

## **DEVELOPMENT OF STEREOTYPE FOR MARRIED WIVES TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR CLOTH WASHING AS OPPOSED TO HUSBANDS**

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Do you know how it started for married wives to take the work of cloth washing in their homes as their role and not for their husbands? If interested to know the answer to this social question, then you are one enthusiastic reader for this piece of writing, which has systematically traced some possible developments for married wives to take the work of cloth washing as theirs and not for their husbands in most of the African societies.

Long long ago, following the development of mankind and the realization for human being to adopt the use of cloth wears, three reasons justified for the need of cloth wears for human beings. First, clothes were to protect human bodies from heat and coldness. Second, clothes were to hide human body private parts from exposure. Lastly, clothes were looked at as a weapon tool for beauty.

The need and emergence for cloth wears by human beings brought in another task/role for human beings to undertake in relation to their worn cloth materials. This is the role of cloth washing. The need to wash cloth wears came as a must because human beings are animals who experience a lot of metabolism processes within their bodies. Such processes affect the worn clothes which could become dirty and acquire some bad smells as a result. In addition, cloth wears can become dirty due to exposure and contact to external environments such as dust, oils, mud's etc. Hence the need for human beings to start washing their clothes came into effect.

Originally, the work for cloth washing was for everyone who wears clothes including married wives and husbands. Gradually this started to change overtime. It was married women who started to take this role of washing their cloth wears as well as those for their husbands. How this started is due to the following two explanations for the stereotype role developments.

First, it was because of laziness tendency for men to do the cloth washing as compared to women in most of the societies. At first, the married husband had to equally wash his cloth wears responsibly as his own wife could do. But due to men's laziness tendency, the husband, because he could not cope up to wear dirty clothes, a thing that could also not have been tolerated by his own wife, decided to start employing someone to do the washing of his clothes for wage payments. From within the societies, few men were willing to be employed for the washing work as compared to girls or women. As a result, it was mostly girls or women who could be available for employment by such married husbands. Once the husband employs a girl or women for the washing work, the following came to be the effective consequences, however.

By nature, men are weaker than women in respect of sexual desires. As result, the married husband could be attracted even to the employed lady sexually. Such advancements could result into married husbands marrying the same employed ladies as their second or third wives. This situation could not be pleasant situations on part of the first wife. Hence for the first married wife to avoid such situations, she could make sure she washes all her husband's clothes herself so that the husband should not find problems with his dirty clothes to the extent of employing one for the washing work. This is one of the approaches, married wives started to do to avoid their husband from house exposure set up with other ladies.

Next, those girls and/ or women in the engagement process with men for marriages, started to get pieces of advice from the already married wives such as those of pledges to their prospective husbands to be ready to undertake the role of cloth washing for them (prospective husbands) once in marriage. Such approach could please many men who were ready to marry to happily look for such ladies who could agree with them as per the ladies' pledges in respect to cloth washing. Men could be happy with such pledges because they could no longer experience any problem of cloth washing once in marriage. Furthermore, married wives started preparing for their young unmarried sisters and daughters to learn

how to wash clothes more actively as compared to their younger brothers and sons in the homes. This was to make sure that these younger sisters and daughters should not find problems with their husbands once they get married in the future. Cloth washing stereotype started developing due to such developments.

Again, the larger societal implications of all these developments was that most of the ladies who were not prepared to do the cloth washing for their husbands in those days, could not find it easy to be married without the use of the described pledges above. Or else they could get married but experience a lot of problems with their husbands until they resort to practicing what other happily married wives could be doing with respect to cloth washing for their husbands. Hence the recognition for the cloth washing work as work for married wives compared to married husbands took root following such developments.

Second, it was also because due to the natural role whereby it is the woman who can deliver a baby and not the husband/man. Between the married wife and husband, it was the wife who could actively have a greater role of cloth washing as compared to the husband. This was because, the wife in addition to washing her own cloth wears, she had to wash all those cloth wears for her newly born child. This differentiated the frequency and extent for which the married couples could be involved in the work of cloth washing. As a result, the wife who could do more and frequent washing developed washing skills more than often as compared to the husband. This is why it is looked or perceived today in some societies that it is always the wife/woman who can do the washing work than the husband/man.

As a result of developed washing skills, the woman continued to take the family leading role of washing clothes for her children and husband while training her daughters to learn how to wash clothes during their earlier ages in life than her sons of the same family. Such developments as described above are the root causes of the stereotyping in respect to the role of cloth washing in homes to date which is mainly done by married wives as compared to married husbands.

Now, if we are to win the war of gender stereotyping nowadays, we have to start addressing such problematic issues at their developmental points. Or else we have to start doing the opposites to such developments until we overcome the problem although such attempts may reverse the situation for the other way round which is not our objectives with our fight against gender inequalities nowadays.

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