Signatures for right-handed neutrinos at the Large Hadron Collider

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We explore possible signatures for right-handed neutrinos in TeV scale \( B - L \) extension of the Standard Model (SM) at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC). The studied four lepton signal has a tiny SM background. We find the signal experimentally accessible at LHC for the considered parameter regions.

The fact that neutrinos are massive indicates a firm evidence of new physics beyond the Standard Model (SM). The most attractive mechanism that can naturally account for the small neutrino masses is the seesaw mechanism. In this case, three heavy singlet (right-handed) neutrinos \( \nu_R \) are invoked. Recently, a low scale \( B - L \) symmetry breaking has been considered, based on the gauge group \( SU(3)_C \otimes SU(2)_L \otimes U(1)_Y \otimes U(1)_{B-L} \). This model provides a natural explanation for the presence of three right-handed neutrinos and can account for the current experimental results of the light neutrino masses and their mixings.

In \( B - L \) extension of the SM, the right-handed neutrinos acquire the following masses after the symmetry breaking: \( M_{\nu_R} = \frac{1}{2} \lambda_{\nu_R} \nu^\dagger \nu \), where \( \nu^\dagger \) is the scale of \( B - L \) breaking. Similar to the electroweak symmetry, the scale of \( B - L \) can be linked to the supersymmetry breaking scale at the observed sector, with the \( B - L \) symmetry radiatively broken at TeV scale. Thus, the right-handed neutrino mass can be of order \( \mathcal{O}(100) \) GeV, depending on the value of the Yukawa couplings \( \lambda_{\nu_R} \) which augurs well for its direct search at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC).

In addition, one extra neutral gauge boson \( (Z') \) corresponding to \( B - L \) gauge symmetry is predicted in this type of models. This gauge boson couples to both the SM fermions and right-handed neutrinos through the non-vanishing \( B - L \) quantum numbers and gives the dominant contribution to the production of the right-handed neutrino at LHC. It is worth noting that in the SM extended with right-handed neutrinos, this production at LHC, is mainly through the exchange of \( W \) boson, and is thus suppressed by the small mixing between light and heavy neutrinos.

The aim of this letter is to analyze the LHC discovery potential for the lightest right-handed neutrino in TeV scale \( B - L \) extension of the SM. We provide a detailed phenomenological analysis for such a neutrino and show that the right-handed neutrinos are accessible via a clean signal at LHC. Our results indicate that observation of \( \nu_R \) signals at LHC would significantly distinguish between TeV scale \( B - L \) extension of the SM and other scenarios for SM extended with right-handed neutrinos.

In the minimal version of the \( B - L \)–type extension of the SM, the interactions between right-handed neutrino and matter fields are described by the Lagrangian

\[
\mathcal{L}_{\nu_R} = i \bar{\nu}_R D_{\mu} \gamma^\mu \nu_R - (\lambda_{\nu_R} \bar{\nu}_R \nu_R + \frac{1}{2} \lambda_{\nu_R} \bar{\nu}_R \nu_R + h.c.) - V(\phi, \chi)
\]

where the covariant derivative \( D_{\mu} \) is defined as \( D_{\mu} \nu_R = (\partial_{\mu} - ig(Y_B - L)Z^\mu) \nu_R \), where \( g(Y_B - L) \) is the \( B - L \) gauge coupling constant and \( Y_{B-L} \) is the corresponding \( B - L \) charge. \( \lambda_{\nu_R} \) and \( \lambda_{\nu_R} \) refer to the \( 3 \times 3 \) Yukawa matrices. The scalar potential \( V(\phi, \chi) \) for the two scalars \( \phi \) and \( \chi \) is defined by

\[
V(\phi, \chi) = m_1^2 \phi^\dagger \phi + m_2^2 \chi^\dagger \chi + \lambda_1 (\phi^\dagger \phi)^2 + \lambda_2 (\chi^\dagger \chi)^2 + \lambda_3 (\phi^\dagger \phi)(\chi^\dagger \chi),
\]

where \( \lambda_3 > 2\sqrt{\lambda_1 \lambda_2} \) and \( \lambda_1, \lambda_2 \geq 0 \) so that the potential is bounded from below. The field \( \phi \) is the usual SM doublet while \( \chi \) is a SM singlet complex scalar field, responsible for the spontaneous breaking of the \( B - L \) symmetry. After the breakdown of the \( B - L \) and electroweak symmetry, mixing between \( \phi \) and \( \chi \) and also between \( \nu_L \) and \( \nu_R \) are generated. These mixings initiate new interactions between the right-handed neutrinos and the SM particles.

The mixing between the neutral scalar components of Higgs multiplets, \( \phi^0 \) and \( \chi^0 \), leads to the following mass eigenstates, which we define as \( H \) (SM-like Higgs boson) and \( H' \) (heavy Higgs boson):

\[
\begin{pmatrix}
H \\
H'
\end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix}
\cos \alpha & -\sin \alpha \\
\sin \alpha & \cos \alpha
\end{pmatrix}
\begin{pmatrix}
\phi^0 \\
\chi^0
\end{pmatrix},
\]

where \( \alpha \) is the Higgs mixing angle which is given by

\[
\tan 2\alpha = \frac{|\lambda_3| v' v}{\lambda_1 v^2 - \lambda_2 v'^2},
\]

while \( v \) and \( v' \) are the vacuum expectation values (VEV) given to \( \phi \) and \( \chi \) respectively. On the other hand, the mixing between \( \nu_L \) and \( \nu_R \) can be represented by the following \( 6 \times 6 \) mass matrix:

\[
M(\nu_L, \nu_R) = \begin{pmatrix}
0 & m_D^T \\
m_D & M_R
\end{pmatrix},
\]

where \( m_D \) is the Dirac neutrino mass matrix and \( M_R \) is the see-saw scale.

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of the lightest heavy neutrino to dominant contributions to the production and decay 

\[ V \] feature:

\[ \text{trino, the weak gauge bosons small, it generates new coupling between the heavy neutrino} \]

\[ \text{tant mixing matrix} \]

\[ \text{Since we assume that} M_{11} \sim \text{non-hierarchical matrix with entries of order } 10^{-4} \text{ GeV.} \]

\[ \text{In this example, } m_D \text{ is non-hierarchical matrix with entries of order } 10^{-4} \text{ GeV.} \]

\[ \text{Since we assume that } M_{\nu_{1j}} \ll M_{\nu_{2j}} < M_{\nu_{3j}}, \text{ the resultant mixing matrix } V \text{ is characterized by the following feature: } V_{11} \gg V_{ij} \text{ for } i = 2, 3. \]

\[ \text{Also the typical value of } V_{11} \text{ is of order } 10^{-6}. \]

\[ \text{Although this mixing is rather small, it generates new coupling between the heavy neutrino, the weak gauge bosons } W \text{ and } Z, \text{ and the associated leptons. This new coupling plays an important role in the decays of the lightest heavy neutrino } (\nu_{h1} \equiv N_1). \]

\[ \text{Now, we can express the relevant interactions that lead to dominant contributions to the production and decay of the lightest heavy neutrino } N_1 \text{ at LHC:} \]

\[ \mathcal{L}_{\text{I}} \sim - g' Z'^{\mu}_1 \left[ N_1 \gamma^\mu N_1 + (UV)_{i1} (\nu_{i1} \gamma^\mu N_1 + h.c.] \right. \]

\[ + \frac{g_2}{2 v_W} Z \left( U V \right)_{i1} (\nu_{i1} \gamma^\mu N_1 \]

\[ + \frac{g_2}{\sqrt{2}} V_{11} W^-_{\mu} l^+_1 \gamma^\mu N_1 + h.c., \]

\[ \text{where the family index } i = 1, 2, 3. \]

\[ \text{From this interaction Lagrangian, one finds that the dominant production mode for the heavy neutrino } N_1 \text{ is through the exchange of } Z' \text{ gauge boson and the main decay channel is through } W \text{ gauge boson as shown in Fig. 1} \]

\[ \text{Some comments are in order: (i) In SM extended with right-handed neutrinos, there is no extra gauge boson and hence the production of right-handed neutrinos may be obtained via the exchange of } Z \text{ or } W \text{ only with a suppression factor due to the mixing between light and heavy neutrinos. (ii) The decay modes for the } N_1 \text{ depend on the Yukawa strength } \lambda_\nu \text{ and the mixing parameter } V_{11}. \]

\[ \text{Since both are of the order of } 10^{-6} \text{ as pointed out earlier, we find that the most dominant decay modes are } W^+ e^- \text{ and } Z \nu_\tau, \text{ with a small fraction into } H \nu_e. \]

\[ \text{In our analysis, we find that the BR}(N_1 \rightarrow W^+ e^-) = \text{always dominant, ranging between 0.65-0.89 while BR}(N_1 \rightarrow Z \nu_\tau) = 0.11-0.33 \text{ for } V_{11} \approx 2 \times (\lambda_\nu = 10^{-6}), \text{ for right-handed neutrino masses } M_N > 100 \text{ GeV.} \]

\[ \text{As mentioned, the dominant production mode for the right-handed neutrinos at the LHC would be through the Drell-Yan mechanism, with } Z' \text{ in the s-channel. The new gauge quantum number associated with the } B - L \text{ symmetry couples the right-handed neutrinos directly to the gauge boson } Z', \text{ as seen from the Lagrangian in Eq. (7).} \]

\[ \text{Thus the rate for the pair production of the heavy neutrinos would crucially depend on the mass of the } Z' \text{ and the strength of the } B - L \text{ coupling } g'' \text{. In Fig. 2 we plot the pair production cross section for a pair of right-handed neutrinos at the LHC, as a function of the right-handed neutrino mass } (M_{N_f}) \text{ for three different choices of the } Z' \text{ mass } (M_{Z'}). \]

\[ \text{The } B - L \text{ coupling and the } Z' \text{ mass is chosen in such a way that it always respects the LEP bound [6]. Furthermore, the recent results by CDF II [7] are consistent with the LEP II constraints in case of } B - L \text{ extension of the SM, with a typical lower bound } M_{Z'}/g'' > 6 \text{ TeV. We choose benchmark points of the model for our analysis, as given below:} \]

\[ \lambda_1 = 0.15, \lambda_2 = 0.02, \lambda_3 = -0.001, \]

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{FIG. 1: The branching ratio for the various decay modes of the right-handed neutrinos.} \\
\text{FIG. 2: Illustrating the pair production cross section for the right-handed neutrinos at LHC.}
\end{align*} \]
\( v = 246 \text{ GeV}, \ v' = 3 \text{ TeV}, \ \lambda_\nu = 10^{-6}, \ V_{11} = 2 \times 10^{-6}, \ (g''', M_{Z''}) = (0.133, 800), \ (0.167, 1000), \ (0.2, 1200). \)

The production cross section is enhanced due to the resonant contribution from the \( Z' \) exchange in the \( s \)-channel, but falls rapidly with increasing right-handed neutrino mass. We now focus on the event rates for the most promising signal coming from the pair production of the right-handed neutrinos in this model. We choose two points from Fig. 2 to highlight the signal for the right-handed neutrinos at LHC, viz. \( (g'' = 0.133, \ M_{Z''} = 800 \text{ GeV}, \ M_N = 200 \text{ GeV}) \) and \( (g'' = 0.2, \ M_{Z''} = 1200 \text{ GeV}, \ M_N = 400 \text{ GeV}). \) The right-handed neutrinos dominant decays are to a \( W \)-boson and a charged lepton and to a left-handed neutrino and the \( Z \) boson, through the mixing parameter \( V_{ij}. \) These decays are very clean with four hard leptons in the final states and large missing energy due to the associated neutrinos. The SM background for such a final state is negligible at the LHC. The dominant processes in the SM come through \( 4W \) productions with \( \sigma(4W) \sim 6 \text{ } fb \), and the dominant contributions coming from the three gauge boson \( WWZ \) productions at LHC, with \( \sigma(WWZ) \sim 200 \text{ } fb \) (including QCD corrections). However, because of the smallness of the pure leptonic branching ratios, the cross section of the four lepton final states fall to \( O(10^{-4}) \text{ } fb \) and \( O(10^{-2}) \text{ } fb \) for the \( 4W \) and \( WWZ \) modes respectively. This is further rendered negligible once we demand the minimum acceptance cuts on the kinematic variables for our signal.

Depending on the production and decay mechanism, we can have the following final states as our signal:

\[
l_i^+ l_j^- l_k^+ l_m^- + E_T + X
\]

where \( i, j, k, m \) run over the three different lepton flavors. We put the following kinematic cuts when selecting the final states for our analysis: (a) For the charged leptons:

\[
\eta > 20 \text{ GeV} \quad \text{and} \quad |\eta| < 2.5. \quad \text{(b) A minimum missing transverse energy(momentum) cut } E_T > 50 \text{ GeV.} \quad \text{(c) For resolving the different leptons in the detector, } \Delta R_{l_i l_j} \geq 0.2 \text{ and a minimum cut on the invariant mass } M_{l_i^+ l_j^-} > 10 \text{ GeV.}
\]

To calculate and generate the events, we include the relevant couplings of the model in CalcHEP 2.4.5 \cite{10} and pass the generated events through the CalcHEP+Pythia interface. We have turned on the initial and final state radiation effects using the Pythia \cite{11} switches. We use the leading order CTEQ6L \cite{12} parton distribution functions (PDF) for the protons colliding at LHC. In Fig. 3 and \( \text{ we plot the various kinematic distributions for the signal arising through} \)

\[
pp \rightarrow N_1 \bar N_1 \rightarrow e^+ e^- \mu^+ \mu^- E_T,
\]

satisfying the above selection cuts. We choose an integrated luminosity of \( \int \mathcal{L} \, dt = 300 \text{ } fb^{-1}. \) As the dominant decay of \( N_1 \) is to \( W \)-boson and electron, the \( \mu \)'s would most often come from the \( Z \) decay, when one right-handed neutrino decays via the \( W \) mode and the other through the \( Z \) mode. Thus one expects a clear peak at \( M_Z \); mass of the \( Z \)-boson in the \( M_{\mu^+ \mu^-} \) distribution as seen in Fig. 3(a). The invariant mass of the electrons is more wide as compared to the invariant mass of the muons. With the SM background completely reducible this gives a clear information on which neutrino flavor is produced in the pp collisions. Another interesting feature is seen in Fig. 3(b), where we plot the invariant mass of the different flavor leptons. A distinct kinematic edge is seen at \( M_{\mu^+ \mu^-} \simeq M_{N_1} \) which is mainly because of the large contributions coming from the dominant decay through the \( W \) boson, following the decay chain \( N_1 \rightarrow eW^* \rightarrow e\mu\nu_\mu. \) A more efficient way of identifying the edge would come if one selects an invariant mass window for \((M_Z - 10 \text{ GeV} < M_{\mu^+ \mu^-} < M_Z + 10 \text{ GeV})\)
and looks at the invariant distribution of \( M_{\ell^+\ell^-} \). This would correspond to the scenario where the muon pairs always come from \( Z \) whereas the electron pairs come from the cascade of \( N_1 \). The \( M_{\ell^+\ell^-} \) distribution would then show a clear sharp edge at \( M_{N_1} \) and thus give a very precise determination of the mass of the right-handed neutrino albeit we have a smaller event rate.

Fig. 3(a) shows that the electrons coming from the primary decay of the right neutrino are much harder than the muons coming from the lighter weak gauge bosons. The missing \( p_T \) distribution in Fig.3(b) represents the light neutrinos in the final state. With an integrated luminosity of 300 fb\(^{-1}\) the expected number of events for the \( 4\ell E_T \) final states is 71 when \( M_{N_1} = 200 \) GeV and 46 when \( M_{N_1} = 400 \) GeV. The \( 4\ell \) can be either \( 4e, 3e 1\mu, 2e 2\mu \) or \( 1e 3\mu \) depending on the decays. However, even with an integrated luminosity of 30 fb\(^{-1}\), we still expect 5-7 events for the above final state. This is quite an encouraging result where we have negligible SM background.

The situation gets more complicated if two flavors of the right-handed neutrinos are assumed to be degenerate in mass. Then one has the same final states for both \( N_1 \) and \( N_2 \) pair production with similar event rates. This would result in loss of the clear correlation that existed between the different charged lepton flavors as shown in the various kinematic distributions, rendering it difficult to exploit the advantages which were perceivable in the invariant mass distributions. However, one advantage would be the doubling of the total number of events in the final state. Other promising signatures arise from the pair production of right-handed neutrinos in this model at the LHC, if the electron pairs come from the cascade of \( N_1 \). The \( M_{\ell^+\ell^-} \) distribution would then show a clear sharp edge at \( M_{N_1} \) and thus give a very precise determination of the mass of the right-handed neutrino albeit we have a smaller event rate.

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