

Entertainment and Mass Media: An Analysis of Western and Islamic Concept of Recreation

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Abstract: *Entertainment and recreational activities are the basic necessities of human beings. Due to hectic life of modern technological world everybody needs amusements and entertainment to refresh the body and mind. In all the societies of the world events of amusement are arranged for the sake of recreation of the peoples. For this purpose, people arrange songs, dances, meeting of poets, plays, festivals, fairs, Stage shows, dramas and music shows according to their culture and customs. Today Film, TV and radio and social media have expanded the concept of recreation. The Western media has tried to utilized sports, music, singing, drinking, gambling, co-meetings, nakedness of women and obscenity as a weapon for making their programs interesting. Entertainment content of the mass media provides enjoyment and may nourish powers of aesthetic appreciation, so games, music, fashion, show business and even from decoration of houses to cooking is considered as recreation of human being. Muslim entertainment media is to somehow different from western entertainment and recreational media. This paper is meant to explore some distinguishing factors and ways of Islamic and Western styles of recreation and entertainment and the role of Muslim media in Muslim societies.*

Keywords: *Entertainment, Recreation, Islamic Concept, Western Concept, digital media, Vulgarity.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, the concept of recreation has been so vast, today; chatting on Internet, playing card, music, video games and mobile phones, all are recreations. It is human nature that after continuous work we feel boredom and tiredness. When we are tired physically and mentally we need rest and sound sleep but when wearer partially tired we need recreation and funny talking. All the kinds of amusement such as games, picnics, hiking, swimming and company of nature etc are necessary for balanced growth of human personality and physical freshness. We feel happiness, when we spend some time in any

recreational activities. We feel refreshed physically and mentally after recreation. In the modern age, media has become the major source to provide information, entertainment and recreation to the masses. So mass media present so many musical and other entertaining programs.

II. ENTERTAINMENT: MEANING AND DEFINITION

According to an English dictionary, "Entertainment means feast and amusement." Dictionary, (1993). "Recreation means pastime and relaxation." Dictionary, (1989). "TAFREEH is an Arabic word; it means happiness, smile and recreation. In Urdu, it means love, walk,

amusement and happiness. "To spend spare time for relaxation and happiness is called TAFREEH. Malik, (1998)." "Entertainment is the integral part of human life when we are tired we need a hobby or any light activity to refresh ourselves. On the other hand, the ways of relaxation are related with cultural concepts of different societies, Arshad, (1992)."

All the sociologists, psychologists and physiologists are agreed that Recreation, play and fun are the basic needs of human being. Play is essential for the development of physical health and skills. The weekend is usually a time for recreation of all cultures. Holidays are common time for recreation, though recreation may take place at any place and any time but it can commonly occur during an individual's discretion or free time. "Traditionally Olympics, music and dance serve as recreation in many cultures, as do sports, hobbies, games and tourism. On the other hand, watching TV, playing video games and listening to music are common forms of leisure." Wikipedia, (2007).

III. WESTERN CONCEPT OF RECREATION

It is fact that most of the western countries have secular and liberal societies, they have their own culture, traditions and way of life. They are so liberal that they do not follow their religious guidelines in their daily life, that's why they do not have certain limitations on eating, drinking and recreational activities in social life. But Muslims cannot ignore this reality that as culture and religious believers of every society is different, like wise there concept of recreation is always in accordance with their cultural norms. Unfortunately, West has distorted the concept of recreation because free sex activities are known as recreation. In America and Western countries pubs, nightclubs, singles clubs, Casinos, sea beaches, gays and lesbian clubs are the symbols of recreational places.

"In international sex market, women's beauty contest is a very popular activity; it was started in 1951 in Britain. In this competition, after careful checking and proper examination of body, award is given to the most beautiful and sexy girl.

Bumpy competition is a new and most popular competition in which prize is given to the most soft, round and deep Bumpy." Akbar,(2003).

"In the modern world, due to science and technology the sources of obscenity have been increased. Dance, clubs, sex markets, nightclubs, hotels and newspapers, magazines are the sources to promote obscenity and nudity." Nasir, (1990)

We can see the liberalism of west in every walk of life; for example, Bull fighting is the national sports of Spain, which is a very inhuman play. Boxing is also a very popular game in America and Western countries, in this play, points are given to that player who tries to hit the face of other boxer, this also inhuman play, Free-style Wrestling is considered to break bones of other wrestler, In another form of wrestling, fighting continued till the sharp injury or the death of one wrestler. In 2005, Eddie Guerrero, 38, was died during the fight. In this fight, a wrestler after severe fight hit his head with an iron chair. The tragic death of Eddie shocked the world of wrestling.

In ancient Roman civilization, slaves were compelled to provide recreation to ruling class. There were vast grounds, known as STADIUM, where Ruling class used to watch a fight between slave (gladiator) and hungry tigers, when a tiger killed any slave, the spectators used to clap and appreciate the fight. It was a popular game and a part of their recreational activities." Ashraf, (2007) "In Tamil Nado, India, Supreme Court has imposed banned on a barbarous play, in which people put red chilly in the eyes of an axe when axe angrily came out in the road side, they threw stones on him till he become severely injured and killed." Suhail, (2007). In the different villages of Pakistan chicken fight, bear and dogs fight, Batair fight, Teeter fight and snake-bite competition are very popular games and considered the main sources of recreation.

Indian and Western media have damaged the concept of recreation in Muslim societies. Pakistani media is on front line in advertising the vulgar music and dance, gambling, drinking usury co-meetings and the concept of Girl and Boys friends. There is no

concept of collective male and female gatherings in Islamic society because the nature of duties is different. Woman is not a candle of show but queen of her home. While it is the responsibility of male to earn living and provide protection but our media is advertising collective style of life by advertising and presenting collective meetings of men and women in their programs. There is vast difference between Islamic and western concepts of recreation. Western media allows recreational love stories and vulgar talking in dramas and plays. In western secular society the concept of moral values has been distorted. It is the reason that it has encouraged immorality, sexuality, and gathering of male and female due to their liberal and secular way of life. It has not only disturbed the family system but also generated new sexual diseases and psychological and mental diseases. Drinking, sexuality and music have nominated western concept of recreation. "Western concept of recreation has been given the name of skill to immorality, vulgar music and dance, and immoral films are acceptable as a skill there because recreation and amusement is allowed through moral or immoral means." Alnajjar, (1992).

IV. ISLAMIC CONCEPT OF RECREATION

Islamic concept of recreation is based on Islamic teachings (Al-Quraan and Sunnah) in which distinction between Halal and Haram, Virtue and Vice and decency and vulgarity has got importance. Muhammad SAW said that vulgarity makes the things bad and ugly while decency makes them fine and decorous. Purposeful recreation is allowed and encouraged in Islam. In a Muslim society, where Islamic Law and traditions are in practice, only that recreation is acceptable which is in accordance with Islamic traditions and norms. Islam encourages all those games and recreations, which are in moral limits and are helpful in physical and mental refreshment and are helpful in building a pious character and personality." Akbar, (2003)

The main purpose of Recreation is to provide satisfaction to the aesthetic taste of human being. In Islamic concept of recreation, one can enjoy painting, poetry, drama, tableau, songs and

natural beauty of the universe, for the better health of human being; exercise is encouraged in Islamic teachings. In Arab, during pre-Islamic period the concept of various physical activities and festivals prevailed very dominantly. Akaz and zulmajnah were very famous and popular festivals at that time. People from surrounding areas did participate and compete in events like wrestling, weightlifting, horse riding, fencing, archery and races etc. Hazarat Umar (RATU) participated in wrestling and won. Hazrat Ali (RATU) was a renowned wrestler and a weightlifter at that time. Strength, respect and courage were the symbols of prestige.

Islam encourages healthy activities and sports. In a Hadith Hazarat Abbas quotes from Holy prophet (SAW), "best game for men is swimming and for women is weaving". According to expert in the field of physical education and sports, swimming is among the best exercise for overall development of human body and physique and for the maintenance of good health. On the other hand, weaving is not only light exercise, easily manageable for women at their homes, but at the same time it is an art and skill, helpful in extra earning an fulfilling the domestic requirements. Salma Ibne Rak quotes that once a race was held before the Prophet. He witnessed it and enjoyed as well. According to Hazrat Aaisha (RATU), during a journey, the Prophet and she herself ran for a race that she won, she says that after quite some time on another occasion the prophet (SAW) challenged her for a race competition and this time the Prophet remained the winner.

"Horse racing was among the events, which was very popular among the Muslims at those times. In this regards it is quite notable that a particular area was specified for races. The prophet himself once participated in such a race and won. In addition to horse racing, the races of camels were also popular in Arab. Anyhow it is quite clear that not only in the events of racing but in any kind sports activity, there was no of gambling or any other type of malpractice or corruption in Muslims at that times was to provide a base, an institution or forum for training the requisite

skills and providing positive recreation, not aimed at wastage of time but to use the time more purposefully and productively.” Jamil, (2002). Hazrat Ans (R.A) said that “a man named Zahir, belong to a village and he used to bring vegetables for Muhammad (SAW) when he returned back Muhammad (SAW) gave him some city goods and said Zahir is our village and we are like a city for him.” Mashriq, (2008). “Islam allows all types of recreation within the conditioned and limits of Halal activities. Muslim society can provide recreational activities so that people’s personal qualities may be saved. Islam emphasis on practical, military, physical exercise and not purposeless activities, which aims just to kill the time.” Siddiqui, (1992).

“Muhammad (SAW) said that every act of human being, which is without fear of Allah is a missing and negligence, except 4 acts, 1.to run towards the target of arrow 2.to train horses 3.to laugh with home fellows 4.to learn swimming.” Akbar, (2003). According to the teachings of Islam this world is examination hall so this precious span of time cannot be wasted in enjoyment and negative activities. The duration of lifetime is a period of test and examination for human being. After death, everybody has to answer before Allah about the time spend in this world, so life time should not be wasted in gossip and purposeless activities Al-Quran says,

“O ye who believe! Observe your duty to Allah. And let every soul look to that which it sendeth on before for the morrow. And observe your duty to Allah! Lo! Allah is informed of what ye do.” (Alquran, Al-Hasher-18). According to Islamic teachings, Shaitan has promised to Allah that he will misguide the humanity that’s why Shaitan is using social, economic, psychological, ideological and recreational methods to lead the humanity towards the path of evils. One of the soft aspect of recreation is fun and humor but it should be so decent that it should not hurt the aesthetic taste of human being, purposeless talk, vulgar sentences, back-biting and double meaning conversation should be avoided. In Islamic teaching, calling with bad

names, parody, back-biting and to hurt others feelings are prohibited. Quran says,

“O ye who believe! Let not a folk deride a folk who may be better than they are, nor let women deride women who may be better than they are; neither defames one another, nor insults one another by nick-names. Bad is the name of lewdness after faith. And who so turneth not repentance, such are evil-doer.” (Al-Quraan, Al-Hujrat-11). “Western media is encouraging nakedness, immoral music and poetry, drinking, gambling and usury in the certain of recreation and amusement. It is resulting in social immorality mental and physical disturbance and sexuality. It is not recreation but immorality and vulgarity. To relate such activities with games and hobbies, which are not source of recreation, is a blunder; some people count gambling and drinking in games and recreation but it is not an Islamic view.” Badakhshani, (1992). Drinking wine and gambling are Haram acts. According to Al-Quran,

“O ye who believe! Strong drink and game of chance and idols and diving arrows are only an infamy of Satan, s handi-work. Leave it aside in order that ye may succeed.” (Al-Quraan, Al-maida-90).

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This skill has played a pivotal role in spreading immorality and displeasing people from religion and morality and disturbing family system. It is signs can be openly seen in western life. The conscience of people related with this media does not accept these sins as a sin. They think it proud able art and skill and think it as service of humanity. Their condition is pitiable because thinking of sin, as skill is very dangerous. The people who are related with film industry their dress; their high standard of life has attraction for unrealistic people. Our youngsters look them with regret and wish to be like them. But no one can look in his or her barren souls. They have all facilities but deprived of psychological and spiritual satisfaction. They try to get spiritual and psychological satisfaction but they have lost the real path of such kind of satisfaction. They have attraction for appearance

reader but realist prays, after seeing their interval bareness that God don't punish so even to an enemy. If the punishment of sin is so horrible in this world then what will be its punishment in world after it.

In the past, this film exhibition was limited only to Cinema halls or particular places but TV, VCR, Dish Antenna, cable network and Internet cafes have so spread. This sexuality in Mohallas, streets and houses has changed every house into cinema hall. Satellite Channels, cable Network and Internet cafés has crushed our new generation morally. Children are naturally inclined towards these vulgar and immoral acts. The recreation or amusement has crushed their religious moral, physical and psychological thoughts and energies. Many children become mature before time and their sexual emotions are inspired which are satisfied through unnatural ways. It causes many sexual diseases. Due to mental immaturity and shyness they cannot tell to their parents and relatives. Their parents ignore them as innocent children. Women's exhibition of beauty accelerates their sexual emotions.

Above discussion reveals that there is a great difference between the entertainment concepts of West and Muslim societies. Drinking, gambling, obscenity, brutality in sports and mix gathering of men and women may be recreational activities in the West and America but all these are Haram and prohibited in Islam. So Muslim media should not present and promote such recreational activities. It is suggested that reasonable play and recreational facilities are quite necessary for the masses as in modern age because it is a great problem to spend the leisure hours. If the leisure time of the masses is spent in better recreational and play activities, their attention can be diverted towards constructive activities. Play and games can be the best means for the outlet of surplus energies and can also help in creating a sense of healthy competition. However, some Islamic countries are also trying to catch the audiences through vulgar and cheap media portrayals in the name of recreation. Many a time, a media outlet try to have stuff from foreign news agencies and they telecast it in the same way for example a fashion show or a model show.

Mass media is promoting obscenity and vulgarity in the name of fun, humor and entertainment. Actually media is distorting the aesthetic taste of people, media crushing the social and ethical values of the society. Media is considered the agent of social change and it is bringing change in the behavior and habits of the people, so media should present purposeful entertaining programs, which should have education, entertainment and reformation for the society.

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