

Quranic and Prophetic Evidence on Permissibility of Blood Transfusion

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ABSTRACT

Blood transfusion has been an important method for saving human lives. The transfusion of blood from one person to another not only implies many medical implications but there are many Shariah perquisites to be taken into consideration due to its sensitivity. This research deals with issue of blood transfusion and its permissibility or prohibition in the light of Quranic and Prophetic evidences. The article analyzes the views of eminent scholars on the basis of Quranic and hadith evidences and elaborated them according to the contemporary and classical tafaseer books. The findings of this research support blood transfusion for saving mankind and welfare of humanity. The views of all jurists and the views of contemporary scholars also conclude the fact that Islamic teachings are for the welfare of mankind, for which blood transfusion is most important, thus it is permissible on medical grounds.

Keywords:Blood transfusion, Prophetic evidences, medical implications, Shariah.

Introduction

Millions of people die in the past, due to blood loss from their body because of wounds that they received mostly during wars. By the passage of time, human knowledge goes towards progress and renowned doctors and different medical techniques and their great efforts in medical fieldwreak the revolution in medical science by transfer of blood from one person to another and through this process they save the lives of others. History remember them as the benefactors of humanity.¹

Medical Ethics In The Light Of *Shariah*

Allah Almighty has created the diseases, and at the same time, He has also created the cure of that disease. Treatment and cure is neither contrary to the *Shariah*injunctions nor is it's new practice. However, through various cycles of time, today it is at its height. As for the plenty of doctors, the superabundance of ailments also straddles worldwide. But this is the disaster for mankind that in past decades' treatment and cure was considered as a philanthropy but today it is just a business and trade.²

Life of human is precious gift from Allah Almighty so it should be esteemed and secured.³ Allah Almighty instructed to save the life of others and call it as a goodness and bounty for humanity. As He stated in Holy Quran that:

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Table 1: Discipline-wise comparison of total science news (in percent) in all three newspapers under study

Discipline	DD	DN	DNe	Total
Medical sciences	4.0	4.6	5.2	13.8
Water matters	1.1	1.7	0.3	3.1
Food safety	0.3	-	-	0.3
Botanical sciences	0.08	0.4	-	0.48
Agricultural sciences	0.7	-	-	0.7
Research & development	0.2	-	-	0.2
Environmental sciences	0.3	0.1	0.6	1.0
Natural sciences/wild life	0.01	-	-	0.01
Energy	0.4	-	-	0.4
Computer sciences	1.0	-	-	1.0
Geology	0.04	-	0.8	0.84
Metrology	-	0.4	-	0.40
Marine Biology	-	0.08	-	0.08
Nanotechnology	-	-	-	
Space science & technology	-	-	-	
Advance sciences (laser etc)				
Engineering	-	-	-	
Total	8.13	7.28	6.90	22.31

DD= Daily Dawn, DN= Daily Nation, DNe= Daily the News International.

Table 2. Discipline-wise data of science news (%) covered by all seven newspapers from Karachi.

Discipline	DD	DE	DJ	DN	DNe	DNw	DU	Total
Medical sciences	4.0	3.8	4.1	4.6	5.2	5.9	9.3	36.90
Water matters	1.1	1.8	2.4	1.7	0.3	2.6	2.9	12.90
Food safety	0.3	0.01	-	-	-	-	-	0.31
Botanical sciences	0.08	-	-	0.4	-	-	-	0.48
Agricultural sciences	0.7	-	0.1	-	-	0.2	-	1.00
Research & development	0.2	0.3	-	-	-	0.08	-	0.58
Environmental sciences	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.6	0.2	0.1	1.90
Natural sciences/wild life	0.01	0.05	-	-	-	-	-	0.06
Energy	0.4	0.04	0.07	-	-	-	-	0.51
Computer sciences	1.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.00
Geology	0.04	-	-	-	0.8	-	-	0.84
Metrology	-	-	0.1	0.4	-	0.2	-	0.70
Marine Biology	-	-	0.03	0.08	-	0.16	-	0.27
Nanotechnology	-	-	0.1	-	-	-	-	0.10
Space science & technology	-	0.06	0.07	-	-	0.12	-	0.23
Advance sciences (laser etc)		-	0.03					0.03
Engineering	-	0.04			-	0.03	-	0.10
Total	8.13	6.50	7.20	7.28	6.90	9.49	12.30	

DD= Daily Dawn, DE= Daily Express, DJ= Daily Jang, DN= Daily Nation, DNe= daily News International, DNw= Daily Nawa-i-Waqt, DU= Daily Ummat

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fever, polio, and bird flu erupted in sparse and faded within days; and these too were occasional and happened as individual cases. Moreover, communal epidemic of gastroenteritis did not occur again since then in that or any other locality in the Karachi city. This shows people may have adopted certain measures to keep themselves safe from water-food-borne disease. However, the value of this study persists even more today and years to come, mainly due to observing changed behaviour of newspaper readers and finding ways how to use newspapers particularly to create understanding for better civic sense among the masses.

A short account of former studies on science communication through newspapers gives an idea about the extent of research in this discipline. However, the data directs towards this side of learning that how science news are treated and covered by the newspapers in a society like Pakistan. Since there are a number of epidemiological issues through the country, the study might be a starting point in initiating such other studies for the welfare of society. Karachi, being the largest metropolitan city, deserves to be focused for this study since a mix population is reachable and the city is inhabitant of the people of different socioeconomic strata.

Moreover, this might be a humble effort from a developing country like Pakistan to share its responsibility in the domain of diffusion studies and the effect paradigm in society with emphasis on health related science news. The initiation of such a different view point might invoke interest among the mass communication researchers towards such other studies for the benefit of society at large. The study concludes since Pakistani newspapers lack proper coverage of science based news; their readers may be far behind the debates about the policies to provide an increased safety to the people.

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Science News Coverage in Pakistani Newspapers

As for newspaper science in Pakistan newspapers is considered, the case for this study relates to the city of Karachi. On the basis of status, the science news data extracted from all three English language newspapers shows a different pattern of science topics. However, one must see which topics constitute the science news coverage in a newspaper. The newspapers under study are regarded media opinion leaders not only in Karachi but all over Pakistan having influence on the public opinion along with reflections of national attitudes. Main functions of newspapers under study are found similar to all latest mass media, providing a field for public discussion (Sturloni, 2003). **The Canadian Press (2014) includes health news as top category while listing the news categories among others. In the special interest category, it includes agriculture, automotive, consumer technology, environment, food, health, lifestyle, oil and gas, science, technology, and weather. However, the NEWS (2014) provides a very brief list of sections as U.S., world, politics, investigative, health, entertainment, money, technology, travel, recipes.**

On the basis of local needs and sequence of events, the journalists coin their own sort of news. The events are reported as and when occur with a slight touch of background information and futuristic approach. Scenario of science news coverage is mostly dependent on the health and environmental situations. Water supply, sewerage systems and cleanliness conditions itself speak of poor state of affairs, hence most news relate to the poor water quality, seepage of water supply and sewerage lines. Since, the gastroenteritis epidemic prevails through contaminated food or water (<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/viral-gastroenteritis/basics/causes/con-20019350>); hence the news relating to prevalence or posing fear for disease only out of contaminated water have been treated as medical news; otherwise all news about the water supply situation, fear for water contamination, general testing of water for any pathogens or routine water checkup have not been regarded as medical news since these types of news fall with the adequate water supply system. Hence, a separate category under “water matters” has been coined for this purpose.

Studies of Science News

Contextual conditions in science news are effectively pertinent to current study but need to be clear in actual living conditions. Science news spread out information about *gastroenteritis* through newspapers but individual consumers of newspapers go through contents, absorb information, realize news trustworthy or not, and act upon the advice of health facility providers in order to keep themselves safe from epidemic or reject the advice.

CONCLUSION

One may ask what value a study has in 2016 that initiated in 2006. The reply is, no event took place other than gastroenteritis like an epidemic; whereas dengue

provided 9.3% coverage (Nazish and Zuberi, 2015), almost double than other newspapers and also much higher than daily the News International; but exclusion of news relating to gastroenteritis epidemic and its causes (16.9 %) may reduce to insignificant number of medical sciences news coverage (5.41%). The cumulative percentage of all science news covered by English language newspapers is 22.31 % only.

This figure may even reduce to 5.41% since each environmental sciences and computer science related news have been found at 1%. Other medical news includes the news about polio, free medical camps, and eye disease etc. However, the coverage of such news is near to zero %.

The third higher number of news (1.9%) after water matters (3.1%) relate to environmental sciences. Release of obnoxious gases into the atmosphere, climate changes, increasing loads of hazardous matters, insanitation, increased vehicular exhausts are some topics of media interest. Therefore, media performs its duty to keep on informing of environmental conditions. However, the coverage is even lower than expected. No newspaper took much care of this important discipline which can be seen as: daily Dawn (0.3%), daily Nation (0.1%) and daily the News International (0.6% each), as compared to daily *Jang* and daily *Nawa-i-Waqt* (0.2% each), daily *Express* (0.4%), and daily *Ummat* (0.1%). This data itself speaks of the grave negligence of media in Karachi on part of providing coverage to the environmental sciences; whereas much of the material is available from concerned agencies and even from NGOs working in this sector for public benefits (Nazish and Zuberi, 2015).

All three newspapers cover food safety (0.3%, daily Dawn only), botanical sciences (0.48%, excluding the News International), agricultural sciences, research & development, natural sciences/wildlife, energy, and computer sciences (respectively 0.7% , 0.2%, 0.01%, 0.4%, and 1.0% daily Dawn only), geology (0.4% Dawn, and 0.8% the News International), metrology and marine biology (respectively 0.04% and 0.08% % Dawn and the News International). Nanotechnology, space science & technology, advance sciences (lasers etc), and engineering found as untouchable fields by these newspapers.

Contrarily, the Urdu language newspapers provided some coverage to agricultural sciences (1%). Other disciplines that received mentionable coverage are: marine biology (0.27%), nanotechnology (0.1%), space science & technology (0.23%), advance sciences (0.3%), and engineering (0.07%).

The combined data of science news disciplines covered by Karachi newspapers in the sample is, however, given in Table 2 (Nazish, 2015).

interest in the society, three English language newspapers; daily Dawn, daily Nation, and the News International publishing from Karachi selected for this study. To have a control over population of these newspapers, sample for this study has been taken for 14 days starting from 17th September 2005 to 30th September 2005 as the main source of information. The reason for selecting this specific period is that on 17th September 2005 the first news about gastroenteritis epidemic hit the headlines of newspapers. The 14 issues of a newspaper are considered as authentic to find out something required (Hijmans, *et al.*, 2003). Moreover, news about gastroenteritis was not seen in newspapers well before 30th September 2005. The validity of this study even after over 10 years seems to be integral as no incident of gastroenteritis outbreak took place during the years 2006-2015 again in the same or any other locality of Karachi city.

Collection of Newspapers

Two newspapers (daily Dawn and The News International) obtained in Dr. Mahmud Hussain Library, University of Karachi, and daily the Nation in the Liaquat Memorial Library Karachi. All newspapers examined carefully. Science news, particularly, the news relating to the epidemic of gastroenteritis were searched, located and measured with the help of a graduated scale in column centimeters. Photocopies of all such news were prepared, pasted on separate sheets of papers, and maintained properly for record. The data has been summarized and is given in table 1.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

News media plays an influential role in shaping the understanding of public so much so that it also reveals the dangers of genetics and medical research (Benjamin, 2005). In Pakistan, “where 70 per cent of the population has no access to primary and emergency care, 1.2 million people die of water-borne diseases annually, a child dies of some disease every minute, and 70 women die of pregnancy-related complications every day, the government has no justification to spend money on lavish projects” (Daily Nation, 2013). Hence, the media is expected to provide information on all issues and events.

Table 1 shows that news relating to medical sciences finds the highest percentage (13.8 %; $13.8/3=4.6$) in aggregate with a large share by the News International (5.2 %), followed by daily Nation (4.6 %) and daily Dawn (4.0 %). The same type of study for four Urdu language newspapers shows the coverage of medical sciences as 23.1 % ($23.1/4=5.8$) (Nazish and Zuberi, 2015). Medical infrastructure in Karachi is in pathetic form. Paucity of basic facilities, non-availability of medicines, failure of emergency cares, poor hygienic conditions all are regular features of Urdu as well as English language newspapers. Data shows that daily *Express* made only 3.8 percent coverage to medical sciences related news; daily, *Jang* provides an ample coverage to medical news (4.1%) a little higher than daily Dawn preceded daily Nation (4.6%), daily *Nawa-i-Waqt* (5.9%) coverage to the medical news while daily *Ummat* took lead in this regard that

for high public interest in science reporting about risk are obvious (Burnham, 1987; Viscusi, 1992). When risks are identified or labeled as concerns; stakeholders including “experts, policy makers, interest groups, and the general public” (Juanillo and Scherer, 1995) become involved in debates about policies designed to provide an increased safety. Although television captured huge audiences later on, Palen (1994) reports 38% respondents still read science news in a newspaper weekly as compared to 56 % of Americans regular viewers of television programs on science, technology, or nature. Conversely, just 9 % rate the newspaper as a good source of science news since 75% of the paying special attention regularly read the paper show disappointment with the science coverage (Weigold, 2001). Likewise, Robert et al (2000) carried out content analyses of Los Angeles Times and The Washington Post, in respect of science, medical, and environmental news reporting. Emma Weitkamp (2003) confirms in her study that medicine and health topics are privileged over science in newspaper reporting and are drawn from a wide range of sources.

[AbdesslamBoutayeb](#) (2006) found most eventful studies relate to the epidemics that usually erupt in populace cities of third world countries. People, civil society, media, and healthcare professionals keep on trying to make people safe from epidemics but small-scale-grip of various epidemics continues; that include bird flu, dengue fever, and gastroenteritis etc. However, the year 2005 in Karachi – Pakistan is marked as horrible one. An epidemic broke out in the thickly populated locality of ‘Landhi’ town in September 2005 that was identified as *gastroenteritis*. The epidemic prevailed very fast throughout the locality. Some 25000 persons mostly children infected by gastroenteritis and 14 persons, despite the efforts of health providers, expired.

Mass media played its due role to inform people about the cycle of epidemic and its causes. Media reporters contacted health experts and asked them to advice people how they could keep themselves safe from *gastroenteritis*. Hence, all such information widely publicized through the media reached people for their realization and subsequently taking preventive measures out of *gastroenteritis*.

Since, taking into account all kinds of media simultaneously might be unmanageable; hence only one form of print media *i.e.* newspaper has been selected for the study. Seeming this fear a typical case, study of science reporting about this risk of high public concern has been carried out to find the role of newspaper coverage.

METHODOLOGY

Selection of Newspapers

Most of the scientists select newspapers for studying their topics of interest (Toby A. Ten Eyck and Melissa Williment, 2003; Hijmans, *et al.*, 2003). Their research focussed on scientific news appeared specifically in the newspapers. Therefore, in view of popularity, reasonability, impartiality, coverage, circulation and

Islamic Perspective of Science and Pakistani Newspapers: A Study of News Dissemination Process

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ABSTRACT

Study of science news coverage in three English language newspapers from Karachi was undertaken for the case of gastroenteritis. 8.13%, 7.28%, and 6.90% coverage was found in daily Dawn, daily Nation, and daily the News International respectively due to eruption of gastroenteritis in the city. The news relating to environmental sciences and computer sciences found only 1%; but the news on food safety, botanical sciences, agricultural sciences, research & development, natural sciences/wild life, energy, geology, metrology, marine biology traced below 1%; whereas the news about nanotechnology, space science & technology, advance sciences (laser etc), and engineering were missing. The study concludes English newspapers in Pakistan lack proper coverage of science involving news and their readers possibly remain from better civic sense.

Keywords: Science/health news, Pakistan, Newspapers, Case study, Gastroenteritis.

INTRODUCTION

News media at all times gives science due importance with such an extensive scope that Edwin W. Scripps and William E. Ritter launched a news agency as 'Science Service' during the 1920s. Ritter (1928) valuing the joint efforts by science and journalism wished-for mixing both entities. Newspapers in the 19th century published the lectures by eminent scientists like Thomas Huxley, Louis Agassiz, and Asa Gray (Weigold, 2001) for public interest, but the coverage of science may have reached its peak all through the Second World War. Hence, in the 20th century, the large news organizations covered science by a beat reporter while small ones handled science reporting by a general assignment reporter or by wire service (Friedman 1986). Dennis and McCarty (1979) found science writers at large newspapers preferred stories on environment, medicine, and technology over physical and behavioral sciences stories. Hence, consumers of large newspapers are more exposed to science news, particularly, health related stories. Newspapers that carry regular science sections as compared to those that do not also give greater coverage to science in the news section (Bader, 1990), particularly for stories about basic research.

Since scientific discoveries can help people to avoid health threats, detect threats, or identify threats; the extent, and the way the press covers the risk, the reasons

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quest for the right thing to do. The pursuit of knowledge on behalf of mankind is a pursuit of search for truth and common good for humanity. This characteristic of true knowledge creation deserves an unbiased quest for the solutions to the problems faced by the mankind today. Instead of man versus woman, the fundamental paradigm of right versus wrong has much wider scope in combating the issues of status of women.

Thirdly, the “women for women” approach is hard to deliver goods in the closely integrated societies where women by virtue of being tied together in multiple competitive relations tend to let down each other to maximize personal space.

Conclusion

The global program for empowerment of women by UN is a comprehensive plan of women's well being. Working under three main headings of “Equality, Peace and Progress” it has shown success towards formulating a common global agenda for women rights. However twenty years down the road, there are many aspects which are in dire need of improvement as a result of consultations and genuine deliberations among member states with a true spirit of women's progress in all areas. The guiding principles of the Commission on Status of Women clearly state that the Commission will work for the betterment of women worldwide, irrespective of nationality, language, race and religion⁷. On the other hand we seldom find any decision taken on this forum which is not in line with the political and economic interests of the global players. We may find hope for Pakistani women in this program by looking at women issues in their local context and find solutions suitable to the socio-cultural situation in hand.

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DrSitti Maria (Islamabad, March 2012) a member parliamentand an active member of the Islamic movementin Malaysia.Dr Maria is not only satisfied with the status of women given by Islam, but also a practical example of how enabling the *Shariah* is for women. According to her, marriage is a contract in Islam, and whatever you decide with mutual agreement at the time of contracting a marriage, that defines your future role.

Pakistan being a country of 98% Muslim population, the meta-narrative of religion (Islam) can be explored to bail out women from the backward and ignorant socioeconomic structures which deny women's rights and use them as a commodity. A positive disposition for religious values is more likely to earn popularity among public for women's rights activists in Muslim societies in comparison to a self-denial outlook which makes their struggle counterproductive among their respective public. According to the survey by Gallup published in New York Times, an overwhelming majority of women in Muslim societies do not consider them as oppressed and find the spiritual and moral aspects of their culture the most valuable for them¹.Being unable to acknowledge and fully exploit the strengths of our socio-cultural and economic system already in place for centuries will be a reductionist approach towards empowerment of our women.

Making use of the available structure.Like other Muslim countries, Pakistan has a strong family system with man as head of the family and bread winner for his family members. The unemployment of a man renders a family of four to ten members suffering from poverty. In such a society a program for poverty alleviation in women can be equally effective by reducing the unemployment rate of men.

Engaging men and boys.The clause “Engaging men and boys in empowerment of women” has been an integral part of the program since 1995. Since the cultures of Muslim and eastern societies are embedded in patriarchal practices, a program for change in the status of women cannot bear fruits without a change in the mindset of men in these societies. A social system based on strong family with man as head of the family requires a treatmentdifferent from those who have lost the centrality of family as an institution. The cultural typology of eastern and Western societies is remarkably different from each other with Eastern cultures being high context and collectivist. Collectivist culture is characterized by strong integration and an emphasis on relationships among people to a greater degree than the cultures of individualism where the integration is lose(Hofstede, 1984). This fact suggests devising an effective plan of creating awarenessin such societies without having to uproot or disregard the local norms and culture.

Secondly, engaging men and boys entails a collective effort to fight against a mind set. A cross-gender struggle for improving status of women will lead towards a friendly and non-hostile environment of gender relations and a genuine

Pakistan. This can be termed as the local version of the notion “Women rights as Human Rights” which is a popular idea in women rights struggle in the world today and included in the *Vienna Declaration and Program of Action*(1995) as well as a part of CEDAW. It is specifically relevant to the situation of countries like Pakistan where corruption is rampant among successive governments, and public funds are hardly used for public good. In addition, the inability of governments to devise effective programs for poverty alleviation, education and health, and to top it off, the absence of accountability are the root causes of its population’s endless afflictions. Had the gendered approach have a positive effect on this situation, the female legislators and ministers most of whom come from the most backward and rural areas of the country, must have created a difference by now. According to SairaBano(2009):

“Although women’s representation in the assemblies has increased quotas, they do not work in isolation: they cannot be separated from dominant societal attitudes and norms. The socioeconomic position of women in society means they are treated unequally by the men in the assemblies and their views are not taken seriously” (p. 31)

Same is the case with lady councilors as Jabeen (2004) writes, quoted by Bano(2009)“The general knowledge of councilors about their job is to serve the Nazim at the district level” (p.32).

Thus in the current circumstances where a lack of political will is at the heart of all problems, an increased presence of female legislators is hard to show any positive results. Same is the situation with other fields of women’s public engagement. The laws for equal opportunities for women are well in place. Articles 25 and 26 of the constitution of Pakistan specifically ban gender discrimination. These and other provisions for working women in the constitution are implemented by various statutes, ordinances, labour policies, and acts of parliament. Only the practical steps according to the legal framework on behalf of the respective governments are awaited to be taken(Sarwar & Abbasi, 2013).

Discourse of Women’s rights activists. Friedman quotes HinaJilan that the women’s rights activists in Pakistan like her sought a secular basis for their struggle and want equality according to the standards of international human rights law and not religion, as religion causes controversies(Friedman, 1995, p. 23). Same is the case with other Muslim countries. At the Beijing +20, the events of Muslim women rights activists were filled with a strong notion on behalf of the panelists that the Islamic *Shariah* laws in their respective countries were the basic hindrance towards achieving equal rights for women, without repealing which, women could not progress on the lines of global agenda. A law that was criticized the most was about wife’s obligation to take permission from her husband to take a job outside her home, which they saw as a great breach of a woman’s fundamental human rights. This reminded me of my interview with

West's political agenda instead, alludes to the ideological nature and political inclination of the program in favor of the US and its allies.

Eschewing the plight of Kashmiri women.The twelve critical areas of the Beijing program include Women and Armed Conflicts under which it has been acknowledged that “wars and armed conflicts destroy families and societies and leave women and girls particularly vulnerable. Sexual violence is widespread and often used as a war tactic”. The program tends to “train peacekeepers to detect, address and stop conflict-related sexual violence, while also supporting the reform of justice and security institutions”. However, the Session ignored the plight of Kashmiri women, who are suffering from sexual violence for years, being raped by Indian security forces and turned widows in large numbers. During the years of illegitimate Indian occupation, 10,167 women have been gang raped by Indian security forces and 22,778 have turned widows. Although under UN resolutions, the Kashmiri people are given a right of self determination that renders India as a usurping force in the valley, India's interests in the region are well backed by the West in its global and regional policies. A complete black out of the mention of Kashmiri women's situation alludes to the inclination of the said program towards the political agenda of the West.

Resolution for Palestinian women.The 59th session adopted a resolution on “situation of and assistance to Palestinian women” that was approved with a record majority vote. The resolution held Israel responsible for the plight of Palestinian women. Keeping in view the pro-Israel political policies of the West and the US-government's pronounced commitment to the state of Israel (which was manifested on the forum in the form of abstention of the European Union and a negative vote from the US), such a resolution being put up on the Session's agenda shows a genuine adherence of the program to the cause of women's welfare. However the rationale for voting against the resolution given by the US and Israel is the same given by the EU and Japan to justify their abstention, showing a unanimity of thoughts towards the issue among the global players. (Table 1)

Table 1 <i>Reasons for not favoring the resolution expressed by the dissenting countries</i>		
Country	Reason 1 <i>(Political nature of the issue)</i>	Reason 2 <i>(Partisan draft against Israel)</i>
Israel	Issue has been politicized	Text not balanced and accurate
European Union	Country-specific elements	-
United States	Political elements	-
Japan	-	Imbalanced draft

RQ 3: Towards benefitting from the program

Revisiting the gendered approach for women rights.The common issues of majority population emanating from one fundamental issue of bad governance do not necessarily need a gendered approach to be resolved in countries like

maintains“Equality is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice”⁵, the claim demands for the realization where the rights start turning into duties, thus further increasing the liabilities, and where a woman needs equity instead of equality with man in order to gain true happiness. Although the biological determinist notion that all the roles and relations of the two sexes are fixed in a single, static pattern is not compatible with the demands of a modern society where Human Development Index is measured through income per capita of the population, however, women’s economic participation enhanced through the false needs created by the social pressures of consumer culture and commercialism are again a form of exploitation that cannot be justified in the name of women’s economic empowerment. Women’s forced employment is a severe breach of fundamental human rights that suggests a legal intervention to prevent this (Sarwar & Abbasi, 2013, p. 213).

The interpretations of the terms used in the draft are criticized by the right in those countries which include Church, pro-family and pro-life groups and NGOs. Family has been interpreted as “collection of individuals”, Mother as “care giver” and the word “partners” has been used instead of couple. The interpretation of the term “gender” was also severely contested from the right wing groups (Baden & Goetz, 1997). The “dubious interpretations” of the term “gender”, “based on world-views which assert that sexual identity can be adapted indefinitely to suit new and different purposes” has been dismissed by Vatican⁶.

The stance of Church on the possible interpretations of the terms further alludes to the influence of homosexual perspective on the program.

RQ 2:Political inclination (Observations from 59th session of CSW)

Saliency of Malala Issue.The 59th session of the CSW was a continuation of the evaluation of progress towards the MDGs with respect to the twelve critical areas of the said program. The researcher had a chance to attend this session that held from 8th to 20th March 2015. There was a visible resonance of Malala’s“heroic” story from Pakistan in events and sessions, who was recently awarded Nobel Peace Prize from the UN. Being a young woman highlighted as a savior of the cause of girls education on the face of religious extremism, she was widely hailed and celebrated during assorted events of the Session.

On the other hand, Malala continues to receive a tepid response at home. Majority Pakistanis are not only hesitant to acknowledge her as a hero, but also consider her as a tool to pursue Western agendas in the region(Yusuf, 2013). In order to raise awareness on education, the UN declared 12 July as Malala day which was not acknowledged by Pakistani government.

Prominence and promotion of Malala as a champ of women and girls’ rights which is not congruent with the perception at home and consistent with the

Vatican has dismissed any chance to accept the legal recognition to abortion, and so have many Muslim countries.

In the light of dominant and popular feminist stances, few articles of the Convention and clauses of the program are discussed as under:

- The critical area “women and media” (clause 33 of BDPFA) admits that “global communication networks have been used to spread stereotyped and demeaning images of women for narrow commercial and consumerist purposes”³. However it does not demand to regulate media content for discouragement of the commercial use of women’s beauty and sexuality and the objectification of women on media which is a worldwide problem faced by women today.
- The article 6 of the Convention demands States Parties to “take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women”. However it does not ask for any measures taken to safeguard women from having to turn into prostitutes, in order to end this exploitation. Instead prostitutes are termed as “sex workers” which shows an effort to approve this practice as a normal and acceptable profession just like other professions. The efforts of many Western NGOs culminated at Beijing in 1995 to exempt prostitution from the category of human rights violations and portraying it as a human right instead (Raymond, 1998). A number of distinctions (i-e consent, age etc were made to regard this form of violence against women as a human right.

There are a number of socio-cultural factors and social pressures in both the Eastern and Western societies which lead women into this profession. Also there are certain taboos and mindsets among members of our society which prevent such women from abandonment of their notorious profession and starting a noble life anew. Prostitutes are stigmatized in West too but the organizations for their rights like COYOTE in the US “works more for the rights of the customers and the industry, rather than for the rights of women to leave prostitution”(Raymond, 1998).In both of these situations women need to be helped through legal manifestations. Prostitution is a way of easy money for poor, but according to the generally held belief in Muslims, against the dignity of a human being. Prevention from this undignified practice is not possible without legislative support just the way doors to child labor have been blocked through laws so that poverty may not lead people into this undignified source of easy money.

- An exaggerated emphasis on the economic independence of women as an equal right and increase in the number of women in paid-labor force entails weakening of the institution of family. Feminists have failed to recognize the burden of double duties on women. Anne-Marie Slaughter, the director policy planning at the US State Department came in the cross-hairs of feminist circles when she resigned from her dream job in 2012. She did so upon realizing that she was not being able to give due attention to her teen age boys along with pursuing her career⁴.While the Beijing declaration

minimum labor force activity in Pakistan is the multiple roles that women have to play in our society, and which are largely determined by social, religious and cultural factors (Sarwar & Abbasi, 2013). The cultural and religious factors highlight women's role based on the biological factor; women are the family makers in Pakistani society and not an integral part of the economic activity on the cost of their biological obligation of giving birth and raising children. Most of the studies on the variable of women's participation in economic activity do not consider the family system in Pakistan that holds men responsible to earn and provide for his family. Western feminism has been criticized by the third world women for being hijacked by the European and American women who are only interested in contraception and abortion (Walters, 2005).

A study of the problems at home and search for indigenous solutions can lead towards some solid outcome. Changes are to be brought from within if they are to be sustained (Bano, 2009, p. 34). In the light of above mentioned studies, this article is an effort to focus on the missing aspects along with highlighting the areas already under discussion on the topic.

Methodology

For this study, the objectives of UN program for women i.e the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been analyzed through official documents. The wording, terminology and discourse of the documents are seen in the perspective of local norms and belief system. The archives of the debates and views published and presented on different media were studied for a general perception of this program in public which have a bearing in answering the research questions. The ethnographic readings and observations of the 59th session of CSW which was named as Beijing +20 (held from 8 to 20 March, 2015) are used to analyze the purpose and outcome of the said UN program.

Findings and discussion

RQ 1: Ideological and theoretical framework of the draft

The drafts of the convention (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action include such articles and clauses which are not consistent with the collectively held belief systems of eastern societies and developing world. Moreover, the interpretations of the terms used in different clauses are openly in conflict with the accepted cultural norms and beliefs in the majority of Muslim world.

The articles and clauses of the said program show an underlying ideology of feminism as a basic framework of thought. The representative of Vatican, a professor at Harvard, Mary Ann Glendon pronounced it as an effort to revive the dead feminism of the 1970s, which had been dismissed for its negativity for men, marriage and motherhood, and its hard stance on abortion (Tempest, 1995). Also,

from each other. Western societies are developed with a strong democratic system in place, while most of the eastern and Muslim societies are either under autocracy and military rule or have weak democracies, with common characteristics of being underdeveloped and suffering from issues of bad governance. These multiple realities suggest that the success of a global program for women empowerment is attached with its consideration for women issues in the respective local contexts and addressing those issues in the light of indigenous realities.

The objective of this study was to identify the underlying ideological framework of the UN program for women empowerment and see its relevance with general belief system and practices in Muslim societies, particularly with reference to Pakistan. The research questions are:

- 1- What do the objectives of the UN program of CSW manifest about the ideological inclination of the program, keeping in view the socio-cultural practices and belief system in Pakistan?
- 2- In the light of the proceedings of 59th session, what is the political inclination of the said program?
- 3- What are the ways that the women in Pakistan can benefit from this global program of action?

Literature Review

The UN program for women under UN Commission for Status of Women (CSW) has been a focus of many studies, mostly in the West, discussing both the drafts of and the progress on these documents. Women's Human Rights (Bunch & Fried, 1996; Plattner, 1995), Women and Armed Conflicts (Gardam & Jarvis, 2000), Women's reproductive rights (Haslegrave & Havard, 1995), Sexuality and Women (Otto, 1995; Raymond, 1998) are among the key areas of the program. The responses and reservations shown on the agenda (Buss, 1998; Moghadam, 1996) have many commonalities with the reservations present in the Muslim societies (Bunch, 2001; Farmer, 2000).

The situation of women rights in Pakistan has been studied in local and international researches, many of which acknowledge that "religious and Qur'anic principles are frequently avoided and twisted in treatment to women" (Bhattacharya, 2014). However the yardstick used to evaluate the status of women is mostly international standards. Studies (Shami, 2003) show a women's rights discourse influenced by western feminism. Although the wellbeing of women in Pakistan requires an extensive work plan in more or less all of the 12 critical areas highlighted by the Beijing Declaration, we need to look at the women issues with the perspective of our indigenous requirements. While talking about feminism in Africa, Amina Mama (cited by Walters, 2005) argues that feminism must acknowledge differences of race, gender and culture. Likewise, according to reports, the reason behind women's low employment rate and