

Sexual and Reproductive Health Issues in Pakistani context and its Islamic Perusal

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Abstract

Sexual and reproductive health is a fundamental human right; central to reducing poverty and improving long-term health. It is intrinsic to our right to life, freedom, health, choice, privacy, education and the prohibition of discrimination. Many women and young people in Pakistan face barriers that prevent them from exercising this right. Major gaps remain at both service delivery and policy level, preventing adequate access to basic health facilities. Denying these rights have grave consequences that exacerbate poverty and inequality. It can lead to greater vulnerabilities to gender-related ill health, unintended pregnancies, maternal death, harmful cultural practices and sexual and gender-based violence. Pakistan particularly struggles with high maternal mortality ratios, adolescent birth rates and unmet need for contraception. The country has the third highest burden of maternal, fetal and child mortality globally. According to the Pakistan Demographic Health Survey (PDHS) 2012-2013, fertility is considerably higher in rural communities than in urban areas. On average, most rural women have 4.2 children. Contraceptive prevalence rate remains low at 26 per cent, meaning that a majority of people are not using birth control methods. This is despite the fact that 96 per cent of married Pakistani women are aware of at least one modern contraceptive method.

Keywords: Reproductive Health, Sexual health, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's), Health and Islam, Reproductive Health Issues in Pakistan

1. Introduction

The age of 10-19 years is that phase of life of an individual where different social, biological and psychological changes occur in human body. Physical changes can be observed by change in voice, height or any other appearance whereas psychological changes can be observed by changes in way of thinking.¹

People in developing countries because of cultural and sexual norms and poverty often get limited access to education and health services. Due to strong traditional norms sexuality and sex is not an openly discussed topic and thus individuals lack proper knowledge about this major component of their health.² Here we will be discuss

- Basic definitions of sexual and reproduction health and its components.
- Have a look on sexual and reproductive health issues that ultimately lead individuals toward infertility.
- Study sexual and reproductive health from perspective of Quran and hadith.

1.2.1 Sexual Health and Reproductive Health:

A state of complete physical mental and social thriving and not just the non-participation of ailment or infirmity. It is all about healthy, positive and respectful sexual relations and sexuality which is not having any sign of violence, discriminatory behavior and coercion.³ The capability of individuals to reproduce and have satisfying responsible and safer life when it comes to sex. It is also all about individuals to decide when they want to have kids.⁴ Reproductive health comprises of 6 basic health components.

Parental Care: This is much important as mother is not only supposed to carry a baby but her role is important from conception to delivery to perinatal and postnatal periods and even to feeding. That's why reproductive health provides facilities for motherhood to become safer.

Family Planning: It discusses How much and when to have kids or option to remain permanently infertile.

Dealing with sexual dysfunction and infertility: This is all about struggle to start parenthood. It involves treatment, medicine and Art's

(Assisted Reproductive Techniques)

Abortions: Sexual assault, unplanned conceptions, lead towards termination of pregnancy.

Treatment and prevention of STD's: STD's are connected with people having active sexual life. Reproductive health provide education to deal with such diseases and also involves medicine to fight stigma of such illness.

Sexual Education: Reproductive health provides learning on how to engage in sexual activities to satisfy each other and strengthening of bond. Due to religious norms, people feel ashamed while talking on such topics due to which children get involved in harmful practices.⁵

1.3 Sexual and Reproductive Health in Regional Scenario

South Asia according to World Bank is most crowded region with 1.891 billion of population that constitutes about 24% of world's population.⁶ Here the population is lacking the basic needs of life like shelter, food and education. In this region of world exists, class discrimination, gender and caste race, political and terrorism issues. Here women, about 73 million faces social and economic discriminatory behavior even this injustice starts before even the child is born.⁷

Even through the concept of early marriage is declining, some of the countries in South Asia like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and India are still up to early marriages where girls get married before 18 years and percentage is as high as 66%, 18 %, 51 % and 47% respectively.⁸

Not only is this, but anemia and maternal mortality also common here. 80% of girls and 85% of mothers here suffer from anemia 550/1 lac women go under maternal mortality.⁹

1.4 Reproductive Health Status in Pakistan

In spite of gradual improvement in some of the health indicators over the past decades, the reproductive health status of population in Pakistan remains much below the desired level when compared with countries of similar socio-economic conditions. It is observed that family planning and health services and supplies have not been adequate to meet the needs and demands of fast growing population, resulting in severe health problems for young children and their mothers, especially those belonging to poor households and living in rural areas. A general view of reproductive health status indicators reveals that fertility levels have remained high (TFR is around 5 births per woman) with low contraceptive use (24 percent in 1996-97), resulting in

large family size with closely spaced children. Infant mortality rate, though declining, is estimated to be around 85-90 per 1000 live births, and excess mortality is evident among girl children than boys between 1-4 years of age, suggesting gender discrimination in child health care and nutrition. Many women have high risk of dying due to pregnancy and childbirth complications, especially in rural areas. As such, maternal mortality rate remains high at 340 per 100,000 live births, but other sources give estimates ranging from 286 in Karachi's urban settlements to 756 in rural Balochistan [ADB (1997)]. Research evidence shows that almost 80 percent of maternal deaths are due to direct obstetric causes resulting from antepartum and postpartum hemorrhage, reproductive infections and edampsia, whereas hepatitis is the most frequently cited means of maternal death from indirect causes [Tinker (1998)]. A few community and hospital based studies in the city of Karachi have highlighted that delayed referrals is a key risk factor for high maternal mortality which relates to inadequacies in maternal services, problems in access to health facility, and delayed decision-making at the family level in case of emergency [Fikree (2000)].

Moreover, the unmet need for family planning remains as high as 38 percent resulting in substantial number of unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions with adverse implications for the health of mothers and children. Infants also have high risks of death from birth related complications and infections such as diarrhea, pneumonia and respiratory infections which are closely related to mother's health and quality of antenatal and postnatal care. The prevalence of other reproductive health problems such as sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/ AIDS is relatively low in Pakistan as compared to other countries in the world. However, it is recognized that patterns of health behavior which can rapidly facilitate an epidemic spread of HIV/ AIDS infection are widespread among men. Most women have problems in discussing the issue with their husbands due to social and cultural barriers and have limited knowledge about the vulnerability of the problem [MoH/UNAIDS (2000)].

A number of factors have contributed to keeping the reproductive health status low in Pakistan. While poverty and an inadequate health care system in terms of supply and management problems underlie the poor health status of the population in general, women face peculiar additional risks because of their reproductive characteristics and low socio-economic status. Hence, provision of RH services need to be based on the socially-embedded gender dynamics in

various stages of the life cycle, on the different and changing needs of both genders and their interaction, and on how decisions are made in the acceptance and utilization of services. In this context, socio-cultural aspects that affect and shape reproductive health motivations and behavior are important in understanding key issues in the utilization of services more effectively and in assessing the gaps in knowledge, concepts and notions relating to RH. This will help to identify significant areas of program intervention. The following sections of the paper will therefore focus on analyzing reproductive health issues of women and men in the socio-cultural context of Pakistan and their implications for reproductive health program.

1. Sexual and Reproductive Health Issues

2.1 Gender Inequality: According to IPPF, obstacles faced by “individuals in deciding with whom and when to have sex, about using birth controls and regarding gaining particular health care are all included in gender based inequality.”¹⁰

Both men and women are bound to acknowledge all chances and restrictions in order to save themselves for adversities. Irregular beliefs are actually a continuity towards gender inequality. In developing countries, mortality rate of pregnant women is high as compared to countries who are already developed. In Africa about one quarter women and East regions are endangered by STD's.¹¹

Young girls are more at risk in regard of sexual and regenerative wellbeing. The phenomenon of existence and ending of life in some regions of the World is directly revolving around inequalities between genders. This discrimination make ways toward inhuman form with noteworthy death rates.¹²

Discriminatory behavior is more visible among Asian nations. Even though women are much advanced in social and economic fields but still marked social injustice and inequality prevail in South Asia.¹³

2.2 Religious and Cultural Restrictions

Because of cultural experiences and faith, gender roles are strengthened. Social construction of feminist shapes the deep health, reproductive preferences and sexuality. Cultural values and norms authorize social and economic roles to men and women of which some particularly harm women and girls.¹⁴

Gender norms in many societies portray girls as obedient in their sexual relations and boys as violent.¹⁵

In South Asia, girls are more inclined towards getting STD's as they have less knowledge than their partner.¹⁶

2.3 Communication Gap between Guardian and Adults

Studies show that before marriage relationships are common among adults in developing countries. These relationships are also taking place secretly in societies where there are strict social norms and ethics. As conservative societies lack proper knowledge on sexual life, premarital sexual relationships here could cause more damage as people because of social disgrace fear avoid communicating about their problems. Studies show that early pregnancy rates are higher which usually end with termination of birth.¹⁷

People when with lack of knowledge engage in sexual desires, they become exposed to medical issues related to sexual health. Parent's gap of exchanging information about medical health ailments with their adolescents is not acceptable. About 20% parents do not feel any hesitation while communicating about children's sexual health issues.¹⁸

As compared to Muslim Communities European societies are much more open while talking about such issues. Here 80% of adults receive knowledge from their parents about STD's, safe sex methods, contraception etc.¹⁹

2.4 Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's):

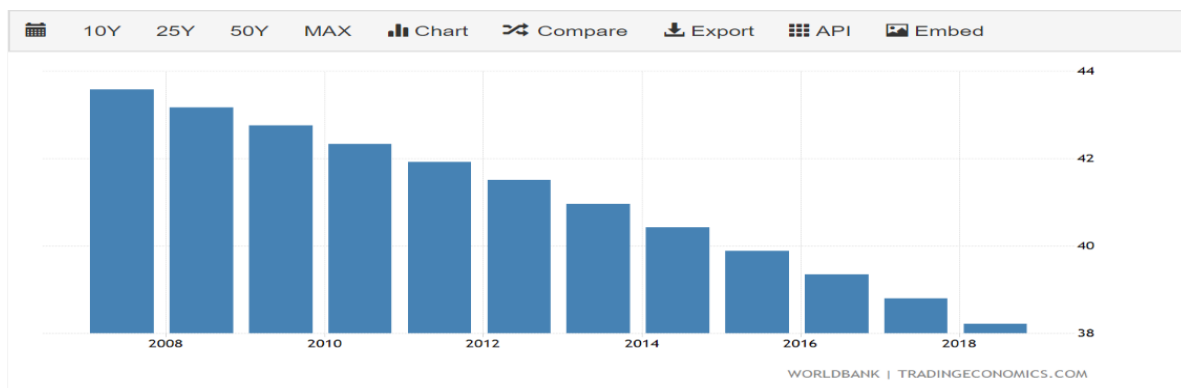
In developing countries, STD's are growing health issues. 4/10 sexually active women could be suffering from STD's and this leads to infertility and even to the death. STD's are often vague by HIV and AIDS. People are having better knowledge about HIV and AIDS instead of sexually transmitted diseases people are even not ready to clarify the connection between STD's, HIV and AIDS.²⁰

Syphilis, chlamydia, Gonorrhoea etc. are sexually transmitted diseases which when become worst causes sores in the body through which HIV/ AIDS enter the human body.²¹

2.5 Early marriage and teenage pregnancy:

All around the World practices of unsafe sex, pre-adult/immature pregnancy, neglected family arrangement and early marriages are very common. According to recent report of WHO, in

developing regions of the World about 12 million girls of age 15-19 years give birth each year. 777/1000 girls who give birth each year are less than 15 years. Deaths and complications of pregnancy are prevalent among this age group (15-19 years). This age group is also exposed to the systemic infections, Eclampsia and puerperal endometriosis.²²



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2.6 Menstrual Issues:

Normal bleeding followed by hormonal changes in the female body, is a natural phenomenon to create life. Different types of menstrual disorders are common among young girls. Common menstrual issues include

- A U B (abnormal uterine bleeding) which include heavy bleeding, no bleeding
- Amenorrhea - bleeding b/w periods
- Dysmenorrhea- painful periods. 67% women suffer from this.
- PMS - premenstrual syndrome - 75 % women suffer from this.
- PMDD - premenstrual dysphonic disorder. 3-8% women suffer from this.²⁴

All these problems related to sexual and reproductive health lead towards infertility and various other reproductive defects.

2. Study of sexual & Reproductive health from perspective of Sharī'ah resources

This is a fact that nitinol of Quran and Hadith has instructions regarding each and every aspect but to understand all these, a deep deliberation is needed. All the teachings of Islam are in accordance with dogma of hygiene which Prophet (SAW) has explained about 1400 years ago in exoteric language but science is now getting aware of these theories. In Quran, Allah Almighty has called human body as best sample of creation.

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ²⁵

“Man has been ordered to avoid all those acts which can harm or allude the human body because health and wellness is a blessing from God and a way to defer these blessings is to protect them.”

This is the subject being sworn about, and it is that Allah created man in the best image and form, standing upright with straight limbs that He beautified.

In one of the hadith Prophet (SAW) describes about the two blessings in the following way:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُورٌ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ: الصِّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاعُ .²⁶

Many people remain in deficit and loss when it comes to blessings, one is health and the other is competence.

When man succumb death and ailment only then he comes to know about the deference of health and age. Health is a great blessing- Hazrat Abu Huraira narrated that

In another saying of the prophet (SAW) explain the subject and add one more blessing:

وعن أبي هريرة قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إن أول ما يسأل العبد يوم القيامة من النعيم أن يقال له ألم نصح جسمك؟ ونزوك من الماء البارد؟²⁷

Man must be asked about the blessings on doomsday in which top of the list would be water and health.

Today's man is facing diverse range of problems in which issue of health and wellness is also included even. Though wellness is a bestowment but people do neglect it and do not take any precautionary measures to uphold it.

There are various benefits of health and wellness. Some of which are:

- Man lives a pleasant Worldly life
- He is able to enjoy the gates audibly.
- He faces problems bravely and never get into despair and pessimism.
- He is able to take right decisions and never do anything on which he feels mortified.
- He honors health as blessing of God.²⁸

Hence health is that blessing of which there is no alternate that's why in developed countries, state is responsible for providing free health and education services.

3.1 Islam & Reproductive Health

There are proper instructions about human health in sources of Islamic Sharī'ah i.e. Quran, Sunnah and Ijama. Sexuality, pregnancy, breastfeeding, contraceptives and abortions are those topic of reproductive health that are most discussed in these resources of Islamic sharī'ah.

In Islam, sexuality is commendable and condemnable too. When it is performed in a licit relationship i.e. wedlock it is commendable but out of the relation of marriage it becomes condemnable. Lovemaking and child bearing are among signs of Divine existence. Allah says:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً
وَرَحْمَةً ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ²⁹

There are the signs of Allah that He created your mates from yourself so that you may find calmness in them and he put between you mercy and affection. Indeed these are signs for those who pay attention.

This refers to Hawwa'. Allah created her from Adam, from the short rib on his left. If Allah had made all of Adam's progeny male, and created the females from another kind, such as from Jinn or animals, there would never have been harmony between them and their spouses. There would have been revulsion if the spouses had been from a different kind. Out of Allah's perfect mercy He made their wives from their own kind, and created love and kindness between them. For a man stays with a woman because he loves her, or because he feels compassion towards her if they have a child together, or because she needs him to take care of her, etc.

Quran further says in this regard:

نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَكُمْ فَأْتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ وَقَدِّمُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ³⁰

You wives are a place of tilt for you so approach your place of sowing when and how you wish.

It is licit for spouses to fulfil their desire and get peace and satisfaction from each other. It must be treated with dignity and diffidence. It is not bound to number of rounds but must be carried through natural sexual outlets i.e. penis and vagina.³¹

There is prohibition for oral and anal sex, lesbianism, homosexuality and other unnatural practices for sex. Sexual activity is also forbidden in case of fast, sickness and menstruation. Quran says in this regard

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ³²

And they ask you about menstruation.

It is pollutant and harm so avoid going near your wives during menstruation and do not reach them until they are clean and pure. But when they get themselves cleaned you may approach them as Allah ordained you. Indeed Allah loves those who continuously turns to him and who keep themselves decontaminate.

About homosexuality Quran throws light as:

أَتَأْتُونَ الذُّكْرَانَ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ وَ تَذَرُونَ مَا خَلَقَ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ عَادُونَ³³

Do you get attached toward boys and leave your mates which Allah created for you? In fact you are the ones who are getting out of boundary.

The Prophet of Allah forbade them from committing evil deeds and intercourse with males, and he taught them that they should have intercourse with their wives whom Allah had created for them.

As in one of the sayings of Prophet (SAW) elaborates the concept in following way:

مَنْ وَجَدْتُمْهُ يَعْمَلُ عَمَلِ قَوْمِ لُوطٍ فَأَقْتُلُوا الْفَاعِلَ وَالْمَفْعُولَ بِهِ³⁴

Whom you saw doing the same as nation of Prophet Lut (AS) kill them who do the act and who aroused them to do so.

This is clear warning to ones who do such acts in the name of free world and you will never find the apostle of Allah this harsh. In another occasion Prophet (SAW) said about homosexuality in women specially which is currently a major thread in the world:

السحاق بين النساء زنا بينهن³⁵

Women's homosexuality is their adultery.

3.1.1 Adultery: Adultery is such crime which has been condemned in almost every religion of world and especially Islamic harsh standing on this subject is justified as per the modern issues.

The Subject matter has been defined by Allama raqib Isfahan, He says

الزنا هو وطى المرأة من غير عقد شرعى³⁶

Adultery is frigging without wedlock

Imam Jarjani defined it this way:

الوطى فى قبل خال عن ملك او شبيهة³⁷

To inseminate a women who is not his own wife

.Allah has not only called fornication illicit, but it is a sin after pantheism and murder. As one of the hadith of Prophet (SAW) emphasizes:

ان الزناة ياتون تشتعل وجوههم ناراً³⁸

On resurrection, fornicated people will come with faces from which flames will be coming out.

This hadith is an eye opener for those who take this illicit action very normally and fornication is becoming very usual phenomena in Muslim countries too and Quran says about pre-marital and extra-marital relationships:

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّانِيَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا³⁹

And do not approach to fornication as it is immoral deed and a way leading to other mischiefs.

Allah is forbidding His servants to commit Zina or to approach it or to do anything that may lead to it.

3.1.2 Pregnancy: Other evils that fornication lead towards are STD's, sexual infections, abortions, motherless babies etc. Quran even throw light on punishment of this shameful deed, Quran says:

الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِئَةَ جَلْدَةٍ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَيْشْتَهْدُ عَدَابَهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ⁴⁰

“The Zaniyah and the Zani flog each of them with a hundred stripes. Let not pity withhold you in their case, in a punishment prescribed by Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a party of the believers witness their punishment.”

This honorable Ayah contains the ruling on the law of retaliation for the person who commits illegal sex, and details of the punishment. Such a person will either be unmarried, meaning that he has never been married, or he will be married, meaning that he has had intercourse within

the bounds of a lawful marriage, and he is free, adult and of sound mind. As for the virgin who is unwedded, the prescribed punishment is one hundred stripes, as stated in this Ayah.

There are number of verses about conception in Quran and some of which are directly relevant to facts.

ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظَامًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ
أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ⁴¹

Then we converted a sperm into a clot and converted clot into a piece of flesh and made bones from this flesh and developed him into another creation. So blessed is Allah. The best to create.

(Then We made the Nutfah into a clot,) meaning, 'then We made the Nutfah, which is the water gushing forth that comes from the loins of man, i.e., his back, and the ribs of woman, i.e., the bones of her chest, between the clavicle and the breast. Then it becomes a red clot, like an elongated clot.' 'Ikrimah said, "This is blood."

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّن تَرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ
مِن عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُضْغَةٍ مُخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِنُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ وَنُقِرُّ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ
إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ⁴²

O mankind! if you have any doubt about resurrection, (consider) we created you from dust then from a drop of sperm then from a clot of blood and then from formed and unformed flesh to show you whom we want to rest in wombs, then we take you out as babies and develop you until you get mature.

The above verse is talking about that if the Nutfah establishes itself in the woman's womb, it stays like that for forty days, then more material is added to it and it changes into a red clot, by the leave of Allah, and it remains like that for forty days. Then it changes and becomes a lump of flesh, like a piece of meat with no form or shape. Then it starts to take on a form and shape, developing a head, arms, chest, stomach, thighs, legs, feet and all its members. Sometimes a woman miscarries before the fetus is formed and sometimes she miscarries after it has formed.

3.1.3 Breast feeding: There are also injunctions about this in Quran as:

وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُنَمِّمَ الرَّضَاعَةَ⁴³

Mothers may breastfeed their children for two complete years for whoever desires to complete the period.

This is a direction from Allah to the mothers to suckle their infants through the complete term of suckling, which is two years. Hence, suckling after two years is not included in this address.

3.1.4 Family planning and Contraceptives: Family planning is linked with breast feeding. If mother complete nursing for 2 years as mentioned in the above verse, there would be a gap in next pregnancy for about 2 and half years. This gap is qualitative for both mother and child. The method of contraception is explicitly mentioned in Hadith.

The method is termed as “(azl)” which is approved by Prophet (PBUH):

وَعَنْهُ كُنَّا نَعْزِلُ وَالْقُرْآنُ يَنْزِلُ. مُتَّفَقٌ عَلَيْهِ. وَرَادَ مُسَلِّمٌ: فَبَلَغَ ذَلِكَ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَلَمْ يَنْهَاهَا⁴⁴

We used to perform azl (withdraw of coitus interrupts) during the time of Prophet. He came to know about this and did not forbid us.

Those who argue about contraceptives give this argument that if azl is permitted than any method using for same purposes is not forbidden. They also argue that family planning tends to raise educated children who proves to be good for Ummah.

Other disagree with the statement and gives following verse of Quran as counter argument.

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا كُلٌّ فِي
كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ⁴⁵

No Creature is there on Earth whose livelihood isn't on Allah. Allah knows its place of dwelling and storage.

Allah, the Exalted, informs that He is responsible for the provisions of all the creatures that dwell in the earth, whether they are small, large, sea-dwelling or land-dwelling. He knows their place of dwelling and their place of deposit. This means that He knows where their journeying will end in the earth and where they will seek shelter when they wish to nest. This place of nesting is also considered their place of deposit.

3.1.5 Abortion: There are several verses in Quran that emphasize not to kill that grows in womb from fear of food or shelter.

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطْئًا كَبِيرًا⁴⁶

Also, don't murder your youngsters from neediness dread. We supply food to you and will provide them too. Indeed killing them is a great sin.

This Ayah indicates that Allah is more compassionate towards His servants than a father to his child, because He forbids killing children just as He enjoins parents to take care of their children in matters of inheritance. The people of Jahiliyyah would not allow their daughters to inherit from them, and some would even kill their daughters lest they make them poorer

قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَنبَأْ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِّنْ إِمْلَاقٍ نَّحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ⁴⁷

State, come I will mention to you, what for you Allah has denied, that not to associate anything with Him, to your parents give your best treatment, and avoid killing your children from dread of destitution. We supply food to you and will give them as well.

As for the explanation of this Ayah, Allah said to His Prophet and Messenger Muhammad ﷺ: Say, O Muhammad, to those idolaters who worshipped other than Allah, forbade what Allah provided them with and killed their children.

3. Conclusion

Above discussion presents both Islamic and modern approach regarding reproductive health. Some similarities and dissimilarities have been discussed. Modern approach terms reproductive health as common sexual practices whereas Islam forbids and condemn pre-marital and extra marital relationships. All this is to prevent human kind from adverse consequences of uncontrolled sexual practices. Since medicine has also discovered the ailments of reckless sexual activities thus religion and science come together to prevent people from disease associated with reproductive health. Only with this measure, world would be able to cherish the human friendly reproductive health.

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