

WOMEN BEGGING IN THE LIGHT OF ISLAMIC TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

The present research paper aims to examine the need, socio-economic characteristics and the role of 'women beggars' embedded in Karachi city. A descriptive research design was employed by using survey method.

The primary source of data collection was face to face interviews with the women beggars. The researcher used a Semi-structured questionnaire as a tool for data collection and a sample of 90 street beggars, were selected from different public places using purposive, a non-probability sampling technique.

Key findings of the study show that begging is a structured profession in the city.

Data indicated that the majority of the respondents have their own houses and they become the professional beggar in a routine with high satisfaction their existing profession. This study suggests that there is an urgent need to implement a comprehensive policy in order to regulate the begging practice in the city.

Keywords: *Socio-Economic, Women, Begging practice, Karachi.*

1: INTRODUCTION

This study is attempted to investigate the demographic and socio-economic determinants of begging with reference to women begging in a Islamic State. Conventionally, beggars have seen in all human societies to seek for assistance or charity in order to full fill human survival needs. Presently, begging has become a profession, especially in an urban lifestyle due to many pull factor supported by urbanization and better socio-economic opportunities promote begging phenomenon ⁽¹⁾. Yet, there are numerous people are deliberately engaged in begging, however, they can find other means to work or earn money. Indeed, begging is a heterogeneous phenomenon and has trailed in almost every society, while its dominance is different from culture to culture.

It is very difficult to explain that why women choose this activity as it has different reasons and ground for its continuing practice in diversified culture. It is not due to the maneuver of a single reason. It is the consequence of a variety of socio-economical and biological aspects.

World Bank (2001) defines “the expansion of the freedom of choices and action, which could increase women authority and control over resources and decision regarding their life.”⁽²⁾. But this situation is very difficult to define. Furthermore, several researches must try to construct set of specific questions based on population based survey for asking individual respondent, for measuring empowerment at individual level, for example Kishor and Subaiya research ⁽³⁾ and to examine that on what special circumstance that push to women’s to beg . Though, the tradition of begging has long roots in different culture and closely associated with religion particularly in South Asia for instance in India, where charity is measured one of the noblest human qualities according to Hindu tradition as mentioned by Dhruvasan 1963 in his article ⁽⁴⁾. In various religions like in Islam, Christianity and even in Hinduism seeking alms is an opportunity to earn God’s blessings ⁽⁵⁾.

Begging includes a chain of patterns, practices, procedures and plan series of planned activities to capture the sympathy of common man in order to guarantee money. It is now become a profession which has specific knowledge and skills.

Beggars use a number of approaches and used various explanations for pursuing other's support. In Pakistan, it is a traditional mindset which generally promotes begging practices in urban areas like Karachi. Mostly, in Karachi, cultural practices promotes begging. For example, certain religious groups or social classes may believe that the financial support of a needy person is a noble job. Although begging is prohibited according to the constitution of the Government of Pakistan but weak governance is also an important factor in controlling the begging.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Begging has been initiated as social practice since the existence of human society. It is viewed as one of the oldest challenges for human society. Though, there is no any evidence is revealed that begging is exist in primitive societies due to close social ties and strong family system ⁽⁶⁾ and the weaker social structure and family support system had the foundation of begging as a social problem. Historically, Begging had noted in Greece amongst the initial period and the Byzantine era. ⁽⁷⁾ & ⁽⁸⁾.The begging was popularized in the purview of Christian doctrine of almsgiving during the era of middle Ages. ⁽⁹⁾

Earlier researches on developing and developed countries suggest that socio-cultural such as migrant background, low educational level and workload has play a significant influences in determining the practice of begging. In this regards, a variety of an arguments and questions may arise in analyzing the process of begging [see also Jelili, 2013 ⁽¹⁰⁾, Ghimire Loknath,2014) and⁽¹¹⁾ Hanchao Lu,⁽¹²⁾ and the research of Olawale, S.G.,2007⁽¹³⁾, Yusuf A. Bell M. B, Jarimi M, Ahmed S. Ogungbade O.K, J. A. Omotosho, AL Hassan. Y. S. ⁽¹⁴⁾ and Ahamdi H. ⁽¹⁵⁾.

Several research reviews have been published on begging behavior. For instance Tripathi &Arora ⁽¹⁶⁾ had viewed begging as soliciting or receiving alms in public place by exposing wound, injury, deformity or disease whether of himself or of any other person or animal. Nevertheless, Begging is very critical and complex in nature. It is observed that voluminous tactics have been used by beggars for begging. For example, a sick young street

beggar generally attracts the sympathy of the common man⁽¹⁷⁾. In a research Tanvir (2001) noticed that many beggars used different strategies to attract people⁽¹⁸⁾. For example, women with very young babies in their laps cause people to give them alms. Broun⁽¹⁹⁾ considered begging as a charge on the failure or weak governance in several cultures as mentioned by Usoro, 2007⁽²⁰⁾, Bose & Hwang, 2002⁽²¹⁾; Collins and Blomley, 2003), observed⁽²²⁾ begging as the practice of pleading others to provide financial support like money, clothes or food with no anticipation of exchange or refund. However, many kinds of researchers supported that begging has a strong association with poverty⁽²³⁾. The Islamic teachings are very clear about begging as narrated in following Hadees:

“Do not turn away a poor man...even if all you can give is half a date. If you love the poor and bring them near you...God will bring you near Him on the Day of Resurrection.”⁽²⁴⁾

There are many begging groups who coerced common people into begging or some people are forced to beg⁽²⁵⁾ and keep the profit or take their share. In this connection Islamic teaching encourage to help the deserving and discourage the people to become comically immobilized. As reported by Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah said,

“It is better for anyone of you to carry a bundle of wood on his back and sell it than to beg of Someone whether he gives him or refuses.”⁽²⁶⁾

If we viewed the Islamic Ideology about the help of poor, it is a clear direction in Islam to its followers to pay alms or Zakat. It is the third pillar of Islam and it is mandatory for all Muslims, who meet the eligibility criteria of having Wealth in a whole year (as per Islamic Teaching), it is compulsory for them to pay zakat to the needy people. (Mustahqeen) with the purpose is to support the under privileged people. Through this kind of Islamic gesture for encouraging the help and support of poor, Islamic teaching is creating a bridge between elites and the poor through a supportive interaction in society. However, in the light of Islamic social norms, it is the moral and religious responsibility of a Man to provide basic food ,clothing and other

necessary requirement of life to the family .In this regards ,Islam does not imposed any financial responsibility to the women's shoulder. As per Fuqaha (Muslim Jurists)- A hadith of the Prophet ⁽²⁷⁾ asks men to provide food and clothing to their wives as they would provide for themselves. Allah SWT says in the Holy Quran:

“And for women are rights over men, similar to those of men over women.” ⁽²⁸⁾

And at other place Allah SWT says:

"And do not covet what Allah has given some of you more than others: the Men shall have their due share according to what they have earned and the Women shall have their share Al-Qalam June 2013 Islamic Perspective of Women's Employment (57) what they have earned. So pray to Allah for his bounty; most surely Allah has perfect knowledge of everything." ⁽²⁹⁾

At another verse Allah SWT says that:

“It is He Who has created you from a single person (Adam), and (then) He has created from him his wife (Eve), in order that he might enjoy the pleasure of living with her.”⁽³⁰⁾

In the context of Pakistan, as a Islamic country, Islamic legislation are strongly knotted and y influences the cultural norms and society's behavior.in this situation, there is no careful record is available about women's' involvement in begging and therefore due to the scarcity of the record, it is very difficult to define the history of women begging in the Country? Certainly, there are a number of social-cultural and political factors are involved to influence them in begging. The most important reason is surely weak economic status which leads to many problems for instance access to credit, unemployment, illiteracy. In Pakistan the currents statics reveal that women are among the less privileged segment of the society. Though Islamic laws clearly indicated the right of women in property, as mention in the Holy Quraan that:

"From what is left by parents and those nearest related there is a share for men and a share for women, whether the property be small or large --a determinate share".⁽³¹⁾

This is being reflected in various pointers – for example in female labor force participation. its rate was in 2003-2004 (LFS 2003-2004).Female labour force participation is extremely low because of early marriages, strong social and cultural influence on outside movement, low human capital, less opportunities ,over burden of household work.

From this study it is revealed that women’s beggars have being facing extremely bad experiences of discrimination in our society. Indeed, many of them are socially excluded from families, schools and getting lucrative jobs in the markets. During the process of data collection, it was shared by the respondents that due to social stigma and discrimination, mostly respondents mentioned that they are financially not secure. There is a need to treat them as human being by providing them legal support that affects their lives. Secondly, these beggars are deprived to get health treatment in a respectable manner as women. A majority of the respondents was disclosed that they are unable to share their health problems with doctors easily and they feel there is always a communication gap lies between doctors and them due to their extreme poverty, especially in the Government hospitals. This communication gap generally compounded by significant gaps in basic information about health care and creates lots of confusion about diseases and its proper treatment.

Objectives of the Study

This study was undertaken to identify the socio-economic status of women street beggars in Karachi. Following specific study objectives of this research:

- To explore the reasons of Muslim Women Street beggars in Karachi;
- To investigate the extent to the association between socioeconomic and cultural

Factors that influence the women towards begging;

- To find out the Islamic Perspective about women's responsibility.

Hypothesis

1. There is a significant relationship between the ethnic background of the Women beggars and their level of education
2. There is a significant relationship between residing conditions and Women beggars and begging as a profession.
3. There is a significant relationship between methods and practices of Begging & daily income of the Women beggar.

Methodology

This study was designed to collect the basic information about the available facilities their lifestyle and role of society towards the women beggars living in different areas of Karachi. The nature of this study is “exploratory” in which survey method was used as the research strategy. In this study, the researcher selected three districts of Karachi as the universe and selected 90 Muslim women as respondent after taking their consent for participation in the study. The population of the study was women respondents in the age bracket (14-70) living in Karachi. In this study, the researcher designed separate survey questionnaires for each respondent. After collecting data, the researcher developed tally sheets and then used simple frequency distribution tables to obtain simple frequencies and percentages using the chi-square method to test hypotheses and to verify the existence of a relationship between variables of hypothesis. Only those women beggars were included who have been engaged in begging since last three years for indept assessment of the phenomena. The data was analyzed and Pearson Chi-Square test was also performed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 for windows.

Discussion & Results

This research has been initiated to focus on socio –cultural determinants of begging with reference to Karachi city. About one hundred and forty street beggars (140) were interviewed; using self-administered questionnaires to collect each respondent's data. It is noticed that the demographic

characteristics like male population, female population, gender ratio and household size are significantly associated with socio-economic status. (See table 1)

It is revealed that majority of the respondents were married (35.9%) and having children (20.4%). As far as the residing conditions, interestingly, this research showed that (47.2%) beggars have their own property, mainly in slum areas or extent of informal settlements (26.8%). Approximate 28.9% of the respondents were stated that they living as a tenant in a rented house whereas others are living with relatives 22.5% respectively. During the process of data collection it was observed that women beggars are extremely stigmatizing and degrading in our society. Mostly, women beggars have to face harsh reaction on the street. Despite of the fact, still there are huge amount of women beggars appeared on streets in a Muslim country, especially in the month of Holy Ramadan in order to get sympathy and alms from others. It was also observed by the researcher, that many of them were very resourceful and deliberately has chosen this profession.

Another interesting and distressing finding is that the highest percentage of urban beggars (40.0%) having graduate degree, where as 27.7% of beggars, which belongs to rural background have completed their Matriculations. This results indicates that there is a missing link between quality of education and the economical consumption of the students. Furthermore, it was also noticed with great concerns that a high percentage of the respondents were reported that they worked as Part-time beggars (36.4%), whereas, 25.7% beggars were worked as full time job .In this regard, 18.6% beggars were used their small or weak children as a successful begging strategy to get the sympathy of the people. As fara as the job satisfaction is concerned, a majority of the respondents (41.4%) were not satisfied with this profession.

Testing of Hypotheses

Ho: There is a significant relationship between the ethnic background of the women beggars and their level of education.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.068 ^a	10	.810
Likelihood Ratio	7.558	10	.672
Linear-by-Linear Association	.674	1	.412
N of Valid Cases	90		

The above table indicates that $\chi(1) = 6.068^a$ $p = 0.810$

It is revealed from the interpretation of the data that there was no significant association between qualification of the beggars and their ethnic background. Phi is interpretable as a nonparametric correlation coefficient, and means just the same thing as the Pearson in terms of the strength and direction of the relationship between these two variables. In this case, $\phi = .810$, which is a weak positive relationship between the two variables. So, it can be concluded that **we reject the null hypothesis** and accept our alternative hypothesis.

Testing of Hypothesis No: 2

Ho: There is a significant relationship between residing conditions and begging as a profession.

Chi-Square Tests

Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
9.984 ^a	9	.352
10.344	9	.323
1.984	1	.159
90		

a. 1 cells (6.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.97. (p value : **0.351**)

Another finding is that majority of the respondents who have their own house in the city, worked as a part-time profession (34.5%). Whereas, 28.9%

of the full time beggars have their own houses in slums areas. This result tells us that there is statistically significant association between residing conditions and begging as a profession in the present study. Interestingly it shows that the majority of women beggars (respondents) have been associated with this profession as a part time job.

Testing of Hypothesis No: 3

The result indicates that a majority of the respondent earns Rs: 550-700 per day .The respondent disclosed that showing their weak or small children as a good strategy to earn money in this profession.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	36.346 ^a	36	.453
Likelihood Ratio	40.596	36	.275
Linear-by-Linear Association	.936	1	.333
N of Valid Cases	90		

a. 43 cells (87.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .37.(p value : **0.453**)

Furthermore, the result of the study also disclosed that the societal prejudice is too sturdy towards their presence at street. It was also revealed that a high number of respondent were showed their interests towards getting education, but due to poverty, prejudice, attitude in common people, they are unable to get an education. This study recommended that there is needs to take some practical step are needed for improvement in the status of women beggars in society and also for the health care facilities.

Nevertheless, women beggars faces many societal pressures and challenges, including growing, changing social relationships with family and peers, and the physical and emotional changes associated with economic dependence. Their physical appearance makes them as a socially different human being and a feeling of ugly autonomy in which turns into dependent in decision-making that may influence their health and health related behavior develops. These Behaviors mainly affect their personal issues such as mental health, alcohol and tobacco use, physical activity levels and even diet.

Conclusions

Before Islam, women were regarded dishonorable in the society. Even the birth of a female children were not socially acceptable in some culture of the world and mostly people buried their girl child alive, prostitution was most common and extensive, and the right of divorce was only in the hands of the husband, inheritance was only for the resilient, and oppression was commonly viewed in society Under that scenario, Islam came and eliminated these bad practices and encouraged the respect of women. Similarly, in “developed countries”, women are not allowed such respect, dignity and honour, even equal pay for equal work. Islam, however, regards women as priceless and treasured, not to be insulted or humiliated.

This study pointed out that homelessness, poverty; unemployment and family rejection are the connecting factors which are directly linked with begging. There is a strong social network regarded as a key component in the life of street beggars which provide a lot of support, protection and facilitate them in their personal, social, economic life as viewed by the present study. The researchers observed serious lapses in the maintenance of effective check and balance systems on the streets. This situation helps and facilitates the criminal beggars in performing their task. It can be concluded that bagging should be considered as a national problem and necessary policies must be designed for its reduction particularly imposed ban on female pan handling as it is against the Islamic norms.

Recommendations

On the basis of the above-mentioned analysis, this research suggests that:

- This research endorses that for controlling street begging and its contributing factors, policymakers and public authorities may implement multi-dimensional interventions on the basis of socio-religious and psycho-economic factors.
- This study strongly recommends that the government should take necessary vigilant, preventative and responsive steps for the

elimination of all types of begging especially criminal beggars and powerful mafia groups from society.

- There is a strong need to set or design the “eligibility criteria” for donation or charity through appropriate urban charity policy. There is a need to design a proper system for the welfare of genuinely deserving people in every community (Muhalla) or union council or town level. It is suggested that at the community level proper beggars' social aid record and documentation of genuine or deserving people is essential for the government in order to provide welfare assistance at their door step and controlling the beggars at street.
- Comprehensive policies are requisite to address this issue within proper legislative contexts. In this connection, Women beggars would not be allowed to work in the streets as per the socio- religious advice. It is suggested that women empowerment programs may be introduced specially in poor communities. The vocational training is very important to control this situation.
- Media campaigns can play a vital role in discouraging the begging practices. In this regards a proper advocacy campaign is needed for social mobilization at mass the level.

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31. Al- Qur'an Surah 4:7.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Beggars location of work	140	5.00	1.00	6.00	3.4571	1.80874	3.272
Income	140	6.00	1.00	7.00	4.6857	1.58267	2.505
MStatus	140	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.3286	1.33811	1.791
Residential Problems	140	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.5429	1.06191	1.128
Age	140	7.00	1.00	8.00	4.1571	1.87859	3.529
Qualificatin	140	7.00	1.00	8.00	5.1786	2.45028	6.004
profession	140	5.00	1.00	6.00	2.7214	1.40435	1.972
Major Cause of begging	140	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.2929	1.03532	1.072
satisfaction	140	7.00	1.00	8.00	4.2214	2.14599	4.605
sizeF	140	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.0214	.90933	.827
Ethnic Background	140	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.6214	1.08931	1.187
Practice	140	2.00	1.00	3.00	1.8571	.55712	.310
Future Plan about this professions	140	6.00	1.00	7.00	4.0714	2.04145	4.168
Valid N (list wise)	140	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.4071	1.22267	1.495

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Future Plan about this professions satisfaction	23.295	139	.000	2.40714	2.2028	2.6115
	26.303	139	.000	2.02143	1.8695	2.1734
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Qualification	22.929	139	.000	2.72143	2.4868	2.9561
Ethnic Background	39.442	139	.000	1.85714	1.7640	1.9502
	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Income Practice	35.031	139	.000	4.68571	4.4212	4.9502
	23.598	139	.000	4.07143	3.7303	4.4126
	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Residential profession	28.333	139	.000	2.54286	2.3654	2.7203
	26.204	139	.000	2.29286	2.1199	2.4659

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
VAR00002	140	5.00	1.00	6.00	3.4571	1.80874	3.272	-.041	.205
Problems	140	7.00	1.00	8.00	4.1571	1.87859	3.529	-.152	.205
Age	140	7.00	1.00	8.00	5.1786	2.45028	6.004	-.424	.205
Income	140	6.00	1.00	7.00	4.6857	1.58267	2.505	-.319	.205
VAR00004	140	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.4071	1.22267	1.495	.470	.205
Residential	140	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.5429	1.06191	1.128	-.059	.205
Status	140	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.3286	1.33811	1.791	.730	.205
Religion	140	2	1	3	1.44	.659	.435	1.234	.205
VAR00001	140	7.00	1.00	8.00	4.2214	2.14599	4.605	.151	.205
VAR00003	140	2.00	1.00	3.00	1.8571	.55712	.310	-.047	.205
Satisfaction	140	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.0214	.90933	.827	.598	.205
size	140	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.6214	1.08931	1.187	-.113	.205
Profession	140	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.2929	1.03532	1.072	.333	.205
Practice	140	6.00	1.00	7.00	4.0714	2.04145	4.168	-.062	.205
Qualification	140	5.00	1.00	6.00	2.7214	1.40435	1.972	.414	.205
Valid N (listwise)	140								

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Qualification	140	2.7214	1.40435	.11869
Ethnic Background	140	1.8571	.55712	.04709
Income	140	4.6857	1.58267	.13376
Practice	140	4.0714	2.04145	.17253
Residential	140	2.5429	1.06191	.08975
profession	140	2.2929	1.03532	.08750
Future Plan about this professions	140	2.4071	1.22267	.10333
satisfaction	140	2.0214	.90933	.07685