

Q. No. 2: Who are entitled to receive Zakat according to the Quran? Elucidating social impact of Zakat, clarify how can poverty be alleviated with its distribution in Islamic Society?
(CSS 2017)

Introduction:

"While the prayer is the essence of the right of Allah, the Zakat is the essence of the right of men."
— Sadruddin Islahi, Islam at a Glance

Zakat occupies a key position in Islamic faith. It is one of the fundamental articles of faith. Zakat literally means "purification and growth". It is the poor-due which is "taken from the rich and given to poor". According to the Holy Quran, there are eight heads of Zakat among whom it needs to be distributed. By giving Zakat, it has various social impacts like poverty alleviation, social justice, generosity, cooperation, circulation of wealth and brotherhood. In fact, distribution of Zakat can alleviate poverty as it circulates wealth, provides financial aid to poor, eliminates greed, provides social security and eradicates the practice of hoarding.

2) Zakat in Islam:

Allah says in Holy Quran:

"Lo! Those who believe and do good deeds and establish prayer and pay the poor-due, their reward is with their Lord." (2:277)

Allah says in another place in Holy Quran

"But if they repent and establish prayer and pay zakat then leave them way free." (9:5)

Allah says again:

واقموا الصلاة واتوا الزكاة واحكموا مع الراسخين

"And keep up prayer and pay the poor-rake and bow down with those who bow down." (2:43)

Thus, it becomes clear that zakat is a fundamental article of Islamic faith.

3) Who entitled to receive zakat according to Holy Quran?

Allah says in Holy Quran, Surah Tawba:

انما الصدقات للفقراء والمساكين والعاملين عليها
والمولفة قلوبهم وغي الرقاب والفرسين وفي
سبيل الله وابن السبيل (9:60)

"Alms are for the poor and the needy and those employed to administer the (funds); for those whose hearts have been reconciled (to the Truth); for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer..."

i) Poor (فقراء):

People who are poor and destitute. They do not possess wealth equal to Nisab. They are entitled to receive Zakat in Islam.

ii) Needy (مساكين):

Needy are those who have no basic needs. They are extremely pauper and destitute. Even they beg for food. Needy are entitled to receive Zakat.

iii) Collector of Zakat (المحلين):

The Holy Quran also entitled the collector or administrator of Zakat to receive the poor-due. However, it is not necessary they also be needy persons.

iv) New convertes (مولى القلوب):

In Islam, new convertes to the religion are also entitled to receive Zakat. They can meet their basic life necessities through Zakat.

v) Free a slave (الرقاب):

If a slave is under bondage, he/she can receive Zakat to get free from the Master.

vi) The debtors (القرضين):

If a person is in debt who cannot repay loans, such person is also entitled to receive Zakat.

vii) In the way of Allah (في سبيل الله):

Zakat is also given for the cause of Allah.

viii) Travellers (ابن سبيل):

A traveller who may possess wealth at home, but during journey does not possess basic necessities, can be given Zakat.

4) Social impacts of Zakat:

i) Eradication of poverty:

Zakat can eradicate poverty in a society. As Allah says in Holy Quran:

"Sly not your children, fearing a fall to poverty, We shall provide for them and for you. Lo! the slying of them is a great sin." (17:31)

ii) Social justice:

Zakat can also promote social justice in a society. Allah says in Holy Quran:

"... And these are those who bury gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah: announce unto them a most grievous penalty." (9:34)

iii) Circulation of wealth:

Zakat can also help in circulating wealth. It eliminates the practice of accumulation of wealth in one hand. Allah says:

"And it should not be that wealth is accumulated in few rich hands."

iv) Sense of generosity:

Zakat also promotes sense of generosity in society. It eliminates lust and greed of materialism. Allah says in Holy Quran:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آلِهِمْ وَنَحْوِهِمْ

"And violent is his love of wealth."

As Holy Prophet (PBUH) said:

"The love of this world is the mother of all evils."

v) Sense of cooperation:

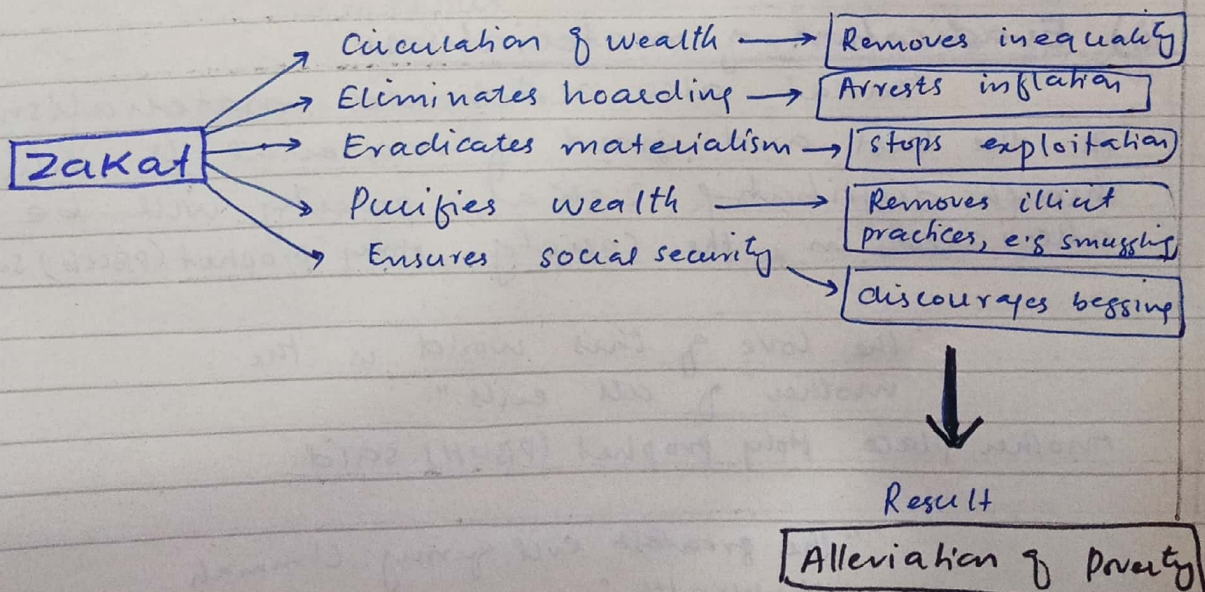
Zakat also cultivates the sense of cooperation in society. People start cooperating with each. Holy Prophet (PBUH) said:

"Muslims are like one body. When an organ of the body ails, the pain can be felt in whole body."

vi) Peace and harmony:

With the distribution of Zakat, peace and harmony will be established in society. It is because poverty and sense of depravity urge the poor to use illicit means to meet the basic needs and it increases crime in a society. Thus, Zakat eradicates such passion...

5) How can Zakat alleviate poverty in Islamic society:



i) Circulation of wealth:

Zakat increases the circulation of wealth in a society. It helps eradicate the practice of accumulation of wealth. Inequality, as a result, in society will be eliminated. In this way, Zakat alleviates poverty. Holy prophet (PBUH) said,

"I have been commanded to collect Zakat from the rich among you and distribute it to the poor among you."

ii) Elimination of hoarding:

Hoarding causes inflation. As wealth is circulated through the institution of Zakat, hoarding will be eliminated. As a result, inflation will be controlled and prices of commodities are regulated. Thus, Zakat eliminates hoarding, thereby alleviating poverty. Allah says:

"And there are those who buy gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah: announce unto them a most grievous penalty." (9:34)

iii) Eradication of materialism:

Zakat also eradicates materialism. As the lust and greed of material is diluted through distributing Zakat, poverty will be alleviated in the society. Holy prophet (PBUH) said,

"The love of this world is the mother of all evils."

Another place Holy prophet (PBUH) said:

"The greatest evil of my Ummah is wealth."

iv) Purification of wealth:

Zakat purifies wealth. It helps increase the growth of wealth of an individual. As one gives Zakat, he will not use illicit means and nor the receiver compel to use smuggling to meet the needs. In this way, Zakat purifies wealth and results in alleviation of poverty. As Allah says:

"Take alms of their wealth and make them pure and clean." (9:103)

v) Ensurance of social security:

With regular distribution of Zakat, there will be social security for poor people in the society. The social security net through Zakat can eliminate poverty.

6) Conclusion:

Allah says in Holy Quran: "And be steadfast in prayer and regular in charity." Zakat is an article of Islamic faith, and the Holy Quran entitled eight heads for Zakat. Zakat has numerous social impacts in a society. Obviously, Zakat can eliminate poverty through various ways.

