



RESEARCH PAPER

Navigating Socio-Legal Landscapes: Decriminalizing Suicide in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the shift towards decriminalizing suicide in Pakistan, analyzing the legal, social, and religious factors that have shaped the legislative change and its potential implications. Historically, suicide has been criminalized in Pakistan, influenced by both colonial legacy and Islamic principles. However, the recent passage of the 2022 bill to decriminalize suicide marks a shift in societal attitudes towards mental health, prompting a need for legal re-evaluation. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, using primary data from expert interviews and secondary data from legal documents and historical analysis. Open-ended questions were posed to experts to gain insights into the legislative process and societal attitudes. The study finds that the decriminalization is influenced by evolving social perceptions of mental health, legal reforms, and religious discourse, creating a complex dialogue between tradition and liberal values. The paper suggests that suicide should not be regarded as a crime but should be addressed with compassion and individualized legal approaches, considering mental health and socio-cultural contexts in each case.

KEYWORDS Decriminalization of Suicide, Pakistan's Parliament, Legal Frameworks, Islamic Principles, Colonial Legacy, Suicide Law

Introduction

Life, often regarded as the most invaluable of blessings, is inestimable. Suicide is defined as “the act or an instance of taking one's own life voluntarily and intentionally” (Merriam-Webster, 2024). Suicide is a complex issue that has been understood and approached in various ways across different cultures and societies throughout history, with perspectives ranging from religious and moral to psychological and sociocultural.

Religious and Moral Perspectives

Suicide is considered a complex issue across various religious traditions. In Islam, it is strictly prohibited, as life is regarded as a sacred gift from God. The Quran instructs, “Do not kill yourselves, for Allah is merciful to you” (Quran 4:29), reinforcing that taking one's own life is viewed as a grave transgression. Similarly, in Christianity, suicide has traditionally been seen as sinful, particularly within Catholic doctrine. Saint Augustine argued that suicide violated the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” (Augustine, 2003). For many centuries, those who committed suicide were denied a Christian burial. However, more recent interpretations within Christian denominations, particularly Catholicism, have shown greater compassion for individuals who commit suicide, especially considering mental health factors. In Hinduism and Buddhism, suicide is generally discouraged because it disrupts the natural cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (samsara). Yet, certain Mahayana Buddhist traditions have viewed self-sacrifice for a greater cause as acceptable under rare circumstances (Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002).

Sociocultural Perspectives

Cultural interpretations of suicide also vary widely. In Japan, suicide has historically been tied to notions of honor, particularly in the practice of *seppuku* – ritual suicide committed by samurai to restore honor after failure. While modern Japanese society views suicide as a significant social issue, the cultural legacy of viewing suicide as honorable contributes to Japan's ongoing struggles with high suicide rates (Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002). In contrast, Ancient Greek and Roman societies had differing views. Greek philosophers like Plato generally condemned suicide, except under specific circumstances such as state-ordered executions or cases of extreme suffering. However, Stoic philosophers such as Seneca and Marcus Aurelius viewed suicide as a rational choice if life's suffering became intolerable (Durkheim, 1951). In Ancient Rome, suicide was sometimes seen as a way to avoid dishonor or punishment. Nowadays, mostly, in the Western society, suicide is seen via psychological and sociological contact. According to Émile Durkheim's seminal sociological study, suicide has four types e.g. egoistic, anomic, fatalistic, and altruistic, which depends on the degree of regulation and social inclusion, that suggests that suicidal behavior is greatly influenced by the social factors (Durkheim, 1951).

Psychological and Medical Perspectives

Suicide is generally viewed as a psychological abnormalities in contemporary era. Mostly, it is attributed with psychological disorders such schizophrenia, substance abuse, or depression. Psychological experts utilize diagnostic instruments like Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) to diagnose and tackle the individuals who are at the danger of suicide. The *Interpersonal Theory of Suicide*, assembled by a psychologist-Thomas Joiner indicates that suicidal behavior originates from a mixture of feeling oppressive or confined and holding the ability to hold in self-harm, which generally generates after frequent exposure to agonizing or overwhelming happenings (Joiner, 2005). This switch toward a medicalized apprehension of suicide has resulted in the development of healing interventions geared towards avoidance.

Modern Societal Approaches

Considering the legal point of view, historically, in many countries, suicide has been counted as a crime. Such as, in England, it was till its decriminalization in 1961, it was considered as a criminal offense. Nowadays, the punitive approach of many countries has turned into rehabilitation and prevention. They have taken the initiatives like suicide helplines, providing counseling services, and public awareness campaigns, so that the suicide stigma, causing mental health issues, may be reduced. The rate of committing suicide is high in countries like South Korea, guidelines have been generated to regularly monitor the media coverage of suicidal attempts, to prevent the rest of people copying these behaviors. For the people attempting suicide, in many legal systems, the rehabilitation and treatment is being preferred, instead of punishments.

Literature Review

Suicide, including both behaviors of mandate and exclusion summing in loss of life which is a global concern. It has notably different figures worldwide. Globally, the suicide remains an important cause of death which is mostly there in the young generation and, in vulnerable people. Suicide remains a significant cause of death, particularly among young people and specific vulnerable groups. In 2021, countries like

South Korea and Lithuania reported the highest male suicide rates among OECD countries, with rates of 34.9 and 33.1 per 100,000, respectively. For women, South Korea and Japan had the highest rates, at 15.2 and 10.2 per 100,000. Men generally die by suicide at a higher rate than women across most countries, a trend reflected globally. The WHO reported that in 2019, the African region had the highest suicide rate globally, at 11.2 per 100,000, compared to the global average of 9 per 100,000. Low- and middle-income countries disproportionately experience higher suicide rates, with 77% of global suicides occurring in these regions. Approximately 800,000 deaths occur annually due to suicide, with an alarming 25-fold increase in suicide attempts (World Health Organization, 2021).

According to the World Health Organization's 2021 data, the global suicide rate stands at 9.0 per 100,000 people. Among various regions, Africa and South-East Asia report the highest rates, both at 11.2 per 100,000. Europe follows closely with a rate of 10.9 per 100,000. In contrast, the Western Pacific (8.7) and the Americas (7.2) report lower rates, while the Eastern Mediterranean region has the lowest rate at 6.4 per 100,000. These variations reflect regional differences in sociocultural and economic factors influencing mental health and suicide prevention efforts (World Health Organization, 2021).

In UK, the rate of attempting suicide have increases in some years. The suicide rate among men is higher than women, as they are disproportionately affected. The factors include the economic and social factors, unemployment and social isolation in particular, have been noted as the major contribution to the increasing suicidal rates. (Buchholz, 2024).

Although there are diverse sources of information regarding suicide, such as news reports, media reports, police records, and legal data, there is a clear lack in the demographical research and literature. Suicide is occurred by multiple factors including social dynamics, psychological factors, and cultural reasons. This scarcity in research shows the unexplored aspects and lack of research upon suicide in Pakistan. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the estimated annual global deaths caused by suicide were nearly 703,000, in 2021 (World Health Organization, 2021). This defines the approximately one death by suicide every 45 seconds. Although suicide is leading across all geographical areas, a notable majority, comprising 77% of global suicide cases in 2019, were there in low- and middle-income countries (World Health Organization, 2019). According to WHO, for every reported suicide, it is estimated that there are at least 10-20 incidents of self-harm (World Health Organization, 2019). Suicide is reported as the third major cause of death among young generation aged 15-19 years (Imran et al., 2023).

As per the 7th Population and Housing Census by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023), the population of Pakistan reaches 241.49 million with a growth rate of 2.55%. In Pakistan, there are incidents of suicide, there is an estimated daily average of 50-55 cases, among males in particular. Among it, the demographics are still a point of concern because the 70% of these cases occur within the age between 15 to 29 years, documenting the suicide as fourth leading cause of death among young generation in Pakistan ("Alarming Rise in Suicide by Youth in Pakistan," 2024).

In the field of suicide prevention, the discussion over how effective is the decriminalizing suicide, has generated interest, necessitating the need for a comprehensive investigation. Despite tries to resolve this issue, the below mentioned research lacks a thorough analysis that should cover all the relevant dimensions. The titled "Decriminalizing Suicide Attempt in the 21st Century: An Examination of Suicide Rates in Countries That Penalize Suicide: A Critical Review" (Lew et al., 2022) discusses

the potential impacts of decriminalization on suicide rates across many countries over a 20-year period. It suggests that erasing the legal repercussions for attempted suicide could encourage early interventions by enhancing help-seeking behavior among vulnerable people which can potentially lead to a decrease in suicide rates. However, this study defines the necessity for a more holistic investigation, particularly with respect to broader socio-economic and cultural contexts. It highlights the notable disparities in suicide rates among countries where suicide attempt remains a criminal offense yet, ranging from 2.5 to 40.9 per 100,000 population (Lew et al., 2022).

Considering the mean suicide rate for these countries is less than the average, around globe, many nations show rates increasing the global norm, particularly in the African region. Moreover, the research shows a decrease in higher annual percentage in suicide rates within the countries where suicide attempt is not a punishable act, that suggests a potential correlation among decriminalization and reduction in suicide rates. Even then, the study's limitations are the reason of to the lack of thorough investigation of various contextual factors that may cause suicide rates more than just legal frameworks, e.g., economic instability, inflation rates, and cultural values. Therefore, while decriminalizing suicide may help in to reducing suicide rates, further research is necessary to fully grasp the intricate relation of these various factors, by considering the unique dynamics of every region (Lew et al., 2022).

The punitive measures had been taken against the people committing suicide, till the 19th century. However, in the previous half-century, a notable change has been seen in this paradigm. A systematic review resulted that among 192 independent regimes, 25 have currently uphold the specific legislations and punishments for suicide attempts. Moreover, an additional 20 countries adhere to Islamic or Sharia law, where attempted suicide may incur punishment despite the absence of explicit legislation. Penalties vary widely, ranging from minor fines or brief imprisonment to life sentences. Notably, countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Ghana, Guyana, Kenya, Malaysia, and Myanmar still uphold legislation to penalize suicide attempts. It is noteworthy that both India, in 2017, and Pakistan, in 2022, have decriminalized suicide. The current research will solely examine the context of Pakistan regarding the decriminalization of suicide (International Association for Suicide Prevention [IASP], 2021).

According to Art. 325 of Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) 1860, drafted by Thomas Babington Macaulay, taking one's own life or helping someone in this act was a crime. The punishment for attempting suicide or assisting it was one year of imprisonment or fine or both. In 2022, this article was decriminalized by the parliament of Pakistan through a bill stating that a person commits suicide in the state of depression, mental illness, or due to some psychological issues. Hence, the person cannot be considered a criminal. Precisely, as attempting suicide is not a crime, the punishment cannot be enforced (Pakistan Penal Code [PPC], 1860).

According to the Bill, "Suicide is an act of killing oneself, most often as a result of depression or other mental illness. According to a study, there is one completed suicide in every 40 seconds, while five percent of people in the world try to kill themselves at least once during their lifetime. Around 79% suicides are from low or middle-income countries. Despite the crucial nature of the act of suicide and reasons behind it, Pakistan Penal Code vide section 325 incriminates the person committing it and prescribes the sentence of simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine, or with both. The issue of suicide ought to be dealt as a disease and should be treated as one. Additionally, punishment is meant to create deterrence for a healthy person not for

a mentally disturbed individual. The objective of this amendment in PPC is to decriminalize the attempt of suicide by any individual because every time it is done, is the reason of some depression, mental illness or commotions" (Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act, 2022). This move - to decriminalize the suicide- in Pakistan, uplifts the important questions regarding its legal, social, and ethical aspects. Considering the regions' legal and religious structure, there is a need of proper investigation with respect to its logical and possible consequences.

The research questions are generated to tackle the ethical and legal vindications of this bill, while also investigating its arrangement with Islamic teachings and checking its effects on ethical values and legal exercises.

1. Is suicide, a transgression within the moral and legal principles of Islam, must be considered as a crime? And thus, can every action have declared *haram* in Islam necessarily equivalent to a crime?
2. Does the rationale behind decriminalizing suicide in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan morally and legally justified?
3. Are the justifications and rationale employed in formulating the bill for decriminalizing suicide deemed valid and reasonable?
4. Does the decriminalization bill fulfill its intended purpose, or are there underlying motives at play?
5. What socio-legal ramifications might arise from the decriminalization of suicide in Pakistan?

The bill "Criminal Laws Amendment Act, 2022," introduced by Senator Shahadat Awan (PPP) on September 27, 2021, underwent a comprehensive review process in the legislative sphere of Pakistan. Initially referred to the Senate Standing Committee (SSC) Interior for deliberation, the bill garnered attention for its proposed amendments to existing laws pertaining to suicide. The SSC Interior, upon receiving the bill, presented its report to the House before referring it back to the committee for further review, taking into consideration the opinion of the Council of Islamic Ideology.

In response to the bill, the Council of Islamic Ideology submitted its views through a letter (No. 179(2019)/R-CCI) dated January 6, 2022. The Council advocated for maintaining the punishment for suicide attempts as a deterrent, citing religious beliefs. However, it recommended a provision be added to PPC Art. 325 to exempt individuals found to be psychologically ill after medical evaluation (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

During a subsequent meeting on February 4, 2022, the Standing Committee revisited the bill. The mover presented statements of objects and reasons, supported by endorsements from prominent religious institutions and scholars favouring the proposed amendments. The Standing Committee members emphasized the humanitarian aspect, arguing that the existing legal framework hindered access to medical care for individuals contemplating suicide. While having the debate on the relevance of section 325 of the Pakistan Penal Code, they suggested it to be omitted, stating the argument that it formed a severe penalty (Review of Criminal Laws [Amendment] Act, 2022).

The Ministry of Interior of Pakistan showed its skepticism regarding passing the bill, mentioning its concerns over the increasing incidence, especially in the underdeveloped countries, of suicide attempts. They argued the justifying of punishment to be deterrent against these attempts. Conferring that, the Council of Islamic Ideology stressed and repeated its stance on withholding the punishment while justifying the exemptions for mentally ill persons (Pakistan Penal Code [PPC], 1860). After having detailed discussions, the Standing Committee unanimously advocated for the bill, leads to Senate for passing it.

Historical Evolution of Suicide Decriminalization

Historically, many countries have implemented legal systems that criminalize suicide, reflecting a perspective that seeks to penalize such behavior. However, current trends suggest a reevaluation of this approach, indicating a growing reconsideration of the criminalization of suicide. This changing viewpoint is discernible not just across multiple nations worldwide but also notably within the legal structures of Pakistan.

The changing attitude towards suicide in modern societies has been gradually emerging for centuries. Subsequent to the French Revolution, all European and North American states eventually decriminalized suicide. The Roman Catholic Church overruled the statute that prohibited holding funerals and burials of people who committed suicide in churchyards in 1983. Several countries, such as Scotland, have never criminalized suicide and have no law for it. The first country to decriminalize the attempt to suicide was Germany in 1751 (Dine, 2019).

Macaulay drafted the Indian Penal Code in 1860. Coming from a practicing Christian family, his approach to the topic of suicide resonated deeply with Christian beliefs, which historically forbade suicide. Later, like other concepts, the approach to suicide also changed. From the 6th to the late 20th century, when suicide was strictly considered a forbidden and undesired act, the church did not allow the burial of any person who committed suicide wilfully or intentionally. The prominent change in cultural perception that suicide occurs due to mental illness has also impacted Catholic thought and attitudes. Ultimately, in the 1980s, the Church showed some flexibility and overruled the law by allowing their funerals (Dine, 2019).

In the known history of mankind, the Muslim community has always had a much lower ratio of suicide. Philip K. Hitti was surprised that there was no tradition of suicide in Muslim history, as mentioned in his book *History of Arabs* (Khurshid Ahmad, 1999). According to a campaign "United for Mental Health," which works on decriminalizing suicide in countries where it is still illegal, it is agreed by all the ministers of health in the World Health Assembly 2019, while approving a plan for the World Health Organization 2021-2030, that the most effective way to reduce suicidal deaths is to decriminalize suicide (IASP, 2021). The general argument to justify suicide is based upon the concept given by Scottish philosopher David Hume. The concept states that "I believe that no man ever threw away life, while it was worth keeping" (Lapham's Quarterly, 2021).

Decriminalizing suicide is supported globally with the argument that criminalization deters people from seeking help from their family, friends, community, or medical professionals. Similarly, it is considered unjust to punish the attempter because suicide is not their desired act but is compelled by external pressures, leaving

them with no choice but to attempt suicide (International Association for Suicide Prevention [IASP], 2021).

Processing of the Bill

During the processing of the bill, the amendment proposed by Council of Islamic Ideology is rejected by other members who called it illogical. As an objection to this rejection, if mentally ill persons have been already exempted by the law, what was the need to pass a bill for them? Having a separate provision for them clearly holds a meaning of their automatic exemption from the punishment for any crime. In this case, the reason for decriminalizing suicide and introducing a bill has no sound basis, because for people, whom the committee is 'concerned about', are not even subject to respective punishment. Likewise, in Islamic law, there are separate provisions for the insane people with a proper ranking of them, whether they are subject to Islamic law or not. Therefore, the criminalization and the punishment are only for the mentally stable individuals and the argument given to reject the amendments by CII has no standing.

As quoted by Senator Shahadat Awan in a webinar hosted by United for Mental Health, "It is a public health issue, it is not an offence...The patient should be provided with treatment and not be send to prison." Despite discussion on the effectiveness of the punitive detention, nowadays almost every crime has the punishment of imprisonment; and according to IASP, that causes mental disorder. Would all the crimes be decriminalized? For sure, not. In case, the way of punishment is not effective enough, then instead of decriminalizing crime, method of punishment can be changed.

Material and Methods

The research employs a mixed-methods approach, using primary data from expert interviews and secondary data from legal documents and historical analysis. Open-ended questions were posed to experts to gain insights into the legislative process and societal attitudes. To assess the legality and legislation of Islam, ten experts were interviewed, including specialists in criminal law, judges, educators, and experts in the field of Hadith.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Structured Interviews

To assess the legality and legislation of Islam, ten experts were interviewed, including specialists in criminal law, judges, educators, and experts in the field of Hadith. The following open-ended questions were posed			
Q1. Is forgiveness possible for the perpetrator of suicide?	Q2. Should every transgression be treated as a crime and subjected to legal punishment?	Q3. Do individuals who contribute to suicide deserve punishment?	Q4. Is eliminating the punishment of imprisonment for suicide a positive step?
All participants acknowledged that suicide is neither a recommended nor a pleasing act. They confirmed the absence of any tradition regarding the survivor of a suicide attempt. Several fatwas were	All participants except two opined that suicide is a matter between God and the individual and only becomes a crime when it infringes upon the rights of another. Some referenced the refusal to perform the funeral prayer for a suicide victim as an indication of	50% of the participants suggested that individuals definitively identified as contributing to someone's suicidal actions should receive punishment proportional to their contribution. Others	60% of the respondents believed that eliminating imprisonment for pre-existing conditions or circumstances related to suicide causes is a positive

cited, emphasizing repentance and seeking forgiveness for those who survive suicide and express remorse for their actions. Darul Uloom Deoband's fatwa stated that while suicide may not be a sin in such cases, the determination to commit suicide is considered blameworthy.	strong disapproval, suggesting that suicide is indeed considered a crime. However, one participant highlighted that this is the personal choice of the Holy Prophet and cannot be legislated.	agreed that eliminating imprisonment as punishment for pre-existing conditions or circumstances related to suicide causes is a positive step by the government.	step by the government. They argued that it considers underlying factors and avoids subjecting the individual to unjust punishment.
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The experts' perspectives reveal a delicate balance between religious doctrine, societal norms, and legal practice. While having a broad consensus about the moral condemnation of suicide, the debate revolves around the response to be generated by the state, that if it should be through penalty, prevention, or through compassion. In the Islamic republic of Pakistan, the suicide decriminalization put a significant shift towards its societal and legal approaches, by considering that how the suicide is being recognized within Islamic and secular structures. By analyzing the above-mentioned interviews, it came that the shift, under discussion, reflects an acquiring perception of justice, which embodying the mental health and human dignity at very high.

The suicide, along with its various facets of the appearances explored through moral, psychological, religious, and legal optic, is being discussed for centuries. Although the topic is old, but the recent development in 2022, regarding decriminalizing suicide bill of Pakistan has enhances the debates on suicide again. This legislative change raises the very important questions with respect to its adjustment with societal beliefs, religious regulations, and legal regime. The following analysis delves into these questions, examining the broader implications of this significant change.

Self-ownership/Self-libertinism vs. Islamic Approach to Life

There lie two approaches towards life. The first guarantees the complete right of a person over himself, and no one can set boundaries for his life except himself. He can finish his life whenever he feels it is useless. This approach is based on the theory of Scottish philosopher David Hume, who says: "I believe that no man ever threw away life, while it was worth keeping" (Lapham's Quarterly). Based on this argument, if the state cannot resolve the personal issues of an individual, it has no right to stop him from suicide. The same approach was adopted by Minoo Masane from India, who said in an interview: "I believe that every human being is a sovereign person, and he alone has the right to choose whether to live or die, society cannot decide for him" (Johnson, 2021).

On the other hand, life is considered a blessing from Almighty Allah, and no one has the right to hurt or destroy it. It is stated in the verse 195 of Surah Al-Baqarah: "Do not put yourselves in the destruction" (Quran, 2:195). While interpreting verse 29 of Surah An-Nisa, Al-Baghawi quoted this verse, stating that it refers to suicide by a believer (Baghawi, trans. Ashrafia Majlis e Ilm o Tehqiq, 638). Similarly, other interpreters, including Al-Tha'labi and Ibn Kathir, have quoted ahadith related to the prohibition of suicide while interpreting this verse. The Prophet Muhammad clearly stated that everyone has a responsibility to take care of his life and body parts and declared the attempter as a sinner, subject to severe punishment (Sahih Muslim, 6816). Hence, just as

murder (except under accountability) is seen as equivalent to the murder of humanity (Quran, 5:32), suicide is also an undesired and prohibited act in Islam. The religion forbids even the desire for death (Sahih Muslim, 6816).

According to all schools of Islamic jurisprudence, suicide is haram (forbidden), and if successful, there will be no punishment, as death drops the punishment. However, in the case of survival, ta'zir (discretionary punishment) would be applied. Shāfi'ī and Ahmad ibn Hanbal carried the stance that atonement would be taken from the person's property in case of death (Abdul Qadir Awdah Shaheed, 536-538). Similarly, assisting someone in this act is also considered punishable, whether done directly or indirectly. These commandments are based on the belief that life belongs to the Creator and that no one has any right to harm or destroy His creation (Abdul Qadir Awdah Shaheed, 536-538).

The scholars endorsing the first approach often neglect the societal aspect, which cannot be ignored. As Phiroze R stated: "Human life is as precious to the state as it is to the holder, and the state cannot turn a blind eye to a person's attempt to kill himself" (State v. Sanjiv Bansal, AIR 1985 All 243, judgment by Justice Phiroze Irani). Every human being has rights and responsibilities to fulfill, and one cannot escape from them due to circumstances, as it disturbs the rights of others (Pakistani.org, Preamble of the Constitution of Pakistan, 2022). The bill under discussion, based on the first approach, ultimately contradicts the preamble of the Constitution of Pakistan, which starts with: "Sovereignty over the entire Universe belongs to Almighty Allah alone" (Pakistani.org). Similarly, Article 9 of the Constitution of Pakistan states: "No person shall be deprived of life or liberty save in accordance with law" (Pakistani.org).

Decriminalizing Suicide - Sympathy or Indignity

The question of whether a criminal should be punished or sympathized arises for almost every crime, especially when socio-economic circumstances play a role. Theories of punishment include deterrence, reformation, retribution, and prevention (Legalserviceindia.com). For the desired outcomes, experts in the field prefer applying an integrative approach to achieve all purposes simultaneously.

The act of attempting suicide is often justified by the person because, at that moment, he had not desired it but had been compelled by some external factors or circumstances. Instead of encouraging the act itself by decriminalizing it, the focus should be on addressing the factors that force or assist the attempter. As mentioned in PPC Article 325, those who help an individual commit suicide are also responsible for the same crime (Pakistan Penal Code, 1860).

Decriminalization is supported by the argument that criminalization causes humiliation for the attempter and his family. This is supported by the report *Suicide Still Treated as a Crime in at Least 20 Countries*, which describes an incident in Sindh, Pakistan, where a police officer took a bribe from the parents of a suicide survivor (Johnson, 2021). The report argues that decriminalizing suicide would prevent such humiliations. However, if viewed from another perspective, the corrupt system is the root cause of such humiliation, and the solution is not necessarily decriminalization but improving the system to punish the actual wrongdoers and protect others (Johnson, 2021).

In Pakistan, socio-economic issues like hunger, unemployment, and poverty are contributing factors to the rising suicide rate. While these issues exist worldwide, the solution cannot be to deem a forbidden act as permissible. Allah's guidance, as found in the Quran and Sunnah, provides a different approach for facing challenging situations. The non-compliance with the law is a major cause of rising suicide rates, and rather than decriminalizing suicide, the punishment should be revisited, or the law should be properly enforced.

Discretionary Powers of Legislative Bodies in Law Enforcement

The bill under review carries the stance that Section 325 of the PPC can be omitted because it is a *ta'zir* punishment. However, as Abdul Qadir Awdah Shaheed argues, a judge may minimize or forgive the punishment based on circumstances but has no right to allow acts that are forbidden by Allah (Abdul Qadir Awdah Shaheed, 536-538). The stance that suicide can be omitted because it is a *ta'zir* is not a valid argument to justify a sinful act.

Expected Socio-legal Consequences of the Bill

If David Hume's thought is followed, it will be argued that if a person considers his life unworthy, there should be no restriction in helping him end it. This line of reasoning could ultimately pave the way for legalizing voluntary or involuntary euthanasia (Lapham's Quarterly). Decriminalizing suicide could lead to higher suicide rates, as individuals may feel it is an "allowed" act, and subsequently, the Islamic concept of *ṣabr* (patience) may be undermined, disrupting the structure of Muslim society.

In an Islamic society, there is a concept of *haya* (modesty) through which individuals are hesitant to openly discuss their sins. Decriminalizing suicide could lead to a loss of shame regarding this act, which could further normalize it. Reformation in society, in this case, would be difficult if suicide is seen as an acceptable option.

Conclusion

After examining the primary data via open ended questions thoroughly, which investigates the fields experts' perspectives, and combining it with secondary data gathered from different library sources, it is concluded that the existence of legislation against suicide remains necessary, irrespective of what result the attempting suicide cause, because this is necessary to be considered it by the society as a crime and sin. The punitive steps may be not enough for this, and may cause the exceed in it. Rather, a holistic approach is needed that must align with Islamic ethics, societal, and psychological dynamics.

To identify the societal behaviors which cause the suicidal behaviors, is a key to this approach that emphasize the need of properly evaluating the individual personalities and verdict of societal pressure. The Islamic law which is based on faith and compassion, can provide steering about life's challenges while guaranteeing cohesion to ethical boundaries. Thus, it is mandatory to keep the legal frameworks within the jurisprudential context, with punishments regenerated to align with logicity and consultation.

Enhancing the extent of investigation to understand the multifaceted elements contributing to suicide is important. Individuals having guilty of attempting suicide

must provide the proper mental health care and assistance, along with penalties, which must be decided based on the assessment of every individuals' circumstances. Ultimately, the decision of penalty must consider the principles of crime and penalty, considering the detailed circumstances of each case. This comprehensive way provides a pathway to address the complexities of suicide within the regime of Islamic ethics and legal framework.

Recommendations

- Taking into account the concept of life as *amanah* from Almighty Allah, attempt to take ones' own life should be criminalized in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan otherwise it would even not be considered as a sin.
- The Judges have enough liberty to make decisions for any case according to the guilt's circumstances and his betterment e.g., in some cases of suicide, the criminal may be released after proper counseling. Thus, it is not necessary to give the punishment in case of imprisonment only.
- There should be flexibility in criminal justice system of Pakistan, especially in the matter of suicide as it is a multidimensional issue holding social, legal and psychological indications. The verdicts should vary according to the circumstances by considering the criminal record of a person. It would be helpful in fulfilling different purposes of punishment such as rehabilitation and deterrence. So the integrative approach should be there i.e. the legislative bodies should decide the punishment for every human being according to his circumstances, especially when he is suffered from psychological disorder, the rehabilitation and reformation should be preferred.
- The educational institutions, mosques and houses should do such an upbringing that the individual have firm belief in his God and can stay patience in every hurdle of life considering it mortal.
- A separate provision with Art. 325 should be added to declare the punishment for a person who forces/helps the attempter.
- It is the universal duty of state that the duty defined in the preamble of Constitution of Pakistan should be fulfilled so that everyone is protected by the law, which ultimately results in decreasing suicidal ideation.

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