

FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FOR ECONOMIC STABILITY: A REVIEW OF ISLAMIC TEACHINGS

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ABSTRACT:

Every member of society needs some necessities for the livelihood. But not everyone is able to earn money and fulfill his/her needs. Such as, people with disabilities, orphans or the sick people can't work on their own they need support. Otherwise, they will become a burden on the society. Apart from disability the old age itself is a burden for those who are poor and needy. Therefore, such people are also discussed in this paper. This one is a qualitative study based on the data collected from the holy scriptures of Islam, journals, magazines, and websites etc. This review paper identifies some major policies that have been implemented by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions for the uplift of the society and suggests some strategies to adopt in the stability of economic development of the society.

KEYWORDS: handicapped, help, Islam, economy, weak, needy, poor

INTRODUCTION:

The Islamic system of sponsorship or financial assistance to the deserving people is a comprehensive system of Islam. Every member of the society has some form of livelihood, without which no human being can live with satisfaction. Without the basic livelihood facility one can neither remain, nor perform its respective duties and rights. Under this system, the circulation of national wealth should not be limited to a few rich or wealthy people and the others may need their mercy. On the contrary, in this case, Islam teaches that the people of the society who are disabled due to some physical excuse, due to which they are not able to earn a living on their own or have not been able to find a suitable job, the "financial support" of such needy people is one of the primary responsibilities of the government. In the same way, those who are close to them will be responsible for their sustenance and other wealthy people of the society will be responsible for

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the sustenance of such people through obligatory and supererogatory alms and donations¹.

Similarly, Chapra writes in his book, those who are unable to earn enough through their own effort because of some handicap or inability then it is the collective obligation of the Muslim ummah (fard kifayah) to help such people fulfill their needs. without stigma or recrimination.² The concept of disability, in the conventional sense, is not found in the Quran³ but collectively the words poor, needy and weak are used to financially support them. This system of Islam not only assists disable persons in meeting their livelihood but also contribute to the economic stability of the society. Such teachings are highlighted in several verses of Holy Quran by Almighty Allah and in the various sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND QURANIC VERSES:

As compared to the physically fit or normal people, the people having any disability face greater financial challenges. Islam, being the complete code of life, consider each aspect of its followers and guide them accordingly. We find several Quranic verses in this respect, such as:

Almighty Allah says,
Righteousness is not in turning your faces towards the east or the west. Rather, the righteous are those who believe in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Books, and the prophets; who give charity out of their cherished wealth to relatives, orphans, the poor, 'needy' travellers, beggars, and for freeing captives...⁴

For having their food, it is mentioned in the Quran as:

There is no blame on a blind person, nor is there any blame on any lame one, nor is there any blame on a sick person, nor on yourselves in that you eat (something) from your own homes or from the homes of your fathers or the homes of your mothers or the homes of your brothers or the homes of your sisters or the homes of your paternal uncles, or the homes of your paternal aunts or the homes of your maternal uncles or the homes of your maternal aunts or from the places the keys of which you have under your control, or from (the home of) your friend. There is no sin on you if you eat together or separately.⁵

Syed Mudoodi in this regard says about this verse: 'It says that the handicapped person can have his meal anywhere and at any house to satisfy his hunger, because the society owes to him this privilege on account of his handicap.'⁶

There is also a share for disable and needy people, says the Quran:

And in their riches, the beggar and the dispossessed have what is truthfully their due.⁷

Similarly, Almighty Allah says:

They ask you what (things) they should expend, say, "Whatever charity you expend is for parents and nearest kin, and orphans, and the indigent, and the wayfarer; and whatever charity you perform, then surely Allah is Ever-Knowing of it."⁸

So, give to the kinsman his right, and to the needy and the wayfarer. That is better for those who seek Allah's pleasure, and it is they who will be successful.⁹

Almighty Allah has also ordered to assist the people in a decent manner.

Such as:

You who believe, do not cancel out your charitable deeds with reminders and hurtful words, like someone who spends his wealth only to be seen by people, not believing in God and the Last Day. Such a person is like a rock with earth on it: heavy rain falls and leaves it completely bare. Such people get no rewards for their works: God does not guide the disbelievers.¹⁰

Further He said,

You who believe, give charitably from the good things you have acquired and that We have produced for you from the earth. Do not give away the bad things that you yourself would only accept with your eyes closed: remember that God is self-sufficient, worthy of all praise.¹¹

Those who do not help other are cursed as:

"Have you seen the one who denies the Recompense? For that is the one who drives away the orphan. And does not encourage the feeding of the poor."¹²

Spend your wealth for the cause of Allah and be not cast by your own hands to ruin; and do good. Lo! Allah loveth the beneficent.¹³

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND SAYINGS OF PROPHET (PEACE BE UPON HIM):

In Islam, there are different ways to financially assist the disabled people. Such as the booty which was unlawful previously was made lawful for the Muslims.

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "A prophet amongst the prophets carried out a holy military expedition, so he said to his followers, 'Anyone who has married a woman and wants to consummate the marriage, and has not done so yet, should not accompany me; nor should a man who has built a house but has not completed its roof; nor a man who has sheep or she camels and is waiting for the birth of their young ones.' So, the prophet carried out the expedition and when he reached that town at the time or nearly at the time of the `Asr prayer, he said to the sun, 'O sun! You are under Allah's Order, and I am under Allah's Order O Allah! Stop it (i.e., the sun) from setting.' It was stopped till Allah made him victorious. Then he collected the booty and the fire came to burn it, but it did not burn it. He said (to his men), 'Some of you have stolen something from the booty. So, one man from every tribe should give me a pledge of allegiance by shaking hands with me.' (They did so and) the hand of a man got stuck over the hand of their prophet. Then that prophet said (to the man), 'The theft has been committed by your people. So, all the persons of your tribe should give me the pledge of allegiance by shaking hands with me.' The hands of two or three men got stuck over the hand of their prophet and he said, "You have committed the theft.' Then they brought a head of gold like the head of a cow and put it there, and the fire came and consumed the booty. The Prophet (peace be upon him) added: Then Allah saw our weakness and disability, so he made booty legal for us."¹⁴

Abu Dharr (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: I asked: "O Messenger of Allah! Which action is the best?" He (peace be upon him) said, "Faith in Allah and Jihad in the way of Allah." I asked: "Which neck

(slave) is best (for emancipation)?" He said, "That which is dearest of them in price and most valuable of them to its masters". I asked: "If I cannot afford (it)?" He said, "Then help a labourer or work for one who is disabled". I asked: "If I cannot do (it)?" He said, "You should restrain yourself from doing wrong to people, because it (serves as) charity which you bestow upon yourself".¹⁵

Abu Huraira related that the Prophet said: The Lord's commandment for every one of His slaves is, 'Spend on others, and I will spend on you'.¹⁶ Similarly, it is narrated in Abu Daud and Tirmidhi that "Those who show mercy will be shown mercy by the Most Merciful. Show mercy to those who are on earth and the One Who is in heaven will show mercy to you."¹⁷ Safwan ibn Salim related that the Prophet said: Anyone who looks after and works for a widow and a poor person is like a warrior fighting for Allah's cause, or like a person who fasts during the day and prays all night.¹⁸

He (peace be upon him) motivated people towards spend their money for such peoples by saying:

Charity appeases the wrath of Allah and eases the sufferings of death¹⁹. Further, Abu Huraira narrated that the Prophet said: Every day two angels come down from Heaven and one of them says, 'O Allah! Compensate every person who spends in Your Cause,' and the other (angel) says, 'O Allah! Destroy every miser'.²⁰ Similarly, it is narrated Hakim bin Hizam that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The upper hand is better than the lower hand (means the giving person is better than the person who receives it). One should start giving first to his dependents. And the best object of charity is that which is given by a wealthy person (from the money which is left after his expenses). And whoever abstains from asking others for some financial help, Allah will give him and save him from asking others, Allah will make him self-sufficient.²¹

Islam being the religion of nature, and Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) being the mercy on all, provide a very clear guideline to help and support such members of the society. Therefore, instead of becoming a burden on the society these people can play an important role in the stability of a state just like the State of Madina.

PRACTICES OF MUSLIM RULERS:

After the Prophet (peace be upon him), his companions followed the glorious teachings of Islam and ruled with the same practices mentioned by Almighty Allah and His prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The very first caliph, Hazrat Abu Bakr, used to buy blankets and clothes during cold days and distribute them among widows and orphans.²² According to this *Shariah*, all the citizens are entitled to the same rights either the citizens are Muslim or Non-Muslim. For example, the elderly who cannot provide for themselves are looked after by the State, whether they are Muslim or not. An incident from the time of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which illustrates this is mentioned as:

‘Umar bin al-Khattab passed by an old man begging. He asked him: “To which of the People of the Book do you belong?” He said: “I am a Jew.” He replied: “What has compelled you to that which I see?” He said: “I am begging in order to pay the *jizya* [head tax] and on account of my need and old age.” Then ‘Umar got hold of his hand, took him to his house and gave him something from his home, then sent him to the treasurer of the Bait-ul-Maal (State Treasury) and said: “Take care of this man and other similar men. By Allah, we have not done justice to him that we ate (*jizya*) from him when he was young, but we forsook him when he was old. Verily, the alms are for the poor and destitute. The poor are the Muslims and this one is a destitute from the People of the Book.” So, he removed the *jizya* from him. Abu Bakr said, “I have witnessed this (incident) of ‘Umar and I also have seen that old man.”²³

Similarly, Hazrat Ali (R.A) was walking in the streets of Kufa when he noticed an elderly man who was begging. “What is this?” Hazrat Ali (R.A) asked. The people who knew the old man turned to Hazrat Ali (R.A) and said, “He is a Christian man.” Hazrat Ali (R.A) looked at them and said, “You used him (for work) when he was young and able, and now that he has become old, you have left him all alone! Compensate him from the Public Treasury!”²⁴ Under Hazrat Ali’s (R.A) government in Kufa, he made every effort to combat the social disease of poverty, as he would utter his famous line, “If poverty were in the form of a man, I would have killed him.”²⁵

Hazrat Umar (R.A) used to persuade whoever he sees to be the best in doing things. He persuaded many of his agents (governors and army leader) to

take charge and wrote letters to remind them. It was recorded in one of his letters saying: "I advise you to treat your people justly, and to devote yourself to looking after them and protect them against their enemy. Do not show any favour to the rich over the poor. That will be better for your spiritual well-being and will help to reduce your burden of sin, and it will be better for your Hereafter...I instruct you to be strict regarding the commands of Allah."²⁶

Muslims are strongly encouraged to take care of the needy and the poor in the community.²⁷ Therefore, Zakat was made obligatory to the wealthy Muslims and the system of Zakat can be set to help the disabled people. History reveals a great example, it was during the reign of Hazrat Umar (R.A), when poverty was completely eliminated and it was hard to find an eligible recipient of Zakat. During the reign of Hazrat Umar (R.A), the second Caliph, the Governor of Yemen, Muaz bin Jabal sent 1/3 of the Zakat collection in a particular year to Hazrat Umar (R.A) but he (R.A) rejected the fund and said: "I sent you to take from the rich and render it to the poor among them". Muaz bin Jabal later claimed that he could not find anyone who deserved the Zakat money. In the following year, Muaz bin Jabal sent half of the Zakat collection and similar conversation took place between them. In the 3rd year, he sent all the Zakat collection to Hazrat Umar (R.A) and said: "This year, I did not find a single person who needs from me anything of the Zakat.

Similarly, during the period of Hazrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz when an Egyptian Governor sent him a letter asking on what to do with the proceeds of Zakat as there was no deserving poor and needy was found in Egypt. Hazrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz said: "Buy slaves and let them free, build rest areas on highways, and help young men and women to get married."²⁸ These two events of the history are for us to settle the financial issues to disabled people of the society.

CONCLUSION

Islam being the religion of nature, and Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) being the mercy on all, provided us a very clear guideline to help and support disabled members of the society. The history of Islam shows the great devotions of the Muslim rulers; their justice, honesty and implementation of Sharia made it possible to stabilize their economy on their own. Following their practices and corruption free system, we can also

overcome the issues of disabled people and instead of becoming a burden on the society these people can play an important role in the stability of a state.

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