



REVIEW ARTICLE

Section: *Cultural Heritage*

The role of Zakat in alleviating persistent poverty and unemployment and redistributing wealth: An Islamic perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to clarify the role of Zakat in alleviating persistent poverty, unemployment, and redistribution of wealth from an Islamic perspective. This was achieved by addressing the conceptual framework of Zakat, social justice, poverty, and unemployment, analyzing the economic and social functions of Zakat, and deducing how it can contribute to establishing a more just and cohesive society. The study adopted the inductive method to trace relevant religious texts and jurisprudential opinions, the analytical method to interpret the impact of Zakat on economic and social structures, and the deductive method to derive contemporary solutions emanating from the objectives of Sharia and jurists' fatwas. The study concluded that Zakat represents an effective sharia and economic tool in fighting persistent poverty by transferring resources to the neediest groups. It also contributes to addressing unemployment through supporting economic empowerment, financing small projects, and assisting artisans, in addition to its role in redistributing wealth and reducing social inequality. The study further showed that the effectiveness of Zakat is maximized when managed within a sound institutional framework, linked to development programs and productive financing, and integrated with other Islamic financial instruments such as waqf (endowment) and microfinance. The study concluded that Zakat is not merely a financial act of worship, but rather a comprehensive system for achieving social justice and sustainable development in the Islamic society.

KEYWORDS: Zakat, persistent poverty, unemployment, redistribution of wealth, social justice, economic empowerment, Islamic economy

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Introduction

Poverty, unemployment, and the unequal distribution of wealth are among the most prominent challenges facing contemporary societies, due to their economic, social, and psychological effects that impact the stability of both the individual and society. From an Islamic perspective, these issues are not understood merely as material imbalances, but as manifestations of weak social justice and decline in solidarity among societal groups, which necessitates the activation of sharia instruments capable of restoring balance and achieving equity. Zakat comes at the forefront of these instruments, as it has both a devotional and developmental roles. It represents a financial and social system intended to redistribute a portion of wealth to its rightful recipients and to achieve the objectives of sharia in preserving life, property, and human dignity (Ahmad & Habib, 2013; Ahmad et al., 2015). Moreover, the obligation of Zakat is considered one of the most prominent legislative, financial, and social solidarity tools in the Islamic system, as it represents an effective means for economic and social reform by mobilizing financial and human resources and stimulating aggregate demand, whether through consumption or investment (Tayebi, 2017).

The importance of zakat in Islamic economic thought is highlighted by the fact that it is not merely a financial act of worship, but rather an institutional mechanism for redirecting resources to the neediest groups of society. Zakat is based on a compulsory foundation that ensures a continuous flow of resources to their eligible recipients, contributing to alleviating the cost-of-living pressures on the poor and needy, and reducing economic disparities between social classes. Contemporary studies also indicate that zakat represents an effective means of achieving distributive justice, provided that it is properly collected, managed, and directed within a sound institutional framework (Dogarawa, 2009; Johari et al., 2014; Khamis et al., 2024).

In the Islamic perspective, persistent poverty is associated with a lack of sufficiency and the inability to achieve a minimum standard of decent living, which makes addressing it a collective rather than an individual responsibility. Scientific literature shows that zakat contributes to alleviating poverty by providing direct support to those in need, enabling them to meet their basic needs, and transitioning from a state of deprivation to sufficiency. Some studies have indicated that, in this regard, when zakat is combined with economic empowerment programs and developmental guidance, its impact is not limited to immediate relief but extends to building the beneficiaries' capacities (Ali & Hatta, 2011; Hasanat, 2026; Riani & Indra, 2026).

Zakat also plays an important role in addressing unemployment, through providing the financing and productive mechanisms it provides. These mechanisms help those capable of working to establish small-scale enterprises or develop income-generating activities. Unemployment not only means a lack of income; it also implies the underutilization of human resources and a decline in economic participation. This makes directing zakat toward empowerment and productive employment an approach consistent with the objectives of Sharia. Recent studies have indicated that when zakat is managed within a development-oriented framework, it can serve as a tool to stimulate self-employment, support micro-enterprises, and enhance sustainable work opportunities (Uddin & Hossain, 2025; Hermansyah, 2025; Mustamin et al., 2025).

On the other hand, zakat is one of the most important Islamic mechanisms for wealth redistribution, as it works to transfer a portion of surplus wealth from affluent groups to the needy according to fair sharia regulations. This transfer is not intended merely to meet immediate needs, but to reduce wealth concentration, promote the circulation of money within society, and bridge social gaps. Some studies have affirmed that zakat has genuine potential to reduce income and wealth inequality, particularly if it is linked to effective management systems and integrated with waqf and other instruments of Islamic social finance (Dogarawa, 2009; Khamis et al.; 2024; Zulkipli et al., 2025).

The importance of this topic becomes evident in light of global economic transformations and the increasing challenges related to livelihood security and social justice. Muslim communities today are in great need of activating zakat as an economic and social resource that can contribute to achieving stability and strengthening social protection networks. Some studies have highlighted that when zakat integrated within a comprehensive development-oriented vision, it can contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, reducing economic vulnerability, and enhancing social welfare for vulnerable groups (Atah et al., 2018; Mustamin et al., 2025; Riani & Indra, 2026).

In its institutional dimension, zakat is also closely linked to issues of administrative efficiency and good governance. Weak organization, fragmented efforts, and the failure to direct resources toward those most in

need may limit the developmental impact of zakat. Therefore, recent literature emphasizes the necessity of developing collection and distribution mechanisms, linking zakat to productive programs, and adopting more integrated approaches that combine zakat and economic empowerment. This would enable zakat to serve as an effective and sustainable instrument for economic and social reform. (Dogarawa, 2008; Sarif et al., 2024; Uddin & Hossain, 2025).

Accordingly, the present study is of both scientific and practical significance. It aims to demonstrate the role of zakat in alleviating persistent poverty, addressing unemployment, and redistributing wealth from an Islamic perspective that combines sharia authentication with economic analysis. It also seeks to highlight zakat not merely as a financial obligation, but as a strategic instrument to achieve social justice and sustainable development, particularly in societies suffering from economic inequality and weak social protection (Ahmad & Habib, 2013; Ahmad et al., 2015; Sarif et al., 2024).

Problem of the Study

The problem of the study lies in the existence of a clear gap between the legislative objectives of the zakat obligation and its economic and social potential as a Sharia mechanism for wealth redistribution and achieving social solidarity and development, and the reality of its implementation in contemporary Islamic societies, which continue to face growing challenges represented in persistent poverty, unemployment, income inequality, and widening social and economic gaps. Although zakat was legislated to achieve goals that go beyond immediate aid to eligible groups—such as addressing the causes of need, boosting earning capacity, and promoting greater social and economic justice—some contemporary practices still limit its impact to providing short-term consumer aid, which may restrict its ability to create lasting change in the living conditions and productive conditions of beneficiaries. Hence, there is a need for a comprehensive scholarly study that goes beyond the traditional approach that treats zakat simply as a financial obligation, to analyzing its conceptual, developmental, and economic dimensions, and exploring mechanisms to use it more effectively to reduce persistent poverty and unemployment, promote fair wealth distribution, and reinforce social solidarity and sustainable development in contemporary Islamic societies.

Objective of the Study

This study aims to clarify the role of zakat in alleviating persistent poverty and unemployment and redistributing wealth from an Islamic perspective. This is achieved by analyzing the conceptual framework of zakat and social justice, reviewing the relevant literature, and demonstrating the mechanisms that make zakat an effective instrument in achieving development and social justice.

Theoretical framework

First: The Conceptual Framework of Zakat, Social Justice, persistent Poverty, and Unemployment

Zakat is defined as a specific wealth taken from specific property when it reaches a particular threshold, at a specified time, and spent on specific recipients (Mahmoud, 2021). It is considered one of the most prominent financial systems in Islamic legislation, as it represents an obligation with devotional, social, and economic dimensions at the same time. It is not merely an individual financial obligation, but a sharia-based mechanism to redirect part of wealth towards eligible groups in a way that achieves solidarity and justice. Contemporary Islamic literature has focused on highlighting this dimension, emphasizing that Zakat is part of the Islamic economic system, which is based on balancing the rights of the individual with the rights of the community, and private ownership with the requirements of social justice (Ahmad & Habib, 2013; Ahmad et al., 2015).

In Islamic sharia, social justice means narrowing the gap between social classes and distributing resources in a way that ensures the welfare of the poor and needy and meeting many of their basic needs (Sahnoun, 2014). The concept of social justice in Islam is linked to the principle of a fair distribution of wealth that ensures a minimum level of sufficiency for all members of society, and prevents the monopolization of money or its circulation among a limited group to the exclusion of others. Accordingly, zakat represents a practical instrument to achieve this goal, as it transfers money from the hands of the capable to the hands of the needy according to clear legal guidelines, which enhances social cohesion and reduces class inequalities. Multiple studies have indicated that the effectiveness of zakat is maximized when it is associated with a sound institutional structure

that ensures proper collection, distribution, and supervision (Dogarawa, 2009; Khamis et al., 2024; Zulkipli et al., 2025).

As for persistent poverty from the Islamic perspective, it is not limited to lack of income alone, but also includes the inability to meet basic needs and preserve human dignity. This multidimensional understanding is broadly consistent with contemporary development approaches, such as that of the United Nations Development Program, which defines poverty as a complex human condition that goes beyond lack of income to include the inability to live a long, healthy, and creative life, acquire knowledge, enjoy freedom and dignity, and access the resources necessary to achieve a decent standard of living (Bannaga, 2018). In Islam, alleviating poverty is part of the objectives of sharia that are related to preservation of life and wealth. Literature emphasizes that addressing poverty through zakat should not be limited to immediate relief, but should extend to empowerment and production, turning the beneficiary from a recipient of aid into an active participant in the economic cycle (Hasanat, 2026; Riani & Indra, 2026).

Unemployment may be defined as the underutilization of a part of the workforce in society, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, although these individuals are willing and able to work and contribute productively (Al-Wazni & Al-Rifai, 2007). It is one of the economic and social phenomena that reflect the underutilization of human capacities and the reduced participation in productive activity, along with the consequent psychological, family--related, and societal effects. From the Islamic perspective, unemployment is not understood merely as an economic imbalance, but rather as a condition that requires development-oriented intervention to reintegrate the individual into productive economic activity. This highlights the importance of zakat, especially when directed towards economic empowerment rather than temporary consumption and financing income-generating activities and small-scale enterprises (Sarif et al., 2024; Uddin & Hossain, 2025).

In light of the foregoing, this section lays the foundation for understanding zakat as a sharia-based economic instrument for achieving social justice, alleviating poverty, and reducing unemployment. It also highlights that the four concepts zakat, social justice, poverty, and unemployment—are closely interconnected within the Islamic framework, with zakat occupying a central position in this interconnected system.

Second: The Role of Zakat in Alleviating Persistent Poverty

Zakat is considered one of the most important Islamic instruments in fighting persistent poverty, as it involves transferring a fixed financial resource from affluent groups to needy groups, thereby ensuring the reduction of their living pressure and achieving a certain level of sufficiency. Literature has indicated that zakat is not merely voluntary charity, but a compulsory distribution system aimed at bridging social gaps and reducing economic deprivation within society (Ahmad & Habib, 2013; Ahmad et al., 2015).

Zakat aims to instill in the Muslim a sense of responsibility towards his fellow Muslim and to foster a spirit of compassion and solidarity among the members of society, so that the wealthy feels the suffering of the poor, thereby establishing a bond of brotherhood and cooperation between them, which prevents feelings of envy or malice (Ibrahim, 1999). Zakat also represents a means to achieve the purpose of social security, which guarantees a dignified life for individuals under the principle of the general guardianship of Muslims. Therefore, it was prescribed for the Imam to collect and distribute it to its designated recipients, to meet essential needs, and to motivate Muslims to contribute further in case the resources are insufficient (Amer, 2019). Effective zakat contributes to reducing social inequality, limiting the grudges and malice that dwell in people's hearts, and this is reflected in reducing crimes, especially financial ones. It also promotes positive behavior and spreads a sense of justice, satisfaction, and self-sufficiency among the members of society (Tayebi, 2017).

The effectiveness of zakat in alleviating persistent poverty is evident when it is managed institutionally based on precise identification of beneficiaries, transparency in distribution, and linking aid to the real needs of the poor. Some studies indicate that zakat can have a tangible impact in reducing poverty if directed towards the neediest families and vulnerable groups suffering from low or no income, such as large families, widows, and irregular workers (Johari et al., 2014; Hasanat, 2026).

Zakat is not limited to meeting immediate needs; it can also serve as a means of economic empowerment if it is used in income-generating projects or in supporting small-scale productive assets. In this case, it transforms from a tool of aid into a means of breaking out of the cycle of poverty, as confirmed by studies linking zakat to sustainable development and the financial and social empowerment of beneficiaries: e.g. Sarif et al. (2024),

Uddin & Hossain (2025) and Riani & Indra (2026).

Some studies also indicate that zakat plays a dual role in alleviating persistent poverty, as it not only assists the needy but also fosters a culture of sharing and solidarity in society, which enhances social stability. Therefore, zakat represents a central element in Islamic social protection systems, as it helps reduce reliance on external aid and supports the self-sufficiency of the Muslim community (Khamis et al., 2024; Zulkipli et al., 2025).

Accordingly, this sections outlines that zakat is an effective instrument in mitigating persistent poverty when it is institutionally managed and accurately directed to the eligible recipients. Its deeper impact can be realized when it extends beyond immediate relief to encompass economic empowerment.

Third: The Role of Zakat in Addressing Unemployment

From the perspective of Islamic economics, unemployment is associated with the absence of productive participation of the individual in economic life, which consequently leads to the underutilization of human resources and a decline in the living standards. Hence, Zakat can perform a remedial function when it is allocated to support those capable of working by providing small-scale financing mechanisms that help them engage in economic activities. Some studies have addressed this dimension, describing it as a natural extension of Zakat's role in empowerment rather than mere support (Hermansyah, 2025; Sarif et al., 2024).

The importance of zakat in addressing unemployment becomes particularly evident when it is used to finance small and medium-sized enterprises, or to provide initial capital for individuals seeking to pursue self-employment. Such an approach turns zakat into an instrument for income generation rather than merely a means of consumption distribution, which aligns with modern concepts in Islamic economics that advocate utilizing sharia-compliant resources to build the productive capacity of beneficiaries (Mustamin et al., 2025; Uddin & Hossain, 2025).

Moreover, addressing unemployment through zakat requires effective institutions capable of designing training, financing, and follow-up programs, so that support is not limited to a one-time financial grant but extends to developing the skills of beneficiaries and guiding them toward suitable economic opportunities. Related studies have indicated that zakat becomes more effective when coupled with good governance and integrated with other development institutions, especially in environments suffering from chronic unemployment and limited job opportunities (Atah et al., 2018; Sarif et al., 2024; Hermansyah, 2025).

The importance of this role is particularly evident in societies experiencing demographic pressure or limited formal employment opportunities, where zakat can create alternative pathways for economic integration through small-scale entrepreneurship. This makes zakat a multifunctional instrument; it not only supports the poor but also helps the unemployed transition from a position of need to a position of productivity and participation (Kakar et al., 2022; Uddin & Hossain, 2025; Mustamin et al., 2025).

Zakat contributes in financing a number of poor individuals and recipients to establish their own small-scale businesses, which assists them in avoiding begging, and moves them from the circle of unemployment to the circle of employment and production (Bashir, 2022). Therefore, one of the most effective means to achieve development is to focus on people, provide their basic needs, and enable them with the means of production. This represents one of the main objectives of zakat, which aims to achieve sufficiency and provide job opportunities for the unemployed, and thereby enable society to overcome poverty and unemployment and achieve economic development (Amer, 2019). From an economic perspective, zakat works to transfer a portion of the wealth of the rich to the poor. Since the marginal propensity to consume is higher among the poor than among the rich, this leads to an increase in demand for consumer goods, which then stimulates production and creates new job opportunities that contribute to reducing unemployment (Abd al-Qadir, 1997).

Thus, this highlights zakat as a practical tool for addressing unemployment through empowerment and productive financing. Its strength lies in its ability to transform the unemployed into producers rather than merely alleviating the impact of unemployment on them.

Fourth: The Role of Zakat in Redistribution of Wealth

Wealth redistribution is considered one of the most important economic objectives of zakat, as it aims to prevent the concentration of wealth in the hands of a limited group and to achieve a certain degree of balance

in the economic and social structure. Zakat works by transferring a portion of wealth from the surplus to those in need, ensuring the circulation of money within society rather than its stagnation, which aligns with the Islamic objective of upholding justice and preventing monopoly. Several studies have emphasized that zakat is not merely a financial transfer mechanism but an comprehensive strategy for resource redistribution (Ahmad & Habib, 2013; Ahmad et al., 2015; Khamis et al., 2024).

The impact of zakat on wealth redistribution is evident in that it creates a cyclical flow of wealth from the rich to the poor, which alleviates class inequality and increases opportunities for the economic inclusion of marginalized groups. This process is not merely passive or consumptive; it may also stimulate overall economic activity, as the transfer of funds to the poor raises demand and enhances the cycle of consumption and production within society (Ahmed, 2004; Johari et al., 2014; Zulkipli et al., 2025).

Recent literature emphasizes that zakat can play a more profound role when integrated with other Islamic finance instruments such as waqf and microfinance, forming together a system for wealth redistribution that is more just and sustainable. The integration of these tools enhances social impact and makes zakat a part of an Islamic financial structure capable of serving both development and social justice objectives at the same time (Atah et al., 2018; Sarif et al., 2024; Mustamin et al., 2025).

The moral dimension in the redistribution of wealth is no less important than its economic dimension, because zakat reshapes the relationship between money and man, and between wealth and responsibility. Thus, it not only seeks to alleviate poverty but also to build a society that is less unequal and more cohesive, where wealth is distributed in a way that ensures both sufficiency and dignity (Uddin & Hossain, 2025; Riani & Indra, 2026).

Zakat is considered one of the most important instruments for redistributing wealth in the Islamic system. Allah Almighty ordained it as one of the pillars of Islam to ensure continuity and permanence, and to prevent it from being subject to personal whims or volatile economic conditions. It is a fixed right on wealth that must be given when its conditions are met (Samara, 2016). Zakat involves allocating a portion of the wealth of the rich, on which zakat is due after a lunar year has elapsed, and transferring it to the poor. Therefore, it aims to eradicate poverty, redistribute income and wealth, and organize social classes. It does not allow the rich to remain in excessive wealth while depriving the poor of their rights; nor does it only assist the poor, but also motivates them to work if they are not entitled to zakat (Benchikh, 2021). Zakat also stands out as one of the most important means of wealth distribution because it is imposed on growing wealth on a recurring annual basis, performing a continuous function in redistribution. It transfers a portion of the rich's wealth to the poor without harming the rich, while at the same time enabling the poor to fulfill their needs, making it a balanced means to limit persistent poverty and stimulate the economy (Bashir, 2022).

Accordingly, Zakat plays a central role in redistributing wealth by channeling surplus to those in need and hence reducing economic inequality. Its effectiveness is further enhanced when it is integrated with other Islamic financing instruments within a comprehensive development-oriented vision.

Methodology of the Study

This study adopts the inductive method, the analytical method, and the deductive method, in accordance with the nature of its subject, which is based on explaining the role of zakat in alleviating persistent poverty and unemployment and redistributing wealth from an Islamic perspective. The significance of this methodological approach stems from the study's need to combine sharia-related authentication, economic analysis, and the derivation of practical implications that can contribute to addressing contemporary economic issues.

Regarding the inductive method, the study traces the relevant sharia texts regarding zakat, its eligible recipients, and its objectives, in addition to reviewing the opinions of classical and contemporary scholars on issues such as the threshold of sufficiency, economic empowerment, and support for productive groups. This aims to form a comprehensive picture of the sharia and jurisprudential basis of the subject. This method helps in collecting scattered details and linking them within a coherent scholarly framework that reveals the various dimensions of zakat in achieving social solidarity and economic development.

As for the analytical method, it is used to analyze the economic and social effects of poverty and unemployment, and to clarify their implications on social stability and human development. It is also applied to analyze the mechanisms through which zakat operates in stimulating effective demand, distributing income,

and reducing class inequality, while demonstrating its effect in transforming the beneficiary from a state of need into a state of active economic participation. This approach contributes to explaining the relationship between zakat and economic growth within a structured well-defined sharia-compliant Islamic framework.

The study also relies on the deductive method to derive contemporary economic solutions from the objectives of sharia and the fatwas of jurists, particularly with regard to sufficiency, empowerment, support for artisans, financing small-projects, and assistance to those capable of working. This method aims to link sharia sources with practical realities, enabling the formulation of practical insights that can contribute to the development of contemporary zakat policies.

Findings of the Study

The study showed that zakat is not merely a financial obligation with a devotional dimension, but represents an economic and social instrument capable of contributing to the achievement of distributive justice and social solidarity. This was confirmed by Ahmad & Habib (2013), who indicated that zakat is considered a strategy for wealth redistribution in a manner that alleviates persistent poverty and achieves fairness in income distribution. Additionally, Ahmed (2004) pointed out that zakat and waqf together form an effective system in fighting persistent poverty and achieving social protection.

The results also revealed that zakat contributes directly to alleviating the severity of persistent poverty by transferring financial resources to eligible groups and meeting their basic needs, thereby helping to reduce forms of economic deprivation. This was highlighted by Ali & Hatta (2011) in their study on zakat in Bangladesh. They showed that zakat serves as an effective societal means to reduce poverty when directed towards the neediest groups. Furthermore, Johari et al. (2014) affirmed that zakat decreases poverty and income inequality among vulnerable groups.

The study also pointed out that zakat is not limited to temporary consumption aid; it can actually become a tool for economic empowerment if directed towards productive programs and small-scale businesses. This was confirmed by Sarif et al. (2024), Hasanat (2026) and Riani & Indra (2026) who demonstrated that zakat is capable of generating sustainable income, and its impact is more effective when linked to human development and productive financing rather than just temporary aid.

Regarding unemployment, the study showed that zakat can help address such issue by supporting those capable of working and funding small initiatives that provide self-income opportunities. This was supported by Hermansyah (2025), Mustamin et al. (2025) and Uddin & Hossain (2025) whose studies showed that when zakat funds are invested in productive tools or micro-projects, they help create new job opportunities and transform beneficiaries from dependent recipients into active economic participants.

The findings also showed that zakat is an effective means of redistributing wealth within the Muslim community, as it transfers a portion of surplus wealth to those in need and helps prevent wealth from becoming concentrated in the hands of a limited group. This is supported by Ahmad et al. (2015), Khamis et al. (2024), and Zulkipli et al. (2025), who noted that zakat represents a sharia-based mechanism for restoring economic balance and reducing the gap between the rich and the poor, particularly when it is managed within a sound institutional framework.

The study also concluded that the effectiveness of zakat is closely linked to the quality of its management and its integration with other Islamic financing instruments, such as waqf and microfinance, and that the absence of good governance may limit its developmental impact. This is consistent with the findings of Atah et al. (2018), Hamsan (2024) and Mustamin et al. (2025), whose studies demonstrated that zakat has a greater impact when managed within a comprehensive development-oriented framework that contributes to supporting the Sustainable Development Goals and enhancing social and economic stability.

The findings also showed that zakat has sharia objective-oriented dimension that goes beyond providing relief to building individuals who are capable of productive activity and self-reliance. This was confirmed by Kakar et al. (2022), Hermansyah (2025), and Uddin and Hossain (2025), who indicated that when zakat is linked to the concepts of sufficiency and economic empowerment, it contributes to building stable families and productive societies and supports the achievement of the objectives of sharia in preserving wealth, life, and human dignity.

Based on the foregoing, the study concluded that zakat has genuine potential to alleviate poverty and

unemployment and redistribute wealth. However, this potential remains dependent on the effectiveness of zakat institutions, sound planning, and the allocation of resources toward productive and development programs. Such an approach can transform zakat from merely temporary assistance into a sustainable instrument for economic and social reform.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study showed that zakat is not merely a financial obligation of a devotional nature, but rather an integrated socio-economic system with genuine potential to contribute to addressing persistent poverty, unemployment, and imbalances in wealth distribution. The study demonstrated that the effectiveness of zakat does not lie merely in providing immediate assistance, but rather in its ability to establish sustainable mechanisms of social solidarity, empowerment, and social justice within the Muslim community.

The study also highlighted that zakat can become an effective development instrument when it is properly collected, allocated, and managed within a sound institutional framework that connects the sharia-compliant zakat eligible categories with actual economic and social needs. When zakat is utilized to support those in need, empower those capable of working, and finance small-scale enterprises, it contributes to moving individuals from the cycle of need to productive activity and from dependency to active participation in economic life.

The study also demonstrated that zakat plays a pivotal role in redistributing wealth more equitably, thereby reducing wealth concentration, promoting social balance, and reinforcing the value of collective responsibility within the Islamic perspective. Accordingly, the effective institutionalization of zakat represents an important pathway toward building a more cohesive society that is more aligned with the objectives of sharia in preserving human dignity and achieving sufficiency and justice.

Accordingly, the study emphasizes that zakat still possesses considerable untapped potential in many Muslim societies. This calls for further development of its management mechanisms, expansion of the areas in which it can be utilized, and greater integration with modern development programs. In this way, zakat can remain a fundamental pillar of Islamic economic development and an effective instrument for promoting development, equity, and social stability.

Recommendations of Study

In light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Strengthen institutional governance of zakat by developing collection and disbursement mechanisms and enhancing oversight and transparency to ensure that zakat reaches its rightful beneficiaries efficiently and equitably.
- Allocate a portion of zakat funds to productive programs aimed at financing small and medium-sized enterprises and supporting artisans and professionals, so that zakat can be transformed from merely consumptive assistance into a tool for economic empowerment.
- Establish accurate databases of eligible beneficiaries to facilitate the systematic identification of the poor, unemployed, and those in need, thereby ensuring equitable distribution and preventing duplication or leakage.
- Integrate zakat with other Islamic financing instruments, such as waqf and microfinance, within integrated development programs that contribute to alleviating persistent poverty and unemployment and achieving sustainability.
- Promote public awareness of the importance of zakat as a developmental obligation that extends beyond its devotional dimension to strengthening social solidarity and achieving social justice.
- Encourage applied field research that measures the actual impact of zakat on persistent poverty, unemployment, and wealth redistribution across different Muslim contexts.
- Link zakat disbursement categories to empowerment and vocational training programs so that zakat support can facilitate beneficiaries' integration into the labor market and help them achieve self-sufficiency.

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