

Lebanese Adolescents Obsessed with Immigration to the 1st world

People often reflect on their special memories of adolescence, as it is an outstanding period of life always remember it with a smile, a sigh and some sadness... We remember with it our illusions, dreams, hopes and failures. It is a period rich with emotion, changes and ups and downs declared governed by the principle of "no longer a child but not fully an adult". Yet, this phase varies from generation to another owing to social and economic conditions. Each phase has its own characteristics which are translated in people's behaviour and their quality of life. Today, the living conditions of adolescents differ from previous epochs due to various factors. When you ask your parents about their adolescence, they tell you immediately: "what adolescence you talk about in our days? Adolescence is a phenomenon of your generation... As for us, we used to work and study in order to live and pursue..." In Their period, the idea of "increasing" their ages in identity cards was very common so that they could obtain a job as early as possible to help them live.

New category

Among the factors that contributed to the emergence of the category of adolescence, the issues of compulsory education and labour laws which ban the employment of young people under 14 years old. These two factors led to the emergence of a new age group with an extended period of childhood, especially that compulsory education lengthened the period of schooling. This means that boys and girls stayed dependent longer. Today, "UNICEF" determines the age of childhood as between 1 to 18 and

Young men got married early in their 20's and girls bear responsibilities at home at the age of 15. This also applies to the general world situation. Indeed, historically there was not a long period of time which separates childhood from the age of puberty which was not too far from adulthood.

Childhood used to undergo a period of preparation for work from the age of 7 to 12 afterwards young boys move to the world of adulthood. Yet, in the middle of the last century, a new kind of adolescence emerges with special characteristics in terms of behaviour, dress and a tendency of rebellion and rejection. The world started talking about the "crisis" experienced by adolescence. The emergence of this age period resulted from the world economic and social changes, particularly after the Second World War and the emergence of the oil communities and the spread of the idea of prosperous communities due to the industrialization, demographic changes, technological advances and the change of the living standards and the proliferation of electronic and computer equipments and the means of mass media...

the adolescent does know that he or she is mature enough physiologically and sexually to undertake the responsibility for building a family. The concept of childhood is a new one just like the special care lavished on it and so is the concept of adolescence. If the childhood had, since the early 20th century, gone through several phases and stages, adolescence in itself had not existed before as a separate and outstanding age category.

It is worth noting that adolescence which had always existed as a biological age rather than a concept is not singular either in its duration or in its position in the community.

The life of today's adolescents cannot be compared with the easy generations and neither the adolescence of a working boy with that of an arduous pupil or a rural adolescent with an urban one. Consequently, there is no single adolescence but rather several ones. This is what distinguishes this period. So, what are the outstanding characteristics of Lebanese adolescents today and how they differ from the adolescence of their parents?

Dr. Mona Fayyad, member of the Lebanese National Team and the regional group which prepared Cawtar's Report «Arab girl adolescents» summarises the major orientations of Lebanese adolescents through a field study including more than 30 interviews with adolescents from both sexes and from various regions in Lebanon. Fayyad said: "Today, we do not feel that there are confrontations between sons and parents, there is rather a rational behaviour." The generation of the parents' generation communication that there are several disparities between them and the new adolescents. Indeed, the latter are more pragmatic and rather more concerned about their future expectations to get a suitable job matching up their studies which tend in turn to last longer and more complex." Most of the parents also pointed out that when they were in their sons' ages they read works of eminent philosophers and writers. The news generation, however, tend to be more attached to the modern communication means.

Dr. Mouna Fayyad also ret the radical difference between the era of the easy generation which was marked by a militant and ideological nature and experienced an economic prosperity, which is no longer exist.

Economic hardship and unemployment has become widespread in the world and ideologies ended and there are even some who considered the "end of history",

In addition, the revolution of information in the world contributes to the growth of this feeling, along with the economic crises and the problem of identity (the Palestinian and Iraq) the feeling of bitterness and the strong interest to immigrate and leave one's homeland."

As for the role models, they are not nationalist and Fayyad points out in this respect that: "During our work with adolescents as part of the elaboration of the report "Arab adolescence" no one referred to a leader or a hero except for Abdel Nasser, mentioned by a Lebanese adolescent and Gussama Ben Laden by in Yemeni. "But, the problem of role models is a great issue. We wonder where are those role models which used to inspire the youth such as Che Guevara and Jamel Abdel Nasser as well as where are the students movements and revolutions like the 1968 students' revolution.

A generation that feels no wrath

With the presentation of the field report, some might be intrigued by for the lack of the feelings of anger among the present adolescents, Especially t the

traditional prevailing idea about adolescents in the western context is marked by rejection and anger. Some people even consider that the new generation does not feel any wrath but rather frustration. Others said that the Lebanese adolescents “are turning their back to the homeland and looking to foreign countries.” They also underline that there is a clear discrimination against girls in terms of individual freedom and even more the lack of any relation with politics. There is a feeling of total failure on the political scale. Yet, it seems as if the Lebanese adolescents are lost and indifferent.. Besides, the relationship with the family is not at its best among Lebanese adolescents and there is a desire live independently, although the expression of this is done in utmost calm. The generation of youth shows the existence of a new culture among Lebanese youth and adolescents: immigration, unemployment, frustration and failure, heavy dreams and an ambiguous vision of the future.

An interest in Body

Adolescents tend to pay a special attention to their own affairs specially in the context of the economic and social conditions. Fayyad noted a great care about their look among adolescents and especially girls and fitness. “This is an international phenomenon resulting from the spread of television and the role of media, advertisement and top models.” This is the most dominating and successful effect of globalisation. It also shows that hamburger, pizza and take-away food and the Asian exotic food among middle class people are over aspects of globalization.

As for their self-expression, Dr. Fayyad notes that adolescents who have a critical and neutral vision of themselves belong to high social classes, whereas a

radical views rejection of change prevails among poor classes. Girls are seeking similarity with others. Besides, their answers tend to be very concise due to the fact that they are not used to express themselves freely and to the lack of dialogue which is common in cultured families and those who have a higher social level.

Pragmatic and Practical Generation:

How can we describe of the present generation of adolescents in Lebanon through the surveys and studies carried out in this respect? Fayyad describes these adolescents as ones that care about themselves, pragmatic, with no illusions, lacking ideology, obsessed by the achievement of a personal successful careers, believe that their families are unable to change. Even more, they explicitly think that they are the cause of the war and consider them losers. They are yearning, according to their social level, to immigrate to the 1st world where they aspire to live without being immersed by dictatorship.

As for the remainders in Lebanon, i.e. the intellectuals, they yearn to live in a reasonable manner, nationalist but have a feeling of bitterness especially with regard to the Palestinian situation. The other adolescents, who are disadvantaged, are dominated by their daily live as “poverty will never help then achieve freedom.” Their demands are simpler and are limited to securing a job. They have heavy burdens, the society of consumption.

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