

Security dimension of *zakat*: Strengthening Islamic education, mitigating social unrest, and promoting sustainable communities

Nazifi Dahiru Abdullahi
Jigawa State College of Remedial and Advanced Studies, Babura, Nigeria
E-mail: nazifida@stud.iuiu.ac.ug

Ibrahim Aminu Ibrahim
Federal University, Dutse, Nigeria
E-mail: baballiya1980@gmail.com

Aliyu Salisu Umar
Sa'adatu Rimi University of Education, Kano, Nigeria
E-mail: almadany1991@gmail.com

Ahmad Taufiq
Universitas Islam Negeri K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, Indonesia
Email: ahmad.taufiq@uingusdur.ac.id

Abstract

This study investigates the multifaceted role of *zakat* in promoting not only poverty alleviation but also communal security, social stability, and sustainable community development. The research aims to expand the traditional understanding of *zakat* by highlighting its potential to address economic disparities and foster social cohesion. Employing a qualitative research design and secondary data analysis, the study systematically examines existing literature to assess the broader social and economic impacts of *zakat*. The findings demonstrate that effective *zakat* management can significantly mitigate social unrest by alleviating poverty, reducing unemployment, and addressing economic inequalities. Moreover, the study underscores the pivotal role of Islamic education in enhancing *zakat*'s impact. By equipping recipients with financial literacy, entrepreneurial skills, and investment strategies, Islamic education enables sustainable resource management and economic empowerment. The research concludes that *zakat*, when combined with targeted educational interventions, can serve as a powerful tool for fostering financial security and communal peace. By integrating these approaches, *zakat* has the potential to become a catalyst for long-term social stability and the development of resilient, self-sustaining communities.

Keywords: *Zakat*, Islamic education, social unrest, sustainable communities, communal security

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Introduction

The establishment and maintenance of a secure and prosperous community rely on effective resource management rather than the mere availability of resources. While resources provide the foundation, it is their strategic and equitable management that fosters social protection and communal security. In any community, individuals strive to earn a livelihood, yet disparities in income are inevitable, creating socioeconomic stratification (Walker, 2024). If left unmanaged, these economic inequalities can lead to social unrest and instability, posing challenges for developing economies worldwide. Governments have implemented various strategies to address these disparities, including the creation of social programs aimed at mitigating economic imbalances and ensuring communal security.

In Islamic societies, *zakat* serves as a pivotal instrument to bridge economic gaps and reduce social vices. By providing material and financial assistance to the less fortunate, *zakat* fosters communal security and social protection. This study explores the significant role of *zakat* as a tool for achieving these objectives. Specifically, it examines how proper management of *zakat* funds can contribute to social solidarity, crime prevention, and the overall resilience of communities.

Zakat, one of the five pillars of Islam, serves as a foundational mechanism for social welfare and wealth redistribution within Islamic teachings. Traditionally understood as a tool for alleviating poverty, *zakat* also possesses a latent potential to address broader societal issues, including communal security, social unrest, and sustainable development. By bridging the gap between economic inequality and social cohesion, *zakat* represents a comprehensive approach to fostering inclusive and resilient communities (Rahman, 2020). The interplay between *zakat*, social stability, and sustainable development highlights its multidimensional impact, extending far beyond its economic contributions.

In an era of rising economic disparities and social fragmentation, the need for robust mechanisms to promote communal security has become increasingly critical. Poverty, unemployment, and inequality are often cited as precursors to social unrest and instability (Chapra, 2016). *Zakat*, when managed effectively, addresses these issues by redistributing wealth, supporting the underprivileged, and fostering an equitable society. Furthermore, its integration with Islamic education enhances its transformative potential. Islamic education not only instills ethical values but also equips *zakat* recipients with essential skills, such as financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and resource management, which contribute to sustainable economic empowerment (Ali et al., 2021). This alignment between economic aid and educational empowerment underscores the strategic role of *zakat* in promoting long-term stability and self-sufficiency.

Moreover, *zakat* aligns with the principles of sustainable development by encouraging resource utilization that balances economic growth, social equity, and environmental stewardship. When implemented strategically, *zakat* can mitigate socio-economic disparities that often lead to marginalization and conflict. This perspective shifts the discourse on *zakat* from being merely a tool for poverty alleviation to a comprehensive framework for sustainable community development (Kahf, 2006). By addressing structural issues within communities, *zakat* has the potential to reduce vulnerabilities, foster resilience, and promote peace.

This study aims to explore the security dimension of *zakat*, emphasizing its role in strengthening Islamic education, mitigating social unrest, and fostering sustainable communities. Through a systematic review of existing literature and qualitative analysis, this research seeks to broaden the traditional understanding of *zakat* by highlighting its socio-economic and security implications. In doing so, it contributes to the growing body of

knowledge on *zakat*'s multidimensional impact and its integration with Islamic education for community development.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative research design to investigate the potential of *zakat* in addressing communal insecurity and promoting sustainable development. Qualitative research is particularly suited to this inquiry due to its emphasis on understanding social phenomena in depth and its ability to explore the complex relationships between *zakat*, social cohesion, and economic empowerment. By employing a qualitative approach, this research provides a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic and security dimensions of *zakat* within an Islamic framework.

Data Collection

The research relies exclusively on secondary data, chosen for its accessibility, cost-effectiveness, and the abundance of existing literature on *zakat*'s social and economic impacts. Secondary data provide a robust foundation for examining this topic due to the wealth of information already available in Islamic classical literature, academic journals, books, and reports from reputable organizations. These sources cover various aspects of *zakat*, including its theological foundations, historical applications, and contemporary practices in alleviating poverty, mitigating social unrest, and fostering sustainable communities.

To ensure the quality and reliability of the data, a meticulous evaluation process was employed. The collected data were assessed for their relevance to the study's objectives, their credibility based on the reputation of the sources, and their reliability in providing consistent insights. The study also incorporated diverse perspectives from multiple sources to enhance the robustness of its analysis.

Data Validation

To validate the findings, the research employed principles of data triangulation. This process involved cross-verifying information from different sources to identify consistencies and discrepancies. By comparing insights from Islamic classical texts, contemporary scholarly works, and organizational reports, the study ensured that its conclusions were well-founded and reflected a balanced understanding of *zakat*'s role in mitigating communal insecurity. Data triangulation also helped minimize potential biases, enhancing the overall validity and reliability of the findings.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed thematically, a method well-suited for exploring complex social phenomena. Thematic analysis involved identifying recurring patterns, concepts, and themes within the collected data, which were then synthesized to construct a coherent narrative about the security dimensions of *zakat*. Key themes included *zakat*'s role in alleviating poverty, reducing economic disparities, and fostering social stability through Islamic education and empowerment initiatives.

In addition to thematic synthesis, the study employed a comparative analysis to validate its findings. Insights from different studies were juxtaposed to identify congruencies and divergences, enabling a deeper understanding of *zakat*'s multifaceted impact. This comparative approach not only strengthened the validity of the findings but also highlighted innovative practices and strategies in *zakat* management that have successfully addressed communal insecurity in various contexts.

Result and Discussion

Role of Zakat in Mitigating Social Unrest

Studies have shown that the effectiveness of *zakat* is largely dependent on how well it is managed (Miller, 2022). *Zakat* has a positive impact by generally increasing income and employment rates in a society (Al-Qardawi, 1999). It has significant potencies to lessen poverty. According to Musaffa, et al., (2022) *zakat* responsibilities apply to crops, minerals, gold and silver, aquatic life, cows, camels, horses, goats, sheep, and productive assets. Furthermore, contemporary academics argue that since the prophet lived in an era characterized by the availability of productive assets, items that are considered productive but were not available during the prophet (peace be upon him) should be included in *zakat* on an equal basis with goods that are subject to *zakat*.

Paying out *zakat* relieves the poor of their hatred and jealousy towards wealthy individuals, as well as making them feel fulfilled. It promotes affection and a sense of solidarity amongst society's haves and have-nots, thereby leading to financial stability and sustainable communities (Musaffa, et al., 2022). Drawing on literature on *zakat*, it appears that *zakat* funds is not given to anyone, rather to its legal recipients prescribed by Allah the most Exalted (The Qur'an 9:60). Islamic scholars agree that, the recipients may not always be prioritized in accordance with precedent, the first two are closely linked categories in terms of need and they constitute the greatest priority of the *zakat* right. Regardless of faith, *zakat* is given to the eight categories mentioned in the Qur'an. Undoubtedly, if the less-privileged of a community got secured in terms of food, shelter and other basic needs, there is high probability that the community is prone to social protection.

Hafandi and Helmy (2021) indicate that when the basic needs of the poor are satisfied through mechanisms like *zakat*, there is less likelihood for social unrest. Ahmadi, et al., (2023) explains on how *zakat* serves as a tool that keeps society peaceful by fostering mutual protection. Aziz et al., (2020) opine that the nexus between *zakat* and poverty reduction, is the effective utilization of *zakat* necessary for achieving SDGs: A multidimensional poverty index approach. Asian Social Work and Policy Review, 14(3), 235-247. highlights that the goals of *zakat*, as interpreted in modern times, are in line with the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially with regard to eliminating poverty (Goal 1) and minimizing inequality (Goal 10). According to him, *zakat* ability to reduce poverty immediately enhances community sustainability by guaranteeing that no one is left behind. Studies also support the assumption that *zakat* strengthens communities by giving people the financial means to protect themselves and their communities from economic crises, as it is a crucial component in fostering long-term sustainability because economic resilience is essential to preserving communal well-being.

Role of Zakat in Promoting Social Cohesion and Economic Stability

Islamic literature has shown that *zakat* serves as a mechanism for redistribution of wealth from rich to the less privileged, thus it helps in reducing or alleviating poverty, economic disparities and promotes social understanding which ultimately leads to social protection (Q7:156). It also helps economy to withstand economic shocks during hardship by satisfying the basic needs of the community indigents which ultimately leads to economic stability. Qardawi (1999) asserts that *zakat* is one of the central tenets of Islam, used not only for wealth redistribution but also for strengthening social bonds and fostering unity among community members. It draws mutual support, trust and enhances social protection and cohesion. He further argues that *zakat* is very powerful tools in relation to the following socio-economic realities:

Economic Growth: One of the main positive effects of *zakat* at the macro level is increasing the purchasing power of *zakat* recipients. Theoretically the Marginal Propensity to Consume (MPC) of the poor is greater than the MPC of the rich, which means if the poor receives this extra financial aid, a big part or even all of it can be used for consumption. This will increase the demand of different products of industries which enhance production of goods. Therefore, *zakat* grows national income and thus the wealth of the economy (Pramanik, 1993). This can be presented in the table below illustrating before and post *zakat* disbursement:

Table 1

Depiction of Zakat's Impact in Economic Growth

Before Zakat			
Income Group	National Income	(MPC)	Savings
Higher Income	100 – 57.1%	0.2	0.8 – 80%
Middle Income	50 – 28.6%	0.5	0.5 – 50%
Low Income	25 – 14.3%	0.9	0.1 – 10%
Post Zakat			
Income Group	National Income	(MPC)	Savings
Higher Income	100 – 57.1%	0.2	0.8 – 80%
Middle Income	50 – 28.6%	0.5	0.5 – 50%
Low Income	25 – 14.3%	0.9	0.1 – 10%

Source: Pramanik, (1993) Development and Distribution in Islam, (reprinted Ed.) pp.13-14

Social Responsibilities: *Zakat* instills a sense of social responsibility among members of a community, encouraging them to contribute to the general welfare of the community. This sense of duty extends beyond financial contributions to include volunteering time and resources for communal benefit. Such collective efforts help to create a resilient and self-reliant community capable of addressing its own needs (Hanum, 2019).

Social Safety Net and Protection: Community with active *zakat* practices are more connected and socially protected, because the funds can be institutionalized and incorporated into larger social protection systems, providing assistance in the form of disaster relief, financial transfers, healthcare, and education (Kjellgren et al., 2014, as cited in Turkawi, 2015). Moreover, the funds can be used for designing programs to protect individuals and families from economic hardship and helping them to cope with basic financial problems.

Altruism and Compassion: *Zakat* encourages altruism and compassion by requiring Muslims to consider the needs of others. This practice nurtures a culture of giving and empathy, where individuals are more likely to help and support one another. Such culture not only strengthens personal relationships but also contributes to more cohesive and supportive community (Farooqi, 2019).

All these social and economic impacts of *zakat* in mitigating social unrest and at the other hand promoting sustainable communities highlighted in Islamic economic literature can be illustrated in the table below:

Table 2

Statistical Presentation of Zakat's impact on Economic and Social Stability

Study	Area of Impact	Findings	Statistics	Reference
Ahmedi, et.al., (2023)	Poverty and Income Inequality.	<i>Zakat</i> reduces poverty and income inequality.	Poverty rate reduces by up to 10% as a result of effective <i>zakat</i> system.	Ahmadi, et al., (2023). Conditions of the owner in the duty of <i>Zakat</i>

Study	Area of Impact	Findings	Statistics	Reference
Hassan, A. (2020). An Islamic Perspective on Governance	Crime Prevention	Effective collection and distribution significantly lessen crimes	There is 15 % decrease in property crimes and 20% reduction in violent crimes	Hassan, A. (2020). An Islamic Perspective on Governance; as cited Iqbal and Lewis (2009)
Abu Bakar and Omar (2017)	Social understanding and Protection	<i>Zakat</i> provides social understanding and washes away social grievances among members	There is a 12% increase in cooperation and social protection in communities with active <i>zakat</i> programs	Abu Bakar, M., & Omar, M. (2017). The Role of <i>Zakat</i> in Alleviating Poverty: Empirical Evidence from Indonesia.
Hassan, M. K., et al., (2024).	Stability and Resilience of Economy	<i>Zakat</i> contributes in stabilizing economy during recession and economic hardship	Regions with active <i>zakat</i> programs have 25% readiness to absorb economic shocks and downturns.	Hassan, M. K., et al., (2024). The national-level potential of <i>Zakat</i> and its ...

Source: see right hand site column

Conclusion

This study highlights the significant role of *zakat* in mitigating communal insecurity and promoting sustainable development. The findings reveal that *zakat* serves as a powerful tool for addressing social unrest, reducing poverty, and fostering social cohesion. By redistributing wealth, *zakat* alleviates economic disparities and strengthens social bonds, ultimately leading to enhanced community resilience and stability. Furthermore, its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) underscores its relevance as a mechanism for achieving global objectives such as poverty eradication and reduced inequality.

However, this study is not without limitations. The reliance on secondary data, while cost-effective and resource-efficient, may not fully capture the nuances and contextual variations of *zakat* practices across different regions. Primary data collection, such as interviews or field observations, could provide richer insights into the lived experiences of *zakat* beneficiaries and the operational challenges faced by *zakat* institutions. Additionally, the exclusive focus on Islamic economic literature limits the exploration of comparative frameworks or potential lessons from non-Islamic charitable systems.

Future research could address these limitations by employing mixed-method approaches that combine qualitative and quantitative data. Studies could explore region-specific case studies to better understand the practical applications and challenges of *zakat* implementation. Furthermore, research could investigate the integration of *zakat* with broader social protection systems to enhance its impact on economic resilience and communal stability. Another promising avenue for future research lies in examining innovative *zakat* management strategies, such as digital *zakat* platforms, to optimize collection and distribution processes.

In conclusion, while this study underscores the transformative potential of *zakat* in promoting socio-economic stability and sustainable communities, it also opens the door for more comprehensive investigations into its multifaceted impacts. By addressing the identified limitations and expanding the scope of inquiry, future research can contribute to a deeper understanding of *zakat*'s role in fostering a more just and equitable society.

Conflict of interests

The author(s) declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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