

RELIGIOUS RESPONSES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Foyasal Khan¹ and Mohamed Aslam Haneef²

¹ MOMODa Foundation, Bangladesh Institute of Islamic Thought (BIIT), Dhaka, Bangladesh,
foyasal.khan@gmail.com

² Department of Economics, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Malaysia,
mdaslam@iium.edu.my

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the role of religion in Sustainable Development (SD) and offers an Islamic perspective to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Applying a multidimensional approach to development, this paper presents 17 SDGs into the six dimensions —i.e., Social, Human Capital, Economic, Sustainable Lifestyle, Environmental, and Institutional. From the discussions of the dimensions from Islamic perspective, some key findings are: Islam lays emphasis on human capital development (SDG 3 and 4) which is a key element in accelerating economic Growth (SDG-8). Islam also offers a wide range of social financial tools such as Zakat, waqf that can be used to address SDG 1 (poverty), 2 (hunger), 5 (gender equality), and 10 (reducing inequality). Islamic finance offers a number of tools for long-term financing such as sukuk that can masterfully be used for building sustainable infrastructure (SDG-9) and sustainable cities (SDG-11). This study also reviews some Islamic principles from the Holy Qur'an that can positively promote several SDGs. *Wasatiyyah* (Moderation) principle can be used for sustainable consumption and production (SDG-12), *Khalifah* (God's vicegerent on Earth) for utilizing Water and sanitation (SDG-6) and energy (SDG-7). *Maslahah* (public interest) for dealing with natural resources; *Salam* (peace), *'Adl wa al-Ihsan* (justice and benevolence) for SDG-16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and *Ta'āwanū 'alal-Birri* (cooperation one another in goodness) for SDG-17 (partnerships for the goals).

Keywords: Religion, Sustainable development, SDGs, Islamic economy, Muslim world.

JEL classification: I31; P400; P470; Z120.

Article history:

Received : August 31, 2021

Revised : January 24, 2022

Accepted : March 29, 2022

Available online : May 31, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.21098/jimf.v8i2.1453>

I. INTRODUCTION

Different development paradigms or models have emerged in the last few decades. Of these, modernization, dependency, and multiplicity paradigms can notably be mentioned. Western Neo-classical economic theoreticians embraced modernization (1945- 1960's) as one of the dominant paradigms which predominantly focuses on wealth, production and consumption relying solely on science and technology (Berger & Beeson, 1998). Local knowledge, indigenous values derived from religions and traditions, and moral responsibilities are totally ignored to resolve development-related challenges (Aslam Haneef, 2001). Nevertheless, as religion provides a respectful code of conduct and advice to billions of lives across the globe, it can be a catalyst in achieving any development goal including sustainable development goals (SDGs). From world history, it has been observed time and again that religion has played a great role in designing political and economic policies that have impacted the lives of people. For example, in Muslim life, Islamic values, virtue, morality, and ethics play a dominant role in their decision making. From this observation, some Islamic scholars argue that the idea of Sustainable Development (SD) is much closer to the Islamic concept of development. It is, therefore, based on available evidence, we argue, that Islam has potential to significantly contribute to achieve SDGs.

We find from a literature search limited studies that address SDGs from Islamic perspectives. Ahmed, Mohieldin, Verbeek & Aboulmagd (2015) explore the role of Islamic finance in promoting SDGs. Dariah, Salleh & Shafiai (2016) seek to answer the question of how to implement SDGs in Muslim countries and discuss a new approach to SDGs from Islamic perspectives. They present seven goals of SDGs (SDG 1-5,8, and 10) as the end goals of development and people's wellbeing and the rest of the goals (SDG 6,7,9,11-17) are means to reach the ends. Al-Ahsan (2015) discuss seventeen SDGs separately in the light of the holy Qur'an and the Sunnah.

From a brief survey of literature we note that the SDGs have not been viewed from a combination of a multidimensional development approach with an Islamic perspective. 17 SDGs are discussed in this research paper to fill this gap. The specific objectives of this paper are:

- To explore the role of religion in Sustainable Development (SD)
- To present 17 SDGs in different thematic groups on the basis of a multidimensional development approach.
- To discuss these themes from an Islamic perspective.

In the next section, we present literature review. Section III is the methodology and section IV discusses the results. Finally, section V concludes the paper and provides recommendation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Religion and Sustainable Development

The root of the word 'religion' is from the Latin word 'religio'. In English, religion means to bind life by monastic vows whereas religion is for showing reverence for God or gods in Latin (Müller, 1893, p.33). Because of very wide-ranging definitions of religion, reaching scholarly consensus over what exactly can be counted as religion is not possible (Morreall & Sonn, 2014; Nongbri, 2013). From

the ancient period (3000 BC- 476 AD) until the medieval period (476 AD -1492 AD), religion was an individualistic matter to instill virtue of worship and it would not be considered as a source of knowledge, doctrine, or practice at collective level (Harrison, 2015).

The concept of religion as understood in the west today is not same for “religion” in Islam as understood by Islamic scholars and based on its own sources of knowledge. Islam is mentioned in the Holy Qur’an as *Din* that is not limited to the personal rituals and beliefs that are commonly understood by the term religion. Rather, as Islam is a complete code of life, isolating Islam from any aspect of life is contradictory, incoherent, and meaningless (Aslam Haneef, 1997).

As one of the central elements in the Islamic worldview, the concept of *din* provides a holistic principle for human beings. More specifically, the economic vision of Islam cannot be envisaged without embracing the universal concept of *Din*. The term *din* appears 92 times in the Holy Qur’an and is used in various contexts to convey the following meanings: debt, obedience, judgement, and way/custom/religion. It is natural for human beings to obey and submit to God’s will in all aspects of their worldly life (Qur’an 51:56). While obedience forms the central purpose of life, what this means in economic matters depends on how one interprets “God’s will” with respect to economic pursuits (Aslam Haneef, 1997).

Most economists would keep religion away in their economic analysis. Thus, religion became an area of ‘assumed away’ by noted economists. They think religion has “little or nothing to do with commerce or economics or politics or industrial relationships” (Watt, 1979 in Aslam Haneef, 1997). The economic growth literature sees religion as an obstacle rather than acknowledging religion’s contribution to growth (Anderson, 1988). Though religion is hardly mentioned in the global reports that matter for world economics and politics, in recent decades, however, we see a revival of interest in religion and economics (Alkire, 2006) as people in many parts of the world are now considering religion as a social capital to be used for positive changes (Jackson & Fleischer, 2007).

Islamic economics and its impact on economic development in particular in Muslim countries has been a focus area of research in recent decades. In the 1980s, Iran, Pakistan, and Sudan undertook Islamization exercises, especially in banking and finance. Since the late 1980s, Malaysia has steadily gained recognition as a success story of economic development in the Islamic world and it was also in the 1980s that Malaysia introduced its own Islamic-reform agenda. Aslam Haneef (2001) sees that there has been the contribution of Islam to Malaysia’s economic development in terms of implementing development policies that promote Islamic values and establishing Islamic institutions, especially with regard to the Malay Muslim population. Thus, Malaysia provides an example of how Islam could be practiced in a pluralist society, and demonstrates that Islam is compatible with contemporary times and societies, even where pluralism is the norm rather than the exception (Aslam Haneef, 2001). Hence, Islamic resurgence in these countries, and the Middle East in general provides an evidence that although in the 1960s secularization, a central pillar of the modernization thesis, was seen as a natural concomitant (even a condition) of economic development, secularization as a way of modernization and economic development does not apply to Islam (Aslam Haneef, 2001).

Another positive change we see is that many researchers have started questioning the western development models as these models have grossly failed to address the pressing social problems i.e., eradication of poverty and reduction of inequality and dependency. Moreover, the wave of modernization has severely affected the culture and institutions of the developing world (Finn, 1983; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005).

Some researchers still see an ambivalent role of religion in development. On the one hand, religion can be a complementary factor to motivate development; on the other hand, it can also obstruct or undermine development (Alkire, 2006). Thus, we can recognize religion as a relevant factor in development research, policy, and practice (Tomalin, 2013).

2.2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The 2030 Agenda includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. Several studies have been conducted to present SDGs thematically using different development frameworks. One such familiar and widely popular framework of presenting SDGs under 5Ps (People , Prosperity, Planet, Peace, and Partnership). For example, Portugal has aligned SDGs with this 5Ps as follows:

Table 1.
List of SDGs Aligning with 5Ps

5Ps	SDGs
People	Goal 1: No Poverty
	Goal 2: Zero Hunger
	Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being
	Goal 4: Quality Education
	Goal 5: Gender Equality
	Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
Prosperity	Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
	Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
	Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, And Infrastructure
	Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities
Planet	Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
	Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
	Goal 13: Climate Action
	Goal 14: Life Below Water
	Goal 15: Life on Land
Peace	Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
Partnership	Goal 17: Partnerships for The Goals

Source: UNGA (2015); UNHLPFSD (2017)

2.3. Religion and SDGs

In 2000, eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were set up at the United Nations Millennium Declaration (UNMD) as a response to development disappointments in the context of poverty and human deprivation. The developing

world achieved desired development outcomes thanks to the joint work of both state and non-state actors. The role of Faith-based organizations (FBOs), alongside secular organizations, in achieving MDGs cannot be overemphasized (Haynes, 2014). In 2015, the sun has set on the MDGs, and the era of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has dawned. So, following the successful engagement of FBOs it can be argued that FBOs can engage meaningfully and actively in the process of achieving the SDGs which requires a multi-sectoral, rights-based, and people-centered approach (Sidibé, 2016).

In Washington, a conference on Religion & Sustainable Development was held on July 2015 by Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities (JLIFLC) where FBOs and religious communities are recommended to engage in the process of achieving the 17 SDGs by 2030 while recognizing the historic contributions of FBOs and religious communities to achieve MDGs. The government can collaborate with FBOs and include these organizations in the planning process for national development. On the other hand, faith-based actors can sincerely engage them with the national development actors from all sectors i.e., private, public, and civil society for the achievement of SDGs. Capacity of local FBOs can be enhanced through building partnerships with bilateral and multilaterals FBOs. The public sector can come forward to empower FBOs in terms of directing procurement policies and negotiating contracts. FBOs must be sound in financial management. Likewise, religious communities can add value to socioeconomic development by way of utilization of their religious assets with their proactive participation (JLIFLC, 2015).

Religious communities can help achieve SDGs in many ways. They may advocate against corruption in the public sector, hold their governments accountable in terms of providing health and other social services, and enrich mental and social health by providing psychosocial services (JLIFLC, 2015). The roundtable thinks that the post-2015 SD agenda has brought about an unprecedented opportunity for FBOs to engage with realizing SDGs in many ways. FBOs can offer solutions to SDGs from the all-embracing spiritual sides of development. These organizations can act as a catalyst for changing behavior through mobilizing society by providing wide-ranging community-based services. Most importantly, FBOs can be a part of governmental delegations for generating greater moral resolution in the process of negotiating the SDGs.

It is interesting to see that the United Nations have been trying to meaningfully engage with FBOs to bring the issues of ethics and morality in the discussion of the SDGs which is currently missing. Karam (2015) says in the roundtable that it will be worthwhile to utilize extensive experience of FBOs in achieving most of the SDGs. She recommends UN agencies to build partnerships with FBOs for various service delivery to the well-being of the people.

In March 2020, to investigate the responses of religious actors to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs at Georgetown University, the World Faiths Development Dialogue, and the Joint Learning Initiative launched a program. They have been organizing quick information for supporting policymakers and practitioners and religious actors to work together in the COVID-19 response (Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs website, 2021). The Berkley Center thinks that in the midst of this pandemic, it is

very pertinent to raise questions about how religious institutions, beliefs, leaders, and practices are contributing positively to the ongoing coronavirus crisis and response. The Center also argues that religious actors can play a very important role particularly in addressing challenges centered on safe religious gatherings and adaptations of rituals, building trust, promoting effective communication and advocacy, and identifying and responding to the needs of communities. Religious actors must resist hate speech and misinformation. At the same time, they have to deal with various conflicts, ranging from domestic to geopolitical, associated with the crisis. The Center believes that in this rapidly changing situation, religious voices should be a part of broad policy exchange. Of course, this has to be based on an informed and nuanced understanding of developments.

III. METHODOLOGY

This paper primarily is a document analysis which involves keyword and subject searching from recent scholarly books and articles, published bibliographies, people sources, and systematic internet browsing to arrange full-text sources in predictable subject groupings.

According to a prominent American sociologist Kenneth Bailey, the document analysis as a form of qualitative research covers documents that comprise information about a particular study's phenomenon for analysis (Bailey 1994). Documents can be categorized into three: personal, private, and public (Payne & Payne, 2004). Aims of documentary analysis are to discover meaning, improve understanding, and realize insights relevant to a research problem. To this purpose, documents, both printed and electronic materials, are systematically reviewed and evaluated for this study as suggested by several experts of research methods (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

To pursue the document analysis in this study, we have conducted an intensive library search and used a variety of documents: background and working papers; journal articles; books and brochures; event programs; newspapers clippings and articles; press releases; program proposals; radio and television program scripts; organizational or institutional reports; survey data; and various public records. We have collected these documents from libraries, newspaper archives, organizational or institutional files, and internet sources.

To provide an Islamic perspective to SDGs, the method used is as follows:

- 17 SDGs have been presented under six broad themes from a multidimensional approach to development.
- The verses of the holy Qur'an relevant SDGs have been read and several translated works and Tafsir (exegesis of the holy Qur'an) from classic as well as modern period have been sought to understand the broader meaning of the verses.
- Finally, we have critically studied Islamic literature and scholarly works related to the various facets of development and sustainable development. For our analysis, we have selected useful contemporary literature on sustainable development and various issues of SDGs.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1. SDGs from a Multidimensional Approach To Development

A German psychologist Paul Baltes’ life span perspective of development emphasizes that development is “lifelong, multidimensional, multidirectional, plastic, contextual, and multidisciplinary” (Lazzara, 2020). He refers to multidimensionality as a complex interplay of factors that affect development across the lifespan, including biological, cognitive, and socioemotional changes. He argues that the development of an individual depends largely on a dynamic interaction of these factors (Lazzara, 2020). Likewise, we can apply a multidimensional approach to development to present the 17 SDGs in six dimensions —i.e., Social, Human Capital, Economic, Sustainable Lifestyle, Environmental, and Institutional (Table 2). We argue that SDGs cannot be achieved without dynamic interactions of these dimensions of sustainable development.

Table 2.
List of SDGs Aligning with 6 Dimensions of Development

Dimensions of Development	SDGs
Social Development	Goal- 1, 2, 5, 10
Human Capital Development	Goal-3, 4
Economic Development	Goal- 8, 9
Sustainable Lifestyle Development	Goal- 6, 7, 11, 12
Environmental Development	Goal- 13, 14, 15
Institutional Development	Goal-16, 17

Source: Authors



Source: Authors

The **Social dimension** of development covers four SDGs: poverty (Goal-1), hunger (Goal-2), gender equality(Goal-5) and reducing inequalities (Goal-10). These are the most pressing social problems facing world society. The SDG-1 is

committed to end poverty in all forms and dimensions by 2030 and the SDG-2 aims to end all forms of hunger and malnutrition by 2030. The SDG-5 is to end discrimination against women and girls everywhere, and SDG-10 focuses on 'reducing inequality within and among countries.

The **Human capital dimension** of development covers two SDGs: Good Health and Well-being (Goal-3), and Quality Education (Goal- 4). Health and education are considered, in development economics textbooks, as human capital in the form of productive investments (see, Todaro & Smith, 2012, p.360). Health embodied in human persons, including skills, abilities, ideals, health, and locations (Ibid). The scenario of education and health in many parts of the world is still below the standard. More than 6 million children still die before their fifth birthday every year and around 16,000 children die each day from preventable diseases. Child-birth related complications take lives of hundreds of women each day. AIDS is now the leading cause of death among teenagers in Sub-Saharan Africa. For education, still there are large disparities in primary school enrolments. Children from the poorest households are less likely to complete their education. In this situation, the SDG-3 makes a bold commitment to end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and other communicable diseases by 2030 (UNDP website, 2018) and SDG-4 aspires to achieve inclusive and quality education for all (UNDP website, 2018).

The **Economic dimension** of development covers two SDGs: decent work and economic growth (Goal-8) and on industry, innovation, and infrastructure (goal-9). These are very critical elements for the sustainable economic development of any country. The global economy is facing three grave problems: slow growth, huge inequalities in income and wealth, and unemployment especially among youth. For economic growth and development, investment in infrastructure and innovation is one of the key drivers. Mass transport and renewable energy are required to grow new industries and technologies (UNDP website, 2018). In this background, the SDG-8 is "to achieve full and productive employment, and decent work, for all women and men by 2030" and the SDG-9 is to "build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation" (UNDP website, 2018).

The **Sustainable lifestyle dimension** of development covers four SDGs: clean water and sanitation (SDG-6); affordable and clean energy (SDG-7); sustainable cities and communities (SDG-11) and responsible consumption and production (SDG-12). Humans cannot live in caves and in isolation. Rather they live as family and society together. Every family or household consists of a house where the members eat together. They need to consume numerous things including water and energy. For the consumption, they need to produce. So, the importance of producing goods and services in human life cannot be overemphasized. Having said that, human beings should be responsible for both consumption and production. They should follow a consumption and production path that supports an eco-friendly lifestyle. Because of not following an eco-friendly lifestyle, we are now at the brink of human-induced climate collapse. Top scientists around the world have recently cautioned us that there should be a radical change in our society by simplifying our lifestyle to prevent the further worsening of the impacts of climate change. Energy and water are intricately connected. All sources of energy

(including electricity) require water in their production processes. Energy is itself required to make water resources available for human use and consumption (UN website, 2018). Over the years, access to improved water sanitation and coverage of electricity have increased across the world. However, the alarming feature is that there is decline in supplies of safe drinking water affecting more than 40 percent of people around the world due to water scarcity. On the other hand, cheap energy is needed to meet the demands of the rising global population. The SDG-6, hence, is to ensure universal access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030, and the SDG-7 is "to ensure universal access to affordable electricity by 2030" (UNDP website, 2018).

The **Environmental dimension** of development covers three SDGs: Climate action (Goal-13), Life below Water (Goal-14) and Life on Land (Goal-15). A harmonious association between them is vital for a meaningful environmental development. Any disharmony might generate ecological imbalance resulting in serious environmental degradation including climate change. We have already come to a climate collapse which calls for immediate climate action even to maintain the present level of the environmental situation. Climate change is a common challenge of all posing a great risk to achieve SD. Social and economic development in terms of ensuring food security and human health, absorbing CO₂ emissions, and providing clean air and water for all will be seriously hampered unless biodiversity is conserved and used sustainably. The global trend of pollution, over-exploitation of oceans, industrial fishing, and the commercial use of marine resources and contraction of forest areas are posing a great threat to biodiversity and human prosperity (UNDP website, 2018).

The **Institutional dimension** of development covers two SDGs: peace, justice and strong institutions (Goal-16) and partnerships for the goals (Goal-17). Development of strong institutions at local and global level is very crucial not only to ensure peace and justice, but also to enhance partnership among the global community. It is an undeniable fact that without effective governance and peaceful and inclusive societies, achieving SD remains a fantasy. It is seen that conflict-affected countries have failed miserably to achieve the MDGs. Hence, SDG-16 calls for promoting peaceful and inclusive societies (UNDP website, 2018). For successful implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, partnerships and strong political will are important. Hence, SDG -17 urges developed countries to fulfill their promise to give 0.7% of their gross national income to official development assistance (ODA). A greater domestic resource mobilization is required for a country to reduce dependency on foreign supports. An equitable multilateral trading system should be promoted to enhance macroeconomic stability and policy coherence for the sake of achieving SDGs (UNDP website, 2018).

4.2. SDGs from an Islamic Perspective

The thematic presentation of SDGs into six dimensions of development is discussed as follows:

4.2.1. Social Development (SoD)

Islam has emphasized establishing social justice where poverty, hunger, and inequality at intolerable level have no place. Islam defines poverty in a broad sense and hence, provides comprehensive Islamic strategies to eradicate it. If an individual fails to meet his/her five basic human requirements as stated in Maqasid al-shari'ah, he/she will be treated as poor in Islam (Hassan, 2010). In his poverty alleviation scheme of Islam, Sadeq (1997) identifies three sets of measures: (1) positive (2) preventive and (3) corrective. For positive measures, an Islamic society will ensure an enabling environment of equal opportunity to grow the income and to distribute income justly to the factors involved in the production process. For preventive measures, the state will ensure that there is no concentration of wealth into few hands. To do this, Sadeq (1997) proposes controlling over ownership and prevention of malpractices that bar the regular economic activities. The corrective measures are the third option required only if the positive and preventive measures are not sufficient to eradicate poverty. These involve a redistributive mechanism to transfer wealth from the rich to the poor in the forms of compulsory transfers (zakat) and recommended transfers (charity). Moreover, the direct involvement of the state to ensure basic needs falls under the corrective measures.

The pervasive poverty scenario in the OIC countries demands all three measures, i.e. positive, preventive and corrective, concurrently to address the poverty problem. Shirazi (2014) estimates the resource shortfall and potential zakat collection in the low-income Muslim countries. He finds that with their potential zakat collection, some low-income Muslim countries can mitigate their resource gap under USD1 international poverty line. However, this is not the case for other countries, mostly in Africa. To him, a comprehensive set of well-coordinated measures is needed to address poverty problems including domestic efforts and financial aid from the rich countries (Shirazi, 2006). Referring to early Muslim history, Shirazi sees enormous potentials in the institutions of zakat and sadaqah in order to help the poor and the needy. At present, there is no practice of institutional Zakat management in majority of the muslim countries. Though Zakat has been officially introduced in a few countries, there is question about its true spirit in terms of implementation (Shirazi, 2006). In another work, Shirazi (2014) argues that Zakāt and Waqf have the potential for alleviating poverty in the IDB member countries provided that the Zakāt and Awqāf institutions are revived to generate sufficient revenue and these funds are used for pro-poor programmes. He supports an integrated approach by combining Zakāt and Waqf into the poverty reduction strategy (Shirazi, 2014).

It is a global shame to have more than 1 billion people of different religions and nationalities undernourished across the globe at this age of technological progress and so-called civilizational advancement. However, this is a solvable problem and all faith groups simultaneously and jointly take part in ending hunger. The religious scriptures of all major religions advocate feeding the needy (Hipple, 2014). From

many verses in the holy Qur'an and hadiths of the Prophet Mohammad (Peace Be upon Him), it is clearly revealed that Islam encourages feeding the hungry people. The Qur'an (al-Insan: 8) states, "And they [righteous people] feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive". In the commentary of this verse, 'Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1989) says, the righteous should understand and supply the real needs including material and spiritual food for the indigent, the orphans, and the captives. Even a righteous man does not forget to feed, house and look after the dumb animals. A prominent hadith tells that a person cannot be a Muslim if he goes to bed satiated whereas his neighbour goes hungry. From this preceding discussion, we can say that the grave problem of hunger can be solved if Muslims take care of their neighbors in accordance with religious injunction.

To address the inequality issue, the redistribution policy in Islam can be effective. The practice of waqf, sadaqah and zakat certainly reduces wealth inequality in a society. Islam discourages the accumulation of wealth through inheritance and anti-usury laws. To reduce gender inequality, women should be given the full right to own property in accordance with the Islamic Shari'ah. Islam ensures financial security of Muslim women in all phases of their life, as a daughter, wife, mother, or sister. Islam does not permit any form of violence against women publicly and privately (Al-Ahsan, 2015). In his book entitled "Gender equity in Islam", Jamal A. Badawi (1995) discusses the position of woman in society from spiritual, economic, social, and political aspects. Men and women have the same spiritual human nature (see, Qur'an Al Nisa: 1; Al A'raf: 189; Al Shura:11). In social and political life, males and females can participate and collaborate with each other in public affairs (see, Qur'an Al-Tawbah: 71). Islamic Shari'ah protects the full property rights of women, and they are not responsible for maintaining the family from their property and income is not a responsibility of women (see, Qur'an Al Baqarah: 233).

4.2.2. Human Capital Development (HCD)

To check and address health problems, we can draw some principles, the best approach and measures from the Qur'an and Sunnah. Islam encourages to have food with good nutriment, to take preventive measures and to keep away from harmful things (Al-Ahsan, 2015). In many Muslim societies, Islam has played a positive role in improving health outcomes. In Afghanistan, religious values are used to instruct people to take care of their health (Kanani, 2011). In India, surviving capacity of Muslim children until their fifth birthday is substantially more likely than Hindu children. This is happening despite poor living conditions of Muslim parents as compared to those of Hindu parents (Bhalotra, Valente & Van Soest, 2008, 2010; Geruso & Spears, 2014). Speakman (2012) compares the impact of religious discourse on HIV/AIDS in Islam and Christianity in Africa where the rate of HIV is strikingly high. The study discovers the dramatic difference in rate of HIV prevalence between Muslims and Christians in Africa and has found a negative relationship to exist between HIV prevalence and being Muslim in Africa. Nordin (2008) argues that universal values derived from the Quran and the Sunnah in individual, family and societal life should be infused and practiced to win over HIV/AIDS. He further advocates that to prevent HIV/AIDS, the believers of every

religion must adhere to a whole host of human values, codes of conduct and ethics guided by the respective religions (Nordin, 2008).

Islam can be defined fundamentally a religion of knowledge. The very first revelation of the Qur'an (iqra') validates this statement. Human civilization can only flourish when the process of creating a new knowledge is continued persistently. Thus, in an Islamic society, Islamic knowledge culture is promoted through advancing education. Awqaf has played a great role in growth and expansion of educational institutions to build a knowledge-based Muslim civilization (Bakar, 2012). Ignorance is condemned and praying for the sake of knowledge is encouraged in many verses of the Qur'an. (See the Qur'an, Al Zumar: 9; Yusuf: 76; Al Isra: 85; Al 'Alaq: 3-5; Al Fath: 11; Al Saff:5; Al Baqarah:65; Ta Ha :114) (Al-Ahsan, 2015).

4.2.3. Economic Development (EcD)

In an Islamic economy, one of the macroeconomic goals is the achievement of economic growth and full employment. Islam supports the growth-oriented financing based on genuine transactions. So, Islamic financing is not only asset based but also the underlying asset is something to produce return, growth, or increment (Kahf, 2006). Though Islamic economics is not anti-growth, the maximization of economic growth cannot be an overall objective (Chapra, 1985). This is because the production of unnecessary and morally questionable goods is prohibited by using the divinely bestowed natural resources. Rather this economy contributes to sustainable development through maintaining a balance between the production of goods and services for present and future consumption (Chapra, 1985).

The work ethic in Islam, as explored by Bayat (1992), rejects idleness and wastage of human resources. Living on other people's property is highly discouraged and at the same time, it is a moral duty of a person to be self-reliant to earn his livelihood. Islam encourages moderation (*wasatiyyah*) in working as well as in generating wealth.

Providing infrastructure facilities is the basic foundation for commerce and trade. Traditionally governments build infrastructure for enhancing competitiveness and long-term growth (Ahmed et al., 2015). Nowadays, the private and public sectors are financing large infrastructure related projects jointly. To develop sustainable infrastructure which benefits the community at large, the Islamic finance can come forward. Islamic capital markets can fund large infrastructure by issuing Sukuk (Islamic investment certificates).

4.2.4. Sustainable Lifestyle Development (SLD)

Water is life and a blessing from Allah (Qur'an, Al Araf: 57; Shurah: 28). No living beings can survive without water and every living being has been created from water (Qur'an, An Nur: 45; An Anbiya: 30). Gilli (2004) states that water conservation is embedded in Islam as the Qur'an and the Sunnah statements and teachings have defined a correct use of water. Gilli (2004) suggests using Islamic principles related to water for developing water conservation policies and campaigning for water

conservation. The Prophet (PBUH) would drink clean water from the wells whose water tastes sweet. He prohibited water to be polluted and commanded not to waste water even if someone stood by flowing water (Kaya, 2009).

Electrification is inseparable from modern life. It has improved the lifestyle of the people tremendously. Islam does not place a bar to live a legitimate good life. Hence, Islam emphasizes on the modern energy research because it contributes to human development. So, to meet the basic five requirements of Maqasid al-shari'ah, energy plays a great role. (Al-Ahsan, 2015).

Currently half of the global population live in urban areas where more than 80% global economic activities take place. However, the dark side of unbridled urbanization is that it impacts the environment adversely, being responsible for 75% of global emissions. In this background, SDG-11 aims to reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities by particularly focusing on air quality and waste management (UNDP website, 2018).

SDG-12 calls for sustainable consumption and production (SCP). The current global population consumes beyond the capacity of ecosystems posing a great threat to sustainability. For SCP, recycling to reduce waste generation should be promoted, food waste should be minimized and sustainable public procurement practices should be encouraged (UNDP website, 2018).

Habib Shaikh (2013), in his Arab News column, states that Madinah Munawwarah, the City of Light, the first settlement in Islam is a very good example of urban planning based on the Qur'anic principles. The Prophet (PBUH) built a mosque in the center of his growing community. Around the mosque, the quarters, properties and houses were distributed to the individuals. This shows Islam as a community-based religion which focuses on the concept of the Ummah. This model strengthens good neighbourliness because of the proximity of houses. Al-Ahsan (2015) state that the humility and wider social humanistic principles based Islamic built environment does not encourage building tall structures and skyscrapers. Because these hinder the flow of air and light toward smaller ones. Rather Islam encourages the use of natural and local materials. For instance, traditional mud houses are an example of the use of indigenous material for sustainable living.

According to the Islamic worldview of sustainability, Allah is al-Razzaq or the Sustainer (Qur'an, Adh-Dhariyat: 58) and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the mercy for all creatures (Qur'an, al-Anbiya':107) and uswatun hasanah or the role model (Qur'an, Al-Ahzab: 21) for human civilization. The Qur'an encourages sustainable consumption and production lifestyle (al-Araf: 56) and considers extravagance behavior as ungratefulness to Allah (al-Isra: 26-27). Humankind as the Khalifah or vicegerent of Allah on earth (Qur'an, al-Baqarah: 30) should engage in sustainable consumption following the sayings and deeds of the Prophet (PBUH). For instance, food intake should be limited to improve digestion. People should avoid overconsumption and materialistic lifestyles. Kahf (1996) states that Islam condemns overconsumption and terms it as Israf (extravagance) or Tabdhir (profligacy). On the other hand, for consumption and spending, Islam recommends a moderate and balanced pattern between stinginess and extravagance (Qur'an, al-Isra: 29). Consumption above and beyond the moderate level is considered Israf and condemned (Qur'an, al-An'am:141).

Islam supports sustainable production system which intends for the purpose of upgrading the quality of life. For this, Islam restricts the maximization of profit and / or quantity to the area of permissibility, commands to use nature and natural resources maintaining ecological and environmental balance and refrains a producer from producing in an extravagant manner (Monzer Khaf, n.d. supply side or producer behavior)

4.2.5. Environmental Development (EnD)

Islam has given an utmost importance to the preservation of biodiversity. In his various commands and advice, the Prophet (PBUH) encouraged his companions to plant trees, preserve greenery and revitalize the earth. We can take enormous lessons from these corpus to take immediate action in preventing climate change and man-made environmental disasters. Followers of Islam are encouraged to conserve water amidst plenty and to use oceans and their resources sustainably. Al-Ahsan (2015) argue that Muslim countries need to build proper institutions and enforce laws to manage natural resources including water sustainably focusing on public interest (Maslahah). Thus, we can support the present-day SSD discourse in light of the central teachings of the Prophet (PBUH) (Al-Ahsan, 2015).

Allah creates everything in measure and proportion (Qur'an, Al Ra'd:8) and with a specific purpose and importance (Qur'an, SA'd:26). Humankind is responsible to use them sustainably for their welfare. For instance, Allah has given us lands as the source of sustenance on the Earth. Lands and dust are pure and can be used for the purpose of the purification (Tayammum or a system of being purified with soil instead of water). Muslim can use the entire earth as the place of prayer. So, it is the responsibility of the Muslims to preserve lands and refrain from any abusing or misusing of lands. The land reform policy in Islam suggests cultivating waste, unused and dead lands and the Shari'ah does not allow anybody even to misuse one's own land.

4.2.6. Institutional Development (ID)

Religious freedom and cultural diversity are supported by Islam (see, Qur'an, Al Mumtahinah: 8-9; Al Hujurat: 13; Hud: 118-19). To build a peaceful and inclusive society, religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence are the two important factors. The Prophet (PBUH) himself is the role model for Muslims in all aspects of life including practicing religious tolerance. There is no single event in the Islamic history that the unbelievers have been forced to convert to Islam (Al-Ahsan, 2015). Muslim nations can utilize Islamic principles of partnerships as a bridge to develop mutual relationships to make the world a better place. They can make notable contributions to the advancement of science and technology though helping each other. Muslim countries also increase investment among each other to develop a sustainable economy.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Conclusion

In this paper, we examine the relationship between sustainable development and religion. The research finds that there is a close connection between religion and development. A believer of religion can be guided by his religion about how to lead a life in this world and how to be successful in the hereafter. Thus, a believer of religion draws a much-needed incentive for engaging in productive activities during his or her lifetime. Growth and development can be accelerated through religion as there are common religious values such as honesty, discipline, hard work, education, thriftiness, entrepreneurship, and absenteeism from harmful activities which can build an effective workforce for pursuing economic activities.

Many of the recent empirical studies point out that there is a positive relationship between religion and economic growth and development. Religion can promote development as long as religious beliefs and practices promote 'moderation' rather than 'extremes'. In today's highly interconnected world, it is always important to have a peaceful co-existence of various religious groups for ensuring a better world. We have shown that religion can become a source of enormous wealth of knowledge that is relevant to SD and thus play a decisive positive role to achieve SDGs.

In reference to our discussion on SDGs from Islamic perspectives, 17 SDGs have been thematically grouped into six dimensions of development as follows: Social; Human Capital Economic ; Sustainable Lifestyle; Environmental ; and Institutional Development. we see Islam has a comprehensive scheme of poverty and inequality reduction as well as social justice with three set of measures: (1) positive (2) preventive and (3) corrective. If the former two measures are properly addressed, corrective measures such as zakat, waqf etc. can easily contribute to address SDG 1,2, 5, and 10. Islam is very supportive to human capital development (SDG 3 and 4). Many scholars have defined Islam fundamentally as a religion of knowledge. Taking care of patients is a part of faith.

Islam supports economic Growth (SDG-8) subject to its rules and regulations. For an unbridled economic growth, Islam does not permit to destroy nature indiscriminately. Islam guides decent work in a relationship of brotherhood. For a meaningful economic development, infrastructure (SDG-9) such as road and plants are very crucial. The various tools of Islamic finance especially Sukuk can be utilized for building sustainable infrastructure.

Top scientists around the world have recently cautioned us that there should be a radical change in our society by simplifying our lifestyle to prevent the further worsening of the impacts of climate change. Islam has emphasized a lifestyle that promotes moderation ("*wasatiyyah*") and does not support "consumerism" in the form of exaggeration and waste ("*Israf*") and spending wrongfully ("*Tabzir*"). So, we have to ensure sustainable cities and communities (SDG-11) where consumption and production (SDG-12) will follow Islamic principles. Water and sanitation (SDG-6) and energy (SDG-7) must be utilized based on Islamic lifestyle.

Islam has positive responses to the three environment related goals (SDG 13- Climate Action, SDG 14- Life below Water, and SDG 15- Life on Land). Islam does not support greed-oriented model of economic growth at the cost of the environment. Rather we must utilize our natural resources based on public interest

(*Maslahah*). Finally, Islamic contributions to build institutions like peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16) are immense. In Islam, giving *salam* (peace) is essential before starting any conversation. Justice (*adalah*) is one of the basic principles in Islam that one has to maintain each transaction. Muslim nations can utilize Islamic principles of partnerships (SDG 17) as a bridge to develop mutual relationships to make the world a better place.

5.2. Recommendation

Finally, the paper proposes the following real and feasible recommendations:

- Different development paradigms or models have emerged in the last few decades. These need to be critically studied.
- As religion provides a respectful code of conduct, and billions of lives across the globe are influenced by religious teaching to a variety of extent, policy makers should integrate religious force into the development models targeting to achieve SDGs.
- Global high-level thought leaders should revisit the role of religion in achieving SDGs.
- Further studies need to be conducted on developing the Islamic framework of SD and then see how SDGs can fit into this framework. Moreover, specific research needs to be carried out on each SDGs from an Islamic perspective so that short, medium, and long-term policy roadmap can be designed based on these studies.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, H., Mohieldin, M., Verbeek, J., & Aboulmagd, F. (2015). On the sustainable development goals and the role of Islamic finance. *Policy Research Working Paper 7266*, May 2015, World Bank Group.
- Al-Ahsan, A. (2015). Monograph of Islamic contributions to global sustainable development. *Pegasus*, V(XI), 4-22.
- Ali, A. Y. (1989). *The holy Qur'an: Text, translation and commentary*. Maryland: Amana Corporation.
- Alkire, S. (2006). *Religion and development*. The Elgar Companion to Development Studies, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 502-10.
- Anderson, G. M. (1988). Mr. Smith and the preachers: The economics of religion in the wealth of nations. *Journal of Political Economy*, 96(5), 1066-1088.
- Aslam Haneef, M. (1997). Islam, the Islamic worldview, and Islamic economics. *IIUM Journal of Economics and Management*, 5(1), 39-65.
- Aslam Haneef, M. (2001). Islam and economic development in Malaysia—A reappraisal. *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 12(3), 269-290.
- Badawi, J. A. (1995). *Gender equity in Islam; Basic principles*. Durban, South Africa: IDM Publications.
- Bailey, K.D. (1994). *Methods of social research*. New York: The Free Press.
- Bakar, O. (2012, October). The role of awqaf (endowments) in the development of islamic knowledge culture: An overview. Paper presented at 3rd International Conference on Islam and Higher Education (ICIHE), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

- Bayat, A. (1992). Work ethics in Islam: A comparison with protestantism. *The Islamic Quarterly*, 36(1), 5-27.
- Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs website (2021). *Religious Responses to COVID-19*. Retrieved from: <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/subprojects/religious-responses-to-covid-19>. Accessed : 19 July 2021.
- Berger, M. T., & Beeson, M. (1998). Lineages of liberalism and miracles of modernisation: The world bank, the east asian trajectory, and the international development debate. *Third World Quarterly*, 19(3), 487-504.
- Bhalotra, S., Valente, C., & Van Soest, A. (2008). Religion and childhood death in India. *CMPO Working Paper No. 08/185, Bristol Institute of Public Affairs, January 2008*.
- Bhalotra, S., Valente, C., & Van Soest, A. (2010). The puzzle of Muslim advantage in child survival in India. *Journal of Health Economics*, 29(2), 191-204.
- Chapra, M. U. (1985). *Towards a just monetary system*. Leicester: The Islamic Foundation.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*, (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: CA, Sage.
- Dariah, A. R., Salleh, M. S., & Shafiai, H. M. (2016). A new approach for sustainable development goals in Islamic perspective. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 219(31 May 2016), 159-166.
- Finn, J. (1983). *Global economics and religion*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.
- Geruso, M., & Spears, D. (2014). Sanitation and health externalities: Resolving the Muslim mortality paradox. *University of Texas at Austin Working Paper*.
- Gilli, F. (2004, October). Islam, water conservation and public awareness campaigns. *2nd Israeli-Palestinian-international academic conference on water for life, Antalya* (pp. 10-14).
- Harrison, P. (2015). *The territories of science and religion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hassan, M. K. (2010, January). An integrated poverty alleviation model combining zakat, awqaf and micro-finance. *Seventh International Conference–The Tawhidic Epistemology: Zakat and Waqf Economy, Bangi, Malaysia* (pp. 261-281).
- Haynes, J. (2014). *Faith-based organizations at the United Nations: Theory and practice*. New York: Palgrave studies in religion, politics, and policy, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hipple, J. A. (2014, December). *Interfaith action on hunger: A shared obligation*. The Message International. Retrieved from: <https://www.whyislam.org/common-ground/interfaith-action-on-hunger-a-shared-obligation/>
- Inglehart, R., & Baker, W. E. (2000). Modernization, cultural change, and the persistence of traditional values. *American Sociological Review*, 65(February), 19-51.
- Inglehart, R., & Welzel, C. (2005). *Modernization, cultural change, and democracy: The human development sequence*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Jackson, P., & Fleischer, C. (2007). Religion and economics: A literature review. *Religions and Development Working Papers Series 3, International Development Department, University of Birmingham*.

- Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities (2015). Proceedings of the Religion & Sustainable Development: Building Partnerships to End Extreme Poverty conference. Washington, DC. <http://jliflc.com/resources/rsd-conference-proceedings/>
- Kahf, M. (1996). *The demand side or consumer behaviour, Chapter 4 in Principles of Islamic Economics*. Kuala Lumpur: International Islamic University Malaysia.
- Kahf, M. (2006). *Maqasid al Shari'ah in the Prohibition of Riba and their Implications for Modern Islamic Finance*. In *Presented Paper at IIUM International Conference on Maqasid al-shari'ah, August 08-10, 2006*.
- Kanani, R. (2011). *Islam and Maternal Mortality in Afghanistan: A Religious and Cultural Approach to Saving Lives*, May 25. The Huffington post. Retrieved on October 9, 2018 from https://www.huffingtonpost.com/rahim-kanani/islam-and-maternal-mortal_b_618826.html.
- Karam, A. (2015). Religion and development post 2015. UNFPA.
- Kaya, M. (2009). *The final divine religion: Islam*. Instabul: Erkam Publications.
- Lazzara, J. (2020). *Intro to lifespan development*. Arizona: Maricopa Community Colleges.
- Morreall, J., & Sonn, T. (2014). *50 great myths about religions*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- Müller, F. M. (1893). *Introduction to the science of religion*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co.
- Nongbri, B. (2013). *Before religion*. Connecticut: Yale University Press.
- Nordin, M. M. (2008). Islam provides solution for HIV/AIDS, 29 Jan 2008, *MalaysiaKini*, retrieved on October 9, 2018 from: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/letters/26676>
- Payne, G., & Payne, J. (2004). *Key Concepts in Social Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Sadeq, A. H. M. (1997). Poverty alleviation: An Islamic perspective. *Humanomics*, 13(3), 110-134.
- Shaikh, H. (2013, July), Madinah has best Islamic urban planning, *Arab News*, Retrieved from: <http://www.arabnews.com/news/457877>
- Shirazi, N. S. (2014). Integrating zakat and waqf into the poverty reduction strategy of the IDB member countries. *Islamic Economic Studies*, 22(1), 79-108.
- Shirazi, N. S. (2006). Providing for the resource shortfall for poverty elimination through the institution of zakat in low income muslim countries. *IIUM Journal of Economics and Management*, 14(1), 1-27.
- Sidibé, M. (2016). Religion and sustainable development. *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, 14(3), 1-4.
- Speakman, S. (2012). Comparing the impact of religious discourse on hiv/aids in Islam and christianity in Africa. *Vanderbilt Undergraduate Research Journal*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.15695/vurj.v8i0.3490>
- Todaro, M. P., & Smith, S. C. (2012). *Economic development (11th Ed.)*. Boston: Pearson Addison Wesley.
- Tomalin, E. (2013). *Religions and development*. London: Routledge.
- UN website. (2018), Water for Life, Retrieved from: <http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/water_and_energy.shtml> (accessed 20 September 2018)

- UNDP website. (2018). *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*. Retrieved from: <<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals>> (accessed 23 September, 2018)
- United Nations General Assembly, UNGA. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. United Nations: New York, NY, USA.
- United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, UNHLPFSD (2017, July), *Voluntary National Review- Portugal*, United Nations: New York, NY, USA.

This page is intentionally left blank