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ISLAMIC STUDIES

TEST - 04

QUESTION NO. 1

Write about the system of Accountability in Islam and how it can ensure an effective public administration?

ANSWER

INTRODUCTION

The concept of accountability is based on justice and emphasises that no person is above the law and everyone is answerable to law, irrespective of class, colour and creed. Islam is a holistic religion which not only teaches about religion but deen, it focuses on every aspect of life which helps a Muslim to stay on the right path and lead his life according to the teachings of Quran and Sunnah. According to the Islamic context, accountability implies to a condition that every individual is answerable and responsible to the authorities. The Islamic system of accountability is designed to uphold ethical standards, ensure equitable treatment, and safeguard the rights of individuals and communities. When applied effectively, it fosters an efficient and morally guided public administration.

CONCEPT OF ACCOUNTABILITY

In public Administration, accountability is the concept which highlights that every person is responsible for their actions and any person who is a public official is not only answerable to Allah Al-Mighty but the public as well. Accountability holds immense importance for a prosperous society as it helps gain public trust and ensure effective governance.

SYSTEM OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN ISLAM

A Muslim can never deny from being accountable. If one escapes the process of accountability he can't escape from it on the Day of Judgement. Allah said in the Holy Quran,

"On that Day you
will be brought to
Judgement and none
of your secrets will
remain hidden"

[AL-Quran]

Hence, every Muslim has a firm believe the Allah (S.W.T) will gather everyone on the Day of Judgement, where every single person will be held accountable for their deeds.

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ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE NEXT LIFE:

Day of judgement will arrive, where every person will face the result of their deeds, whether it be a reward or a punishment.

"So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it."

[Az-Zilzaal]

Allah has mentioned in the Holy Quran, that the day of judgement is not only to punish those with wrong deeds but also to reward those who have done ~~an~~ good - even a small good. That will be the day when justice will be served as the only judge will be the All-mighty Allah (s.w.t), ~~and~~ everyone will be held accountable and that will be the day when justice will prevail.

"We set up the scales of justice for the Day of Judgement, so no soul will be wronged in the least. And if a deed is the weight of mustard seed, we will bring it forth. And sufficient are We as a (vigilant) Reckoner."

[Al-Anbiyaa]

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ACCOUNTABILITY IN THIS WORLD:

Humans are given the responsibility of maintaining accountability in this world, by Allah. Allah has trusted humans in this regard, which makes our lives meaningful. Those in authority are burdened as they are not only accountable for their own selves but they will also be answerable for the jurisdictions they serve.

"(Remember) when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to place a successive authority on earth."

[Al-Baqarah]

The above ayah highlights that human is the successive authority on earth to about which Allah highlighted in front of the angels as well.

"Accountability breeds response-ability".

- Stephen Covey.

Self accountability is also responsible as being responsible for your actions will lead to a better response. This helps a person being clear in communication and consistent follow-up.

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ACCOUNTABILITY DURING HOLY PROPHET (S.A.W) AND HIS CALIPHS

At the time of Holy Prophet (S.A.W) and his caliphs an exemplary system of Accountability existed, especially at the time of Hazrat Umar (R.A). Holy Prophet (S.A.W) had appointed judges in different areas, who were responsible for their respective areas issues. A department of accountability was established during the time of the caliphs for the purpose of accountability of the public. Holy Prophet (S.A.W) had appointed Umar (R.A) as judge at Madinah and Hazrat Ali (R.A) was sent to different areas of Yemen. Not only the public but the one's with authority were also held accountable in the same way.

CONCEPT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Public administration is the implementation of government policies and it is also an academic discipline that prepares public servants for public offices.

"Public Administration is a detailed and systematic execution of public law".

- Woodrow Wilson (Father of Public Administration).

Woodrow Wilson had divided government institutions into two separate sections, administration and politics. He highlighted that administration is out of the sphere of politics.

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EFFECTIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

An effective public administration ensures that government institutions and officials work efficiently, transparently and equitably to meet the societal needs and promote public good.

KEY FEATURES OF EFFECTIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION:

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Accountability and Transparency.

Citizen-Centric Approach

Strategic Management

Efficiency and Effectiveness.

Participation and Consultation

Ensure Rule of Law

Above mentioned are the key feature to deliver good governance to the public and ensure the sustainable development of the society.

ROLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM IN ISLAM TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION:

Islamic public administration focuses on various aspects which help maintain an effective public administration.

① Administration by Consultation:

Islam has focused on consulting the public and do not exclude them from the decision making process.

"And consult them in the conduct of affairs".

[Aal-e-Imran].

② Ensure Justice in society:

An effective public administration must focus on prevalence of justice.

"But if you judge, judge between them equitably. God loves the equitable".

[An-Nisaa].

③ Ensure Rule of Law

Adherence to legal frameworks ensures fair and consistent administration, it also protects the rights of individuals and maintain order in society.

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① Efficiency and Equity:

Appropriate use of resources according to the needs of the public ensures optimal utilization of resources and also ensures equitable service delivery. The administration must address the needs of all segments of society, ensuring that no group is marginalized.

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell the Islamic system of accountability is purely based on the divine commandments and ethical principles, which offers a framework for effective public administration. It integrates justice, transparency, and responsibility. The Islamic system of administration combines all the features and highlights the importance of accountability in this world and life hereafter. A holistic model of administration is provided in Islam which ensure the welfare and prosperity of the society and helps build a sustainable society.



QUESTION NO2

Discuss how letters of Hazra' Umar (R.A) and Hazra' Ali (R.A) laid down the golden rules for public administration and good governance.

ANSWERS

INTRODUCTION

Letters of Hazra' Umar (R.A) and Hazra' Ali (R.A) are seminal documents in Islamic governance which offer timeless principles of public administration and good governance. Their correspondence with governors and officials provide detailed guidance on justice and accountability. They have also influenced the administrative practices throughout the history and are everliving till the Day of judgement as these principles are the exemplary principles, required to build a prosperous society without injustice and which ensures peace. The golden rules of their letters can never be replaced which outline the principles of justice, equity and the responsibility of the rulers. The rulers of today's world also need to focus on those letters and also implement the strategies and rules highlighted by both the caliphs in their letters, as it will help make world a better place to live and minimize the chaos.

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LETTERS OF HAZRAT UMAR (R.A)

Hazrat Umar (R.A) - second caliph - was known for his extensive correspondence with his governors and officials. His letters emphasized justice, accountability, and welfare of the people.

For instance the letter of Hazrat Umar (R.A) to the Governor of Basra included following words;

"Keep yourself away from luxuries,
and fear the cry of oppressed, for
the plea of the oppressed is
answered"

The world highlighted that justice must prevail to get away from the plea of the oppressed. These letters give a lesson to the Muslims to not be arrogant as even if you are a leader in this temporary world, you are still a servant of Allah (s.w.t).

"He has ordered him to fear Allah, to prefer obedience to Him and to follow what He has commanded in His Book (Holy Quran) out of His obligatory and elective commands"

LETTERS OF HAZRAT ALI (R.A)

Hazrat Ali (R.A) - Fourth caliph - wrote comprehensive letters to Malik Al-Ashkar when was appointed as the Governor of Egypt. The letter is preserved in Nahj-al-Balagha, which outlines the principles of justice, equity and the responsibilities of the rulers. He highlighted his advice in a line in following words;

"Let the dearest of your treasury
be the treasury of righteous action"

Hazrat Ali's (R.A) letter highlighted many advices and focused on the importance of accountability, consensus and being compassionate towards the subjects.

GOLDEN RULES IN LETTERS

① Be Forgiving and Tolerant:

Hazrat Ali stated this in the following words;

"Habituate your heart to mercy for the subjects
and to affection and kindness for them".

Hazrat Ali (R.A) highlighted the importance of Forgiving and focused on not to use the powers in a wrong way.

② Justice and Fairness:

Both caliphs emphasized the importance of justice. Hazrat Umar (R.A) instructed his governors to treat all citizens equally, stating that the strong should not oppress the weak. Hazrat Ali (R.A) advised Malik Al-Ashhar to be just and avoid favoritism.

③ Accountability:

Hazrat Umar (R.A) was known for holding his officials accountable and reminding them that they were entrusted with public welfare and would be answerable to Allah for their actions. He warned the ~~caliphs~~ governors against corruption and misuse of power.

④ Consultation and Inclusiveness:

Both the Caliphs highlighted the importance of consultation in governance. As Hazrat Umar (R.A) had established a council of advisors and encouraged his governors to seek counsel in decision making.

⑤ Welfare of the people:

Letters of the Caliphs prioritize the welfare of their citizens. Hazrat Umar (R.A) advised his governors to be accessible to the people and address their needs. Hazrat Ali (R.A) instructed Malik to show compassion towards his subjects.

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CONCLUSION

Leaders of Hazrat Ali (RA) and Hazrat Umar (RA) focus on the foundational principles of public administration and good governance in Islam. Both emphasized on justice, accountability, consensus and welfare of the people which offers the timeless guidance for leaders of the contemporary world as well. By following these golden rules, administrators can foster ethical governance which will help serve the needs of the people and uphold the value of justice and equity to build a prosperous nation.