

Council of Islamic Ideology declared tobacco use as an 'un-Islamic' act

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ISLAMABAD, May 25: The Council of Islamic Ideology has declared the use of tobacco as an 'un-Islamic' act, the Network for Consumer Protection, a project of association for rational use of medication in Pakistan revealed on Tuesday.

A report prepared by the Network for Consumer Protection said tobacco was the main cause of avoidable diseases and preventable deaths in the world. According to estimates, worldwide mortality from tobacco is likely to rise from about 4 million deaths per year in 1998 to about 10 million per year in 2030, more than the total of deaths from malaria, maternal and major childhood conditions and tuberculosis combined.

Over 70 per cent of these deaths will occur in the developing world, the report added.

The Tobacco Free Initiative-Pakistan has sought the opinion of the Council of Islamic Ideology on tobacco use against the backdrop of decrees issued by the prestigious Islamic research institutions and renowned Muslim scholars around the world.

The Tobacco Free Initiative-Pakistan, a project of the Network for Consumer Protection, said the Muslim scholars from all schools of thought throughout the world had already decreed smoking as impermissible or 'Haram'.

According to the Muslim scholars, smoking is forbidden on the account of divine injunctions. "Eat and drink but never dissipate. And do not with your own hands cast yourself into destruction."

The report said the ruling of the Muslim scholars against smoking was delivered at the request of the World Health Organization, which sought their views on the issue of tobacco in light of the Quran and Sunnah.

"Smoking in whichever form and whichever means, causes extensive health and financial damage to smokers. It is also a cause of a variety of diseases. Consequently on this evidence smoking would be forbidden and should in no way be practiced by Muslims", said Sheikh Gadul Haq Ali Gadul Haq, a grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Cairo.

His ruling said to preserve one's health, wealth as well as that of society as a whole, and medical evidences now available on the dangers of smoking, further supported the views to declare smoking impermissible.

According to Dr Hamid Jamie, former secretary of Al-Azhar University and consultant for the Islamic Fiqh Encyclopedia, Kuwait: "The ruling which one feels most happy about which would leave our conscience clear is that smoking is 'Haram'. It is not wholesome due to its bad taste, bad smell and the serious health risks it causes."

"Having read the several medical reports on the facts of smoking and the risks it poses to health and society, I would say it is absolutely forbidden (Haram). Smokers should also stop smoking and non-smokers should never take up the habit," says Dr Abdul Galil Shalabi, a member of the Islamic Research Academy.