
Traffic Culture of Muslims in Pakistan and Islamic Culture through

Hadith-e-Nabvi

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ABSTRACT

Islam depicts the travelling and indirectly traffic rules which are important agenda for not only civilized communities but also for all societies over the globe. Traffic situation is becoming bad in Pakistan by the increase of vehicles in recent years. There are many factors involved in this regard such as many road accidents happen due to lack of knowledge of traffic rules, risky practices towards traveling or traffic rules and regulation and negative attitude of drivers, Being Muslims, it is expected that most of the Pakistanis have knowledge of Hadith by the last holy prophet Muhammad. The prophet also addressed the basic rules for travelling also. This research work was initiated because to highlight the teaching of concerned hadith and present basic traffic rules prevailing in Pakistan. It will be helpful to study comparatively to understand where we are lacking and what interventions we must make regarding this issue regarding traffic culture. Emphasis has been given on the differences and similarities between Muslim traffic culture and Islamic traffic culture.

Keywords: Traffic culture, Muslims Traffic, travelling in Pakistan, Islamic Traffic teaching, Hadith on Travelling

Introduction:

It is analytical research related to Muslim traffic culture and Islamic teaching about traffic and travelling ethics and rules. The question arises why is important to know the traffic rules and ethics? It is significant because there is a gap between cultures and we have to understand the similarities and differences between traffic culture like what Muslims are practicing and what is the system that Islam gives us for travelling and traffic.¹ There are many factors involved in this regard.

What are traffic rules following culture?

We can define traffic rules following culture as “*Norms, and attitudes shared by a group of people regarding driving behavior and traffic following rules and safety interventions*”² Road traffic safety refers to methods and measures for reducing the risk of a person using the road network being killed or seriously injured.

The users of road include.

- *Pedestrians*
- *Cyclist*
- *Motorists*
- *Vehicles*
- *passengers*

Traffic is a group of individual drivers manipulating their vehicles on common streets and highways. Traffic safety is the manner in which drivers handle their vehicles in spacing and speeding³ so regarding the manners of the drivers to handle their vehicle education of road safety is playing an important role. Road security alludes to the guidelines to keep us from the mishap on the street. Individual won't commit errors while utilizing.

When defensive driving comes, observing traffic rules and using common sense are essential. While operating a vehicle on the road, traffic rules are helping to safeguard you and others.

Cultural values:

Every country has their cultural values⁴. Like we are following religion of Islam so we have values that are set by Islam and we have to follow those rules. The country where there is no religion prevailing (such as Russia), the residents of that country consider the state as their religion so they follow the rules and regulation set by the state or government.

Behavioral factor and culture:

Person has been taught motives and values by their culture and man behaves according to his/her culture⁵. The same patten of culture is being adopted by the drivers and stake holders of the travelling activity. Traffic culture is a sign of introduction of a collective behavior of the society.

Aims and Observations:

This research is going to be helpful for Students in future.

- The main observation of this research work is to determine and to explore the knowledge regarding the culture varies in Muslim and western countries.
- The attitude of professional drivers toward traffic rules of countries. (Foreign drivers)
- To observe or find out the similarities and differences.

Within this research the methodology I have used is Qualitative. I collected material from the online sources available on internet, from going through articles, videos, following some surveys relate to the culture of traffic rules and regulation.

Literature review:

The Shariah by the Last prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم has empowered the ruler to protect the lives and property of their citizens. He devises various measures and rules for this. There are two types of rules: Laws which are not contradicted to the Shariah and are based on Quran or Sunnah are acceptable and followable in the community.

If the ruler of the time formulates laws which are not contrary to the message of the Last prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم and are based on some expediency, then we are commanded to obey them.

Life Safety:

The rules apply to traffic rules, with two exceptions: Violation of these rules harms the driver's own life or threatens to harm others. Shariah-e-Muhammad صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم forbids harming one's own life or the lives of others, so it is obligatory on the subjects to obey these rules and regulations.

Laws that violate the risk of losing one's life. Allah says:

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا

Translation: And do not destroy yourselves. Surely Allah is Merciful to you⁶.

It is narrated in the Hadith that a person who sleeps on a roof that does not have four walls is free from it. That is, Allah Almighty has taken the responsibility of protecting man, but whoever puts himself in danger, this responsibility falls away⁷.

This category includes the following rules:

فَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ حَافِظًا

Translation: So! Allah is the Best Guardian⁸.

But there are some precautions that must be taken for the protection of the subordinates. Failure to comply increases the risk of loss of life, so it is important to reduce it. There is a speed limit set by the government. There is a high risk of loss of life in crossing this limit. Therefore, it is necessary to keep a concession. Archery is also undesirable in the Shariah.

الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا

Translation: Those who walk on the earth gently⁹.

There is a Hadith which says:

The word al-Tanni is the basis which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to say in order to prevent people from speeding, especially when there is a lot of traffic on the road. Speeding also causes others to be intimidated, which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade. Traffic rules in which there is a risk of harm to others. Shariah by the Last Prophet Muhammad has strictly forbidden us from harming others.

The Last Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

الْمُسْلِمُ مِنْ سَلَّمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ

The perfect Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the other Muslim is safe, and the perfect believer is the one from whom the blood and soul of the people are safe¹⁰.

Similarly, the Last Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Whoever causes trouble to the Muslims in the way, the curse of the people becomes obligatory upon him¹¹.

Harassment means spreading dirt on the road, such as defecating or throwing a stone, etc. According to Allama Ragheb, torment means physical harm¹², so it means physical harm to someone¹³.

The Last Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُعَذِّبُ الَّذِينَ يُعَذِّبُونَ النَّاسَ فِي الدُّنْيَا

“Allah punishes those who torment people in this world.”

From all the Hadith mentioned above, it is clear that inflicting any kind of harm on another Muslim causes divine punishment.

Use of horn:

Prohibited area refers to a hospital or school in which patients have difficulty in blowing the horn. Similarly, misuse of the horn is prohibited because it causes great inconvenience to the people. Hadith by the last prophet states that if anyone put himself in the way of the Muslims to disturb them, then Allah Almighty, His angels and all the people send a curse on him¹⁴.

Remove the painful thing from the path whether it is a rock or a fork or a vehicle etc. because all these things become a source of trouble and disturbance to others. In the same way, parking a car incorrectly or driving on a one-way track from the opposite direction is not free from hurting others. Which is narrated from Abu Hurairah in these words,

وَتُؤَيِّطُ الْأَذَى عَنِ الطَّرِيقِ صَدَقَةٌ.

‘Removing the harmful objects from the road is charity’¹⁵.

It is a matter of course that the rule revolves around addiction in its existence, whenever the addiction is found, it should be removed. Therefore, stopping is a command and red signal is a cause, while it is wise to avoid an accident. If there is no vehicle on the road but the signal is red, then it is necessary to stop even if there is no danger of an accident¹⁶.

Pakistani Traffic Culture:

Turn on the lights at the Right Time:

According to the rules of Pakistan Traffic Police, if you do not light the lights of your car or motorcycle at the appropriate time, you can be challaned. The fine is set at Rs 1,000. There is traffic culture of some youth in Pakistan to on the lights of their motorcycles in the day time. More over the culture of using high light beams as head lights of cars and motorcycles is also a negative traffic culture in Pakistan. Interestingly, if you light your car or motorcycle's headlights on a 'high beam' on a bright day, it can distract other drivers coming from the front and you can also be fined under this law.

Disruption of Emergency Services Vehicles

Emergency service vehicles, especially ambulances, firefighters and police patrol vehicles, are often seen plying the highways of our cities in heavy traffic. Often people start driving in front of or behind them to make it easier for them to cross the sea of traffic. But blocking the way of any emergency services vehicle can also be challaned. The fine is Rs 5,000 so the culture is also not good in Pakistan.

Seating of Children next to Driver:

Here is another very common traffic violation is being seems in Pakistan and that is seating of children at very next front seat to the drivers which

normally can disturb the drivers during driving through the naughty activities of the children which becomes the cause of accident.

Second very common violation in Pakistan is underage drivers, which are common. It is also seen that a few year-old children sitting behind the steering wheel. According to traffic rules, it is a crime to put a child under the age of five in the front seat of a car and you can be fined up to Rs 3,000 for violating it¹⁷. The main purpose of this is to protect young children from any accident or sudden braking injury while traveling.

Abrupt Opening of Car Doors on Road:

It is also common in Pakistan that passengers of cars use to open the doors of parked cars abruptly without watching or noticing the coming traffic behind their cars, which is really dangerous and often become the cause of injuries of motorcyclists so this act is also a violation of traffic rules for which the passengers can be fined Rs.1000¹⁸.

Parking on the sidewalk

According to the traffic laws of Pakistan, pedestrians have a right on the sidewalk¹⁹ and if driver parks their motorbikes or cars on the sidewalk and lose the right of pedestrians, they may have a challan and to pay a fine of Rs.1000²⁰. In Pakistan, another very common violation of traffic rules is to park the cars or motorcycles on the main highways, between the markets and roads, even in front of the hospitals, and it is not even considered that the car or motorbike parked next to other rightly parked vehicle is in their right²¹.

Distance between Vehicles:

According to the Pakistan's traffic rules, the drivers should have to maintain the distance of minimum one meter from the next vehicle but there is common violation that drivers do not consider it completely and minimize this distance even to some inches. The same rules are also for the parked cars but in Pakistan drivers do not care the distance even for parking²². Traffic Police has announced the challan with a fine of Rs 750²³ for this violation also.

Parking on Bridge and Green Belt:

In Pakistan, there is also a lot of violations regarding parking at green belts, under passes and even on bridges. Green belts are being destroyed due to continuous parking especially near government offices by the government officials²⁴. According to this traffic law, there is a fine of Rs 750²⁵ for this violation but is being ignored.

Analysis:

- In Pakistan as well as in other countries, driving license candidate must be at least 18 years old and medically fit to drive but young with the age of 15/16 can be good enough for driving license test.

- In Pakistan overloading of heavy vehicles is commonly encountered and this has the adverse impact of both prematurely destroying road pavement infrastructure as well as increasing crash risks. There is separate lane for heavy vehicles on motorways or highways but nobody follows the rules.
- In Pakistan if someone consume alcohol while driving then he will be arrested but the license of the driver should be cancelled and in Pakistan there should be rule of law for every person.
- In Pakistan, the authorities will hold the privilege to cancel the driving license of any violator of traffic rules. There is also E-challan generated with the help of camera, an amount of Rs.500 charge by Pakistan post will likewise fall in the account of the violator. In other countries there is fine on not wearing a seatbelt not in Pakistan. In foreign if penalty for violation of traffic rules is much higher as compared to Pakistan.
- Violation of traffic rules like over speeding, wrong parking, signals violation, children front seating, under age drivers and drunk drivers is common which are also fixed for challaned but implication is absent properly.

Conclusion:

As Pakistan is an under developed country, the culture of traffic rules is lacking somehow. The level of awareness among the professional driver is low, and as well as the developed countries are concern, they have awareness but there is need to change their mind set as they have no moral values, they are just scared of penalties. Islam conveys safety measure and traffic or travelling rules and norms to obey so it is government and community responsibility to publish these laws as a religious responsibility also and it will be more effective because in Pakistan, maximum public is religious minded.

Recommendations:

The government needs time to take steps to make people aware of these laws so that they can easily be aware of them.

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