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Zakat and Social Welfare: The Role of Islamic Charitable Practices in Contemporary Societies

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In a world where the needy communities of the poor and disadvantaged groups continue to increase, and economic inequality and social injustice remain intact, the Islamic practice of Zakat has evolved as a beacon of hope and equity. It has emerged as a revolutionary weapon not only adopted by the rich, wealthy, and, influential in supporting the socio-economic plight of its fellow citizens but has also been integrated among the governmental arm of the law to implement regime-based social welfare programs. Zakat is not considered merely a religious obligation embedded in the pillars of Islam but a remarkable constituent to social welfare and economic justice crafted and descended from the legislative body of Allah in the form of the Qur'an and the prophet Muhammad. Every individual within the Islamic community is directed to take action to execute Zakat as a part of their religious practice. The purpose of this research paper is to investigate various factors related to Zakat. This paper articulates Zakat based on theological and legislative standpoints by drawing data from the holy book of the Qur'an and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad.

Keywords: *zakat, charitable practices, social welfare, poverty alleviation, economic justice.*

INTRODUCTION

The Islamic zakat owes its origin to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and the almighty

Allah as enshrined in the holy Quran which forms one of the five pillars of Islam. All the laws of the earlier prophets from Ibrahim, Isma'il, and Isa, to the Jews, included the concept of charity and almsgiving.¹ However, the Islamic practice of zakat was initiated and codified by Prophet Muhammad.

Most verses in the Quran that discussed zakat were generally related to the compulsory contributions following the migration to Medina as opposed to the voluntary offerings made in Makkah. The statutory zakat was introduced during the caliphate of Abu Bakr, who also introduced the provision that it should be paid to the official person under the authority of Muhammad. More codification of zakat regulations was done by the second and third Caliph, Umar and Uthman respectively. There was a time when no one in Medina required zakat when Umar bin Abdul Aziz ruled (717–720), instead, it became somewhat of a personal obligation. However, later on, the Sunnis, as well as other Muslims, saw the collection and distribution of zakat as a part of the role of the Islamic state which is still in many modern Islamic countries today.

'Zakat is a vital component of Islamic social welfare, as it ensures that the wealth of the rich is distributed among the poor and needy.'² The Quran has many verses in this respect hence for Muslims who are in a position to do so, zakat is obligatory. It indicates who the rightful beneficiaries of Zakat are: the poor and the needy, those who are collecting it, those whose minds have been engrossed towards the truth, and the liberators of prisoners, debtors, and travellers.³

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Theological Foundations of Zakat: The concept of zakat can be traced back to the Quran and Hadith. In several verses, including 2:43, 2: 277, and 9:103 the Quran underscores the significance of alms and correlates it to wealth growth, purification, and virtuous deeds. These verses prescribe the eligible recipients of zakat and state that its giving is an act of worship for

¹ 'History of Zakat' (National Zakat Foundation) <<https://nzf.org.uk/knowledge/history-of-zakat/>> accessed 17 June 2024

² *Ibid*

³ 'Sahih Muslim Book 5: The Book of Zakat (Kitab Al-Zakat) (International Islamic University Malaysia) <https://www.iiu.edu.my/deed/hadith/muslim/005_smt.html> accessed 17 June 2024

the Muslim. Thus, zakat is one of the five fundamental principles of the Islamic faith, which is further emphasized by hadiths. In this regard, there are sayings like the one in Sahih al-Bukhari, which not only emphasize this but also indicate caution against its disregard.

Aside from zakat, Islam also promotes Sadaqah, meaning charitable giving not restricted to a calculated percentage of one's belongings. While there are specific rules as to who is to give and who is to receive the payment of zakat, Sadaqah is just another way of giving or charity that has many specifications of Islam but is completely voluntary and may be given in cash or kind or benevolent actions. Khums, a Shi'a Charity, is the Kindness Fund; it is also called the Poor's Fund and is another charity specific to Shi'a Islam. It is an independent tax that targets specific products such as battlefield spoils and precious metals sold in mines. Unlike Sadaqah which is given on any subject and then there is a special tax called Khums while zakat has some specific conditions about the quantity that one needs to pay which is 2.5 % of their total wealth and certain categories of people they can pay it to.

*Anas b. Malik, 'Kitab Al-Zakat: The Book of Zakat.'*⁴

The book 'Anas b. Malik, 'Kitab Al-Zakat: The focus of 'The Book of Zakat' lies in explaining the importance of Zakat in the context of religion and its link with concepts like wealth creation, purification, and other benevolent acts. Zakat is viewed in a way that helps in the purification of one's wealth, decreases the gap between the rich and the poor, and especially helps in asserting the moral character of the donor. This Hadith emphasizes the significance of the practice of Zakat, as a very significant pillar of the faith concerning the religion of Islam with an aim of both attaining spirituality. This Hadith emphasizes the significance of the practice of Zakat, as a very significant pillar of the faith concerning the religion of Islam with an aim of both attaining spiritual growth as well as establishing a more just society.

For Muslims, it is important to distinguish between the theological rationale for zakat and the theoretical and legal imperatives of zakat, and between zakat, Sadaqah, and khums. Besides being a religious as well as an economic value, zakat is also important for the purification of

⁴ *Ibid*

money, assisting the needs of the deprived sections of society, and building up a spirit of philanthropy among the Muslim community.

2. Zakat and Economic Justice

'Zakat is not only a means of alleviating poverty but also a means of promoting economic justice and social welfare.'⁵ Studies on Islamic economics and social welfare pay particularly much attention to the status of Zakat in reducing economic inequalities. Since zakat is an act of charity in which one is obliged to give out a certain portion of their wealth to the poor, it works as a means of reducing economic differences.

Mitigation of Poverty: In this sense, it has come to be realized that zakat can drastically bring down incidences of poverty and prevent it from worsening. Research has used the Sen Index, Average Poverty Gap, Income Gap, and Headcount Index in analyzing the role of Zakat on poverty. For example, the Selangor, Malaysia community-based study found that the Zakat alleviated the rate and severity of poverty among new Muslim converts.⁶

Inequality of Income: One of the most highlighted pillars of Islam is Zakat or almsgiving, which has been found to help in the equalization of income levels by taking wealth from the well-off and giving it to those who are in need. When it comes to the assessment of income differences, the second method often applied in practice is based on the Gini Coefficient and the Lorenz Curve {The Gini coefficient measures income inequality, ranging from 0 (perfect equality) to 1 (one person has all the income). It is calculated as the area between the Lorenz curve (actual income distribution) and the line of perfect equality, divided by the total area under the line of perfect equality}. For instance, an empirical study conducted in West Java Province, Indonesia

⁵ Chapra, M. Umer, 'The Economic Problem: Can Islam Play an Effective Role in Solving it Efficiently as well as Equitably?' (2015) 22 Working Papers 1432-1 <https://ideas.repec.org/p/ris/irtiw/1432_001.html> accessed 23 June 2024

⁶ Fuadah Johari et. al., 'Zakat Distribution and Programme for Sustaining Muallaf Belief and Thought' (2014) 66(1) Jurnal Teknologi <<http://dx.doi.org/10.11113/jt.v66.1940>> accessed 23 June 2024

emphasized that zakat distribution programs wield a positive impact in eradicating poverty and decreasing the income disparity among receivers.⁷

Efficiency in Zakat: It has been seen that other structures of productive zakat such as offering funds for business have also proven to reduce levels of income disparities substantially. The kind of zakat mentioned has a positive impact on economic equity because it assists the recipients in improving their level of income and gain/earnings and ensures that it meets their requirements at regular intervals.⁸

Empowerment: Through the provision of the necessary tools and support to enhance the recipient's economic status, zakat distribution programs can empower the impoverished. In this way, the impoverished will be able to enter the market actively and improve their quality of life, which means that the income divide might decrease.⁹

Aid to the Poor: It also means that besides serving as an economic tool, zakat can help achieve economic justice for the poor and enhance social welfare. It is one of the most significant aspects of Islamic social welfare since its mission is to make society equal and eliminate economic disparities.¹⁰

Other Religious Models: Tithing is also a concept found in Christianity and can be compared to zakat. Tithing which entails presenting a percentage of one's income to the church to support others is a common practice. Tithing, however, is mostly a voluntary form of giving and not obligatory as is the zakat. Almsgiving or Zakat and Tzedakah has a similar concept of charity in Judaism. Tzedakah is the act of providing a portion of one's income to the unfortunate and

⁷ Qurroh Ayuniyyah et. al., 'The impact of zakat in poverty alleviation and income inequality reduction from the perspective of gender in West Java, Indonesia' (2022) 15(5) International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management <<https://doi.org/10.1108/IMEFM-08-2020-0403>> accessed 23 June 2024

⁸ Raihana Darsono et. al., 'The Impact of Productive Zakat on the Income Inequality of Mustahiq in Yogyakarta' (2019) 3(1) Journal of Economics Research and Social Sciences <<https://journal.umy.ac.id/index.php/jerss/article/view/9884/5669>> accessed 23 June 2024

⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰ Johari (n 6)

destitute people. Like zakat, tzedakah is not compulsory, but like zakat, it is considered obligatory, and thus a moral requirement.¹¹

The governmental means of transferring wealth that is based on an increase in wealth is titled progressive taxation, which is different from zakat. This is precisely the effect of taxing the super-rich at a higher rate than the lower-paid individuals, which narrows the gap. This is known as progressive taxation where an individual's contribution depends on his/her earnings. While progressive taxation is an atheistic measure introduced by the government, zakat is a religious charge upon the Muslims in the society with low income or wealth. Often categorized as philanthropy, social welfare programs which are secular and voluntary exercises designated to assist the needy, the poor and the indigent are not a sort of zakat. Public grants remain one of the primary sources of social welfare projects, although these can either be secular or faith-based. However, as it is quite clear to many, it is zakat, and it is a religious responsibility carried out and distributed by religious institutions.¹²

MECHANISMS OF ZAKAT COLLECTION AND DISTRIBUTION

One of the most vital components of Islamic economics is zakat, which is aimed at fighting poverty or recreating income redistribution. Zakat is gathered through conventional and modern methods and implemented through numerous techniques where Islamic banks and other related organizations take an important role in managing the whole process. It is stated that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to collect zakat personally, he used to designate people to go for this purpose. Correctly guided Caliphs and Muslim monarchs ensured the sound and accurate collection. Some of the institutions that involve themselves in the collection and distribution of zakat are the Zakat, Tax, and Customs Authority in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). These centres ensure that Zakat is calculated justly and fairly, and distributed fairly to deserving recipients.¹³

¹¹ Jennifer Bremer, 'Zakat and Economic Justice: Emerging International Models and Their Relevance for Egypt' (2015) Semantic Scholar <<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Zakat-and-Economic-Justice%3A-Emerging-International-Bremer/317d3df7f444b91dbac7e762e60bc3d82500e31a>> accessed 29 June 2024

¹² *Ibid*

¹³ *Zakah collection in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia a Fiqh based perspective* (2nd edn, Zakat Tax and Customs Authority 2022)

To go with the modern trends, there is the use of technology in Zakat distribution as well as its collection. This includes applications that can be downloaded on mobile devices and websites that enable one to apply for the procedure and enhance its convenience. Managers who are involved in the management of Zakat include Islamic-based banks and investment firms. They help in the disbursement of Zakat funds and economically support the needy and the deserving. Organizations for zakat management are designed to make the process of collecting and disbursing zakat more efficient as is the case with Centralised Zakat Management (CZM).¹⁴

Zakat is available in gold, silver, wages, farm animals, crops, and companies' profits, and it is collected by Islamic financial institutions and organizations. These establishments and groups distribute Zakat to deserving recipients, ensuring that what is disbursed is used according to the intended purpose which includes fighting poverty, and the improvement of the economy. They are also in charge of the Zakat money so that they can distribute it in the right manner and in a way that will bring about the wanted outcomes.¹⁵

IMPACT OF ZAKAT ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Case Studies of Zakat's Effectiveness -

Indonesia: Several researchers have provided contrasting findings on the extent of Zakat operationalization in the country of Indonesia. Zakat has been seen to enhance the effect of growth, poverty reduction, and income disparity. However, some research at the same time argued that the impact of Zakat is either insignificant or negligible because Zakat institutions have not been efficient in the distribution and management of funds effectively. The overall results reported have also been inconsistent, indicating that the effects of Zakat could vary based on specific indicators.¹⁶

¹⁴ Mohd Rodzi Embong et. al., 'Role of Zakat to Eradicate Poverty in Malaysia' (2013) 39 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.17576/pengurusan-2013-39-13>> accessed 24 June 2024

¹⁵ Suhaili Sarif, 'Zakat for generating sustainable income: an emerging mechanism of productive distribution' (2024) 11(1) Cogent Business & Management <<https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2312598>> accessed 24 June 2024

¹⁶ Siectio Dicko Pratama, 'The Role of Zakat in Alleviating Multidimensional Poverty' (2023) 6(1) International Journal of Islamic Economics and Finance <<https://doi.org/10.18196/ijief.v6i1.17006>> accessed 24 June 2024

Nigeria: Though this pillar of Islam has been practised in Nigeria for a long time because there are many Muslims in Nigeria when the government resorted to reinstating the method of practising the zakat for the poorest populace as a way of supporting the needy, it lacked serious support in the system which could be most suitable in addressing the challenge of poverty.¹⁷

Oman: The analysis of its effect on poverty reduction was done using the survey conducted in Nizwa City, Oman. The research concluded that there is potential for zakat to be more than capable of cutting poverty rates however, this study only provided probability factors and didn't evaluate the efficiency.¹⁸

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Zakat is given and managed effectively in areas like the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the results are poverty has reduced and the income Gini coefficient is relatively low. Creating an efficient independent body like the Zakat Authority as already practised in several countries or having an arrangement of some sort with an authoritative department like Zakat, Tax, and Customs Authority (ZATCA) in Saudi Arabia to safeguard fairness and accuracy in the collection, Holdings, and distribution of Zakat funds is important. Experience now shows that in the regions where Zakat systems are relatively very weak or inadequately directed, there has been little or negligible influence on poverty eradication. They include Nigeria, which despite the government's efforts to undertake Zakat has not recorded much progress in the application of Zakat.¹⁹

ZAKAT AND SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS

Integration of Zakat with Government Social Welfare Programs: Social assistance programs and Zakat are integrated in Indonesia by the government. The Zakat, Tax, and Customs Authority (ZATCA) is the legal body entitled to the collection of Zakat and distribute it to

¹⁷ Novendi Arkham Muftadi and Dewi Susilowati, 'Analysis of Governance and Efficiency on Zakat Distribution: Evidence From Indonesia' (2018) 3(2) International Journal of Zakat <<http://dx.doi.org/10.37706/ijaz.v3i2.74>> 13 June 2024

¹⁸ Sara Salim Al-Hadhrami et. al., 'Role Of Zakat In Poverty Alleviation: A Case Study In Nizwa City, Sultanate Of Oman' (Conference: 2nd Kedah International Zakat Conference 2021 At: Kedah, Malaysia, 2021)

¹⁹ Muftadi (n 17)

deserving recipients. They also cooperate with the administrators of Zakat so that they can be assured of proper collection and delivery of data. Originally in Jordan, the National Social Protection System depends a lot on Zakat, and this is institutionalized. Many essential services such as health care programs, Temporary Relief Services Money for basic needs, Employment Generation, and Income Generation Activities are financed by the Zakat Fund. However, better coordination of poverty reduction activities is still difficult mainly because poor people are not consistently registered in many of the government activities.²⁰

Collaboration between Islamic Charities and Secular NGOs: Efforts have been made to partner with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) by the Islamic institutions like the Badan Amil Zakat Nasional (National Zakat Agency in Indonesia) BAZNAS in Indonesia which utilizes the Funds of Zakat to pursue the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Compared to the stated objectives this alliance suits Islam's ban on poverty and endeavour towards the development of societies and it represents the partnership for objectives for the sustainable development of goals. A selection of Sudanese and Algerian subject-matter specialists has participated in the webinars, which the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) has summoned on the role of Zakat in social protection. Until such conversations, it will remain a matter of focusing on the engagement of the secular NGOs and the Zakat Funds to improve the provision of social security, as well as the eradication of poverty, among the Beneficiary Community Clusters (BCCs).²¹

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES IN ZAKAT IMPLEMENTATION

Zakat organizations remain mainly closed to society to such an extent that people find it hard to understand how the monies are collected and distributed. This could help foster suspicion and in turn, lessen the effectiveness of Zakat as a tool for alleviating poverty. Therefore, it is important for institutions that are in charge of zakat to accept some of the repercussions

²⁰ Charlotte Bilo and Anna Carolina Machado, 'The role of zakat in the provision of social protection: a comparison between Jordan, Palestine and Sudan' (2018) International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth <https://ipcig.org/sites/default/files/pub/en/OP381_The_role_of_zakat_in_the_provision_of_social_protection.pdf> accessed 14 June 2024

²¹ 'The role of Zakat in the provision of social protection' (*International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and UNICEF MENA Regional Office*, 15 January 2019) <<https://socialprotection.org/learn/webinars/role-zakat-provision-social-protection>> accessed 15 June 2024

concerning the choices that they make and the actions that they undertake to ensure that the donations received are well distributed in society. Therefore, for Zakat institutions to function properly good governance is compulsory and admissible. This includes the formulation of policies and standards and ensuring that the institutions are manned by competent personnel.²²

Due to these reasons, economic crises can affect Zakat institutions so much because the latter likely struggle to collect and distribute cash affected by volatility. While digitization raises various questions about the security and privacy of data, it accords flexibility that can help enhance the overall processes related to zakat distribution and collection. Large-spread ailments such as the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak have raised the urgency of zakat establishments which ought to have contingency measures formulated so that a society's affected people can be assisted.²³

These concerns indicate that institutions involved in zakat must focus on enhancing accountability, transparency, and governance to combat such challenges. They should also have strategies for responding to disasters and assisting the concerned populace if they are to operate effectively in contemporary society. Any institution that helps in zakat should be willing and prepared to use and train the human resources from Asnaf.²⁴

LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

Indonesian legislation does not specifically provide laws on zakat, but the Law of Zakat Management No. 38/1999 acts as the legal framework for the mobilization and distribution of

²² Habeebullah Abdulkabeer Akinlabi and Ashrof Akintola Habeebullah, 'Implementation of Zakat Collection and Distribution System in Ibadan Metropolis Using WordPress Core Architecture and Architectonics' (2022) 11(1) Fountain Journal of Natural and Applied Sciences <<https://doi.org/10.53704/fujnas.v11i1.444>> accessed 15 June 2024

²³ Raynal Yasni and Agam Reynaldi Reza Erlanda, 'Challenges of Zakat Integration as Source of State Revenue' (2020) 3(2) International Journal of Islamic Economics and Finance <<https://doi.org/10.18196/ijief.3238>> accessed 15 June 2024

²⁴ Tengku Mohd Azizuddin Tuan Mahmood et. al., 'Issues And Challenges Of Zakat Institutions Achieving Maqasid Syariah In Malaysia' (2021) 2(1) AZKA International Journal Of Zakat & Social Finance <<http://dx.doi.org/10.51377/azjaf.vol2no1.46>> accessed 15 June 2024

zakat funds to govern zakat management in Indonesia. The law also regulates the role of NGO Zakat collectors to ensure that they fully observe the provision of the law.²⁵

The Islamic Financial Service Act 2013 (IFSA)²⁶ is one of the many regulations in Malaysia's comprehensive system of the regulation of Islamic financial institutions. This act not only ensures the solidity of financial legislation but also provides the framework suitable for all Islamic financial companies when Sharia is implemented into the legal environment.²⁷

In the sphere of implementing Zakat, especially in the regulated systems, the state plays a significant role. To involve the state and to collect and distribute zakat, the Indonesian government has adopted institutions and laws concerning zakat. It should also be noted that non-state actors are also involved in the performance of Zakat administration including NGOs engaged in Zakat collectors. These organizations provide excellent structures by which zakat can be properly coordinated to ensure the efficient collection and distribution of zakat funds.²⁸

ZAKAT AND REFUGEE/DISASTER RELIEF

During emergencies in humanitarian aspects, it is largely through zakat that relief is accorded. Two organizations fitting this description are International Humanitarian Relief (IHR) and Islamic Aid, whose main focus is on providing livelihood to those affected by calamities such as natural disasters or war, particularly in Gaza and Northwestern Syria. I add to it the fact that zakat provides a way forward for those in need of resources and offers them an opportunity to live a better life thus reducing the suffering of the needy. Schemes and services associated with health and physical well-being are categorized. The followers of the Islamic tradition can use zakat to make payments for health-promoting services and support health-related initiatives that allow vulnerable groups to address the issue of access to healthcare services. In addition to

²⁵ Alfitri Alfitri, 'The Law of Zakat Management and Non-Governmental Zakat Collectors in Indonesia' (2005) 8(2) International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/256801892_The_Law_of_Zakat_Management_and_Non-Governmental_Zakat_Collectors_in_Indonesia> accessed 23 June 2024

²⁶ Islamic Financial Services Act 2013

²⁷ Fazlurrahman Syarif, 'Regulatory framework for Islamic financial institutions: lesson learnt between Malaysia and Indonesia' (2019) 2(2) Journal of Halal Product and Research <<http://dx.doi.org/10.20473/jhpr.vol.2-issue.2.79-85>> accessed 23 June 2024

²⁸ Alfitri (n 25)

helping hundreds of families have safe homes to live in and creating employment opportunities for the communities, zakat also funds sustainable housing projects such as the Hayat Shelter Village in Akhtar, Syria.²⁹

This was done through the formation of an independent organization called the United Nations Refugee Zakat Fund, which was formed and created by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to ensure that every single penny that is given to zakat is utilized in helping the refugees and the displaced persons. Transparency is ensured throughout the entire process of collecting and distributing Zakat since this fund is managed and controlled accordingly.

The Zakat collection and distribution process is transparent because this fund and the process connected with it are controlled and supervised. Before the initiation of the Refugee Zakat Fund, the UNHCR consulted with scholars in Islamic jurisprudence and heads of fatwa organizations internationally. Whereas the IDRFB received 16 fatwas from these organizations internationally. The UNHCR maintains a 100% policy to distribute Zakat to families of displaced and impoverished refugees as well as those with difficult access. This could further be observed to mean that salaries and other administrative expenses are in no way subsidized by Zakat. Zakat is mostly provided to families in the form of economic support assistance thus helping them meet their daily necessities like food and medicine. Moreover, keeping thousands of refugees jobless in their new nations, ensures they administer their affairs and meet the challenge of extreme hardship.³⁰

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR ZAKAT IN SOCIAL WELFARE

The Zakat administrations and departments should explore ways of using technologies to increase the effectiveness of the process of collecting and distributing the due Zakat. This includes making certain that the transactional history is traced using blockchain technology. Thus, Zakat can be also set to be more participatory in the sense that it can be tailored to address specific groups of people, for example, women and youths who are often locked out of most

²⁹ 'Where will Your Zakat Go?' (*International Humanitarian relief*) <<https://ihrelief.org/en/zakat/>> accessed 23 June 2024

³⁰ 'Islamic Philanthropy - Zakat' (*Australia for UNHCR*) <<https://www.unrefugees.org.au/ways-to-give/islamic-philanthropy/zakat/>> accessed 17 June 2024

Zakat organizations. The institutions involved in zakat should make an effort to develop the staff and partners in zakat operations required skills. Zakat institutions should work in partnership with other organizations, for example, non-governmental organizations and governmental organizations since it would enable them to share resources as well as skills. From zakat, funds can be disbursed for climate change-related causes such as making available funds for agriculture that can adapt to climate change and the production of renewable energy.

Zakat can be planned in a way to eradicate poverty because it can be moderately selective with a focus on poor households and disadvantaged groups. Among the several purposes, zakat could be utilized to finance disasters in the form of funding the necessary actions in this sphere. It shows that zakat could be utilized to fund activities that are linked with the enhancement of global health, including financing health care services and health education.³¹

SUGGESTIONS

A modern zakat management system should be established to ensure zakat funds are collected and distributed smoothly. Technology, such as mobile apps and websites, should be utilized to facilitate easy giving of zakat and efficient distribution to those in need. Integrating zakat into social welfare programs can contribute to fighting poverty and reducing income inequality. Zakat must be distributed fairly and efficiently to those who truly require it. Progressive taxation policies, similar to those in many countries, should also be introduced to help close the income gap. Education about the importance of zakat in promoting social welfare and economic justice should be emphasized, alongside explanations of its theological and legal basis. Additionally, raising awareness about other forms of charity, such as Sadaqah and khums, should broaden understanding of Islamic charitable practices.

CONCLUSION

In the intricate tapestry of contemporary society, zakat emerges not merely as a thread of financial assistance but as a vibrant tapestry of hope, unity, and resilience. This research explores the profound role zakat plays in social welfare, illustrating how this ancient practice transcends

³¹ Bremer (n 11)

time to address modern challenges. As we witness the transformative power of zakat in alleviating poverty, fostering community development, and promoting social justice, it becomes evident that zakat is not just a pillar of Islam but a beacon of comprehensive societal welfare. By integrating zakat with contemporary technologies and regulatory frameworks, as well as synergizing with governmental and non-governmental organizations, we can amplify its impact manifold. The future of Zakat lies in its ability to adapt and evolve, ensuring that its principles of compassion and justice reach every corner of the globe, especially in times of crisis and need.