

COVID-19 Pandemic: A Qualitative Exploration of Religious Leaders' and Community Members' Perspectives

Mudasar Ali Nadeem¹, Shabbir Hussain² and Sabeh Ahmad Sanwal³

<https://doi.org/10.62345/jads.2023.12.4.101>

Abstract

The present study aims to explore the views of religious leaders and community members regarding social protection during the COVID-19 pandemic. A qualitative exploratory research design was used to gather their perspectives through both telephonic and face-to-face in-depth interviews, employing purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The findings indicated that the Islamic perspective on illness, pandemics, and COVID-19 differs from the everyday practices of common Muslims. Islam emphasizes the importance of taking precautionary measures in all situations and supports isolation, quarantine, and government-imposed lockdowns. It instructs followers to comply with such measures to prevent the spread of pandemics like COVID-19. On the other hand, the majority of community members believed that if death is destined due to COVID-19, it cannot be avoided, even by following the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for COVID-19.

Keywords: COVID-19 in Pakistan, Islam and Coronavirus, Islamic Perspective on Epidemics.

Introduction

The first case of the deadly COVID-19 virus pandemic emerged in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. It is a highly contagious virus that spreads rapidly from one person to another. This virus affected a large number of people, causing pneumonia-like symptoms among patients (Schwartz & Graham, 2020). Consequently, it impacted Wuhan and many other parts of China, as well as various countries around the world, within a month (Luo et al., 2020). As of April 21, 2020, there were 2,476,916 confirmed cases of COVID-19 globally, with 170,297 reported deaths (Google News, 21st April 2020).

To control the outbreak in China, the government initially decided to lock down Wuhan province. This measure proved somewhat effective in containing the virus and preventing its spread to other areas (Luo et al., 2020).

Other countries around the world, including Pakistan, were made aware of the COVID-19 threat through China's experience. Therefore, China's neighbouring countries, including Pakistan, temporarily halted their interactions with China (Khan & Naushad, 2020). However, bilateral relations with other countries were not affected, as the disease had originated in China. Unfortunately, the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Pakistan in February 2020.

¹Lecturer in Sociology, Government College University Faisalabad, Chiniot Campus.

Email: mudasaralinadeem@gcuf.edu.pk

²Lecturer Sociology, Govt. M.A.O. Graduate College, Lahore, Pakistan. Email: shabbir.iscs@gmail.com

³MPhil Sociology, Government College University Faisalabad. Email: Sh.sabeh@gmail.com



There are many myths surrounding the outbreak of coronavirus in Pakistan. It is commonly believed that the virus entered the country via Iran. Since the first reported case in February 2020, the total number of confirmed cases in Pakistan had reached 9,216 by April 21, 2020, with around 192 deaths (Government of Pakistan, 21st April 2020).

Pakistan also followed China's lead by implementing a nationwide lockdown to prevent the rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government of Pakistan announced restrictions on public gatherings and movement, aiming to enforce social distancing (Khan & Naushad, 2020). However, essential services such as bakeries, medical stores, and grocery shops were allowed to remain open to provide necessities. People were asked to stay at home, and restrictions were placed on collective religious activities, including prayers, gatherings, and ceremonies.

Different segments of the population responded differently to the lockdown, especially to restrictions on collective religious practices. Religious leaders in Pakistan argued that it was unwise to place restrictions on communal religious rituals. In a press conference, a prominent religious leader, Mufti Muneeb ur Rehman, announced that the lockdown would not apply to mosques from April 14, 2020. He, along with other religious leaders, declared that restrictions on Friday congregational prayers and *Tarawih* prayers were also unwise. During the press conference, he argued that if the government wanted to implement social distancing, then all venues of gatherings should be considered equally, rather than specifically targeting religious rituals. He claimed that it appeared the media and government were unfairly singling out religious practices while exempting other venues from lockdown.

This press conference highlighted a disconnect between the government and religious leadership regarding measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the country. According to medical professionals and scientists, COVID-19 spreads through contact with infected individuals, greetings involving physical touch, and interaction with contaminated surfaces. Therefore, people were advised to wear face masks, avoid physical contact, and maintain a distance of at least five to six feet from others. The goal of these measures was to enforce social distancing, which would be compromised if collective religious rituals were held in mosques and similar venues, thereby increasing close contact and the risk of viral transmission.

This situation illustrates the influential role of religious leaders as key opinion-makers in Pakistan. Their views significantly affect the public, owing to the deep connection between religious leaders and the people's belief systems. The public's response was mixed, and many citizens were reluctant to follow government directives. Therefore, it is essential to explore the perspectives of religious leaders and community members regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. The objectives of this inquiry include understanding their views on the disease, Islamic teachings related to pandemics like COVID-19, religious teachings about communal rituals during such crises, and their opinions on controlling the spread of the virus.

Methodology

Research Design

As the objectives of the present study are exploratory in nature, aiming to explore the opinions of religious leaders and community members about the COVID-19 pandemic, a qualitative research approach was employed to examine their views and religious teachings related to both the current and past pandemics.

To achieve the study's objectives, the researcher selected two categories of religious leaders equally: Imam Masjid and religious scholars. The category of Imam Masjid was chosen due to

their active role in leading collective religious rituals, while religious scholars were selected for their influence as key opinion-makers.

For participant selection, purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used. A total of eight in-depth interviews were conducted—four from each category using a semi-structured interview guide. These interviews were conducted telephonically at prearranged times.

In addition, the researcher also interviewed community members from two tehsils of District Hafizabad. The community members were divided into four categories: shopkeepers and traders, unskilled laborers, political leaders and government servants, and private sector workers. Participants were selected using purposive sampling and were interviewed face-to-face at their preferred locations and times, while strictly observing all COVID-19 SOPs.

Recruitment of the Participants

First, the researcher contacted an Imam Masjid to conduct his interview. He was selected using the purposive sampling technique. After the interview, he was requested to refer a prominent religious scholar and/or another Imam Masjid who was knowledgeable about the current pandemic and religious teachings related to pandemics. Based on his referral, further participants were selected using the snowball sampling technique.

After conducting seven in-depth interviews, participants began to provide similar responses to the same questions. However, to ensure data saturation, the remaining interview with a religious scholar was also conducted. All participants from the religious leader category were contacted via their personal mobile numbers and were requested to participate in the study. In total, 11 religious leaders were contacted, out of which 3 declined to participate. Those who agreed were asked to provide a suitable date and time for their interviews.

On the other hand, community members were selected using purposive sampling. To conduct interviews with shopkeepers and traders, the president of the local trade union was approached as a gatekeeper, and he facilitated the researcher in arranging interviews with members of this group. To conduct interviews with public and private sector employees, the researcher relied on personal contacts, as he has been residing in the same district and teaching at a public college for the past five years. Similarly, a local political leader helped facilitate interviews with political figures.

For unskilled daily wage laborers, snowball sampling was used. The first daily wage laborer was selected using purposive sampling, while the rest were identified through referrals using the snowball sampling technique.

The sampling distribution of the community members is as under in Table.

Categories	Pindi Bhattian	Hafizabad	Total
Shopkeeper/Traders	4	4	8
Political Leaders	4	4	8
Public Servants	4	4	8
Private Servants	4	4	8
Daily Wages Laborers	4	4	8
Total	20	20	40

Data Collection

For data collection, the researcher designed a semi-structured interview guide in the national language, i.e., Urdu. A total of 20 open-ended questions were included in the guide, along with

additional probing questions provided as prompts for the interviewers. The interview guide was structured in a way that it began with general questions, followed by the core and key questions in the middle, and concluded with general questions again.

Interviews were conducted on the pre-decided dates and times, each ranging from 30 to 40 minutes. The average duration of the interviews was 36 minutes. Before starting each interview, participants were asked for their consent to record the conversation. They were assured that their information would remain confidential and would not be shared with anyone without their permission. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed.

A field team consisting of two interviewers the researcher and his associate carried out the fieldwork.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data provided by the participants in the form of verbal responses. For this purpose, first, the interviews were transcribed from the national language (Urdu) into English. The transcribed interviews were then read and re-read to ensure familiarization with the data.

In the second stage of data analysis, various codes were identified from the data. These codes were then grouped under similar categories.

In the third stage, the categories were further refined and merged into themes. The findings were presented using both pre-determined themes and emergent themes developed during the analysis.

Findings

Characteristics of the Study Participants

A total of eight participants from the category of religious scholars participated in the study and shared their views through in-depth interviews. However, three participants refused to take part in the study.

The average age of participants from both categories was 44 years. Approximately 50% of the participants were between 30 and 40 years old, 38% were aged 41 to 50, and the remaining 12% belonged to the 51–60 age group. This implies that none of the participants were below 37 years or above 55 years of age.

On the other hand, the average age of the community members was 39 years. About 30% of the community members had education levels of matriculation or below, 55% had education ranging from intermediate to graduation, and 15% were postgraduates or above.

Illness and Diseases

Both religious scholars and Imam Masjid were asked to share their opinions on the Islamic perspective on diseases. Every participant stated that sickness purifies human beings from their sins and also increases the dignity and sacredness of believers.

In Islamic teachings, it is commonly believed that even when a thorn pierces the foot, it results in the forgiveness of a believer's sins. According to one of the participants, "diseases are actually a source to achieve a high rank in heaven."

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of participants

Sr. No	Participation	Status	Age group
1	Participated	IM	30-40 years
2	Participated	RS	41-50 years
3	Participated	IM	30-40 years
4	Refused	RS	
5	Participated	IM	41-50 years
6	Participated	RS	30-40 years
7	Participated	RS	41-50 years
8	Participated	IM	30-40 years
9	Refused	IM	
10	Refused	RS	
11	Participated	RS	51-60 years
IM=Imam Masjid, RS=Religious Scholars			

However, it is the reaction of human beings that matters during illness. If a disease strengthens the bond between Allah and a person, then it is considered a reward for the individual. On the contrary, if a person begins to lose faith in Allah because of illness, it leads to an increase in their sins.

The incident of the Prophet of Allah, Hazrat Ayub (AS), is very well-known in Islam. He remained ill for a very long time and exhibited great patience during his suffering. Allah Almighty rewarded him for his patience. This implies that Islam teaches patience and calmness when facing illness.

Participants also believed that Islam provides guidance regarding both contagious and non-contagious diseases. For contagious diseases, Islam instructs believers to take necessary precautions to prevent the spread of the disease. First and foremost, ill individuals should seek treatment from medical experts and follow their advice carefully. Merely saying "Allah will help us" is not sufficient, because Allah helps those who help themselves. Therefore, the sick should consult knowledgeable professionals for diagnosis and treatment (Bah & Aljouidi, 2014; Rahman et al., 2008).

On the other hand, community members were also asked about the Islamic perspective on illness. The majority of respondents believed that it is Allah's power to cause or cure diseases. However, around 21 participants specifically mentioned the word "fate" when discussing this topic.

One participant stated, "Everything is written in our fate. If illness is in our fate, we will suffer from diseases. If a healthy life is in our fate, we will live a healthy life." Conversely, a participant from the government sector argued that although Almighty Allah decides our fate, human beings are conscious and rational creatures. Allah has created humans with the ability to distinguish between hygienic and unhygienic practices. It is up to individuals to choose which practices they adopt. He further added that hygienic practices promote a healthy lifestyle, while unhygienic practices contribute to the spread of disease.

A shopkeeper, when asked about the Islamic perspective on illness, stated that Islam encourages taking precautions and consulting doctors for treatment. He also emphasized that spiritual healing should be practiced alongside biomedical treatment.

These findings indicate a range of perspectives on the Islamic view of illness. The varied responses may be attributed to the fact that community members have limited awareness of Islamic teachings regarding illness.

Pandemics and Epidemics

Participants from the religious category claimed that Islam is a universal religion, valid until the Day of Judgment. Islam has clear teachings regarding every aspect of human life, including guidance on pandemics. According to a Hadith of the Holy Prophet, if a pestilence starts in any land, one should not visit that land, and if one lives in that place, they should not leave. This implies that Islamic teachings provide instructions to prevent the spread of pandemics, as pandemics and epidemics are mostly contagious, and infected individuals can spread the disease to others (Bah & Aljouidi, 2014).

The Holy Prophet clearly instructed his followers to separate sick camels from healthy ones. The purpose of this instruction was to teach that the diseased should remain at a distance from the healthy. This implies that Islam encourages taking precautions, isolation, and quarantine. Islam is also in favor of social distancing to prevent the spread of pandemics (Albar, 2007; Bah & Aljouidi, 2014).

During Hazrat Umar's regime, a plague spread in Syria. He was traveling to Syria and, upon hearing about the disease in that area, he returned and instructed those already in Syria to remain there. This reflects that taking precautions is wise, as the Companions of the Holy Prophet also took similar measures during epidemics. The majority of the participants believed that taking precautions is not a sign of disbelief; rather, Islam encourages taking all necessary precautions (Bah & Aljouidi, 2014).

On the other hand, community members were not well aware of the Islamic perspective on pandemics and epidemics. Many were unaware of the historical incidents of pandemics and epidemics in Islamic history. The majority of community members believed that pandemics and epidemics are in the hands of Almighty Allah, and that fate decides who will suffer from such diseases and who will not. The community members seemed to be more reliant on their fate and less aware of other precautionary measures as outlined in Islamic teachings.

When asked about Islamic teachings on taking precautions, many were unaware of these teachings. One shopkeeper claimed that wearing masks and avoiding greetings were part of a larger agenda by non-Muslims to harm Muslims. One political leader stated that Islam asks for firm belief in Allah to end diseases and suffering. However, he argued that the government is imposing a Western agenda on society.

Conversely, one government servant stated that Islam asks individuals to follow the instructions of experts to avoid disease and illness, but religious leaders do not encourage common Muslims to take proper care of their health. He further mentioned that religious scholars are not providing the true Islamic perspective on pandemics. He added that understanding Islamic teachings requires reading Islamic texts, but the majority of ordinary people are illiterate, and most of these teachings are in Arabic, which the common Muslims in our society are unable to understand.

Awareness and knowledge about COVID-19 Pandemic

Religious leaders were asked about the COVID-19 pandemic, and they provided varied views. However, the majority claimed that it is a natural pandemic, similar to the pestilence that was a very popular and deadly pandemic during the time of the Holy Prophet and his companions. Only three religious leaders out of eight claimed that it might be a part of biochemical weapons used by developed countries to destroy their opponents and their economies.

History is full of such incidents where it was claimed that particular diseases emerged from biologically engineered viruses. Five participants were of the view that COVID-19 is a test from Almighty Allah, and that Allah tests His believers in many ways. Moreover, Allah sends evils and

natural pandemics and disasters because of human beings' sins. In the Holy Scriptures of Islam, it is narrated that "mischiefs emerge on land because of humans' sins." It is also mentioned in the Quran that "we will test you with hunger and fear."

One of the participants reported that it is quite possible that this pandemic emerged from those who eat Haram (forbidden) food, because many things prohibited in Islam deteriorate human health (Bhat & Qureshi, 2013). However, the majority of participants believed that Muslims do not eat bats or dogs, but they are still suffering from the disease. Therefore, they regarded it as a natural pandemic. Thus, the majority of the participants were of the view that COVID-19 is a test from Almighty Allah.

According to one of the religious scholars:

It is narrated in a sacred hadith of the Holy Prophet that when human beings engage in immorality and become rude and indecent, Allah will bring about diseases that their elders have never heard of. According to this hadith, it is certainly the result of our sins. We are a global sinful community, and we are becoming more involved in many wrongdoings over time.

On the other hand, the views of the community members were quite different from those of the religious leaders. The majority of the participants denied the existence of COVID-19. They were of the view that it is an attempt by foreigners to weaken their belief. About 15 participants reported that this disease cannot be transmitted to Muslims because it is spreading among those people and communities who eat Haram (forbidden) things, such as bats, dogs, snakes, etc. One of the shopkeepers reported, "We Muslims perform Wudu five times a day, which will keep us safe from this disease."

In addition, the majority of the public and private servants were of the view that COVID-19 is a viral disease and very contagious. However, the majority of the shopkeepers, traders, and daily wage workers denied the existence of the disease in their community and felt there was nothing to worry about regarding COVID-19. According to one of the shopkeepers, "I come to my shop every day. I never wear a mask. With the grace of Almighty, I am healthy. But those who wear masks are getting ill day by day."

Precautionary Measure to Avoid COVID-19

According to the majority of the community members who were asked about the latest COVID-19 pandemic and the Islamic perspective on this pandemic, the majority of participants were of the view that it is a natural pandemic, but different from previous pandemics. It is also highly contagious, spreading from one person to another by shaking hands with an infected person and/or touching any excretion from the mouth or nose of a positive patient. As a result, covering the mouth during sneezing and coughing and avoiding handshakes is necessary to prevent the disease. On the other hand, the majority of the religious scholars were of the view that Islam urges followers to take precautions during pandemics (Bah & Aljoudi, 2014). Therefore, according to the participants, patients should take precautions particularly, and the general public should do so as well. Shaking hands with others is not necessary. The duty of greeting others is fulfilled when you exchange "Salaam o Alaikum" even from a distance. While shaking hands is a noble act, it is not necessary to avoid a pandemic. Islam never prohibits taking precautionary measures. One of the religious scholars reported, "The Holy Prophet did not meet with a person suffering from leprosy. Instead, the Holy Prophet asked him to maintain a distance from his fellow tribesmen to prevent the disease from spreading to others." Therefore, wearing a mask, washing hands with soap, and covering the mouth and nose while coughing and sneezing is not only a moral duty but also a

religious duty. Otherwise, germs can spread to healthy people and make them sick as well (Albar, 2007; Bhat & Qureshi, 2013; Khan & Naushad, 2020).

On the other hand, the majority of community members reported that they wear masks because it is mandatory according to government protocol. One respondent claimed that most shopkeepers and customers do not follow these SOPs because wearing a mask all the time is very difficult, as it is hard to breathe with a mask on. One of the government servants, when asked about taking precautions, claimed that it is both our moral and legal duty to take precautions. Interestingly, none of the community members claimed that it is a religious duty to take precautions. However, the majority of the religious leaders were of the view that it is a religious duty to take precautionary measures to avoid COVID-19. It seems that the common masses are not well aware of Islamic teachings, especially regarding pandemics.

One of the laborers, when discussing COVID-19, was of the view that hunger is the deadliest disease in the world. The primary and most important need of the poor is the availability of food. They cannot live in isolation; they have to earn their livelihood. They cannot watch their children go hungry. It seems that the poor community is more concerned about their poverty and fulfilling the basic necessities of life and is less concerned about pandemics and religious teachings regarding such pandemics.

In addition, it seems both community members and religious leaders are not on the same page regarding COVID-19. Similarly, the government and the religious leaders are also not aligned. One of the religious leaders reported that the government is focusing on collective prayers, but they are less concerned about gatherings at political rallies and events. He further added that recently the head of administration visited their area, and hundreds of thousands of people were there to welcome him. However, the government is focusing only on mosques. He explained that COVID-19 is just a strategy to weaken their faith and disturb their collectiveness.

On the other hand, a private servant explained that Islam is a universal religion. There are many lessons in the Holy Scripture about how to avoid COVID-19. However, the common masses are not aware of such lessons.

Implementation of Lockdown

Soon after the identification of initial cases of COVID-19 in Pakistan, the government of Pakistan decided to impose a lockdown in the country to address the rapidly spreading and deadly COVID-19. At that time, different people interpreted it in various ways, but religious scholars were skeptical about the ban on collective religious rituals in mosques. When asked about the decision of the lockdown, five religious participants were of the view that it is the duty of the government to strictly implement a lockdown in the country because the cases of COVID-19 are increasing day by day (Albar, 2007). One of the participants reported, "in Islam, it is obligatory to accept the commands and orders of the government. The Holy Quran says follow the instructions of those in command." Therefore, it is obligatory for every citizen to refrain from those acts that are prohibited and follow those instructions that are imposed by the government. In Islam, followers are asked to take precautions imposed by the government in any case (Albar, 2007; Bah & Aljouidi, 2014). Islam gives permission to say prayers at home under such circumstances. According to one of the participants:

"The Holy Prophet ordered offering prayers at home when there was heavy rain in the town. He instructed to add two words in the Azaan: "Salaat al-Baytakam," which means "pray at home." This order was given during heavy rain, but now the situation is more severe. People are contracting this disease and dying day by day. Therefore, they can offer their prayers at home to

avoid meeting with others. Collective prayers can also be offered at home. In Islam, it is not permissible to attend mosques after eating onions and garlic because their odor is unpleasant for others. You know, this odor does not harm others, but this pandemic is killing people. So, we can benefit from the relaxations that Islam provides to its followers”.

On the other hand, three participants were of the view that it is a good decision, but it conflicts with faith, as the government is only targeting collective religious rituals. They further added that the government should not impose a ban on saying prayers in mosques. Offering prayers and seeking forgiveness from Allah can protect us from this deadly disease. Everything is under the control of Almighty, so Muslims should visit their mosques regularly to say their prayers, and the government should not close mosques. One of the participants claimed that "in Islamic teachings, it is necessary to offer mandatory prayers in mosques, and any other prayer can be offered at home. These prayers at home become a source of blessings for the house." However, every participant agreed that COVID-19 positive patients should not visit mosques or any other crowded public or private places. They have both a moral and religious duty to stay at home, follow the instructions of the government, and immediately contact healthcare providers (Albar, 2007).

On the other hand, the community members also provided varied responses regarding the lockdown in the country. The majority of the community members were in favor of the lockdown, but a few were worried about their livelihoods. Government servants and political leaders supported the lockdown to avoid COVID-19 and were less worried about their livelihood. One of the political leaders claimed that common Pakistanis are not able to understand the complexities of the disease. Therefore, they should follow the SOPs and stand with the government's decisions. On the other hand, the majority of traders, shopkeepers, and laborers were not in favor of the lockdown. One of the traders reported that the lockdown is very bad for poor countries like Pakistan. He further added that traders and shopkeepers are suffering due to the lockdown, and businesses are collapsing. Every sector is suffering from the lockdown. Private servants, on the contrary, were in favor of the lockdown but were also worried about their jobs. One of them reported that employers are not ready to pay them if they are not attending their offices. Meanwhile, the government is also not supporting them to meet their basic needs.

Role of Social Media and the Duty of Religious Scholars

The majority of the participants were of the view that religious scholars, including Imams, should start different campaigns to inform the masses about Islamic teachings in this time of the pandemic. Currently, very few scholars are doing this job. On the other hand, the majority of scholars are divided on the decisions taken by the government to avoid the pandemic. Community members were also of the view that religious scholars should use social media to inform others about the true and relevant incidents of pandemics from Islamic history. It is the duty of religious scholars to use different platforms, including social and electronic media, and to give special sermons using loudspeakers to educate the masses about COVID-19 and their responsibility to stay at home and say their prayers accordingly. One of the participants claimed that "Holy Prophet, in case of emergency, usually asked someone to climb a hill and inform others." This implies that using different mediums to inform others is quite relevant in Islam. Using those media that are mostly accessible to the majority is permissible in Islam. Social media is one of the easiest ways to inform others quickly; therefore, religious scholars should use this media. One of the Imams said, "I asked my people to be well aware of this disease because it is spreading rapidly, and there is no treatment yet. Therefore, obey government orders to stay home and stay protected." This finding is consistent with a study conducted by Bah and Aljouidi (2014) when they took a religious perspective to contain Ebola.

Many participants also provided suggestions to control the current pandemic of COVID-19. They were of the view that everything is under the control of Almighty Allah; therefore, we should ask for His forgiveness and refuge from evils and diseases. There are many verses in the Holy Quran specifically for seeking refuge from evils. Everyone should recite those verses. In such conditions, helping needy people and distributing basic necessities of life should also be practiced. On the other hand, the majority of the community members were of the view that after symptoms appear, one should rush to the hospital and seek advice from expert doctors. This is the best way to avoid the disease and the spread of the disease.

Conclusion

The present study aims to explore the views of religious leaders (Imams and religious scholars) and community members about the current COVID-19 pandemic, religious teachings about pandemics like COVID-19, religious teachings about collective religious rituals during such pandemics, and their opinions on controlling the disease. The study found that religious leaders and community members are somewhat aware of the COVID-19 pandemic, and COVID-19 is regarded as a natural pandemic. It is found to be obligatory for Muslims to obey the government/authorities/institutions, as narrated in the Holy Quran. Moreover, Islamic teachings suggest taking precautionary measures to control pandemics. In such circumstances, it is not obligatory to say prayers in mosques because saving lives is also obligatory, and Islam forbids visiting crowded places where a healthy person might get infected. Isolation, quarantine, and lockdown are permitted in Islam to control pandemics, as the Holy Prophet advised separating sick camels from healthy ones. However, community members are not well aware of the Islamic perspective on illness, pandemics, and precautionary measures, and they are more reliant on their fate and less likely to obey the SOPs. Therefore, religious leaders should work closely with the government and the local community to inform the masses and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

References

- Albar, M. A. (2007). Seeking remedy, abstaining from therapy, and resuscitation: An Islamic perspective. *Saudi Journal of Kidney Diseases and Transplantation*, 18(4), 629.
- Bah, S. M., & Aljoudi, A. S. (2014). Taking a religious perspective to contain Ebola. *The Lancet*, 384(9947), 951. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(14\)61515-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(14)61515-1)
- Bhat, A. M., & Qureshi, A. A. (2013). Significance of personal hygiene from an Islamic perspective. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 10(5), 35–39.
- Google News. (2020, April 21). Coronavirus (COVID-19). Retrieved from <https://news.google.com/covid19/map?hl=en-PK&gl=PK&ceid=PK:en>
- Government of Pakistan. (2020). *Realtime Pakistan and worldwide COVID-19 situation*. Retrieved from <https://www.covid.gov.pk>
- Khan, N., & Naushad, M. (2020). Effects of coronavirus on the world community. *SSRN*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3532001>
- Luo, H., Tang, Q. L., Shang, Y. X., Liang, S. B., Yang, M., Robinson, N., & Liu, J. P. (2020). Can Chinese medicine be used for prevention of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)? A review of historical classics, research evidence, and current prevention programs. *Chinese Journal of Integrative Medicine*, 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11655-020-3159-9>
- Rahman, M. T., Nazer, R., Brown, L., Shogar, I., & Bouzenita, A. I. (2008). Therapeutic interventions: An Islamic perspective. *Journal of the Islamic Medical Association of North America*, 40(2).
- Schwartz, D. A., & Graham, A. L. (2020). Potential maternal and infant outcomes from (Wuhan) coronavirus 2019-nCoV infecting pregnant women: Lessons from SARS, MERS, and other human coronavirus infections. *Viruses*, 12(2), 194. <https://doi.org/10.3390/v12020194>