



Poverty and its Factors from a Sharia Perspective in a Society

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Abstract

This Article explores the comprehensive program offered by Islam, as envisioned by the Allah of the universe, which addresses various aspects of human life, including poverty and deprivation. Islam provides specific solutions, laws, and methods to tackle these issues, highlighting the critical importance of economic matters. Poverty, a significant threat to societies, is addressed by Islam through guidance and directives aimed at eradicating it from its roots, rather than offering superficial remedies. Islam's unique approach seeks to liberate humanity from misery, anxiety, and suffering, promoting fairness and social balance. The dissertation emphasizes that Islam rejects the pursuit of individual interests at the expense of others and consistently focuses on eradicating poverty, considering it a perennial social ill. Islam advocates for solidarity, brotherhood, and support to ensure a decent life for all, where basic needs are met, and responsibilities are fulfilled. The main causes of poverty in many Islamic countries are identified as a lack of understanding and implementation of Islamic principles, particularly in economic and financial matters. The responsibility for this negligence is attributed to Islamic governments that misuse national wealth and ignore public interests, deviating from Islamic legal frameworks.

Furthermore, the Article argues that the root causes of poverty and hunger are not due to food production shortages or population growth, but the political-economic systems that monopolize resources. Many Muslim nations have suffered due to their governments' alignment with non-Islamic systems, leading to economic and social turmoil. The study concludes that the solution to poverty lies in the comprehensive teachings of Islam, which recognizes poverty as a fundamental human problem and strives to eliminate it from its very foundation.

Keywords: Poverty, Factors, Sharia Perspective, Society.

Introduction

As human history reveals, societal conflicts and abnormalities have been persistent, with poverty and deprivation considered among the primary factors contributing to historical conflicts and struggles. The root cause of poverty is intertwined with disparities in distribution, which have perennially victimized individuals. In the current era, although the mechanism of development relies heavily on mechanized forces, human society is driven by technology, with only a limited number of countries leading the way while others lag behind. The existence of widespread poverty in the world today, even compared to previous eras, with its increasing prevalence, is alarming. Despite this, few governments have devoted even one percent of their efforts to consider the causes of poverty and how to address it. Based on personal observations, meetings, and studies, it is evident that poverty is a significant challenge in society, prompting the decision to shed light on this issue through my thesis, aiming to better elucidate the realities, methods, and factors

contributing to poverty in society. While some ponder how to transcend into the realm of supernatural worlds, a vast portion of humanity perpetually struggles to secure sustenance. The factors causing such disparities among human groups are related to complex interrelationships among various factors. Thus, my aim with this thesis is to explain a range of such differences that lead to the creation of contrasting dichotomies, namely poverty and affluence, side by side.

Islam is the only school of thought that has taken comprehensive steps towards eradicating poverty and deprivation in all dimensions of life. The primary causes of poverty and hunger are not simply shortages in food production or global population growth but rather the political-economic system that has deliberately monopolized industrial and agricultural food production. Many Muslim nations afflicted by poverty and hunger have failed to utilize divine ordinances. Instead, their governments, in pursuit of short-term solutions to economic problems and to maintain their power, have fallen into the hands of East and West. They have ensnared their nations in chaos, diverted from righteous thoughts, followed corrupt and misguided systems, and shown interest in ideologies of corruption, oppression, and cruelty. These leaders, being profligate and tyrannical, have adapted Eastern and Western plans to their countries, despite their inconsistency with Islamic societies, thus bringing poverty and misery to their nations, a shameful legacy in this world and humiliation in the hereafter.

Research Methodology

Relying on the mercy, praise, and repentance of God, I conducted research on Quranic verses as interpreted by eminent Islamic scholars and the books written by contemporary scholars. To the best of my ability and utilizing the sources available to me, including household books, I extracted evidence and authentic hadiths according to the rules of criticism and adjustment. I made every effort to use reputable sources.

First Section: Definition of Poverty

Initially, one might think that defining poverty is quite simple and straightforward, and it is a matter that does not require definition, as it is a well-known economic condition that everyone is aware of and can interpret. It can be defined as the difficulty of livelihood or insufficient economic means in providing food, clothing, and other necessities of life. However, upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that poverty encompasses theoretical matters on which scholars have different opinions. Depending on the circumstances, individuals' situations, and even legal reasons, the definition of poverty varies. Based on these, scholars in different schools of thought have different interpretations. What initially comes to mind is related to its general meaning, which is familiar among people, and all individuals, regardless of their social status, are aware of it. In the inevitable discussion of poverty, both the general meaning and the specific terminology will be defined.

In terms of terminology, poverty means the possession of little wealth or its scarcity in a person's possession, or what is necessary for one's livelihood, even if that wealth is nonexistent, insufficient, or inadequate. Some have said that poverty refers only to the lack of wealth, while others have referred to it as the scarcity of wealth. The former statement is more well-known.

Firouzabadi in his dictionary has stated: "Poverty is the opposite of wealth. Poverty occurs when a person's means do not suffice." Some have said that poverty refers to those in need or those who are destitute, while others have said the opposite, and some have considered poverty and destitution as synonymous.

Terminological definition of poverty: Of course, the subject of debate and discussion in defining the concept of poverty in terms of religious and terminological perspective among Muslim scholars is similar to the topic of zakat in Islam and its distribution among the deserving. Poverty is the first condition that leads to the collection of zakat.

Scholars have differences of opinion regarding the meaning and definition of poverty, which leads to the collection of zakat, and the definition of wealth, which prevents the collection of zakat. What most scholars agree on is that someone who owns a house and a servant that they cannot do without is allowed to receive zakat. Imam Malik said: "If someone does not have anything besides their house and servant, it is permissible for them to receive zakat. Otherwise, it is not permissible." The opinions of Ibn Munzar, Nakha'i, and Thawri are similar to this.

Abu Hanifa says: "Poverty, according to Islamic law, means not having the minimum amount of wealth (nisaab), and wealth is defined as having the minimum amount of wealth (nisaab)."

"Nisaab" in Sharia is defined as an amount at which zakat becomes obligatory if one's wealth reaches that threshold.

Imam Malik and Shafi'i, may Allah have mercy on them, and some scholars have said: "The terminological definition of poverty is when a person owns something that does not suffice them, and the definition of wealth is when a person owns something that suffices them. Then, those who hold this view disagree on what amount of wealth suffices an individual."

Imam Shafi'i and some scholars have said: "It is the lowest amount at which one can say it is sufficient."

Ahmad, Thawri, and Ibn Mubarak, May Allah have mercy on them, say: "The terminological definition of poverty is when a person does not have fifty dirhams or their equivalent in gold. The definition of wealth is when a person has fifty dirhams or their equivalent in gold."

Some have said: "Poverty means not having enough food for one night, and wealth is the opposite of that."

Second Section: Types of Poverty

Poverty is examined from various perspectives and has special classifications, each of which represents a type of poverty with its own characteristics and consequences. The following are references to the types of poverty:

1. Absolute Poverty

Deprivation of basic necessities of life, especially the lack of food and sustenance, can be called absolute poverty. In this situation, human endurance and strength are compromised, their health is endangered, and they are on the brink of life and death. In absolute poverty, a person becomes thorn in the eyes of society, feeling alienated in their own city, appearing destitute, and disappearing from perspectives. Distress arises, calamities and troubles besiege the person, leading them into despair. This foundation of poverty is a significant factor in the increase of errors, crimes, improper behaviors, and corruption, and sometimes it becomes a source of disbelief and atheism.

The aim of absolute poverty is the sufficient provision of an individual's essential needs such as food, clothing, housing, medication, and healthcare to preserve life, health, and continuity of life in such a way that the lack of these necessities would endanger life or health.

2. Relative Poverty

Each person should adapt to their time and adjust their income and standard of living according to the available means of their era. Relative poverty is a type of poverty where someone does not have the same level of resources as others in their society. The purpose of relative poverty is that although an individual may have the necessary amount of food, clothing, etc., they are deprived of the comforts and amenities that most people enjoy, meaning they are poor relative to the average social life. From an Islamic perspective, in addition to the fact that absolute poverty must be eradicated from all individuals, relative poverty must also be eliminated. Generally, the poverty mentioned in narrations and emphasized to be eradicated is relative poverty, meaning the necessity of eliminating absolute poverty is considered self-evident. The relativity of poverty can be considered for different purposes; someone may be considered poor in one city or country while being considered rich in another city or country, or someone may be considered wealthy today but recognized as poor with the same wealth and facilities in the future. Poverty can also be observed through comparing one city with another or one country with other nations.

3. Natural Poverty

Poverty resulting from the scarcity or absence of natural factors and changes in geographical boundaries due to lack of access to open seas, abundant deserts, lack of channels and superior materials, lack of natural production and capital increase, and scarcity of flat lands and fertile soils, which in turn affects all economic activities. Unpleasant events such as floods, hurricanes, droughts, fires, the disappearance of agricultural

lands under water, dry years causing shortages and economic imbalances are also among the factors that shape natural poverty.

4. Cultural Poverty

Cultural poverty can be considered as the lack of necessary awareness, prejudices, self-centeredness, obstinacy, denial of sciences and their scientific advancements, and adherence to ancestral knowledge and rational methods. Extreme cultural poverty is the most severe type of poverty and is the root cause of backwardness and a barrier to many developmental movements. It gives rise to many problems and is the most painful illness. Combating cultural poverty requires time and effort and demands tireless efforts.

5. Spiritual and Moral Poverty

Human beings are a combination of body and soul, and just as their body needs food and necessary substances, their soul also requires appropriate nourishment. Anyone who neglects this falls into spiritual poverty, which is the poverty of the soul, heart, and mind of human beings, which has multiple indicators.

6. Real Poverty

In Islamic teachings, poverty is mentioned that can be called real poverty, and real wealth and poverty appear after the reckoning of deeds in the Hereafter. Whoever can provide the necessary capital for purchasing paradise from the blessings of life and worldly amenities and fulfills their duties properly has attained real wealth and eternal happiness.

Whoever arrives empty-handed in the Hereafter's court and squanders whatever they have in the gambling den of this world will be considered unfortunate and poor. It is clear that the real owner of the world and all that is in it is the true realm of God (glory be to Him). Allah Almighty has said: (لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ): "To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth."

7. Selective or Willful Poverty

Selective poverty arises due to laziness, consumerism, and extravagance. A person who focuses more on consumption than production and investment, consumes the products of colonial countries recklessly, and recklessly spends without considering the future, creates the factors of poverty themselves. Similarly, a person who excessively spends on luxury matters or conforms to social norms and spends beyond their financial capacity actually leads themselves into poverty.

Therefore, it can be said that poverty among nations is now more of a choice. They, with their indulgence, consumerism, and extravagance, have trapped themselves in the snare of poverty.

8. Natural and Imposed Poverty

Poverty is distinguished into natural and imposed poverty based on its causes. Natural poverty arises from the scarcity of water, the absence of fertile lands, the lack of resources and mines, and is obvious. However, imposed poverty results from the unjust economic system of wealthy individuals who oppress and exploit the people through legal and illegal tricks, and push them into the quagmire of poverty. Imposing exorbitant taxes, bribery of government officials or representatives, dividing society into factions, and engaging in foolish games are among the factors that impose poverty on a nation.

Third Section: Factors of Poverty

What is the cause of poverty? It is necessary to discuss this issue clearly, identifying which economic systems contribute to the creation and spread of poverty and which ones are influential in preventing its prevalence. Finally, proving that Islam is the only doctrine that has taken effective steps towards eradicating poverty and deprivation in all aspects of life through comprehensive programs is also crucial in this important discussion.

Undertaking such discussions is essential to lift this dangerous scourge from the shoulders of humanity and ensure that people find salvation from the dire consequences of this devil of corruption forever. The primary cause of hunger and insufficient food production in the third world is not population growth. The main cause

is the political-economic system that deliberately monopolizes industrial and agricultural food production. Economic and social researchers have not reached final conclusions regarding the causes of poverty; they only consider superficial matters. However, if we pay attention, we will see that some fall into the trap of poverty due to factors such as excessive extravagance, laziness, and indolence. Others become impoverished because their wealth is seized by oppressors or they live in societies where corrupt laws prevail and do not guarantee the rights of the poor.

Or some fall into poverty due to circumstances beyond their control, such as natural disasters, droughts, diseases, and so on. These mentioned factors ensnare various groups into the grip of poverty, whether a child is born into a poor family and grows up in a land of fruitlessness or all the factors together create poverty. Therefore, the factors of poverty can be divided into two major categories:

1. Inherent Factors
2. External Factors

First: Inherent Factors

The mentioned cause lies within the individual in terms of their possessions, competence, and capabilities. It is noteworthy to mention that the importance of these factors is not equal to external factors because external factors are stronger.

Second: External Factors

External factors relate to society, work conditions, personal environment, and the external circumstances of the individual. Personal resources play a significant role in their poverty, even though it will not be the sole factor. In other words, the mentioned cause is not solely due to the actions of the individual but also from the actions of others who live with them in society. External factors, in turn, are divided into two categories:

1. Social Factors
2. Natural Factors

First - Social Factors: It is not related to the individual themselves but rather to those who live with them or to the society resulting from the wrong and ugly laws and systems in which they live under.

Second - Natural Factors: It is not related to human will but is from Almighty God, such as death, disease, earthquakes, volcanoes, and so on. These mentioned events affect numerous people, and humans have no control over them. Without a doubt, most often, societal breakdowns result in the occurrence of poverty, and most of its factors are beyond an individual's control.

Therefore, it will be challenging to categorize the factors of poverty scientifically because these factors are interconnected and interdependent. As we mentioned earlier, poverty is a social phenomenon that arises as a result of unjust economic laws and improper social systems, distinct from natural laws. This is because the complexity inherent in natural laws dictates economic laws. However, the severity of economic laws diminishes when people incline towards social justice and adopt fair and non-oppressive systems.

If we examine the origin of wealth in humans, we will see that it relates to a nature that distinguishes everything from one another. And we will see that God Almighty has granted superiority to some over others, and if it were His will, He could have created everyone at the same level of life or status. In the eighteenth century, economists, led by Malthus, said: "The produce of the land is not sufficient for the sustenance of the earth's inhabitants because the increase of the earth's inhabitants is faster relative to the increase in the wealth of it." But this theory lost its importance in the nineteenth century due to industrial advancements that surpassed natural constraints.

Many resources were obtained from the earth, not only from its surface but also from its depths in search of raw materials and gold. Here, other factors emerged besides population growth and increase, such as:

1. Natural differences in abilities and talents (hereditary or innate or acquired), including intelligence, courage, and seizing opportunities.

2. Social differences between classes.

3. Political differences: which have a significant impact on economic differences, whether directly or indirectly. These differences arise from laws in force, whether these laws encourage personal ownership or group ownership, whether they respect intellectual property or material ownership, or differentiate between them.

It has been observed that the larger the government, the greater the wealth, and the more extreme the poverty. But in recent times, all these differences have become intertwined, and their clarifications have been obscured. Industries and inventions have played a significant role in these changes, which are divided into two major parts: external and personal factors, which we will discuss below.

First Topic: Personal Factors in Poverty

1-First - Laziness in Earning a Livelihood: Laziness in earning a livelihood is one of the most dangerous factors that lead to poverty. This is not only an ethical problem but also a social plague and an economic disaster that causes countries and nations to lag behind. Islam has prohibited it. As narrated from Anas, *عن انس رضي الله عنه قال قال كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول اللهم انى اعوذ بك من الهم والحزن والعجز والكسل والجبن والبخل وضلع الدين* and *my God be pleased with him, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) sought refuge from worry, sorrow, helplessness, laziness, cowardice, miserliness, debt burden, and domination by men.*

It is said that an inscription found from the Nile River in Egypt reads: "After the perseverance of contentment and victory, the tent of poverty is woven from laziness.

2- Illness: Illness is considered one of the major sources of poverty. Many poverty cases stem from illnesses that force individuals to seek assistance from governments and organizations. The cost of treating illnesses can be financially burdensome, leading to a dual threat to individuals' financial stability. Therefore, governments establish healthcare centers and local housing projects to provide access to healthcare facilities. Comprehensive health insurance programs mitigate the financial impact of illness on individuals and their families.

In conclusion, personal factors such as incapacity, laziness, and illness contribute significantly to poverty. Addressing these factors requires a multifaceted approach, including education, healthcare access, and social support systems.

3 - Ignorance: Lack of awareness of the benefits of economy and failure to adapt economically is a major cause of poverty. Ignorance about investment and financial management leads to squandering of resources. Because an ignorant person cannot identify the problems surrounding them and take actions to increase their income, which in turn improves their standard of living, ignorance sometimes leads to incorrect actions that result in poverty, lowering one's standard of living.

4- Fifth - Improper Planning: Through discussion and research, it is evident that a large percentage of poverty cases are not due to low income but rather due to improper planning and lack of wisdom in its use. For example, before addressing their necessities, some individuals focus on luxury items, spending their income on such items, leading to economic instability for themselves and their families. Some people mismanage their affairs, especially in economic matters, without considering the consequences. Household heads, without tolerance, engage in actions with traders that ultimately lead to bankruptcy.

There are numerous examples of mismanagement and improper planning in the economic realm, undoubtedly contributing to the poverty of many people. Incorrect thinking, such as lack of education, lack of knowledge, and lack of experience, disrupts economic life balance, leading to poverty. Some governments teach the principles of household and home economics in schools to enable people to manage their affairs rationally, especially in girls' schools, as women bear significant responsibility for household planning.

Governments also encourage people to save money for future needs and emergencies, as improper use of resources is considered wasteful.

1- Preoccupation with Luxury Items and Neglect of Necessities and Prioritizing the Less Important over the More Important:

A) The first blessing is the blessing of food, which sustains life. The right to life is superior to all other rights, as nutrition and sustenance form its foundation. The first thing that God (glorified and exalted be He) guided Adam to be food. When He placed him in Paradise, He said to him: **وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ** "And We said, 'O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat from it in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.'"

So it is foolishness for a person not to prioritize food, which plays a role in maintaining their health, and instead prioritize other things. Some people spend extravagantly on fine clothing to show off to others or adorn their homes with expensive utensils and carpets, gift precious items, and valuables, but they pay little attention to nutrition and settle for something insufficient. They take pride in their attire and home furnishings, misusing the blessings of God.

Those who indulge in drinking alcohol, tea, and coffee lift themselves away from food, or as a result of consuming these substances, their sense of hunger diminishes. These individuals harm their health and disrupt their well-being. They misuse the blessings of God. Paying excessive attention to luxury items and neglecting human health necessities is detrimental. Eating improper foods and drinking unauthorized beverages instead of what God has made lawful poses a significant risk to human health, as God has forbidden them due to the harm they cause. Likewise, unauthorized items such as alcohol and drugs not only harm the individual but also cause harm to others, depriving them of their possessions. The doer of such actions considers positive responses to its demands. For them, it is better to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, those who are deserving of possessions that are used in vain.

As narrated in the hadith of the Prophet: **عن ثوبان رضى الله عنه ان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال افضل الدينار على دابته فى سبيل الله ودينار ينفقه الرجل على اصحابه فى سبيل الله قال ابو قلابه بدأ بالعيال ثم قال وان رجل اعظم اجرا من رجل ينفق على عيال له** "The best dinar is the dinar spent by a man on his family, and the dinar spent by a man on his riding animal in the way of Allah, and the dinar spent by a man on his companions in the way of Allah." Abu Qilabah said, "When the people asked, 'O Abu Qilabah! Which of them is the best?' He replied, 'The one who spends on his family, and starts with the first wife, and the one who has the greatest reward, is the one who spends on his family and has children from them who are provided with sustenance by Allah.'"

B - Extravagance and Overspending: Extravagance in anything brings harm, and if it occurs in food consumption, it later leads to health problems. Moreover, it leads to the waste of wealth, as some extravagant individuals dispose of leftover food in the trash without considering those in need. There are many reasons and texts that prohibit extravagance in general and specifically in food. Mujahid said: If one spends gold and silver equal to Mount Uhud in the path of good, it is not extravagance, but if one spends as much as a mustard seed in falsehood, it is extravagance. Allah says: "And do not spend wastefully. Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful." He also says: **وَلَا تُبْذِرْ وَتَبْذِيرًا إِنَّ الْمُبْذِرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا** "And [they are] those who, when they spend, do so not excessively or sparingly but are ever, between that, [justly] moderate."

5 - Betrayal: It leads to idleness and neglect of responsibilities, making one unable to support their family financially. Lack of trustworthiness hinders success and prosperity.

6 - Aging: Although seemingly not one of the major causes of poverty, when compared to other factors, aging is considered relatively insignificant. As a person ages, their expenses increase, and they spend more on themselves.

7 - Following Corrupt Traditions and Vanity: Excessive spending on ceremonies, both joyful and sorrowful, contributes to bad luck in the household

8 - Individual Unemployment: Whether temporary or permanent, it prevents livelihood and eventually leads to poverty, which in turn leads to moral corruption, illness, and family breakdown.

What is currently observed in the literature on economic development is that urban unemployment is only one aspect of the insufficient employment and poverty in underdeveloped countries. It is unclear whether the conditions of educated unemployed youth in cities, who are supported by the extended family system and earn temporary incomes from informal employment while searching for jobs in the modern sector, are worse.

9 - Greed and the Wealthy: The large and consuming wealthy individuals exploit the efforts of the less fortunate in various ways, directly or indirectly, through various means of profiteering and gambling habits that lead to poverty.

Topic Two: External Factors of Poverty

A - Social Factors

These factors are numerous, including deficiencies in production and its resources, wealth distribution within a state, and the utilization of wealth-generating activities. If resources and individual activities are limited, the wealth of a society or state will be scarce, leading to poverty. Therefore, no matter how abundant a society's wealth is, if not properly utilized, its benefits are minimal. Vast agricultural lands that do not yield benefits are not useful. Similarly, seas surrounding countries, if not utilized for their wealth like fish and other resources, become unproductive. What is necessary is the establishment of factories to employ people and increase the country's wealth, thereby increasing people's income. Inadequate or limited production resources lead to increased poverty.

The lack of agricultural land, insufficient agricultural tools, or lack of knowledge about effective farming methods that increase production can lead to poverty. Environmental factors such as bad weather or the government's inability to control harmful pests can also contribute to poverty, sometimes due to the scarcity of agricultural tools. Old and inefficient tools and machines slow down work, leading to decreased production. Limited agricultural land requiring more labor but not yielding sufficient returns also contributes to poverty. Additionally, governments sometimes settle for cheap specific products, further exacerbating the situation.

We often see industries at their infancy stages due to the lack of skilled personnel who can operate large industries. Alternatively, the absence of raw materials necessary for these industries' production contributes to individuals' low income or poverty. However, in wealthy countries, the level of production is high due to the use of machinery and the application of new sciences in various industrial, agricultural, and health fields, increasing production, economy, and consumption.

Furthermore, protecting crops from pests, ensuring workers' health, and employing more people contribute to increased wealth. Current governments have made significant efforts to utilize natural resources for electricity, water, and air, as well as developing tourist attractions for economic benefits.

First - Injustice and Unjust Appropriation of People's Property: Various injustices such as robbery, plundering, embezzlement, bribery, and deceit in trade contribute to poverty.

Second - Industrial Irregularities: Industrial irregularities stem from two main factors: industrial capitalism and mismanagement in factories. Industrial capitalism leads to several irregularities:

- 1- Concentration of wealth in the hands of a limited group.
- 2- Elimination of small industries that many people rely on.
- 3- Control and domination over workers' wages.
- 4- Monopolization of production and resources, which has a significant impact on people's utilization. If the government does not take measures to prevent this type of investment and support the people, the situation will deteriorate, leading to the deprivation of a large number of people.

Under an improper and incorrect industrial system, various low-level activities occur:

1- Increased production beyond the needs and necessities results in workers reducing production if appropriate policies are not implemented. Alternatively, some workers may be laid off due to lack of necessity, or their wages may be reduced, leading to a decrease in their economic status.

2- Unemployment of a significant number of workers, leading to homelessness and disrupting their family structure.

3- Sometimes, the situation deteriorates to the point where workers revolt and strike until the government addresses the issue of a fairer system of work distribution. A wise government anticipates and addresses the situation before it escalates.

4- Public unemployment: One of the phenomena of social abnormalities, if it expands, poses a significant danger. Unemployment deprives workers of their basic living needs, leading to the disintegration of families and potentially driving them towards crime, immorality, and vice. Unemployment not only leads to poverty but also exacerbates crime and corruption. It breaks the bonds within families, forces children and women to seek menial wages, and if not addressed, it makes solving the mentioned problems even more challenging.

Third: Misleading and unfair explanations: This action creates favorable conditions for individuals, groups, and governments to utilize wealth and resources for their benefit, depriving others. The motivation behind this selfish act is the selfishness and ego of individuals, groups, and governments. The solution lies in reforming the foundations and intentions of these actions and instilling in them a sense of human equality and coordination, where responsibilities should be equally shared. This involves ensuring justice and equality in the distribution of wealth and benefits to all individuals, not just a few, and creating opportunities for everyone to receive their fair share. Equal distribution is one of the most complex issues that economists and social scientists have strived to address, resulting in significant differences in their views and theories, but they have not reached a successful solution to achieve the desired goal.

Fourth - Wars: War is a social phenomenon that arises as a result of the motivations of governments and their interests, as well as the ambition of rulers in economic, social, and political arenas. Despite differing opinions regarding wars against nations and the claims of some thinkers that it is a natural and necessary phenomenon for the benefit of society, undoubtedly, war leads to poverty in society.

Advocates argue that war is a pervasive disaster and leads to the destruction of human societies because it depletes wealth, increases poverty, reduces essential benefits, diminishes the number of useful individuals, and burdens society due to the increase in dependents such as widows, orphans, and the disabled. Among the dangerous consequences of wars is the loss of a significant portion of wealth due to the conditions of military supplies, etc. Wars usually bring about terrifying conditions of poverty and need.

Fifth - Increase in Population: Population growth in a country or region, if excessive, creates pressure based on natural resources. While these resources cannot adequately respond to the increase in population, ultimately the standard of living declines, and the relatively poor become impoverished. It is undeniable that a healthy environment reduces microbial diseases and decreases mortality rates, resulting in a gradual increase in population. If the benefits of the population are not sufficient, the standard of living gradually decreases. Population growth reduces per capita land and capital resources, which means that a static and backward economy, due to population pressure on available resources, bears the burden of poverty without any technological advancement. A large population creates additional demand for economic resources such as education, housing, and healthcare services.

Therefore, it is up to governments to adopt wise policies to address the problems of citizens and strive to increase revenues and production.

Sixth - Various Vital Problems with Unemployment and Occupation

Seventh - Non-utilization of Natural Resources.

Eighth - Poor Health Conditions of the People and Scarcity of Medical Supplies: Good health contributes to an individual's productivity and well-being, benefiting both the individual and society. The abnormal state of health is one of the major causes of poverty, as it not only exacerbates diseases due to the lack of medical supplies but also leads to poverty.

Ninth - Incorrect Education and Training: Illiterates are more helpless in dealing with life's problems compared to the literate. An educational system that does not benefit everyone is incomplete. An educational system that does not prepare individuals for earning a livelihood actually leads to poverty. In fact, deficiencies in industrial and technical education are among the educational shortcomings.

Tenth - Remarkable Industrial Advancement: Industrial progress, despite its benefits, has led to hardships because it has caused unemployment and reduced wages for some people. Indeed, inventions like machines, which, instead of replacing individuals, cause unemployment, eventually lead them into poverty, making them needy and unfortunate.

Eleventh - Spread of Social Deviations: Social deviations such as gambling and immoral behaviors undermine health and wealth, leading to imbalance. Humans themselves become the cause of their own poverty. As the Prophet (PBUH) said: *عن ثوبان(رضى الله عنه) قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لا يرد القدر الا الدعاء ولا يزيد في العمر الا البروان الرجل يحرم الرزق بالذنوب يصبه* (Narrated by Thawban: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: 'Nothing delays destiny except supplication, and nothing increases life except righteousness. A man is deprived of provision because of the sins he commits.')

Twelfth - Low Wages.

Thirteenth - Conflicts, Biases, and Enmities are among the most important factors undermining family cohesion and human societies.

Fourteenth - Corrupt and Ineffective Legal and Military Systems.

Fifteenth - Decline in Ethics, Weakening of Religious Sentiments, and Moral Decay.

Sixteenth - Lack of Spirit of Cooperation and Compassion Among People.

Seventeenth - Merciless Pursuit of Worldly Gain and Accumulation of Wealth without considering its fairness and ethicality.

Eighteenth - Stinginess and Hoarding of Wealth, as hoarding wealth and not utilizing it among the people leads to their distress, hunger, and deprivation.

Nineteenth - Irregular Distribution and Mismanagement of Resources that could benefit people.

B-Natural Causes of Poverty

There are many natural causes of poverty, which can be broadly divided into personal and societal factors.

Firstly, some individuals in society are forcibly afflicted by events such as the death of the family breadwinner, which places the responsibility of supporting the family on others, or disasters like house fires and unexpected accidents.

Secondly, widespread disasters such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, droughts, diseases, famines, hurricanes, extreme heat, debilitating cold, and agricultural pests contribute to the ruin and poverty of large groups of people. The impact of these factors cannot be ignored, as natural phenomena play a significant role in the sustenance granted by the Creator. These calamities have existed in different eras, and it is necessary to recognize their dangers. Truly, God created the heavens and the earth with truth and wisdom. Observation of the firmament and the earth leads to the certainty that their Creator is Wise and Knowledgeable.

Allah says: *وَمَا ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ* "He may destroy you and bring forth a new creation, and that is not difficult for Allah."

It is astonishing how humans, in their arrogance, due to their freedom from the dominion of these forces, express what their conscience tells them, a conscience that believes in God, such that the Lord says: *هُوَ الَّذِي يُسَيِّرُكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ حَتَّى إِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلِكِ وَجَرَينَ بِهِمْ بِرِيحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ وَفَرِحُوا بِهَا جَاءَتْهَا رِيحٌ عَاصِفٌ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ أُحِيطَ بِهِمْ دَعَوُا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ لَئِن لَّمْ أَنْجِبْنَاهُمْ مِنْ هَذِهِ لَئَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ* "He it is who makes you travel by land and sea, till when you are in ships and they sail with them with a fair breeze, and they are glad therein, there comes a stormy wind, and the waves come to them from all sides, and they think that they are encircled

therein, they supplicate to Allah, making their faith pure for Him alone: If You deliver us from this, we will certainly be of the grateful ones."

Topic Six: Poverty is the Greatest Social Problem

Human societies face major problems, and among the most dangerous is poverty, which attracts the attention of reformers and governments. Social justice is established when the poor are relieved of this deprivation, a deprivation that has befallen them due to various forms of social injustice. Poverty is not a new phenomenon but rather a problem that has plagued all societies throughout history. Humanity has recognized this problem from the beginning, and it is so dangerous that it gives rise to other problems, and it is the basis of all social problems, leading to the misfortune of many people afflicted by it.

The history of poverty is intertwined with the history of humanity itself. Poverty has been the cause of many crimes and calamities, endangering not only well-being but also leading humans towards committing crimes and atrocities, resulting in psychological and intellectual disintegration, disrupting family law, removing peace of mind and certainty, endangering human faith, and turning the means of danger into security and peace, causing nations to lag behind, and causing great concern in societies, leading to ignorance, and fostering pessimism among those affected by it. Therefore, religions and philosophies have attempted in various ways to prevail over it, as life's problems cannot be solved without addressing it.

In all eras, governments, nations, and human classes have experienced poverty. Poverty existed in ancient Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria. Even in advanced civilizations, poverty manifested in various forms. Poverty is a den of crime, where crimes breed, and in environments where poverty exists, deviant methods emerge, thus it becomes inevitable to eradicate it.

According to recent statistics, out of every three people, two are afflicted by the worst problems of our time: poverty, ignorance, and disease. This triple enemy holds the grip of over two billion people, reaching a total of three billion. Most of humanity today suffers from hunger, stemming from poverty, encompassing large regions in Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America.

Hunger is the brother of death, which consumes the body and makes one accept things they wouldn't in a state of satiety. It leads to actions that one would not commit otherwise. Poverty is the father of hunger and the root of all misfortunes, a major cause of misery and turmoil that affects both individuals and societies. Every disaster in human life, every calamity in family circles, the collapse of nations, or alterations in world history, all are rooted in this poverty.

Any kind of moral crime, such as adultery, theft, murder, lying, and hypocrisy, is related to this chronic illness. This illness strikes a blow to the essence of religion, moral foundations, human happiness factors, and it is the greatest enemy of humanity.

Poverty is not only a social problem afflicting a portion of society, leading to their exclusion from work and activities, fostering resentment and animosity towards the wealthy, but it's also an economic problem characterized by low income and financial resources, and failure to meet daily needs. Therefore, economists have devised theoretical and practical solutions to address this problem. Poverty is also a political issue, as governments strive to eradicate it and count it among the triple enemies: poverty, ignorance, and disease. Furthermore, poverty is a humanitarian problem because humans suffer from it, creatures that God has entrusted as His vicegerents over what is in the heavens and the earth. Despite this, their needs remain unfulfilled while the sky is generous with rain, and the earth yields its produce generously. Thus, it is astonishing that this problem engages the thoughts of people and the deliberations of reformers across the globe, and the only salvation lies in addressing and treating it.

Of course, the treatment of this intellectual affliction has astonished many thinkers and reformers who have tried to find a solution to it, but so far, despite all these efforts, nothing but temporary and superficial solutions have been achieved. Only in Islam can a true and comprehensive solution be found. It is a solution that, without Islam, seeking an alternative path will lead to failure. Throughout history, religions and other philosophies have attempted to solve this problem and alleviate the suffering it brings upon the poor, whether through sermons, admonitions, or other philosophical perspectives that reject hierarchical superiority. The greatest example is Plato's Republic. Centuries before the birth of Christ, attempts were

made to remedy this affliction through violent movements, which, however, led to even worse deviations than before, such as the Mazdak movement in ancient Persia five centuries after Christ.

History tells us that in ancient times, the poor were sold to those who could provide sustenance for them. In Sparta, any child with a disease that rendered their father incapable of working was killed. In other nations, elderly and infirm people were euthanized.

In modern times, poverty and economic problems have preoccupied the hearts and minds of people. Distorted minds of human societies, using these opportunities, lead them towards extremist paths and ideologies, pretending to be the friends of the poor and needy. This ignorance has also helped Muslim societies remain unaware of the Islamic system, and they have fallen under the influence of propagandists who tarnish the image of Islam. Therefore, it is necessary for every Muslim to understand something about Islam. Muslims must clarify to others what Muhammad has brought to them.

The regulations that solve individual and societal problems like poverty are inherent in Islam and not found elsewhere. They do not pursue temporary treatments that temporarily alleviate the pain but fail to cure the disease.

Topic Seven: Consequences of Poverty

Undoubtedly, poverty is the source of calamities and evils, a great affliction that deprives individuals and societies of benefits and interests. It is the primary obstacle to progress. In this discussion, we will outline some of the dangers and harms it brings to both individuals and society. From this social phenomenon, many calamities and misfortunes arise, some affecting individuals directly and others affecting the whole community.

Now, let us enumerate the most significant harms that poverty inflicts upon individuals:

1. **Health Impacts:** Poverty disrupts health and undermines physical strength because the poor lack the means to afford proper healthcare, thus exposing them to the risk of death.
2. **Ignorance:** Poverty leads to ignorance by depriving individuals of the opportunity to seek knowledge. A person who lacks resources cannot properly educate their children or support their education. Similarly, ignorance leads to poverty, creating a vicious cycle. Poverty on one side leads to ignorance, and ignorance, in turn, leads to poverty. There is a reciprocal relationship between poverty and ignorance, where poverty leads to diseases and ignorance drives individuals towards poverty. Poverty leads to diseases, making people ignorant, and diseases and ignorance together lead to poverty.
3. **Humiliation and Dishonor:** Poverty makes humans lowly, subjecting them to those who are less than them. The poor often overlook the injustices done to them by the wealthy. Hajjaj bin Yusuf wrote: "Know that poverty is the great army of God; it humiliates anyone who shows arrogance." Ibn Mu'tamir said: "The poor are dead except for those whom God elevates with dignity and contentment."

Some have said: "O God, protect me from the evils of wealth and from the calamities and humiliations of poverty."

4. **Loss of Dignity and Honor:** Poverty robs individuals of their dignity and honor, leading to their humiliation. People are accustomed to respecting the wealthy and disrespecting the poor, except for those who are guided. Luqman said to his son: "O my son, accumulate lawful wealth, for no one becomes poor except through three traits: deficiency in religion, weakness in intellect, and lack of compassion, of which the last is greater than the others in bringing people's contempt upon him."

Aktham bin Saifi said: "The one who seeks wealth is generous to his family."

Some have said: "I have seen the rich with dignity and the poor in humiliation."

5. **Anxiety and Mental Turmoil:** Poverty causes mental distress and anxiety. The troubled heart becomes prone to forgetfulness. One who falls into poverty experiences the aforementioned conditions, where sciences, knowledge, and benefits are lost, but if poverty persists, these losses become negligible over time.

Ali said: "The poor are sad in this world." Imam Ghazali said: "Hunger leads to death, not to knowledge."

6. Emotional Distress and Family Turmoil: Poverty squeezes the heart, causing it to panic and often leading individuals into conflicts. Poverty disrupts the relationship between husband and wife, disturbs the peace of the household, which poses a danger to the morality of children and the future of the family.

Some books mention the following: "A person who was behind a woman turned back when he saw her, as he could not afford to support her anymore. Finally, poverty came to him to such an extent that he could not even provide bread for himself and his children. He could not find any other obligation because people knew him as an extravagant person. His wife asked him to go to the caliph and tell him about their situation. He did not want to appear before the caliph himself, so his wife insisted. She swore that if he revealed their secret again, she would divorce him. He asked to go to the Amir al-Mu'minin, who was Harun al-Rashid. His husband gave him a lot of money, but he did not have any. "

7. Weakening of Faith, Hypocrisy, and Exploitation: Poverty leads to a weakening of faith, often resulting in hypocrisy and exploitation. The needy and impoverished often resort to flattery and sycophancy, hoping that praising the wealthy will lead to their own benefit, even if it means pleasing them in sinful acts. They act according to the desires of the wealthy to gain their friendship and obtain something from them.

8. Lack of Compassion and Loss of Chastity: Poverty diminishes human dignity and strips away chastity. Individuals become susceptible to base actions. Some wise men have said: "If you give something to a beggar, you become his master; if you want something from someone, you become his prisoner; and if you disdain someone, you become like him."

9. Weakness and Instability in Faith: Poverty weakens faith and may even lead to disbelief. Dhu al-Nun al-Misri said: "The closest person to disbelief is one who is overtaken by poverty and lacks patience."

10. Entrapment in the Clutches of Debt: Debt causes great distress, degrades human dignity, tarnishes honor, and eventually leads to committing crimes out of desperation.

11. Corruption of Nature and Paralysis of Human Potential: Poverty prevents individuals from engaging in activities necessary for sustaining life, threatening them with deprivation. It corrupts their disposition and nature, inhibits their talents and intellect, and stifles their potential.

12. Moral Corruption and Committing Crimes: Poverty leads to moral corruption and the commission of various crimes such as adultery, theft, and murder. Most crimes committed by women who compromise their chastity stem from poverty. Most prisons and courts are filled with the poor, and one of the main causes of financial crimes is poverty.

13. Begging and Seeking Help: Begging and seeking help are among the dangerous phenomena that stem from poverty. When individuals cannot meet their basic needs, they and their families may resort to begging from passersby, knocking on doors, and making desperate appeals, which tarnishes their honor.

14. Inability to Sustain and Work: Poverty deprives individuals of sufficiency and the ability to work. It leads to neglect of their life affairs, malnutrition, which results in a decrease in human power, lowers the standard of living, and causes diseases that push individuals away from productivity and their livelihood activities.

Conclusion

The conclusions drawn from the materials presented in this dissertation can be summarized as follows:

Islam provides a comprehensive program from the perspective of the Lord of the universe, encompassing various aspects of human life, including poverty and deprivation. It offers specific solutions, laws, regulations, and methods to address these issues, emphasizing the importance of economic matters in human life.

Poverty, as one of these issues, poses a threat to societies and nations. Islam offers valuable guidance and directives for addressing and resolving poverty. Islam's approach to alleviating poverty is unique in that it addresses the root causes rather than merely superficial or temporary remedies. It seeks to liberate humanity

from misery, hardship, anxiety, humiliation, and suffering, aiming to establish a fair balance in individual and social life. Islam emphasizes that the pursuit of one's interests at the expense of others' harm is unacceptable. Therefore, in Islam, the solution to poverty is not at the expense of excessive attention to individual interests.

Islam has consistently focused on addressing the social ill of poverty and has provided guidance for its remedy, considering it a perennial problem and a disease afflicting human societies. Islam has declared a relentless battle against poverty and has urged various means and methods to eradicate it from society, aiming to strengthen family and community cohesion through solidarity, brotherhood, and support. Islam aims to ensure a decent life for every individual in society, where basic needs are met, life is dignified, and fulfilling responsibilities is facilitated, thereby saving people from the dangers of poverty, destitution, homelessness, and deprivation.

Islam does not condone a society where some live in opulence while others lack even the bare necessities. It does not tolerate the cries of hunger from one person while another indulges in excess. It does not allow non-Muslims in Islamic society to suffer hunger, nakedness, and destitution. Therefore, it can be said that the main factors behind poverty and deprivation in most Islamic countries stem from a lack of understanding and implementation of Islamic principles and directives, especially in the neglect and non-compliance with economic and financial laws. In this regard, the primary responsibility lies heavily on Islamic governments that have either ignored Islamic financial resources or misused the wealth and assets of Muslim nations for personal and unnecessary purposes, disregarding public interests and deviating from Islamic legal frameworks. The reality is that the suffering and adversity of humanity today are due to this negligence in understanding and implementing Islamic teachings and the failure to understand and implement its guidance and regulations.

Islam is the only school of thought that has taken meaningful steps in the eradication of poverty and deprivation in all dimensions of life. The primary and fundamental causes of poverty and hunger are not a shortage of food production or population growth, but rather the political-economic system that has deliberately monopolized the production of agricultural and industrial foodstuffs. Many Muslim nations suffering from poverty and hunger have failed to utilize heavenly directives. Their governments, in pursuit of solving economic problems and maintaining their authority, have, for a few days of comfort, allied with the East and the West, dragging their nations into turmoil. They have followed corrupt and misguided systems and expressed interest in them, leading them to ruinous actions and oppression. By implementing Eastern and Western programs in their countries, which are incompatible with Islam, they have brought poverty and misery to their nations, becoming a shameful legacy for them in this world and humiliation in the Hereafter.

In conclusion, it can be said that the solution to this problem, like hundreds of other problems, lies in the comprehensive teachings of Islam. It is Islam that recognizes poverty as a fundamental and major problem of humanity and strives to eliminate it from its very foundation. Until the means and factors of poverty are eliminated, resolving the issue itself will remain challenging.

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