

# ZAKAT IS A SIGNIFICANT SOCIAL SAFETY NET IN THE DETERMINATION OF FOOD SECURITY: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY IN RAWALPINDI

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## ABSTRACT

*In a world where food production is sufficient to feed everyone, more than 850 million people live in condition of undernourishment, hunger, or starvation. Much of the population lies in the current dynamic of the global agro-food system; they have impaired access to food and contributed to environmental damage and social disintegration. Conventionally, the term "food insecurity" is used to describe situations of food deprivation. The notion of food security is as old as humanity, as the establishment of human communities always depended on access to food. In the present study significant focus was given to highlight the importance of zakat as a social safety net in the determination of food security, the exploration of the importance of zakat and usher for equity and access in food. The study was carried out in district Rawalpindi and 500 respondents were selected by using simple random sampling technique. Interview schedule was used for the collection of data and the data was analyzed by using Chi square test to explore the association between the two dimensions of study, food security and Zakat. Study explored that zakat and ushering are considered to be as a best social safety net for equity and access in food.*

**Key words:** Food security, Zakat, Ushering, Safety net, Rawalpindi, Quran

## INTRODUCTION

Food security as a concept originated in the mid-1970s, in the discussions of international food problems at the time of global food crisis. The primary focus of interest was primarily on food supply problems assuring the availability and to some degree the price stability of basic foodstuffs at the international and national level (1).

Pakistan is a low income developing country. Agriculture is its most important sector because it is primarily committed to provide healthy food to its rapidly growing population. Although the rate of population increase has considerably slowed down from over (3 percent) in

1980s to (2.09 percent) in 2009-10, but it is still considered as a high rate of population growth. With the current rate of population growth, the population is expected to get doubled by 2050 making Pakistan 4th largest nation by 2050 from current status of 6th most populous state of the world (2).

State of food security in Pakistan has deteriorated since 2003. The conditions for the state food security are inadequate in 80 out of 131 districts of Pakistan. 48.6 percent of Pakistanis does not have access to sufficient food for an active and healthy life. FATA has the highest percentage of food insecure population at (67.7 percent) followed by Balochistan 61.2 percent and the percentage on similar issue is 56.2 percent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Dera Bugti in Balochistan has the highest percentage 82.4 percent of food insecure people."Balochistan has the highest number of districts with worst food insecurity. The 20 districts of Pakistan with worst conditions for food security include 10 districts from Balochistan, 5 from FATA; 3 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; and 1 from Gilgit Baltistan and Sindh each (3).

It is important to note the Islamic concept of change "that Allah changes not the conditions of a people (including the availability of bounties and food) until they change what is in their souls, i.e., their behavior and compliances" (Quran, 13:11; 8:43). Equally, it is important to note that a successful historical record of implementation of Islamic regulations for more than fourteen centuries led to advancements in social and material conditions (including food availability and security), resulting, ultimately, in the establishment of an Islamic civilization which exceeded all previous civilizations (including the Roman) in its expansion, resilience and achievements (4) (5).

The Islamic management approach as applied to food finds that the status of food (availability and quality) relates to and interconnects with its utilization in seeking, attaining and distributing sustenance and consequently, with its resultant impacts like resource degradation, pollution, mischief, and celebration and joy (6).

All scholars of Fiqah agree on the principle that Usher is compulsory, but they differ on the details. According to Imam Malik and Imam Shafi, Usher is compulsory on agricultural produce like wheat, jowar, dates, grapes and other similar agricultural products which feed the people and which can be stored. According to Imam Abu Hanifa, it is compulsory on everything which is grown on land, irrespective of whether it can be stored or not, except grass and wood for fuel. Some scholars have applied Ushr on honey, even though it is not a producer of the earth. It is reported that, during the time of Hazrat Umar, Ushr has levied on Pearls and Amber. Hazrat

Umar has also levied Ushr on goods which were brought for sale from other lands. And in the Ahadees which we browsed above, it is evident that Ushr was paid on what was taken out of mines i.e. gold, silver, etc (7).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the present study the population was from the District Rawalpindi including 500 farmers from Tehsile Gujjar Khan. This population group was included the people from rural areas of Tehsil Gujjar Khan, district Rawalpindi. Data collection tools were used in the study included the use of structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Then, factors were ranked taking their mean value into consideration. Significance of relationship was tested through Pearson Chi- Square Test.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Hypothesis 1:

$H_0$  = There is no association between best way of helping needy and poor people who do not have access to the proper food and zakat and ushering can maintain equity.

$H_1$  = There is association between best way of helping needy and poor people who do not have access to the proper food and zakat and ushering can maintain equity.

**Level of significance:**  $\alpha = 0.05$

**Test statistic to be used:**  $\chi^2$  - Test

**Computation:** Best way of helping needy and poor people who do not have access to the proper food and Do you agree that zakat and ushering can maintain equity and access in food

Best way of helping needy and poor people who do not have access to the proper food	zakat and ushering can maintain equity and access in food			Total
	Agree	Strongly agree	Undecided	
Providing money	166	199	5	370
providing food items	69	57	0	126
creating awareness about agriculture	0	2	0	2
any other	0	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>500</b>

Chi- Square: 237.100

p value: 0.000

Df: 2

To test this hypothesis that there is no association between zakat and ushering can maintain equity and access in food and helping needy and poor people who do not have access to the proper food. Pearson Chi- Square test was applied the value of Chi- Square was 237.100 and its p value was 0.000 which was less than level of significance which showed the significant result. It meant that there was association, Zakat and Usher has significant effect on best way of helping needy and poor people who do not have access to the proper food.

**Hypothesis 2:**

$H_0 =$  There is no association between asserts for offering offer zakat and usher and best way of helping needy and poor people who do not have access to the proper food.

$H_1 =$  There is association between asserts for offering zakat and usher and best way of helping needy and poor people who do not have access to the proper food.

**Level of significance:**  $\alpha = 0.05$

**Test statistic to be used:**  $\chi^2 - \text{Test}$

**Computation:** asserts for offering zakat and usher and best way of helping needy and poor people who do not have access to the proper food

Asserts for offering zakat and ushering	Best way of helping needy and poor people who do not have access to the proper food				Total
	Providing money	Providing food items	Creating awareness about agriculture	Any other	
Crops	180	50	2	2	234
live stocks	111	38	0	0	149
Fruits	2	4	0	0	6
Poultry	14	28	0	0	42
Vegetables	3	2	0	0	5
Nil	60	4	0	0	64
<b>Total</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>500</b>

Chi- Square: 722.272

p value: 0.000

Df: 3

To test this hypothesis that there is no association between asserts for offering zakat and ushering and the best way of helping needy and poor people who do not have access to the proper food. Pearson Chi- Square test was applied with 0.05 percent level of significance, the value of Chi- Square was 722.272 and its p value was recorded as 0.000 which was less than level of significance which showed the significant results. It mean that there is association, Zakat and Usher has profound effect on better food security for poor and needy people and access to proper food for them.

## CONCLUSION

The main objective of the study was to explore the importance of Zakat as a social safety net to determine the food security in the study area and perception of people regarding the importance of Zakat in the equity and access for poor and needy and their situation of food security. Zakat and usher can maintain equity and access for food and can be helpful to secure food for those who were considered to be disadvantage groups and were deprived of food security. The major asserts

in the study area to offer zakat and usher were crops, vegetables, poultry and fruits because the respondents were consist of farmers and their main source of income was agriculture.

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