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Apprehending Social Justice: The Islamic Approach to Poverty

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Abstract

The Islamic plea on mitigating poverty is something enviously more than a gesture of charity. It is transferring up values that are common to any people like human dignity, equality and providing with basic needs for creating the society that considers a just economic system. The designated Zakat which every Muslim is legally required to provide annually constitutes the foundation, it being complemented by the Sadaqah and Waqf mechanisms. Ethical business practice and ensuring people receive education have a positive impact and help in breaking the generational poverty cycles. Difficulties are connected with the means of collection, adaptation, and also the modern ways of the Internet platforms and impact investing can result in higher effectiveness. Therefore, the Islamic Outlook provides a realistic basis upon which individuals can build and embark on their social justice and poverty reduction initiatives. To be more specific, one area of future study could be to delve into the utilization of varying areas of Islamic finance techniques in antipoverty programs or evaluate the efficiency of e-zakat collection systems in different regions. Through the use of these strategies and by more betterment, Islamic communities are able to contribute towards the making of a world where everyone is treated with justice, fairness, and equity.

Keywords: Social Justice, Poverty Eradication, E-Zakat, Islamic Principals

Introduction

Poverty remains a persistent global challenge, hindering human development and progress. As measured by the World Bank's international poverty line of \$1.90 per day, an estimated 689 million people lived in extreme poverty in 2017 (World Bank, 2020). This translates to roughly 9.2% of the world's population struggling to meet their basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, and healthcare. The consequences of poverty are far-reaching, impacting not just individuals but entire societies. Limited access to education perpetuates poverty cycles, hindering social mobility and economic growth (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011). Furthermore, poverty is often linked to poor

health outcomes, malnutrition, and increased vulnerability to environmental disasters (Alkire, 2002). Addressing poverty is not just a moral imperative but also crucial for achieving sustainable development and global stability. Social justice, a cornerstone of Islamic principles, refers to the creation of a just and equitable society where individuals have access to their basic rights and opportunities. The Quran emphasizes fairness and compassion, stating: "Verily, Allah enjoins justice, and the doing of good, and giving to kinfolk; and forbids indecency and evil and wrongdoing" (Quran 16:90).

Islamic teachings promote the dignity and worth of all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, or social status (Sachedina, 2009). Fulfilling social justice becomes an obligation for Muslims, ensuring the well-being of the most vulnerable members of society. This translates into practices like Zakat, the mandatory charitable giving that helps redistribute wealth and alleviate poverty (Rahman, 2002). Social justice in Islam goes beyond economic equality; it encompasses fair treatment under the law, access to education and healthcare, and the eradication of oppression in all its forms. This article claims that norms and beliefs driving the Islam as a major and valuable element of social justice, especially concerning anti-poverty campaigns. The program will be focusing on how these core Islamic ideas like justice, mercy, and alleviating poverty resonate as operational tools for solving this vice. It will focus on the role and types of charity (Zakat), along with the topic of economic law based on the ethical distribution of wealth in which all the people can share the wealth. In this regard, it also will look at the educational and skill building aspects of Islam emphasizing the need for these knowledge-based resources in arming the poor with a means of uplifting themselves out of poverty. At the end of the day, this article will do its best to demonstrate that the inner foundation of Islamic approach towards poverty is not about just giving charity but about establishing economic and social system through which justice prevails and every member of the society enjoy basic human rights and living standard.

Justification of the Study

Poverty is one of the most important problems the world is facing at present, such innovative and productive mechanisms must be found. Despite the fact that different approaches exist, the Islamic approach to social justice has a unique perspective that can provide with a frame with the capacity to meaningfully contribute towards the fight against poverty. This is a timely topic where the consideration of the scope and perspectives of this underused technique are highly relevant. To begin with, Islam has a great legacy stressing the issues of social justice and the necessity of averting the basal human need. What shouldn't be forgotten is that poverty is not only about material deprivation. By understanding what these principles mean and how they function, we can work to resolve poverty more efficiently. An important point is that the fact of the consistent growth of the Muslim population worldwide lowers the relevance of the colonizers' and the imperialists' vision concerning their (anti-poverty) practices, which would be however easily applied to Muslim communities, as these peoples have a strong religious background. Discussing the Islamic perspective on poverty is a way to contribute to the community dialogue on social justice where an alternative economic system and moral principles of mutual good living are offered instead of the system of inequality and individual prosperity regardless of everyone's wellbeing.

Understanding Poverty

Poverty is a much-complex issue when you come to know that it is an issue with multifaceted definitions and numerous approaches to measure the same. Absolute poverty meaning usually has been connected to an idea of a minimum income sufficient to buy life-saving necessities and necessities such as food, shelter, clothing, and healthcare. Excluding positions, an international poverty line drawn by the World Bank for 2020 has established the number of people living in extreme poverty at a poverty level of \$1.90 per day in 2020 (World Bank, 2020). While the first-mentioned idea might be true, but opponents to this line of reasoning think that it is insufficient because it ignores other facets of poverty, such as education, sanitation, and participation in society. This reaction is followed by studies, such as Amartya Sen, whose capability approach stresses people's ability to perform in their community and live a satisfactory life as the key. As well as that, the situation of the relative poverty persists as the poverty is measured in reference to particular average income level of the country or the region. The approach focuses on income inequality and the fact that poverty could be defined as relative and as such, social capabilities can be met at the minimum standard for a person to still experience deprivation (Townsend, 1979). Knowing the varying meanings of these terms and such measurements is very important in that it helps to establish the right approach on Poverty and come up with suitable anti-poverty strategies.

The Poverty factors such as insecurity, conflict and the absence of good health systems and education cross the globe. This, in turn, perpetuates the poverty (Sachs, 2005). Climate change also pushes poor, forcing people to leave their homeland where they cannot depend on it for living (Carrington et al., 2018). Outcomes are equally grave and touching on health, education, and social well-being (The World Bank, 2020). Regionally, disparities exist. The highest poverty rates in Sub-Saharan Africa are joined by issues like tuition income inequality as well as spatial concentration of poor among the wealthy nations. (World Bank, 2020) There are various causes and consequences of the global water crisis; however, comprehending this problem cites the effective strategies. Numerous anti-poverty initiatives exist, from government programs offering social safety nets to international development aid focused on infrastructure and economic growth (Deaton, 2009). While these efforts have achieved some success, limitations remain. Critics point to issues of sustainability, dependency, and a lack of focus on empowering individuals to break free from poverty cycles (Easterly, 2006). Additionally, addressing systemic inequalities that perpetuate poverty, such as unequal access to education and land ownership, often proves challenging (Narayan, 2000). Exploring alternative approaches, like those offered by the Islamic framework for social justice, becomes crucial for achieving more comprehensive and long-lasting solutions.

Islamic Framework for Social Justice

Social justice underpins the Islamic worldview, emphasizing fairness, equity, and the fulfillment of basic human needs. The Quran, the central text of Islam, repeatedly calls for justice and compassion. One powerful verse declares: "Verily, Allah of His bounty enjoins justice, and the doing of good, and giving to kinfolk; and forbids indecency and evil and wrong-doing" (Quran

16:90). Here, justice ("adl" in Arabic) extends beyond legal matters to encompass a broader societal responsibility. Hadiths, sayings attributed to Prophet Muhammad, further reinforce this concept. One narration emphasizes, "The best of people are those who benefit others" (Sahih al-Bukhari). Islamic teachings promote the inherent dignity and worth of all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, or social status (Sachedina, 2009). This translates into a responsibility to ensure the well-being of the most vulnerable in society, including the poor, orphans, and widows. Justice becomes more than an abstract ideal; it becomes a foundational principle guiding social and economic interactions. The Islamic framework to social justice is developed on a few foundations which all together greatly assist to the progress of poverty reduction. To begin with, Islam prefers the inherent dignity and worthiness of all the human beings whether they belong to the high standing or they have the poor background. This concept, rooted in the belief that humanity is created equal before God (Quran 49: United Nations Agenda 2030, point 13), binds us with an obligation to make sure that all the human beings in our society gets well-being. For instance, the everlasting value of equality (musawah), or the suited treatment of individuals that leads to fairness, is the second concept herein.

Therefore, human rights as embodied in the legal sphere of justice, the socio-economic domain, or the provision of essential needs apply to women too (Rahman, 2008). The third point is the sense of obligation upon Muslims in terms of survival fulfillment and a reasonable standard of living which is as well promoted in Islam. The Quran itself instructs believers to "...give the kinsman his due, and the poor and the wayfarer..." (Quran 24:21), supports that social welfare and redistribution of resources contribute to the living standard of the poor (especially the old, the young, the vulnerable, and the disabled). Such a setup of these fundamental rules as a whole constitutes a tall order to dismantle the social injustice and give the power back to people and lift them out from the cycles of poverty. Zakat, one of the Five Pillars of Islam, is the base stone of Islamic system and an exemplar method of reducing poverty. It is a type of hospitable obligation imposed on a Muslim's wealth getting over a particular limit annually. The Quran explicitly mentions Zakat alongside prayer, stating: "Enjoin prayer, and pay zakat, and bow in worship with those who bow (Jalaluddin, 2014, p.189) Such mandatoriness ensures that everyone receives equitable opportunities, with the ultimate goal of providing equal opportunities across all, leading to a socially just and equitable society (Rahman, 2002). The cases of the rich but also its encouragement of a sense of donativeness and collective accountability within all Muslims is one objective of zakat. The specific categories of recipients for Zakat payments are outlined in the Quran, including the poor, the needy, those in debt, and wayfarers (Quran 9: Everybody acknowledges that music is good for the recovery of the mental disorders because of the fact that it relieves our stress and also helps as a distraction as well as a form of support. Meanwhile, Zakat funds can be used for various social welfare initiatives like building schools and colleges and hospitals, adding significantly to a viable and compassionate society (Hussain, 2007).

Islamic Approaches to Alleviating Poverty

Zakat: A Pillar of Redistribution

Zakat, the contribution with the highest priority among all Islamic traditions, comprises the basis of social justice and eradicating poverty under the Islamic system. It demands those (Muslims)

who possess an amount of wealth that exceeds a fixed amount per the Crescent moon year to donate a certain share of their wealth every lunar year. The Quran explicitly mentions Zakat alongside prayer, highlighting its importance (Quran 2 :). Similarly, being bestowed third place in the world of art on account of my work in this particular exhibition requires a rapid learning curve. The forced nature of this ensures a constant flow through resources to the neediest and so brings about the possibility of income distribution and a just society (Rahman, 2002). Zakat targets eight specific categories of recipients outlined in the Quran, including the poor, the needy, and those in debt (Quran 9: This has led to an increase in fuel surcharges for air cargo, as airlines must factor in the additional costs of operating their flights. Furthermore, by tackling the needs of their basic existence, Zakat acts as the main bedrock and enables people to move out of the cycles of poverty (Hussain, 2007). In addition, zakat funds can be used for wider social utility goals such as school and hospital creation. This contributes greatly to the nation's welfare and socially just and compassionate nature.

Sadaqah and Waqf: Extending the Reach of Charity

Beyond the duty of zakat, Islam, also fosters sadaqah (voluntary charity) to supplement more ways of aiding those in need. The Sadaqah can be given through different types, for example, it may be a monetary donation, provide food and services (Khan, 2019). Through this provision, humankind gratifies charitable wish beyond the required zakat giving. Additionally, Waqf, a charitable endowment, is an act whereby a person dedicates wholly or partially possessed assets for permanent social welfare projects that can serve for a long term. The Income generated from Waqf fund is used to cater for the purpose or reason behind the Waqaf such as health facilities, educational institutions, or micro loans which in turn becomes a sustainable income generating method for poverty eradication Use our AI to write for you about: Persuasive Essay These systems either voluntary or mandatory, together with Zakat, help in designing a multilateral plan that would ensure support and fulfill the desires of the needy.

Ethical Economic Practices

Besides the acts of charity, the Islamic guidelines also encourage us to perform economic tasks that are fair, socialist and results in the poverty reduction. Among these, a principle of the fair trade is ethically treated the workers and receiving a fair pay (Chapra, 2008). When businesses operate in accordance with fair trade guidelines, no one in the supply chain will be exploited which makes a wealth distribution fairer and allows producers to have more freedom, many of them belong in developing countries. Rather than simply add value to the livelihoods of workers, this strategy fosters a participation-based approach that is at the same time humane and sustainable, ensuring that all workers, including the most vulnerable, have a voice in the decision-making process. Furthermore, Islam might be considered as the system of thought that leads to creation of an economic system that rejects the accumulation of unproductive wealth and the promotion of the investment into productive business activities that create job's opportunities as well as to the economic growth (Lewis, 2000). Thus, the notion of philanthropic investment that widely referred as the wealth circulation where the wealth is treated as a medium to give back not to acquire it yourself is in line with the idea of responsible investment.

Challenges and Considerations

While Islamic approaches offer a unique framework for tackling poverty, implementing them effectively in the modern world presents certain challenges:

- **Effective Collection and Distribution:** The main challenge is to guarantee the proper collection process and its flawless distribution. It is the privilege of the modern economies to be built on strong institutions and transparent mechanisms with solid foundations for large amounts of money. In case there're no states of mismanagement or inefficiency within zakat collection bodies, it can be repelling potential contributors (Hussain, as cited in 2017). Highlighting the worries by implementing the better transparency and accountability is pivotal.
- **Adapting to Modern Needs:** The eight categories of Zakat recipients in Surah Al-Tauba have been provided by Almighty as a guideline and therefore it is not clear whether those channels of assistance are sufficient in addressing the diversity of contemporary poverty. Examples like depression, mental disorders or long-term illnesses are outside a basic coverage scope and need other support measures as an addition to the insurance. Contemporary Islamic activists argue for channeling Zakat fund to programs like social safety nets, vocational training, and community development in order to cater for the emerging needs. These goals include addressing issues like mental health and substance abuse.
- **Addressing Criticisms:** The critics occasionally cite lack of Zakat sufficiency to meet of the extensive level poverty. Despite Zakat being a basic pillar of the framework, fatwa stands as an umbrella over this architecture. The voluntary Sadaqah, Waqf endowments along with ethical economic practices all are other components that explain overall approach (Ahmed, 2010). Thus, zakat funds contribute a lot not just to immediate tackling of scarcity but also for long-term social intervention whose impact is reflected in the individual rise out of poverty (Iqbal, 2007).
- **Zakat Collection Platforms:** The collections of Zakat on online platforms can be an effective means of easing the process, enhancing accessibility, and increasing transparency issues of Zakat funds (World Zakat Forum, 2019). It permits anyone making contributions to see their donations used more clearly and watch impartially as their contributions are made.
- **Impact Investing:** Currently, Islamic financial institutions are voluntarily moving from mere social finance to apply impact investing which means marriage between financial returns and social and environmental provisions (Khan, 2016). This is how zakat funds, charitable endowments, and social alliances finance projects that generate lasting positive effects.
- **Technological Solutions:** Technology could be employed for creating a group of stakeholders in a very less time period, named beneficiaries, making the Zakat distribution process more convenient and reaching remote areas, and connectivity between the potential donors and the work agencies (Bhuiyan, Siddiqui, Chowdhury & Huq, 2018).

Although these novelties may, at first, seem uncomfortable, they may be precisely what is needed to promote the Islamic approach to poverty reduction.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Islamic set on mitigating poverty is something enviously more than a gesture of charity. It is transferring up values that are common to any people like human dignity, equality and providing with basic needs for creating the society that considers a just economic system. The designated Zakat which every Muslim is legally required to provide annually constitutes the foundation, it being complemented by the Sadaqah and Waqf mechanisms. Ethical business practice and ensuring people receive education have a positive impact and help in breaking the generational poverty cycles. Difficulties are connected with the means of collection, adaptation, and also the modern ways of the Internet platforms and impact investing can result in higher effectiveness. Therefore, the Islamic Outlook provides a realistic basis upon which individuals can build and embark on their social justice and poverty reduction initiatives. To be more specific, one area of future study could be to delve into the utilization of varying areas of Islamic finance techniques in antipoverty programs or evaluate the efficiency of e-zakat collection systems in different regions. Through the use of these strategies and by more betterment, Islamic communities are able to contribute towards the making of a world where everyone is treated with justice, fairness, and equity.

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