Pakistan Social Sciences Review
www.pssr.org.pk

RESEARCH PAPER

Islamic Version on Objectives of Community Development: An Analysis

Asif Naveed Ranjha[1] Yasmin Roofi [2] Sarfraz Batool [3]

1. Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan
3. Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan

PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
	Community development focuses on solution of community problems and bringing positive changes. This research aims to analyse relationship between practices of Islam and community development. This is qualitative nature research with secondary data analysis. All initiatives of community development bring social changes and Islam also believes in it as emergence of Islam itself brought big social changes in the Arab community. Social security measures introduced by Islam are beneficial for the welfare and adjustment of disadvantaged people in community. Community development improves quality of life and *Zakat* is an ideal example of it in Islam. Religion Islam guides its followers to help the needy through various services and community development also emphasizes on service provision. Islam and community development encompass principles of self-help and social justice and bring stability and solidarity in the community. Community development practitioners need to get guidance from Islamic practices for better working in local communities

Introduction

Community development practice has been need of almost all nations and is practiced in various ways through governmental or non-governmental efforts. Main theme includes service provision and problem solution at grassroots level with maximum participation of community people without any discrimination. Community development is the result of joint efforts of local community people for promoting their collective welfare and improving their lives (Chile & Simpson,

2004; Gray & Mubangizi, 2010). Ranjha (2013) defined community development after having analysis of different definitions:

A process of socioeconomic uplift of the whole community and people in the community initiated by a government authority or organisation or the community itself on the basis of its felt needs with maximum participation of the local people.

He mentions few important and key points in the definition which include community empowerment holistically, measures taken by state, community people or any organization, felt need based actions and involvement of community people. It is true that needs demand services, changes and development which could be achieved through some collective efforts. When, community development term was unknown, needs were fulfilled and services were provided at community level. The role of religion remained dominating regarding satisfaction of needs and provision of services at the grassroots level in throughout history.

Islam is rapidly expanding and one of the largest religions on earth with nearly 1.3 billion followers (Watts & Diaconu, 2005). Presently, it holds sixth position as per population ratio, which will be at number five in the near future. Mohamed and Baqutayan (2011) describe that Islam deals with human life and guides in right directions which lead followers towards spiritual and material satisfactions. Islam is a balanced religion focussing on both spiritual and worldly matters (Ahmed, 2004). According to Watts and Diaconu (2005), generally, a lot of literature is available on Islam, but not much about Islam and Social Welfare. This secondary data based study aims to explore and describe community development concept and objectives in light of Islamic concepts and practices. In Muslim and even Non-Muslim countries, it is utmost need to use multidisciplinary approaches for comparison and better practices towards welfare and development.

Community Development Objectives and Islam

Community development initiatives and projects are launched at grassroots level with specific objectives and aims. Communities, particularly less developed and developing, need many services in various thematic areas. These thematic areas are also discussed as the aims and objectives of community development schemes. There could be a long list of community development projects as it addresses almost all spheres of life where large numbers of people face problems. Generally, we witness community development programmes in health, education, infrastructure development, agriculture, livestock, poverty reduction, human rights areas etc. Dunham (1972) discusses various major objectives of community development which include bringing social change for human and material betterment, strengthening structure of institutions for development, encouraging full participation and encouraging disadvantaged people to actively participate in the development process for social justice. According to Ranjha (2013), experts and practitioners find some objectives very common and essential in community development projects and programmes which include social change, welfare,

improvement of quality of life, stability and solidarity, capacity building, provision of services and national and international development.

Social Change

Mohamed and Baqutayan (2011) describe that '*change is universal, unavoidable, irreversible and is necessary phenomenon*' (p. 25). They are right as we see lots of changes in society due to various factors and all societies witness changes. Our likings and dislikings do not matter and cannot hinder many changes. Abbott (1995) and Dunham (1970) discuss social change as a major objective of community development. With reference to 'Freirian terms', Popple and Redmond (2000) discuss community development as a liberating force having potential and source for bringing social change. Definition of community development given by the Community Work Association Consortium for North East England (CWACNEE) illustrates that it brings social change and social justice (Popple, 2007).

Improvements in the social structures of communities are often results of essential social changes. These changes could be of various kinds i.e., changes in education services, health services, social conditions, environment and physical infrastructure. Any or many social changes are linked with political and economic changes in wider perspective. Community development programme initiated at any level bring social changes in local communities (Ranjha, 2013).

Mohamed and Baqutayan (2011) emphasise that Islam plays vital and significant role for the social changes and developments in the lives of human beings. In short span of 23 years (610-632), The Holy Prophet (PBUH) entirely changed Arab tribal society (Morad, Nasri, & Merrick, 2001). That change was not only religious but also in all spheres of human life which included social aspects. Mohamed and Baqutayan (2011) negate those Western thinkers who criticise Islam as a static religion and reason for the backwardness of Muslims. Mohamed and Baqutayan (2011) argue that Islam never overlooked social changes from the first day when The Holy Prophet (PBUH) started preaching. Islam brought real and practical changes in all walks of life i.e., social, economic, moral and political transformation. Islam guided for changes in the social set up to build a changed society overall. Islam does not negate need, unavoidability, irreversibility and universality of changes. It accepts changes that are acceptable in Shari'ah.

Social Welfare

Presently, most of the community development initiatives by public and private organizations aim to provide welfare services at local level. These welfare services encompass the welfare of women, children, old age people, youth and patients. Vos (2005) includes social support also in welfare of communities. Vos talks about the historical significance of community development programmes with reference to welfare in Netherland. During 1950s, the focus of community development in Netherland was social support and improvement of so-called development. Industrialization and modernization impacted local communities

during 1945-1960 and community development was used as a tool to handle these impacts (Vos, 2005).

Hendriks (1972) answers the question, 'why community development?' that community development aims to maximize local participation in planning and to encourage socio-cultural welfare in local communities.

Islam became a ray of hope for getting freedom and respect, establishing better and caring society working for justice and welfare of all (Yamani, 2002). During the era of of Umar Ibn Al-Khittab (RA), all community people had their share in the state where social and economic justice was ensured. Social security measures taken in Islamic states, especially during the period of Umar Ibn Al-Khittab (RA) are embodiments of welfare services and community development. Nadvi (2012) discusses various social security steps introduced in the period of Umar Ibn Al-Khittab (RA) which included social security department for census and registration of people, public treasury department, provision of food to masses, health services, teaching and education, matrimonial allowance, old age benefits, old age investment, loans for business, interest free loans, payment of debt, social insurance and stipends for widows, married and unmarried women and young people. Also, measures were taken for the Non-Muslims. This social security made Islamic state pioneer in the provision of primary and secondary services to local communities. These services brought solidarity and stability in the state.

Improvement in Quality of Life

Community development also aims to improve quality of lives of local communities. Vos (2005) argues that local community people were involved in community development programmes in brining improvements in their lives during the 1960s. In the context of community development in Nigeria, Abbott (1995) views those approaches successful which focus on improvement of quality of life and working for specific targets. As far as the concept of 'quality of life' is concerned, it is very important in development. Ranjha (2013) links poverty with quality of life and views poor communities having low quality of life. Quality of life could be improved through the growth of the economy. In addition, it needs better environment, health and education, recreation and social welfare. In other words, these are felt needs of every community and better community development approaches aim to fulfil these needs which lead towards quality of life.

Islam gives very clear and comprehensive concepts to improve quality of life. Muslims are guided for hardworking to survive and fulfil their needs (Ahmed, 2004) which could improve their daily lives. Islam makes its followers responsible for themselves and for society too (Ali, 2014). According to Ahmed (2004), *Zakat* is a religious institution to tackle poverty and promote welfare in the society. *Zakat* is a social pillar encouraging Muslims for bringing social justice and equity in communities (Ali, 2014). Systems of *Zakat*, *Infaq* and *Awqaf* bring a sense of

collective support and social solidarity (Kahf, 1999). *Zakat* improves quality of life of various types of community members. Ahmed (2004), referencing Quran (9:60) mentions beneficiaries of *Zakat* spending i.e., poor, *miskin* (needy), persons collecting *Zakat* amount, who are attracted towards Islam religion, to free slaves, for people in debt, for the cause of Allah, wayfarer. *Zakat* is a beautiful and workable system of fair distribution of wealth among community members. According to Dean and Khan (1997), *Zakat* is right of community people in money of individuals. *Waqf* also plays a vital role for enhancement of quality of life of poor communities. Zuki (2012) considers *Waqf* an important socioeconomic institution in the Islamic state. With reference to Cajee (2007), he argues that *Waqf* is a powerful institution for community facilitation which provides social, medical and educational initiatives in the community. As far as *Awqaf* is concerned, Kahf (2003) emphasises that set up of *Awqaf* should be managed by local people of the community because they know beneficiaries. The same principle is necessary for better community development.

Capacity Enhancement

Community development does not focus on merely the development of individuals. It aims to improve the capacities of groups and communities for brining development. Armstrong (1971) considers that community development focuses on the maximum involvement of community members and groups in decision making to minimize the level of isolation. Indeed, involvement and participation enhance capacities of communities. Hayes (1981) argues that community development builds capacities of community people which make them able to handle their matters and to forecast any problems in future life.

It is natural that when all community people participate for their well being, they start learning and improvement which build their capacities. Capacity building is both product and producer of community development.

A clear change was witnessed after establishment of first ever Islamic State in 622 A.D. when principle of brotherhood united all Muslims without any discrimination. That brought social harmony and Muslims gave and received social and financial cooperation from each other (Zaid, 2004). Their cooperation with each other enhanced their capacities too. System of *Zakat* engages all rich Muslims to contribute to help the poor and the needy, which directly and indirectly increases their capacities as members of the community. Here it is important to discuss that Islam does not make compulsion for everybody to contribute financially. With reference to *Zakat*, Hasan (1971) argues that Holy Quran teaches Muslims to contribute according to their financial and material positions. Furthermore, *Zakat* giving does not mean making needy communities beggars and destitute.

Caliphate Umar Ibn Al-Khittab (RA) introduced a pure Islamic governance system based on respect, obligations, care and accountability (Al-Qudsy &

Rahman, 2011). Umar Ibn Al-Khitab emphasized on uplift of the needy and disadvantaged people in the community. It could be argued that his priority was capacity building of the needy people for individual assistance as well as the overall development of the community.

Provision of Services

Community development is not limited to few programmes or services, but it is multidimensional practice depending on the nature of communities and needs. Hendriks (1972) argues that community development programmes should focus on provision of various services i.e., measures for education, agriculture, financial assistance, soil conservation, youth welfare, erosion control and more social services. Community development programmes are always according to the needs of the community.

With special reference to social security and community welfare, Tahir (2015) mentions verses of the Holy Quran:

"It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces Towards east or West; but it is righteousness- to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the Allah-fearing." (p.206)

Islam is very clear about the rights of needy and poor and obligations and duties of individuals and communities to help people in need. Quran clearly declares those people successful who serve humanity and have fear of Allah.

Hasan (1971) argues that Islam focuses on the set up of a society having religious, moral and social justice values. He further says that Holy Quran makes emphasis on '*feeding of the poor*' (p. 210). It means that Islam preaches for the assistance of needy communities which is not the responsibility of a single individual. It is possible through individual as well as collective efforts.

Morad et al. (2001) pointed out that The Holy Prophet (PBHU) started medical care facilities in the 5th century for treatment and care of wounded soldiers during the war days. This was a significant development in health sector bringing change with service provision.

Various development programmes were also initiated during reign of Umar Ibn Al-Khittab (RA). These programmes included construction of guesthouses in big cities, constructions of roads, bridges, construction of shelters, wells, food points on the road from Madina to Makkah, residential facilities for travellers and canals digging in the state (Nadvi, 2012).

Stability and Solidarity

According to Hayes (1981), Lawrence Moore argued that programmes of community development could bring stability and social solidarity in the community. Stability could be taken in the meaning of permanence and consistency. In addition, Oakley (1998) gives theoretical theme of community development linking it with solidarity, local democracy and people's participation. It seems true that participation of community people in any initiative is sign of unity and harmony which could be result of democratic values. Lee (2003) considers that community development could be seen as supportive in the 21st century, focusing on regeneration, integration and participation but with challenges. Al-Qudsy and Rahman (2011) argue that principles of respect, obligation, care and accountability produced a community enriched with better social and economic systems. They argue that the Muslim community, having faith in God, obtained benefits with regards to their social, economic and political matters.

Islamic version is very clear about solidarity. Muslims are guided through the Al-Quran (3:103), "*And hold fast, all of you together, to the cable of Allah, and do not separate*".

Muslims are advised by the creator to hold Allah's cable with a tight grip and be united with no separations or divisions. This message is a guide for a community life with stability and solidarity which could lead and led by community development. Chaudhry (2003) includes a saying of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) with reference to brotherhood and unity of the Muslim community:

"*You will see the believers in their mutual kindness, love and sympathy just like one body. When a limb complains, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever.*"

Muslims as members of a community have mutual respect, love and compassion which unite them like a human body. All community members feel pain of any member in need and these feelings are perceived through unity. Community welfare and development bring community members close through joint effort initiatives which give them 'we feelings'. Smith (1985) talking about the status of women in Muslim society, argues that The Holy Prophet (PBUH) gave respect to women and trusted on them and always provided equal chances for participation in religious matters of the newly established Muslim community. This was also a beautiful example of a change which led stability and solidarity in the overall community.

Standing Conference for Community Development (2001) and Department of Communities and Local Government (2006) mention social justice as important value of community development. Islam remains an advocate of social justice in Muslim communities. Ali (2014) talking with special reference to *Zakat*, argues that

Islam is against injustice, inequality and discrimination. He further argues that social relationship among Muslims is based on the concept of sacrifice where they share some amount of their finances for virtue and they gain community consciousness feelings.

Armstrong (1971) argues that community development relies on community participation and also has self-help value. Islam preaches self-help for self-development and to avoid dependency. Chaudhry (1999) discussed a story from the life of the Holy Prophet (PBHU) which is the best example of social welfare, planning, participation and mutual help and self-help. A person came to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) for financial assistance and the Holy Prophet (PBUH) asked him about his belongings. He had a blanket and cup at home. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) asked him to bring the belongings. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) put both things for auction in the meeting place. A Muslim offered one Dirham and another Muslim purchased both things for two Dirhams. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) gave two Dirhams to the seller and advised him to purchase an axe from market for one Dirham. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) fixed the axe handle and asked that person to go into the jungle for woodcutting. The Holy Prophet (PBHU) advised him to sell woods in the market and asked him to visit him (PBHU) after fifteen days. When he came after fifteen days, he told that he sold woods and earned twelve Dirhams. He purchased clothes and food for him. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) told that work or job is better than begging and disrespect. The story tells about a great social worker guiding and planning for better problem solution of a community member in need. The self-help approach becomes a lesson for all community members who led people towards mutual help and problem solution.

Conclusion

History of professional practice of community development and services is not too old as Rafiq (2003) considers it young subject. On the other hand, Phillips and Rittman (2009) view history of community development as old as any community. Besides these differences of opinions, there is agreement that community development is to meet felt needs of communities and solution of local problems with joint efforts and participation of community people. Islam as a divine religion also guides its followers to work for the welfare of needy people at local level. Objectives of community development are harmonious with the teachings and practices of Islam. Both Islam and community development work for positive social change and emphasize on service provision for community people, capacity building, uplift of quality of life and stability. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) brought a change in the Arab community by giving concept of equality and brotherhood according to the principles of Islam nay Arab community. The socioeconomic institution of *Zakat* introduced welfare of poor and deserving people, solidarity in the community through uplift of quality of life and mutual help. Self-help is an important value of community development and Islam provides practical examples of self-help. Various state initiated community development projects were launched in the period of Caliph Umar Ibn Al-Khittab

(RA) which proved as guideline for development programmes in the modern era. Number of Religious Islamic organizations are registered and engaged in various community development projects for service delivery at local level with maximum participation of community people. Objectives of community development were emphasized by the teachings and practices of Islam centuries ago.

References

Abbott, J. (1995). Community participation and its relationship to Community Development. *Community Development Journal, 30*(2), 158-168. doi: 10.1093/cdj/30.2.158

Ahmed, H. (2004). *Role of Zakah and Awqaf in poverty alleviation*: Islamic Development Bank, Islamic Research and Training Institute Jeddah.

Al-Qudsy, S., & Rahman, A. (2011). Effective Governance in the Era of CaliphateUmar Ibn Al-Khattab (634-644). *European Journal of Social Sciences, 18*(4), 612-624.

Al-Quran (3:103).

Ali, J. A. (2014). Zakat and Poverty in Islam. In M. Clarke & D. Tittensor (Eds.), *Islam and Development: Exploring the Invisible Aid Economy*. New York: Ashgate.

Armstrong, R. (1971). Community Development and Community Organization— Allies Or Rivals? *Community Development Journal, 6*(2), 103-110. doi: 10.1093/cdj/6.2.103

Chaudhry, M. S. (1999). *Fundamentals of Islamic Economic System*. Lahore: Burhan Education and Welfare Trust.

Chaudhry, M. S. (2003). *What is Islam*. Lahore: Snsam Education Foundation.

Chile, L. M., & Simpson, G. (2004). Spirituality and community development: Exploring the link between the individual and the collective. *Community Development Journal, 39*(4), 318-331. doi: 10.1093/cdj/bsh029

Dean, H., & Khan, Z. (1997). Muslim Perspectives on Welfare. *Journal of Social Policy, 26*(02), 193-209. doi: doi:10.1017/S0047279497004972

Department of Communities and Local Government. (2006). The Community Development Challenge. Wetherby, West Yorkshire.

Dunham, A. (1970). Community Development-Whither Bound? *Community Development Journal, 5*(2), 85-93. doi: 10.1093/cdj/5.2.85

Dunham, A. (1972). Community Development in North America. *Community Development Journal, 7*(1), 10-40. doi: 10.1093/cdj/7.1.10

Gray, M., & Mubangizi, B. (2010). Caught in the vortex: can local government community development workers succeed in South Africa? *Community Development Journal, 45*(2), 186-197. doi: 10.1093/cdj/bsp007

Hasan, A. (1971). Social Justice in Islam. *Islamic Studies, 10*(3), 209-219.

Hayes, S. E. (1981). Uses and Abuses of Community Development. A General Account. *Community Development Journal, 16*(3), 221-227. doi: 10.1093/cdj/16.3.221

Hendriks, G. (1972). Community Development in Western Europe. *Community Development Journal, 7*(2), 74-90. doi: 10.1093/cdj/7.2.74

Kahf, M. (1999). *the Performance of the Institution of Zakah in Theory and Practice.* Paper presented at the International Conference on Islamic Economics towards the 21st Century, Kuala Lumpur.

Kahf, M. (2003). *The role of waqf in improving the ummah welfare*. Paper presented at the International Seminar on Waqf as a Private Legal Body, Organised by the Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan, Indonesia.

Lee, A. (2003). Community development in Ireland. *Community Development Journal, 38*(1), 48-58. doi: 10.1093/cdj/38.1.48

Mohamed, S., & Baqutayan, S. (2011). Toward Social Change in Islam. *International Journal of Basic & Applied Sciences, 11*(2), 23-33.

Morad, M., Nasri, Y., & Merrick, J. (2001). Islam and the person with intellectual disability. *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health, 5*(2-3), 65-71.

Nadvi, M. J. (2012). Social Security During the Reign of Caliph Umar Ibn Al-Khattab. *Ma'arif Research Journal, 3*(1), 33-40.

Oakley, P. (1998). Review Article Community development in the Third World in the 1990s. *Community Development Journal, 33*(4), 365-376. doi: 10.1093/cdj/33.4.365

Phillips, R., & Rittman, R. H. (2009). *An Introduction to Community Development* (ed.). New York, USA: Routledge.

Popple, K. (2007). Community Development Strategies in the UK. In L. Dominelli (Ed.), *Revitalising Communities in a Globalising World* (pp. 137-150). Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Popple, K., & Redmond, M. (2000). Community development and the voluntary sector in the new millennium: the implications of the Third Way in the UK. *Community Development Journal, 35*(4), 391-400. doi: 10.1093/cdj/35.4.391

Rafiq, Z. (2003). *Community Development: Concept and Practice*. Peshawar: Saif Printing Press.

Ranjha, A. N. (2013). *Working Practices, Problems and Needs of the Community Development Projects in Punjab Province, Pakistan*. PhD, University of Dundee.

Smith, J. (1985). Women, religion and social change in early Islam. *Women, Religion, and Social Change*, 19-35.

Standing Conference for Community Development. (2001). A Strategic Framework for Community Development: . Sheffield: Standing Conference for Community Development.

Tahir, A. (2015). Social Security: An Introduction (A Comparative Study in the backdrop of Islam and West). *Dialogue (1819-6462), 10*(2).

Vos, K. (2005). Community development policy and legislation: The Dutch case. *Community Development Journal, 40*(4), 405-418. doi: 10.1093/cdj/bsi085

Watts, T. D., & Diaconu, M. (2005). Islam and Social Welfare: An Introduction and Bibliography. *Journal of Comparative Social Welfare, 21*(1), 30-41.

Yamani, A. Z. (2002). Social justice in Islam. *Islamic Studies, 41*(1), 5-34.

Zaid, O. A. (2004). Accounting systems and recording procedures in the early Islamic state. *The Accounting Historians Journal*, 149-170.

Zuki, M. S. M. (2012). Waqf and Its Role in Socio-Economic Development. *ISRA International Journal of Islamic Finance, 4*(2), 173-178.