

A Research Study on the Role of Parents, Teachers and Scholars in the Positive Use of Social Media in Muslim Society

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ABSTRACT

In order to protect Muslim adolescents from the harmful effects of social media and to encourage its responsible, ethical usage, this essay examines the vital and complex roles that parents, educators, and Islamic scholars play. As the fundamental foundations of the family and society, parents are primarily responsible for raising, guiding, and safeguarding their children throughout their entire lives. Islam places a great emphasis on parents – to treat them kindly is to adore Allah – which emphasizes their important responsibility to inculcate moral, religious, and ethical ideals in their offspring. After that, the essay explores the precise duties that these three groups need to play when it comes to using social media. In order to combat problems like cyberbullying, parents are encouraged to actively avoid becoming "Fitnah Mongers" by engaging in inappropriate online trends, set clear boundaries and productive schedules (including screen time limits), and cultivate healthy, open relationships. They should also educate their children about the proper use of social media. In a similar vein, educators are positioned as the next most important people, charged with fostering moral behavior and character development. Their responsibilities include teaching social media ethics (including how to deal with cyberbullying and false information), promoting the use of social media to acquire useful knowledge and skills, and offering an educational setting that combines degrees with real-world skills to help people resist the allure of improper financial gain on the internet.

Keywords: *Parents, Educators, Islamic Scholars, Social Media, Muslim Adolescents.*

Introduction

In a family structure, parents are the core and pillars of it. Family is formed by parents, and society is formed by family. So, they are very important for society and its betterment. Parents who include a mother and a father have miscellaneous roles. They have to take care, protect, provide, encourage, guard, and guide the children. They are the most important factor in the lives of children, and the same goes for the children. It is up to parents how they bring up their child and make them a useful and sophisticated person for society, and a humble human being. A child is like a plant for parents. It is the parents' responsibility to take care of it,

provide it with essential nutrients so it can grow healthy. If they do not look after then, the growth will be disrupted and they will not be able to have fruitful results. Every phase of a person's life, including childhood, teen years, and the young phase, parents are an essential part of it. Their guidance, training, protection, and instruction become part of a person's development. Therefore, parents should take care of their children, raise them well with wisdom and responsibility

Significance of Parents in Islam

Parents have a high place in Islam. Allah Almighty emphasizes the importance of parents in the holy book, Al Quran, many times. It mentions as;

﴿لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا﴾

(Worship none but Allah; be kind to parents,)

Islam entitles parents to high ranks to the point of declaring paradise under the feet of a mother. One time, a person came to the beloved Prophet and asked;

قَالَ جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَنْ أَحَقُّ بِحُسْنِ صَحَابِي قَالَ "أُمُّكَ" قَالَ "قَالَ ثُمَّ مَنْ قَالَ "أُمُّكَ". قَالَ "ثُمَّ مَنْ قَالَ "أُمُّكَ". قَالَ "ثُمَّ مَنْ قَالَ "ثُمَّ أَبُوكَ"

("A man came to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and said, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! Who is more entitled to be treated with the best companionship by me?" The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Your mother." The man said, "Who is next?" The Prophet said, "Your mother." The man further said, "Who is next?" The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Your mother." The man asked for the fourth time, "Who is next?" The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Your father.")

In Islam, higher ranks come with higher responsibilities. The parental role according to Islam is considered sacred. They have to guide ethics, steadfast them in religion, treat them with kindness, bring them up with morality, make them righteous, instill strong faith, build good character, guard them from evil and sin, provide them with basic needs, and last but not least, ensure their well-being for this world and the hereafter. Allah says in the Quran;

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ﴾

(O believers! Protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones.)

The teacher of this ummah, our Beloved Prophet, said while emphasizing the role of parents;

"وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُمْ وَالْمَرْءُ رَاعِيَةٌ عَلَى بَيْتِ نَعْلَمَهَا وَوَلَدِهِ وَهِيَ مَسْئُولَةٌ"

("A man is a guardian over the members of his family and shall be questioned about them (as to how he looked after their physical and moral well-being). A woman is a guardian over the household of her husband and his children and shall be questioned about them [as to how she managed the household and brought up the children].")

Role of Parents about Social Media Usage

The destruction that social media brings to youth is very severe, so it is important to use it cautiously and learn its ethics. In this regard, parents play a significant role and should teach their children about the positive use of social media.

Therefore, the following roles parents can play for the potential use of social media;

Serve as a Role Model for your Children.

The first person a child sees after birth is their parents. They look up to them, observe, and perceive from them; it becomes part of their personality and behavior. Therefore, parents' behavior and attitude in front of their children must be good. Whatever you want your children to learn, conduct it yourself. Present yourself as a practical role model, whether about religion, social, moral, or social media usage practice. Demonstrate to them how they can use social media with responsibility.

Set the Boundaries and a Productive Schedule for them.

Parents should set boundaries for their children in all matters, including social media. Set screen timing, use parental monitoring features provided by social media platforms, set age-appropriate access, and don't give the phone until 18, or without supervision. Don't allow them to use social media inappropriately, and for haram (forbidden) income. Engage them in a productive lifestyle, such as extracurricular activities, healthy games, hobbies, teach them skills which benefit them financially, and build a connection with their religion.

Foster a Healthy Relationship with Children.

Parents should build a healthy and strong relationship with their children. Nowadays, especially youth, are not connected with their parents. They spend most of their time on social media and do not engage in family activities, or tell their problems, which they face on social media, like cyberbullying. It is somehow the fault of parents, as they erected a wall between them because of a controlling approach. Instead of understanding, they try to excessively control their children. Therefore, parents have to build a relationship of respect, understanding, open communication, and easy access. Give them the validation they seek from other people on social media and a relationship in which, when you stop them from harmful use of social media and they genuinely stop.

Educate them about the Positive Use of Social Media.

Parents should teach their children about the dos and don'ts of social media. Encourage them to use it for a good purpose. Tell them how they can make it a source of salvation and how they can bring positive change to society. Teach them the danger of social media and how they can use it while maintaining modesty and privacy.

Do not become Fitnah Mongers.

It is seen everywhere how, these days, parents engage in harmful use of social media with their children. Instead of stopping them, they are buying them iPhones and devices. They are participating in vlogs, TikTok trends, challenges, and Instagram reels. They are proud that their children are YouTubers, TikTokers, and Influencers. They are not only engaging themselves in the Fitnah of social media

but also encouraging their children to be part of it.

According to the American Psychological Association, there are 4 tips for parents about social media use.

- i. Model healthy social media use.
- ii. Discuss your child's social media use.
- iii. Watch out for problematic social media use.
- iv. Monitor your child's social media use.

Role of Educators

In the life of a person, after parents, the most influential and impactful person is their mentor, their teacher. They play a very important role in shaping their character, behavior, provide them with moral guidance, and bring them up as a useful and humble person for the community and society. It is the education, teaching, and guidance from educators that enable a person to achieve a rank in society. Islam also emphasizes the importance of learning, knowledge, and those who impart it. It is mentioned in the Quran;

﴿قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ﴾

(Say, [O Prophet] "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" None will be mindful [of this] except people of reason.)

Prophet Muhammad highlighted the importance of teaching and said;

"*خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ*"

"The best among you (Muslims) are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it."

Role of Educators Regarding Social Media

Teachers have vital roles and duties to perform, one of which is to protect students from Fitnahs and provide guidance to prevent them. Therefore, in this era of social media Fitnah, the role of an educator is essential to create awareness and provide the necessary steps to avoid the harmful impact. The following roles an educator can play for the productive use of social media;

Educate students to use social media productively and responsibly

Educators should encourage their students to use social media for positive and good purposes. Teach them how they can use it for learning beneficial knowledge, which educational channels and accounts they should follow for learning skills, and authentic Islamic knowledge. Instruct them to use social media to showcase their talents, skills, art, and emphasize the responsible use.

Teach them social media ethics

At this age, cyberbullying, harassment, hoaxes, misinformation, and defamation through social media are very prevalent. People are openly hurting others, making inappropriate and unethical memes, content, challenges, etc. Teachers should teach their students to use social media morally, avoiding harmful content, and maintaining modesty. Tell them to establish ethical guidelines for social media as well as report negative and inappropriate content that violates Islamic principles.

Use creative methods and strategies to protect students from the Fitnah of social media

Educators should be concerned about the well-being of students and learn about what kinds of problems students are facing related to social media. Then teach them creative methods and strategies to cope with the negative effects of social media and turn it into a positive use. The best method is to present yourself as a role model and exemplify responsible behavior.

Emphasis on personal and intellectual development and rectification

A teacher's duty is not only to deliver lectures and teach an academic syllabus, but also to work for the personal and intellectual improvement of students. One of the negative impacts of social media is targeting the critical and cognitive abilities of students. Furthermore, losing their strong sense of self and overall well-being of young individuals. So, it is the teacher's vital duty to rectify students' problems, boost their personal and intellectual development for balanced growth.

Provide an educational environment that offers degrees with skills

Youth are using social media for two main reasons: one is fame, and the other is money. Today's social media is the easiest means of earning and but the way people are earning is mostly inappropriate and against the principles of Islam. For instance, on TikTok Live, people are earning millions in a month or week. But the environment, the acts there are immoral, vulgar, and unethical. However, social media also provides appropriate ways to earn money by using technological skills. But unfortunately, youth become a part of the negative side of technology, and the educational system is one of the culprits for this. The education system is providing degrees, but not skills or opportunities. Therefore, they should provide a system where students can get a degree and learn skills. They can use this to financially strengthen themselves and have sufficient means of earning

Role of Islamic Scholars

The Arabic word Ulama refers to a scholar, which is an English language word. It means "those who are learned." Islamic scholars are those who have a deep knowledge of Islam, and they have a crucial role to play. They have to reform themselves and others. They are tasked with spreading Islamic knowledge and ensuring that people can grasp the true essence of their faith. Furthermore, interpret religious texts and guide contemporary problems. Allah Almighty commends us in the Quran;

﴿فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

(If you [polytheists] do not know [this already], then ask those who have knowledge [of the Scriptures].)

Prophet Muhammad said while highlighting the significance of scholars;

"وَإِنَّ فَضْلَ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ وَإِنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ وَرِثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَإِنَّ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ لَمْ يُورَثُوا دِينَارًا وَلَا دِرْهَمًا وَرِثُوا الْعِلْمَ فَمَنْ أَخَذَهُ أَخَذَ بِحِطِّ وَافِرٍ"

"The superiority of the learned man over the devout is like that of the

moon, on the night when it is full, over the rest of the stars. The learned are the heirs of the Prophets, and the Prophets leave neither dinar nor dirham, leaving only knowledge, and he who takes it takes an abundant portion."

Role of Islamic scholars regarding social media usage

The Fitnah of social media is the biggest problem of contemporary times. Muslims are using it negatively, which is severely impacting their spiritual life, and they are losing their connection with Allah almighty. Therefore, being an Islamic scholar, it is their responsibility to guide Muslim youth on how to counter the Fitnah of social media and promote positive social media usage according to Islamic teaching.

Connect youth with the religion

Youth on social media are engaged in ill-mannered, immoral, and immodest behaviors that are against the principles of Islam. The reason behind this is that they are not connected with their religion and have a weak spiritual life. As an Islamic scholar with in-depth knowledge, they must connect youth with the teachings of Islam and warn them against the consequences of these negative behaviors.

Foster a trusted and comfortable relationship with the youth

Today's scholars should build an environment that is approachable for youth. They should establish an environment in which youth feel comfortable with them and easily share their problem. Do not immediately criticize or judge them; instead, adopt a friendly relationship with the youth. Try to understand their struggles and weaknesses. Use a wise and gentle approach to validate their feelings.

Offers solutions to modern-day problems according to Islam

People are facing Fitnah and challenges with modernity. Especially, Youth are the victims of issues, like feminism, extremism, LGBTQ, the misuse and negative impact of social media, and many more. So, Islamic scholars should provide a solution to modern problems according to Islam.

Arrange panel discussions and interactive sessions with the youth

Scholars should directly address the youth. They should conduct panel discussions and interactive sessions using different platforms, including virtual settings, webinars, community centers, or educational institutions. They should engage with youth in a very friendly environment, listen to their concerns, doubts, clarify their misconceptions, and address negative social media usage and current issues in those sessions. Try to encourage them, provide them with practical solutions and advice. Create awareness about the Fitnahs of social media and Islamic guidance for its responsible usage.

Embrace digital tools in scholarly work

Islamic scholars should use digital tools such as social media for scholarly work. They should use them to preach, educate, teach Islamic knowledge, and deliver guidance. By using digital platforms, their message will be delivered to a larger audience and can create a huge impact at once. They should use social media to spread authentic Islamic knowledge and clarify the misconceptions, misunderstandings that people are propagating against Islam through social media. The scholars who are at educational institutions, Mosques, and Madrasas should be on social media as well.

Encourage the Use of social media according to Islam

Islamic scholars should encourage the use of social media according to Islam. With their deep knowledge of Islam, they can effectively guide the youth. Address the haram (forbidden) and harmful content, highlight negative usage, and promote the ethical and appropriate use. Tell the youth they can use social media within the Islamic limits and with a balanced approach. Collaborate with Muslim influencers who are using social media while maintaining Islamic principles. Additionally, promote the use of social media for charity, community work, and campaigns against persecution. They should encourage the productive use of social media by demonstrating it.¹

Conclusion

The role of parents, teachers, and Islamic scholars is very crucial for the betterment and well-being of Muslim youth. They have an impact and influence on their lives. With their wisdom, efforts, and help, youth can be protected from the Fitnah of social media. Their guidance helps youth to use social media effectively and morally. The parents, teachers, and scholars can make this world and the hereafter successful by teaching the commandments of Allah Almighty and connecting the youth with their religion.

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