

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

INTRODUCTION:

Zakat is obligatory (Fardh) upon all Muslims who are Sahib-e-Nisab. The Holy Quran has mentioned Zakat eighty times in which Allah clearly gave instructions on its recipients who are eligible for it. Moreover, Zakat is necessary in a poverty-ridden society. It ensures circulation of wealth, reduces class difference, controls inflation, controls poverty and promotes welfare in society.

I. RECIPIENTS OF ZAKAT:

The Holy Quran has mentioned in detail the people who are eligible to receive Zakat. The Holy Quran says:

It says:

The Sadaqat (Alms) are for the poor, the needy, those who collect them, those hearts are to be reconciled, to free captives and the debtors for the cause of Allah and

for the travellers, a duty imposed by Allah, Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.

(Surah At-Taubah: 60)

Thus, in the above mentioned Ayat, The Quran specifies how Zakat is to be distributed precisely and administers the eight categories for Zakat disbursement. This determination is not upto the government, scholars or even the Prophet himself. It is reported that a man once came to the Prophet and asked him Zakat.

The Prophet said:

"Allah permitted not even a Prophet to adjudge Zakat (worthiness). Rather, He himself ruled on it and permitted it in eight cases.

Therefore, if you belong to any of these, I shall most surely give you your right."

(Abu Sa'eed)

Recipients (Musarifi)

Description

Recipients (Musarifi)	Description
Fuqarah	Those who are living in economic hardships.
Masakeen	Those who do not have basic needs.
Amileen	Those who administrate the system of Zakat
Muft Mujaal-ul Quloob	Individuals who have recently embraced Islam.
Fi-Riqab	To free from slavery.
Gharimeen	Those individuals who are struggling to repay legitimate debts.
Fi-Sabilillah	In the pathway of Allah - for causes that align with Islamic principles
Ibn-as-Sabil	The wayfarer - travellers in need.

Hence, Zakat cannot be given in mosques and hospitals. Moreover, it should not be given to the descendants of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). Above are the only eight recipients which are entitled

2. SOCIAL IMPACTS OF ZAKAT:

Circulation of Wealth:

Zakat ensures wealth circulation within the economy, reducing the gap between the rich and the poor. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) advised his companion Mua'z Bin Jabal, while he was preceding to Yemen⁸ to teach them that Allah has made it obligatory for them to pay the Zakat from their property and "is to be taken from the wealthy among them and given to the poor".

Thus Zakat helps a lot in decreasing poverty. If proper Zakat system is established, the poverty will vanish away from the earth. In Sur

And those in whose wealth
as a recognized right,
for the needy and the
deprived.

Social Harmony And Justice:

Zakat bridges the gap between the haves and the have nots. In capitalistic economies, we see that wealth accumulates into few hands and the condition of the poor further deteriorates. One of the purposes of Zakat is to avoid such social disparity.

This (wealth) may not circulate solely among the rich. From among you. (~Surah Al-Mashr:7)

Crime Reduction:

Alleviating poverty through Zakat can lead to a reduction in crime rates as individuals are less likely to resort to illegal activities out of economic desperation. **For Instance**, during Haarat Umar (R.A's) era, the distribution of Zakat was so effective that not even a single recipient of Zakat was left in Medina, thereby resulting a prosperous society having negligible poverty-related crimes.

Strengthening Social Bonds:

By addressing economic inequalities Zakat helps strengthen social bonds and reduce tensions between different social classes.

The Quran says:

"But if they repent and establish worship and

pay the poor-due (Zakat),

then they are your

brethren in religion"

(~Surah-Taubah -11)

Discouraging Beggary:

If everyone pays Zakat from among the rich, no poor and the unfortunate would have to resort

to begging. Nowadays, we find beggary a menace facing many societies.

Islam on one hand, ordered the affluent to care about the destitute, and on the other, prohibited the poor and the needy from stretching hands before others.

Narrates Hazrat Abu Hurairah (R.A.) that the Holy Prophet said: "Whoever begs from people so as to accumulate more riches, he is asking for a live coal (fire) from hell, so let him ask for a lot or little."

Promoting Self-Respect:

Zakat is obligatory on the wealthy people. If they pay Zakat, they are just performing their duty assigned by Allah. They are not doing any favour on the poor and their destitute. Because, if they do not pay a due share, they will have to face a wrath of Allah on the Doomsday.

That is why the Zakat givers are themselves thankful to the receivers as they are helping to fulfill their duties. The Quran says:

“O you who believe! Render not vain your almsgiving by reproach and injury.”

(~Surah Baqarah: 264)

Poverty Alleviation with the Distribution of Zakat in Islamic Society:

Poverty can be alleviated with the distribution of Zakat in Islamic society in the ways mentioned below

By Providing Direct Financial Assistance And Healthcare Services:

First, poverty can be alleviated by providing direct financial assistance and healthcare services to the destitute through Zakat funds.

This assistance can help them meet their basic necessities of life i.e. healthcare, which is costly nowadays.

According to WHO, Healthcare costs have pushed 1.6 billion people deeper into poverty. However, According to United Nation High Commissioner For Refugees (UNHCR)'s Zakat program report 2025, The Refugee Zakat Fund helped more than 349,000 refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) across

21 countries. Moreover, Inklus Hospital in Karachi, Pakistan, is also a good example of a self-sustaining organization that developed using Zakat. These illustrations depict that Zakat funds can become a game changer for eliminating poverty from society.

Education And Skills Programs:

The introducing education and skills training programs through Zakat funds can also eliminate poverty. Literacy rate and employability can be increased by introducing Zakat-funded scholarships, vocational skills training programs and imparting market oriented technical and professional training under a wide range of demand-driven courses. For instance: the Al-Taqdim Project is an education (skill development) program of Cybernetics Robo Limited, funded by the Zakat fund in Bangladesh. Similar initiatives can be taken by other

countries to eradicate poverty.

Promoting Job And Entrepreneurship:

Third, poverty can be reduced by promoting entrepreneurship and job opportunities. Through Zakat fund, there are many skilled professional such as tailors, launderers, butchers and drivers etc who do not have enough money to buy essential tools and machinery for their trades.

Similarly, Zakat may also play a crucial role in helping farmers acquire land for agricultural purposes.

Thus, the governments of Muslim countries should adopt such initiatives, by expanding earning opportunities.

Child Nutrition And Food Distribution:

Poverty can also be alleviated in Islamic Society by initiating child nutrition

and Food distribution programs for the impoverished through Zakat funds. Well-nourished individuals perform better academically and professionally, thus, contributing to the economic growth of society.

Water And Infrastructure facilities through Funds.

Poverty can also be reduced by providing by providing infrastructure and water and sanitation facilities through Zakat funds. Infrastructure development such as roads, energy stations, water system etc not only improves access to markets hospitals, and education but also enhances employability, agricultural productivity, food security and hence, quality of life.

Critical Analysis:

In today's world, the distribution of Zakat has become a personal concern for the rich. None of the government officials can hold affluent people accountable for the payment of Zakat. That is why wealth is unfortunately accumulated in few hands; the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer day by day. Similarly, the lack of trust in government institutions is the another hurdle in way of efficient distribution system. In the current situation where Muslim countries are entangled in the shackles of poverty, Zakat should be institutionalized and properly managed without corruption. Where there is no Islamic state Muslim states should come forward and play this role. Many of them a lot during natural disasters in Pakistan.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, Zakat is one of the key tenets of Islam that transforms the economic condition of people. However, not every Muslim is eligible to receive Zakat, only eight recipients are mentioned. Moreover, Zakat promotes social harmony, reduces crimes, discouraging beggary and many evils that are prevalent due to poverty. Hence, distribution of Zakat eliminates poverty by financial assistance, skill development, providing jobs, and bearing healthcare costs which is the main reason of poor people's poverty.