

POVERTY ALLEVIATION: CHALLENGES FOR THE ISLAMIC WORLD

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THE ISLAMIC WORLD**

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**THE CENTRE FOR POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (CPDS)
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PREFACE

Poverty is a condition not a curse or blight. It is a universal phenomenon, and Muslim countries are not an exception to it. This condition can be alleviated by efforts made by the poor themselves, by affluent individuals, by groups of individuals, and by an efficient re-distribution process. In Islam, there is an intrinsic mechanism of redistribution of financial resources in the form of *zakah* and *sadaqah*. *Zakah* is a poor's *alm* mandatory on those fulfill the *nisab*. It has to be given to eight categories of people who are known as *asnaf*. It can be institutionalized, or can also be directly given away by rich people to *asnaf*, or it can be a combination of both. There is no uniform practice in all states. Muslim minorities are facing difficulties in having any kind of institutionalized system. However, it is better to have it institutionalized. It is rightly said that if at world level collection and disbursement of *zakah* is practiced by certain universally acceptable mechanism, poverty alleviation in Muslim countries would be faster.

The persistent gap between rich and poor can considerably be lessened not only by redistribution of money. Distribution of lands, creation of jobs, having reservations in jobs for socially and educationally poor, vocational training, engaging poor with small business also play important role in alleviation of poverty and its ultimate eradication.

Professor Ansari discusses various aspects of distributive justice in Islam. He justifies distributive justice because concentration of money, hoarding and squandering are prohibited in Islam. It is an obligation on the rich because he has to practice the unique principles of 'Islamic brotherhood' (*ukhuwah*) and vicegerence (*khalifah*), and on the state to because government in a state is a representative of Allah (s.w.t.) and in that capacity state has to practice social and economic justice among its people. Professor Ansari critically examines various aspects of *zakah* and offers amicable suggestions for improvement of redistribution of resources through it. Professor Ataul Haq Pramanic presents an exposition of the Islamic view of poverty. According to him, states are making efforts for alleviating poverty policy and practices are proving to be in effective. He emphasized on human development and pleads that states should practice *nisab*-based PLI to overcome the problem of human deprivation as it will reduce the gap between the rich and the poor.

Muhammad Ayub Siddique highlights trends of poverty and income distribution in Pakistan for alleviating poverty. He also discusses various studies conducted by economists and policy makers and suggest that a combination of imparting education and giving vocational training to poor in central in poverty alleviation strategies.

Zuriana Shafii and Abdul Razaq Ahmad also emphasize on alleviation of poverty through augmenting education among poor of Malaysia. They discuss about an educational programme named Academy Menara Gading. According to them, the programme has potential to alleviate poverty in the country, but it requires certain structural and institutional improvements.

Salwa Muddthir Ismail has done case study of HIV/AIDS and poverty in Sudan. He found that poor section of the society is suffering more and get less medical and financial assistance. He also discusses about negative economic impacts of these. He suggests that any attempt to fight HIV/AIDS at a national level cannot be separated from the wider international context. It cannot and should not be seen separate from global inequality, poverty and under-develop.

Sulochana Nair
Abdul Haseeb Ansari

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INTRODUCTI

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