

Islamic Studies

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Who are entitled to receive Zakat according to the Quran? Elucidating social impacts of Zakat, clarify how can poverty be alleviated with its distribution in Islamic society?

Introduction :

The Quran uses the term Zakat around thirty times and it is considered as obligatory pillar of Islam. In surah Tauba, Allah entitled the recipients of Zakat. Moreover, Zakat have following impacts on society which includes, it balance the wealth distribution, it fosters social bonding, eradicate dependency in society and eradicate crime from society. Besides, poverty can be alleviated through Zakat. Zakat play vital role in transformation of Islamic society on the basis welfare.

Meaning of Zakat :

The arabic word of Zakat assumes vast meanings. It means "purification", "growth" and "giving". Zakat means that it purify the soul of muslim; increase wealth and create economic balance by giving finance in society. The Quran highlighted the importance

of zakāt in surah Baqrah, verse 43.

"واقبوا الصلاة وآتوا الزكاة واركعوا مع الراكعين"

"And keep the prayer and pay the poor and bow down with those who bow down."

There are following recipients of Zakāt according to Quran :

In surah Taubah verse number 60, Allah identified the recipients of zakāt.

i) Fuqra :

The word "Fuqra" refers to poor. Poor are those who are economically depend on others.

ii) Masakeem :

Masakeem refers to the needy. Those people who work to earn but do not meet the sufficient level to maintain basic necessities of life.

iii) Amileem :

Amileem: are those who collect zakāt, protect it and responsible for distribution on behalf of government.

iv) Mulaqātul - Qulub :

Mulaqātul Qulub are those people who are in alliance with Islamic state against enemies.

v) Fir Riqyah :

Fir Riqyah means slaves, zakāt can be spend for the freedom of slaves.

vi) Al- Gharimeem :

Al- Gharimeem are those who are suffering from burden of debt. Through zakāt the debt can be repayed.

vii) Fi Sabil-illah :

Zakāt can also be spend in the way of Allah. However, it does not mean spending money to construct mosques or constructing roads. In the context of "fi Sabil-illah" the zakāt can only be spend for "Jihad".

viii) Ihm-al- Sabil :

It means travellers with worthy goals. If someone is travelling to gain knowledge or any noble cause zakāt can be given to them.

i	Fuqra	Poor
ii	Masaqeeem	Needy
iii	Amileem	Zakat collectors
iv	Mulafat-ul- Qulub	Allies working for Islam or new converts
v	Ein riqah	Slaves
vi	Al-Gharimeem	Burdened with debt
vii	Fi-Sabil-illah	In the way of Allah
viii	Ihm-al-Sabil	Travellers.

There are following social impacts of Zakat :

i) Distribution of zakat creat economic balance :

Zakat ensures that wealth should not be concentrate in the hands of few people but circulate with in society. Through the circulation of wealth the gap between classes will be eradicate and economic balance and stability will be ensured.

ii) Zakat fosters social bonding :

Social bonding or unity among believers is one of the major components of Islam. Zakat fosters a sense of solidarity among Muslims, it promotes empathy and curbs resentment. The social bonding creates harmonious society.

iii) It eradicates dependency :

Proper distribution of zakat empowers individuals to become self-sufficient. It reduces dependency on others. It helps poor to start their own business. In long term the society will become self-sufficient and upgrades living standards.

iv) Zakat helps to reduce crimes :

According to the "Office of Justice USA" when the economic factor is one of the major cause of crime. When individual does not meet the basic necessities through legal way, then person try to gain through illegally. However, zakat helps to reduce crime, because when basic necessities are fulfilled, it creates social security and people avoid to involve in illegal ways.

Poverty can be alleviated through zakat by following ways :

i) Funding for education :

Zakat fund can be used to provide education and skill development training to poor. Which enables them to secure better employment opportunities. For instance, Malaysia allocate zakat fund to provide scholarships to needy underprivileged students.

ii) Microfinance for business :

Zakat funds can be used to provide interest free loans for small businesses. It help underprivileged to become self sufficient. Alchawal foundation's micro loan program is one of the best example of providing loans. According to NGO's report, as of 2020 100 billion PKR are distributed and around 99% people repayed the loan after establishing profitable businesses.

Conclusion :