

(father, brother, or husband), could visit her family. The expression takhzin (to store) was used to express restrictions imposed against her movements. The women were guarded against moving around in the village for no good reason. Upon leaving the high walls surrounding her domain to visit a sick relative, attend a wedding or circumcision celebration, the woman covered her body with a thick black cloak ('abaieh). As mentioned earlier, a woman on meeting a man averted her face and shielded it with the cloak. The man also often turned his back and faced a wall or sat on his knees allowing the woman to pass. Unlike the majority of the fallaheen women whose work did not confine them to the boundaries of their courtyards, the Barghouthi women were the prisoners of their homes.

Within their total seclusion, women organised their domestic work. Not all women in the same household had the same work or load. Social status, prestige, wealth and age influenced the type of work done by each woman. For example, being the wife of the sheikh, sheikh Mahmoud's wife enjoyed a special position and hence had almost no share in the housework. Unlike most other households, the Saleh family had female servants who took care of most of the domestic work. However age in general was the main criterion for the division of work between the women of the same household. Daughters in-law carried the burden of bringing up the children and most of the domestic work (Moore, 1985). Unmarried daughters also helped. They were generally the ones who had relatively more freedom to move about and hence, they were usually the ones who went to bake the bread in the taboon (oven), located outside the compound. The unmarried daughters were also the ones who occasionally carried the water from the village main spring to the house. This was only at times when the four cisterns located inside the compound were empty (which was very rare).

In the yard space in front of each house, most of the domestic work was carried out. This was the space where women cooked, washed clothes and dishes, cured olives, prepared yogurt and cheese, and dried the food. In front of the house was found all sort of cooking utensils, and small piles of wood for the fire. Most domestic work was done in the morning. In the afternoon women had more free time