

# ROLE OF ISLAM IN PREVENTION OF SMOKING

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**Background:** Smoking is common all over the world. It is a pandemic pollution. In spite of awareness about its dangerous effects on the health, tobacco companies spend million of dollars on its advertisement and sales promotion. This study tried to see the effect of Islam on prevention of smoking. **Methods:** The study was carried out on 1000 subjects residing in different localities of Abbottabad. The basic method used was a questionnaire designed specifically to give an idea of the religious status of person and correlate that with their smoking habits. **Results:** Out of the study group 325 (32.5%) were found to be indulged in different kinds of smoking and we concluded that Islam has a positive effect on smoking prevention.

## INTRODUCTION

Along with other pollution e.g. water pollution, dust pollution, pollen pollution, noise pollution, the tobacco smoking pollution also has very important role in damaging the human health. Efforts are being made to combat smoking from personal to WHO. level. In result of these efforts awareness about the dangerous side effects of tobacco smoke are being communicated to the public. Despite of this preventive campaign the public of the developed as well as under developed countries is continuing smoking. WHO has important role in legislative action to combat the world smoking epidemic.<sup>2</sup> There are Islamic rulings on smoking. The Islam and its influence can have effective and positive role in combating the smoking especially in the Muslims. Islam as a religion has very important and positive role in all kinds of addiction prevention including the tobacco smoking.<sup>3</sup>

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A total numbers of 1000 subjects were interviewed regarding tobacco smoking. These subjects belonged to different areas of Abbottabad and were engaged in different professions. A questionnaire regarding their personal/religious status and specific information about smoking was filled in individually.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: Age: Sex: Occupation: Marital Status: Education level:

Address:

Monthly Income: Smoker Non Smoker

Cause of starting smoking: Anxiety For company sake other

Smoking during Ramazan: Yes No

Smoking at public places: Yes No

Saying five times prayer: Yes No

Recitation of Holy Quran: Yes No

Study of Islamic literature: Yes No

Fasting in the month of Holy Ramazan: Full Casual Not at all

Giving Zakat: Yes No

Performed Haj: Yes No

Taking part in Islamic movements: Regular No Casual

## RESULTS

The study was done on 1000 subjects residing in different localities of the Abbottabad, out of them 325 persons (32.5%) were found to be indulged in smoking. Among 325 smokers, only 32 (9.84%) were having good religious status. 34.76% (113) of smokers were well educated and belonged to posh families but not very much religious. 55.4%(180) of smokers were not educated and not very much religious. Among Public transport drivers 80% (80 out of 100) were smokers. Among religious smokers 18.75% (06) smoked during fasting month of Ramazan (before or after Fasting). Among religious smokers 12.5% (04) smoked even at public places.

Among non-smokers 475 (70.4%) were having good religious status and educated. 29.6%(200) non-smokers were having little religious touch. Among non-smokers 10% (10) were illiterate persons. Among drivers 20%(20) were non-smoker.

Table-1: Distribution of smokers and non-smokers

Smokers	325	32.5%
Non-smokers	675	67.5%
Total	1000	100%

Table-2: Characteristics of smokers

Having good religious status	32	9.84%
Well educated and of posh family but not very much religious.	113	34.76%
Illiterate and little religious touch	180	55.40%
Total	325	100%

Table-3: Distribution of public transport drivers (n=100)

	Subjects	Percentage
Smokers	80	80%
Non-smokers	20	20%
Total	100	100%

Table-4: Distribution of religious/smokers at public places

	Subjects	Percentage
Smoking at public places	4	12.5%
Not smoking at public places	28	87.5%
Total	32	100%

Table-5: Distribution of religious smokers smoking in ramazan (before and after fasting)

	Subjects	Percentage
Smokers in Ramazan	6	18.75%
Not smoking in Ramazan	26	81.25%
Total	32	100%

Table-6: Religious status of non-smokers

	Subjects	Percentage
Good religious status	475	70.4%
Little religious touch	200	29.6%
Total	675	100%

Table-7: Literacy status of non-smokers

	Subjects	Percentage
Illiterate non-smokers	10	10%
Literate non-smokers	90	90%
Total	100	100%

## DISCUSSION

Electronic media such as television, dish, Internet, radio and news papers etc. play important role in communication irrespective of their positive and negative achievements. Most of the people are trapped by these attractive advertisements irrespective of their educational, financial and religious status. But the teenage smokers are major victims of these advertisements.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of advertising and sales promotion of the tobacco companies is reflected in the amount of money they spent for this purpose. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), global advertising costs of tobacco transnational conglomerates (TTG) amounted to some \$ 1,800 millions in 1978. In the United States the cigarette industry spends more than \$ 422,000,000 annually on advertising in newspapers, magazines and on billboards: In 1980, it was reported to spend more in one day on smoking than the principal government agency on health spent in a year. Recent information from United Kingdom shows a substantial increase in regular tobacco advertising expenditures. In Malaysia, the tobacco companies, mainly British American Tobacco (BAT) and Rothmans, spent approximately \$ 5,000,000 in 1977 to promote smoking.<sup>2</sup> In 1992 it is reported money spent on smoking world-wide every year is US \$ 100000 millions.<sup>2</sup>

The spending of large sums of money on advertising serves to spread and maintain the idea of smoking, associating with success, pleasure, relaxation, freedom, or in its crudest form, with the attractive sexual attributes of femininity or virility. Promotion of tobacco conveys the message that smoking is socially acceptable.<sup>2</sup>

In view of the power of advertising, it is not surprising that more countries have enacted restriction on advertising than any other single type of legislation to control smoking. About 47 countries have legislation or voluntary agreements imposing restriction of some kind on advertising tobacco and its products. Of these 15 impose a total ban on tobacco advertising. The background of legislative actions to combat by WHO the world smoking epidemic is dangerous effects on the health and economy.<sup>2</sup>

Smoking causes severe harm to human health and leads to death. Allah has forbidden self-destruction: "Kill not yourselves, for verily Allah has been to you most merciful (Quran 3:29)". The companions of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) Peace be upon him understood that this verse forbade Muslim to expose himself to dangers or destruction.<sup>4</sup> Smoking incurs financial waste and loss which is prohibited in Sharia (Islamic Law). There are five rulings of Fiqah applicable to smoking:

1. Smoking is imperative, if it is indispensable for balance and ability to perform physical and mental duties, which could be true in some cases.
2. It is recommendable, or desirable, if it produces greater balance and ability to work.
3. It is permissible if smoker remains unaffected, whether he/she smokes or not.
4. It is reprehensible if the harm caused is slight or if it is likely to cause harm.
5. And it is impermissible (haram) if harm has actually occurred or if severe harm has been ascertained to occur.<sup>5</sup>

The school of thought of the opinion that smoking is "haram" and strongly reprehensible give following arguments:-

1. Tobacco is neither a nutrient nor a curative but inebriating and a devitalizer intoxicant therefore according to Messenger of God (Peace be upon him) all inebriating and devitalizer substances are banned.
2. Because of the offensive smell associated with it, smoking is held to be as abominable as eating raw garlic or onion.
3. It is vice and all vice is haram.
4. It is a cause of distress and temptation to the masses. Anything that acts as such is ruled to haram.
5. Smoking involves frivolous play, immodest merrymaking and idle sport - all which are haram.<sup>6</sup>
6. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) says "Do not harm yourselves or others". He also "forbids taking any intoxicant or stupor-inducing agent".<sup>7</sup>

It is established by conclusive evidence that smoking is profoundly detrimental to the soul, mind and wealth of individual and may lead to the destruction of these blessings that Allah has enjoined should be preserved and kept out of harm's way. For this reason and with the aim of protecting the health, the wealth and the lives of both individuals and communities, smoking, in all forms, must be categorically forbidden.<sup>8</sup>

It is evident from this study that Islam has a positive and an effective role on smoking prevention and it will be true in all type of addictions and anti social activities. Therefore religion teachings/seminars should also be arranged to combat the world-smoking epidemic.

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