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**Social Consequences of the Misuse of Language and their Solutions: A Quranic Perspective**

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**Abstract**

*This qualitative study aims to find out the solution to selected social issues and their implications that take place due to misuse of language. The solution to these issues is intended to be sorted out from the Quranic perspective. The researchers targeted 10 social issues through purposive sampling: lying, backbiting, hypocrisy, rumor, hate speech, disinformation, ridicule, bullying, slandering, and insulting. The researchers attempted to find out the solution to these social issues from the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. The social implications of these issues were analyzed with the help of the theory of Content Analysis by Lasswell (1975). The Qur'anic verses and their perspectives were explained with the help of Hermeneutics. The study stands as a piece of evidence that the Holy Quran is a complete code of life. The study may be useful to find out the solutions to various other social-cum-linguistic issues through the teachings of the Holy Quran.*

**Keywords:** Social Issues, Language Use, Quranic Perspective, Hermeneutics, Content Analysis

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## Title

### Social Consequences of the Misuse of Language and their Solutions: A Quranic Perspective

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## Abstract

*This qualitative study aims to find out the solution to selected social issues and their implications that take place due to misuse of language. The solution to these issues is intended to be sorted out from the Quranic perspective. The researchers targeted 10 social issues through purposive sampling: lying, backbiting, hypocrisy, rumor, hate speech, disinformation, ridicule, bullying, slandering, and insulting. The researchers attempted to find out the solution to these social issues from the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. The social implications of these issues were analyzed with the help of the theory of Content Analysis by Lasswell (1975). The Qur'anic verses and their perspectives were explained with the help of Hermeneutics. The study stands as a piece of evidence that the Holy Quran is a complete code of life. The study may be useful to find out the solutions to various other social-cum-linguistic issues through the teachings of the Holy Quran.*

## Keywords:

[Social Issues](#), [Language Use](#), [Quranic Perspective](#), [Hermeneutics](#), [Content Analysis](#)

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## Introduction

Society is as much the product of individuals as individuals are the product of society. Social interaction is one of the fundamental needs of human beings. No human can exist or survive all alone. For Aristotle, "We are social beings, and this is no mere accident; it is who we are. If you sanely delight in solitude, you are not a human being—either something lower ("wild beast") or higher ("a god")". <https://www.quora.com/Aristotle-said-Whosever-is-delighted-in-solitude-is-either-a-wild-beast-or-a-god-How-do-you-relate-to-it>

Similarly, Saxe (2020) believes that human well-being is present in social intimation. Whenever humans interact, the occurrence of a social problem is inevitable. Hornell (1923, p.345) defines a social problem to be a problem that affects all humans in the same way. A social problem can be the result of various factors including misuse of language.

Language is a ubiquitous phenomenon. It is a tool of interaction among humans. Humans use language to communicate their thoughts, emotions, and messages (Hassan, et al. 2024; Breeze & Hassan, 2024). Language is one of the greatest gifts humans have received from Allah. If there were no language



on the face of the earth, life would become miserable. The presence of language for human existence is as paramount as the existence itself. The use of language results in various functions inevitably. Banga et.al (2015) has observed that language plays a very important role in the development of personality and cognitive skills. It is through the use of language that humans let others know what they feel about certain things. Moreover, language plays an important role in the intellectual, personal, educational, and social development of human beings.

As the use of language is very crucial and beneficial for human existence and social interaction, the misuse of language creates a list of societal and personal issues. The abuse of language by individuals, institutions, social groups media, etc. can be lethal. It can even distort the social order and social peace subsequently leading the society to chaos. Nwedo and Chibgo (2022) rightly observe that various social issues and conflicts arise from the misuse of language. Adamu (2013, p. 82) cites Manoff (2011) on the origin of a conflict and describes that conflict is the result of misuse of language. Hence, the correct use of language is very important for social balance, order, and peace.

Social evils such as lying, backbiting, hypocrisy, mongering, slandering, rumors, hate speech, harassment, derogation, propaganda, bullying, gaslighting, and mis/disinformation all are very toxic to social poise. All of these evils are the result of misuse of language. These evils do not involve any sort of physical combat or violence at all. As these evils/issues breed from the misuse of language, these issues can be solved and settled through the right use of language.

The Holy Quran is a sacred book of Muslims (Abdullah, 2019). This is a divine book and is revealed to the last apostle of Allah: Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). This divine book contains a universal message in it (Abdullah & Jamil, 2017). This book is a beacon of light for all humans irrespective of time, space, geography, and religious beliefs of the individuals. This book provides guidelines for all aspects of life. It is a complete code of life. Haider (2015) notes that the Holy Quran contains a universal

message, and it provides people the guidelines to differentiate between good and evil and live peacefully on the face of Earth.

Not only does the Holy Quran provide guidelines on all aspects of life but also provides a complete guideline on speech ethics. Irwandi (2019) explains that the Holy Quran presents a complete guideline on the ethics of speech comprising truthful speech, gentle speech, accepted speech, noble speech, etc. The adaptation of the speech ethics of the Holy Quran can be the solution to all the social issues that start with the misuse of language. The current study aims to discover the Quranic guidelines on speech through which the social issues created by the misuse of language can be solved.

### Research Objectives

1. To explicate the guidelines of the Holy Quran on selected social issues related to the misuse of language and its implications.

### Research Questions

1. How does the Holy Quran guide the use of language to provide solutions to the social issues occurring from the misuse of language?

### Background of the Study

Since the time society came into existence, human society has been marked with many social issues such as inequity, injustice, exploitation of human rights, disturbance in family relationships, gender discrimination, etc. Religious scholars, particularly Muslim scholars, have written various translations and interpretations of the Holy Quran. Also, they have provided comprehensive details on how the Holy Quran provides solutions to the social problems humans are faced with (Hassan, 2022). All of this has been carried out with the help of philosophical lenses. It still seems to be found how the Holy Quran provides guidelines on the solutions to the social problems that start as a result of misuse of language.

### Literature Review

In this section, past studies are reviewed which would help advance the understanding of the readers about the Qur'anic perspectives on various social issues. Khan and Hussain (2022) conducted a qualitative study and found that all the social issues of Pakistan could be solved in the light of the guidelines provided by the Holy Quran. Their findings revealed that adaptation of the Quranic principles of economics could bring a revolutionary change in economic and other social issues. In the same way, Mohsin and Shaista (2021) conducted a qualitative study on issues in Pakistan including economy and disaster management, and concluded that the Holy Quran provided a plausible solution to these problems.

Awaru et.al (2021) researched the Islamization of the social sciences and concluded that Islam and social sciences didn't seem compatible; Islam was a much better and complete code of life. Similarly, Syed (2020) conducted qualitative research and concluded that problems such as lack of justice, superstitions, adherence to the customs of non-Muslims, the trend of listening to music and watching dance, and an interest-based economy could be ended through the guidelines of the holy Quran. In the same vein, Hassan et.al (2020) conducted a concurrent study and found out that whenever language about Islam and Muslims was used, it was misused. Such choice of language causes social evils with the misuse of language. Correspondingly, Irwandi (2019) made a very crucial argument on the Quranic perspectives of language. He presented the Quranic ethics of speech which can be beneficial to solve social issues. Yet, he has not specifically mentioned the specific speech-related issues. Saleem et.al (2019) conducted descriptive research and concluded that the origin of language started from God when he communicated with angels. Shah (2011) conducted qualitative research and revealed that the Quran provided the foundations of modern-day linguistics theories such as Mentalism, Behaviorism, and Signs and Signifiers.

However, researchers from the field of sociology have also conducted studies to suggest solutions to social problems related to humans. Khan et.al (2021) conducted a qualitative study. They looked into social problems such as child labor, obesity, child

marriage illiteracy, etc., and concluded that the problems would increase in the future and demand more schools, colleges, universities food, etc. The researchers recommended that the developed countries of the world not only look into the problems of their own countries but also the problems of other countries of the world. Gilligan (2005) conducted a study on social problems and their possible solutions. He focused on anti-social behavior issues and suggested that there was only a radical or reformist way to deal with this issue.

Studies from both the aspects: religious and social have been done for the solution of the social issues. However, based on the limited review of the past studies, it seems to the researchers that no study has been conducted before on the issues that are created by the misuse of language and can be solved with the use of language in the light of guidelines of the holy Quran. Therefore, the Quranic guidelines on the issues related to the misuse of language can fill the existing gap in knowledge and can solve real-world social problem(s).

## **Methodology**

The right use of methodology plays an important role in any good research. Some significant methodological elements of the study are delineated here. Verses of the holy Quran have been selected through purposive random sampling which present solutions to the social problems emerging due to the misuse of language. A list of 10 social issues has been selected which are prevailing because of the misuse of language. The list entails lying, backbiting, hypocrisy, rumor, hate speech, disinformation, ridicule, bullying, slandering, and insulting. The data has been analyzed qualitatively with the help of the theory of Hermeneutics and Content Analysis (Lasswell, 1975). The theory of Hermeneutics is a methodology of interpretation of a text. The theory/methodology mainly deals with biblical texts, wisdom literature, and texts of philosophy. In a time of need, it can also deal with the art of understanding and communication. Since the Holy Quran is a combination of all, a divine text, literature of the highest wisdom, and universal philosophy; this

method of qualitative analysis is suitable for the present study as well. Hermeneutics is a wider and broader discipline that includes verbal, non-verbal, and written communication. Content Analysis deals with the interpretation of a written or spoken text based on its context and usage.

### **Analysis and Discussion:**

#### **Social Issue Caused by Misuse of Language: Lie**

Social Implication: Lie is one of the major issues that stem from the misuse of language. A lie is a problem that purely begins with the misuse of language. Lie is considered to be the mother of all the sins. Moreover, a large number of social issues come into existence as a result of telling lies. These issues entail mistrust, dishonor, disrespect, normalized dishonesty, and psychological as well as ethical consequences.

Guideline from the Quran: The Holy Quran provides warnings as well as guidelines to solve the issue of lying which is the result of misuse of language. The lie is one of the greatest sins which have been detested by Allah Almighty. The Almighty Allah manifests His hatred for a liar:

“And, invoke the curse of Allah upon liars.” (Al-Quran 3:61)

The Holy Quran does not merely provide a warning and frighten the believers and disbelievers; it also provides the guideline on this issue. The principle of speech has been demonstrated in the holy Quran:

"Always speak the truth. Shun the words that are deceitful or ostentatious" (Al-Quran 22:30)

Similarly, on another occasion, the holy Quran clearly states the value of speaking the truth. It reads:

“Don’t confound truth with falsehood” (Al-Quran 2:42)

If we follow the speaking principles described in the Holy Quran and keep in mind the warning given by Allah for lying, this social issue will be resolved significantly.

#### **Social Issue Caused by Misuse of Language: Backbiting**

Social Implication: Not unlike lies, backbiting is also one of the issues that appear because of the misuse of language. It refers to speaking badly about someone when s/he is not present. It has many personal, psychological, and social implications. It can damage relationships, erode trust; generate hypocrisy, promote double standards, create a toxic atmosphere, and develop mental health issues.

Guideline from the Quran: Here again, the holy Quran warns as well as guides how to speak to culminate the issue of backbiting. Its severity is explicitly mentioned in the holy Quran:

“And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Merciful and accepts repentance” (Al-Quran: 49:12)

The Quran puts forward a clear direction on the issue of backbiting. It states:

“Don’t backbite one another” (Al-Quran: 49:12)

The holy Quran clearly and explicitly forbids humans to backbite as it is an abhorring act and provides clear instructions on this issue. If society follows this principle contrived by Allah, the problem of backbiting can easily be abolished from the society. So, the fear of Allah and answerability to Allah can stop humans from backbiting.

#### **Social Issue Caused by Misuse of Language: Hypocrisy**

Social Implication: Hypocrisy is another issue that starts with the misuse of language and affects social settings a great deal. It occurs when someone talks about something otherwise than what s/he has in his/her heart. It creates many adverse effects on society including double standards, loss of credibility, truth, and trust. Hypocrisy can bring social chaos and disturb social cohesion in multiple ways.

Guideline from the Quran: Like all other issues concerning human life, the holy Quran gives clear directions and guidelines to avoid this evil of hypocrisy. The holy Quran states:

“Say with your mouth what is in your heart.” (Al-Quran: 3:167)

Here again, there is a clear guideline from the holy Quran that if we start to say what we have in our hearts. Through this guideline, the problem of hypocrisy can be reduced and ultimately eradicated from society.

### **Social Issue Caused by Misuse of Language: Rumor**

**Social Implication:** A rumor is a piece of information that is circulated without having any solid or proper evidence. It is a baseless talk about individuals, communities, or even events. Rumor, like all other vices that start from the misuse of language, has multiple social implications including loss of reputation, social unrest, conflict or disturbance, social division, etc. Rumor can also reduce the credibility of the person and undermine his social worth.

**Guideline from the Quran:** The holy Quran gives clear directions and guidelines on how this evil or issue can be reduced with the help of the right choice of language. The holy Quran demonstrates:

“Ascertain the truth of any news, lest you smite someone in ignorance and afterward repent of what you did.” (Al- Quran: 49:6)

There is a clear instruction from the holy Quran that leaving the vain acts of speech and action can help reduce the element of rumor in society. Moreover, the holy Quran provides a roadmap to eradicate the issue of rumors from society. It suggests that one should not speak without proof. If there is no proof, there is no need to say useless things against anyone. It is very lethal to speak baseless things.

### **Social Issue Caused by Misuse of Language: Hate speech**

**Social Implication:** Hate speech is also the result of misuse of language. The emotions of hate are expressed through the misuse of language. Hate speech can lead to many social consequences such as disturbance of social cohesion, inflammation of disrespect, psychological problems, etc.

**Guideline from the Quran:** The holy Quran also provides clear instructions on how to deal with the problem of hate speech. The Holy Quran says:

“Choose the best words and say them in the best possible way.” (Al-Quran: 17:53& 2:83)

As hate speech is the result of emotions of anguish and abhorrence and the choice of language of the speaker is always bad, the holy Quran guides over it. If a person chooses good words to communicate his emotions, despite anger and dislike, the problem of hate speech can be eradicated from society.

### **Social Issue Caused by Misuse of Language: M/disinformation**

**Social Implication:** M/disinformation is another social problem that is an outcome of the misuse of language. M/disinformation spreads from the misuse of language. It has various social implications which entail mistrust, social division, threat to democracy, and loss of honor and respect of the individual and institutions alike.

**Guideline from the Quran:** M/disinformation is a form of deception that is carried out with the misuse of language. The Holy Quran very plainly demonstrates the solution to this problem. The holy Quran says:

“Talk straight, to the point without any ambiguity or deception.” (Al-Quran: 33: 70)

It is clear that if a person speaks, straight, and to the point, there will be no possibility of deception or misinformation at all. It is evident that by following the speech guidelines given in the Holy Quran, the problem of m/disinformation can be ended in society.

### **Social Issue Caused by Misuse of Language: Ridicule**

**Social Implication:** Ridiculing is another problem that springs from the misuse of language. This has become very common for people to ridicule others out of fun or sarcasm. This results in many social implications. First of all, it can hurt personal and professional relationships. Similarly, it can harm the self-respect of the person being ridiculed leading the



person to mental and psychological torture. The person being ridiculed suffers from emotional pain and agony. In the same way, it can lead to bullying behavior as well. This can bring chaos and disturbance in the society.

Guideline from the Quran: Like all other social issues that occur from the misuse of language the Holy Quran provides clear guidance on this issue as well. The holy Quran openly states:

“Don’t make mockery of others or ridicule others.” (Al-Quran: 49:11)

The Holy Quran forbids ridiculing others and making fun of others. If people in society don't mock others, this can escalate social harmony, respect, trust, and honor among the people. The linguistic principle of the holy Quran provides complete and clear guidelines on how to avoid the social issue of mockery/ridicule in society.

### **Social Issue Caused by Misuse of Language: Bullying**

**Social Implication:** One of the most commonly practiced evils with the misuse of language is bullying. Bullying takes place when a person tries to harm others either with his actions or misuse of language. It causes insult, disrespect, emotional pain, harm, and distress to the person facing it. It is a symbol of the power dynamic. Bullying has multifaceted social implications. It affects society, individuals, and communities by and large. It creates social insecurity and mistrust. This may cause a culture of violence and aggression.

Guideline from the Quran: The Holy Quran also provides practical solutions to the social problem of bullying. The holy Quran says:

“Speak in a civilized manner in a language that is recognized by the society and is commonly used.” (Al-Quran: 4:5)

This is quite evident from this verse that to get rid of the issue of bullying from society, it is inevitable to adopt the criterion of accepted speech. The people should adopt the same pattern of speech which they want to receive from others. The Holy Quran explicitly and emphatically declares that the

issue of bullying can be eradicated in two ways: first by speaking in a civilized manner and secondly, by using the language that is commonly used in society. As most of the society if not the entire uses civilized speech, adhering to this yardstick of the use of language put forth in the Holy Quran can eradicate the social issue of bullying.

### **Social Issue Caused by Misuse of Language: Slandering**

**Social Implication:** Another social issue that spasms from the misuse of language is slandering. Slandering is referred to as an act of making damaging and false statements about people. This is done just because of vilifying the reputation and assassination of the character of someone. Slandering can result in many social implications. It gives rise to mistrust and loss of personal and professional relationships. Moreover, it can distort social harmony and create social and personal conflicts.

Guideline from the Quran: Like all other issues, the speech ethics of the Holy Quran provide guidelines on the solution of the issue of slandering as well. It is stated in the Holy Quran that:

When you hear something malicious about someone, keep a favorable view of him/ her until you attain full knowledge about the matter. Consider others innocent until they are proven guilty with solid and truthful evidence. (Al-Quran: 24:12-13)

This verse of the Holy Quran advises people to construct positive opinions about others. No information about others should be accepted until solid evidence is presented. Even an accused should be considered innocent until solid proof is produced against the accused. This culture can nurture trust, better understanding, and justice in the communities.

### **Social Issue Caused by Misuse of Language: Insult**

**Social Implication:** The act of insulting is also an outcome of the misuse of language. This act takes place when foul language is used by individuals, societies, or communities. This act begins at personal

level and extends to a social and communal level. Insulting other people, their religions, deities, and religious beliefs creates a lot of social disorder, anarchy, enmity, and even violence at times. Insult can close open communication and individuals may feel unwilling to engage freely in a talk. In terms of insulting others' religions etc., we invite others to insult our religions and deities.

*Guidelines from the Quran:* The holy Quran provides guidelines to culminate the issue of insult. It defines criteria and principles which can be of great assistance to end the vice of insult. The Holy Quran reads:

"And do not insult those whom they invoke other than Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge. Thus, we have made pleasing to every community their deeds. Then to their Lord is their return and He will inform them about what they used to do. (Al-Quran: 6:108)

In this verse, the Holy Quran provides guidelines that the believers should not disrespect the gods of the non-believers otherwise they will insult their religion and deities. This may result in further social evils such as aggression, and intolerance. There is an implied advice in the verse that the response of insult is insult and respect and tolerance brings back respect and tolerance.

During the study, the data have shown that certain issues in society start only with the misuse of language. These issues bring many social implications. The data have further elucidated that the Holy Quran has presented a complete code of speech and given humans a thorough speech manner to adopt and avoid social issues taking place because of the misuse of language. Moreover, the data have

highlighted that the Holy Quran has both guided and warned humans to avoid misusing the language. There are certain occasions, as far as the limited data given here, that the Holy Quran provides a compressive speech ethics which if humans follow, can bring social harmony, respect, trust, honor, and mutual love as a result of eradicating the misuse of language in the society.

## **Conclusion**

This study was conducted with two major aims. Firstly, it aimed to investigate the social issues that take place because of the misuse of language and what implications are caused by these issues in society. Secondly, the study aimed to find out the solutions for these social issues from the Qur'anic Perspective. The Holy Quran is a universal guide for all humans irrespective of their religion, culture, and region. The Holy Quran is a linguistic miracle. The Holy Quran has established such criteria and speech ethic-philosophy that by following its communicative principles, the social problems that spring up with the misuse of language can be easily resolved. Trust can be turned into trust. Deception can be converted into honesty and hypocrisy can be turned into purity of relations. By following the speech codes, directions and guidelines offered by the Holy Quran, social chaos and disturbance can be easily turned into social harmony and synchronization. In the future, the research doors are open to investigating solutions to various social issues such as inequality, injustice, violation of human rights, and social discrimination through the linguistic choices and speech ethics of the Holy Quran.

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