

The Role of Zakat in Poverty Alleviation with particular Reference to Sokoto State Zakat and Endowment (*Waqf*) Commission

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Abstract: Islam is a comprehensive system of life. It was built upon five pillars viz. monotheism, *Salat*, *zakat*, fasting and pilgrimage. Zakat as one of these five pillars of Islam has a special consideration through which if a Muslim (to whom it was prescribed) fails to establish becomes incomplete Muslim. It is obligatory upon those who are wealthy to take out some specific portion of their wealth to those who are poor. This system has many advantages among various Muslim communities. It will instill the attitude of love, intimacy and affection between a rich and a poor, and more importantly, *zakat* often help towards the alleviation of poverty in the society. For this, Islam put the responsibility of collecting the *zakat* on a government from the wealthy people and to distribute it to those who are needy. As such many Muslim states in Nigeria today have established *Zakat* and Endowment Institutions / Organizations to carry out this task. Sokoto state is one of these states where *zakat* Committee was upgraded to Zakat Commission in December 2016. The activities of the Commission contributed immensely towards the alleviation of poverty in the state. Thus, this paper aims to examine to what extent the Sokoto State Zakat Commission contributed in the eradication of poverty in Nigeria and Sokoto state in particular.

Keywords: Role of Zakat, Poverty Alleviation, Sokoto State, and Zakat and Endowment (*Waqf*).

INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. Blessings and peace be upon our leader Muhammad (peace be upon him), his family, his companions, and those who follow his guidance until the Day of Judgment.

The name of this act of worship (*Zakah*) shows the virtues of it, because it is a way of purification and increase for the souls and properties of the wealthy individual and the poor at one hand and the same time it is success for the one who pays it. Allah the Most High says: "But that which you give in *zakat* seeking Allah's countenance, then those, they shall have manifold increase [¹]. The payment of *zakat* is incumbent upon every free Muslim who possesses the minimum amount upon which *zakat* is payable (the *Nisab*), once it has been in his possession for a whole year, aside from agricultural produce, on which *zakat* is payable from the day of harvest, if it comes to the minimum amount on which Zakat is due (*Nisab*). Allah says: "But pay the due thereof on the day of its harvest [²].

Zakat is a *sadaqah* of a compulsive nature which the rich have to pay to an Islamic state in order to help it create an economically conducive environment

where its citizenry could live in love and friendship and whereby it could realize its ideological imperatives. In other words, *zakat*, in its broad scope, deals with the fiscal policies of a state as it affects its moral and spiritual climate – a vehicle for social change, a source of its continuity, and a device for the safeguard of its ideological frontiers in a world not friendly.

Poverty is a problem, but it is also a social sin. It is not solved only through a shift in the ownership of goods, but also through personal striving, aim and goodwill, every social solution must include a human solution. It should change not only economic relations, but also the relations between men; it should bring about the just distribution of goods as well as proper upbringing, love and sympathy. Nothing would be done in the true sense of the word if there were change in the ownership of the goods, but hatred, exploitation and subjugation remained in men's souls. So great is Islam's concern for the poor and the needy on the establishment of *zakat* institutions.

Concept of Zakat in Islam

Definition: Zakat can be defined as that portion of a man's wealth which is designated for the poor [³]. The term is derived from the Arabic verbal root

meaning “to increase” “to purify” and “to bless”. It finds its origin in Allah’s command to “take *sadaqah* (charity) from their property in order to purify and sanctify them” [4]. That is why this kind of *sadaqah* is called *zakah*, for by paying it, one is aspiring to attain blessing, purification and the cultivation of good deeds [5]. Taking into account its very nature, it is no wonder that zakat constitutes one of the five pillars of Islam. It is associated with prayer in eighty-two Qur’anic verses. Allah, the Exalted One, prescribed it in His book (the Qur’an), His Messenger corroborated it by his (*Sunnah*), and the community (*Ummah*) by consensus upheld it [6].

Zakat is basically “payment in the cause of Allah” so its main object is the love and pleasure of Allah, the Beneficent and the Merciful. He is pleased and ready to reward enormously when it is paid in the way He has divinely guided us. This pleasure is gained by physically paying out to the all or any of the eight categories of beneficiaries in the community every year out of one’s surplus wealth [7]. It is neither a tax nor duty on your wealth but a right of the beneficiaries to be given in the name of Allah to offer, out of his bounties he bestowed on us, in praise and thanks to Him. It is both a physical and a spiritual exercise of the Muslims for obtaining the love and pleasure of Allah for the benefit of the society. It is a social and welfare dues offered to the community with love and compassion. And this shall be our intention to obey and please Him whenever we give *sadaqa* (obligatory or optional) [8].

In the early days of Islam at Makkah, no limit or restriction was placed on the amount to be donated, for that decision was left to the individual Muslim’s conscience and generosity. In the second year of *hijrah* (migration), according to the widely known authorities, both the type and the quantity of *zakah* revenues were determined, and detailed illustrations were provided [9].

The Position and Significance of Zakat in Islam

Zakat is an obligation in the religion and it is a pillar of Islam. It is reported on the authority of Abdullah bn Umar (R.A) that he said: “The messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said; Islam is based on five; to testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, to offer the (compulsory congregational) prayers dutifully and perfectly, to pay zakat (i.e. obligatory charity), to perform Hajj. (i.e. pilgrimage to Makkah), to observe fast during the month of Ramadan” [10].

Zakat was legislated at the start of Islam as a general obligatory charity, without limit and conditions and without any fixed *Nisab*, *Hawl* (period of time) or rate. The situation continued thus until the Madinan phase began, in the year 2 A.H., when zakat based on *nusub* and *maqadeer* (period and rate) began [11].

Zakat must be paid by every Muslim who has a *nisab*, which is the minimum of one’s holdings liable to *zakah*. The *nisab* is conditioned by the following:

- *Zakat* should be paid on any amount of money remaining after meeting the expenses for such necessities as food, clothes and housing, vehicles and craft machines.
- A complete year of Islamic calendar should pass, starting from the very day of the *nisab*’s possession, without any decrease during the year. In case of its decrease (being less than *nisab*) the year count (*hawl*) starts from the day of the *nisab* completion [12].

As for one who refused to pay it, while acknowledging the obligation to do so, he would be guilty of a sin by withholding it, and half of his wealth would be taken as a punishment [13]. It is reported on the authority of Bahz Ibn Hakeem, on the authority of his father, who in turn reported on the authority of his grandfather that he said. “I heard the messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) saying; ‘from all grazing camels, for every fourty camels, a young she camel which has entered its third year (*Bint laboon*) is due, and there is no distinction between types. Whoever pays it seeking the reward of doing so, he will have that reward, but whoever refuses to pay it, we will take it from him and (in addition) we will take half of his camels, as enjoined by our Lord, Most Blessed, Most High and it is not permissible for the family of Muhammad to take anything from it” [14].

If a community refused to pay it, even though they knew that it was obligatory, and they have power and the ability to resist, they must be fought until they pay it. It is reported on the authority of Abdullah Ibn Umar (R.A) that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: “I have been ordered (by Allah) to fight against the people until they testify that none has the right to be worshiped but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, offer the prayers perfectly and give the obligatory charity (*Zakah*); if they perform all that, then their lives and property will be safe from me except by right of Islamic law and then their reckoning (accounts) will be for Allah to settle” [15].

The Significance of Zakat Includes the Following:

1) Famine is prevented:

It is reported on the authority of Abdullah bn Umar (R.A) that he said: “the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H) approached us and said: ‘O, company of the *Muhajiroon* (Emigrants) there are five things which if you are put to trial by them – and I ask Allah to grant you refuge encountering them ... and they do not refuse to pay the *zakah* on their wealth except that they will be

prevented from receiving rainfalls; indeed, were it not for the animals, no rain at all would fall on them” [16].

- 2) A means of attaining piety:
Allah, most high says: “By no means shall you attain Al-birr (piety, righteousness, etc. it means here Allah’s Reward, i.e. Paradise), unless you spend (in Allah cause) of that which you love” [17].
- 3) Allah replaces what is spent in zakat:
Allah says: “And whatsoever you spend of anything (in Allah’s cause), he will replace it. And he is the best of providers” [18].
- 4) Entering Allah’s mercy:
Allah says: “And my mercy embraces all things. That (mercy) I shall ordain for those who are pious, and give *zakah*; and those who believe in our *ayat* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs and revelations etc.)” [19].
- 5) Salvation from loss:
It is reported from the authority of Abu Zarr (R.A) that he said: “I reached him (the Prophet S.A.W) while in the shade of the *ka’abah*; he was saying; they are the losers, by the Lord of *ka’abah*! They are the losers by the Lord of the *ka’abah*! I said (to myself): ‘what is wrong with me? Anything improper detected in me? What is wrong with me? Then I sat beside him and he kept on saying his statement. I could not remain quiet, and Allah knows in what sorrowful state I was at that time. So I said; ‘May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O! Messenger of Allah, who are they (the losers)? He said: ‘they are the wealthy people, except the one who does like this and like this and like this (i.e. spends of his wealth in Allah’s cause) [20].

Types of Zakat

Islam enjoined zakat on the following:

- Crops
- Fruits
- Livestock
- Merchandise
- Minerals
- Gold
- Silver
- Treasures [21].

The Beneficiaries of Zakat:

Those entitled to receive zakat are eight (8). Allah says: “As *sadaqat* (here it means Zakat) are only for the *fuqara’* (poor), and *Al-masakin* (the poor) and those employed to collect (the funds), and to attract the hearts of those who have been inclined (towards Islam), and to free the captives, and for those in debt, and for Allah’s cause (i.e. for *mujahidun* – those fighting in a holy battle), and for the wayfarer (a traveler who is cut off from everything); a duty imposed by Allah. And Allah is All-Knower, All-wise” [22].

1. The poor person who has nothing:

It is reported on the authority of Anas ibn Malik (R.A) from the Prophet (S.A.W) what he said: “Begging is right only for three people; one who is in grinding poverty, one who is in debt and is unable to pay it, and one who is responsible for compensation and finds it difficult to pay” [23].

2. The *Miskeen*, who has something, but is not sufficient for his needs:

It is reported on the authority of Abu Hurairah (R.A) that he said: “the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said; ‘the *miskeen* is not the one for whom a date or two or morsel or two (of food is sufficient) but the *miskeen* is one who does not (beg or) ask the people for something or show his poverty at all. Recite if you wish (Allah’s statement): “they do not beg of people at all” (Qur’an 2:273) [24].

3. Those who work in collecting and distributing it, but it is not permissible for them to be from the tribe of Banu Hashim:

It is reported on the authority of Abdul-Mutallib Ibn Rabe’ah Ibn Al-Harith (R.A) that he said: “The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said; ‘indeed, *zakah* ought not to be given to Muhammad or to the family of Muhammad. *Zakah* is nothing but filth that comes out from people’s properties” [25].

4. Attracting the hearts of those who are inclined towards Islam:

It is reported on the authority of `Amr Ibn Taghlib (R.A) that some property or something was brought to the Messenger of Allah (SAW) and he distributed it. He gave to some men and ignored others. Later he got the news of his being admonished by those whom he had ignored. So he glorified and praised Allah and said: “*Amma ba’du* (to proceed); By Allah, I may give to a man and ignore another, although the one whom I ignore is more beloved to me than the one to whom I give. But I give to some people as I feel that they have no patience and no contentment in their hearts, and I leave those who are patient and self-contented with the goodness, and wealth which Allah has put into their hearts, and `Amr Ibn Taghlib is one of them [26].

5. Freeing the Captives:

It is reported on the authority of Al-bara’ Ibn Azib that he said: “A Bedouin man came to the Prophet (SAW) and said; ‘O, Messenger of Allah! Teach me a deed that will cause me to be admitted to paradise.’ The Prophet (SAW) said; ‘Though you have spoken but a few words, you have broached a subject which is broad and far-reaching. Free a soul and manumit a neck [27].

6. Person who is under debt:

It is reported on the authority of Qabeesah Ibn Mukhariq Al-hilali (R.A) that he said: "I was under a burden of debt and I went to the Messenger of Allah (SAW) and asked him regarding it. He said; 'wait till we receive *sadaqah*, so that we order that to given to you'" [28].

7. In Allah's cause (It may be spent on battles and on Hajj):

It is reported on the authority of Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudry (RA) that he said: "The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said; '*sadaqah* is not permissible for the rich, except in five cases; one who fights in Allah's cause, or who collects it (the *sadaqah*), or a debtor, or a man who buys it with his money, or a man who has a poor neighbour who has been given *sadaqah* and gives a present to the rich man" [29].

8. The wayfarer, that is, the traveler:

The traveler; One who wishes to return to his native land, but he has lost the means to achieve his desire [30].

Establishment of Zakat and Endowment Commission, Sokoto State

Sokoto State Zakat and Endowment Commission is an institution established by Sokoto State Government of Nigerian. Sokoto is a state with over four million population located within the North West region of Nigerian. Over 99.9% populations of people in the state are Muslims of different tribes, background, occupation and economic status [31].

The practice of zakat and *Waqf* in Nigeria is as old as the coming of Islam in the country. The extent to which these economic tools are applied varied from time to time. The understanding of them differs among the Muslims in the country, in the past, under the Sokoto Caliphate the Zakat and *Waqf* are well taken care of by the Caliphate and they have contributed immensely in the socio-economic welfare of the Muslims. However, British colonial occupation of the Caliphate in 1903 had negatively affected the Zakat and endowment activities of the region. It was only in the recent Shari'ah re-introduction in Muslim states in the country, which started in 1999, that Zakat and endowment resurfaced among Muslims in Nigeria again.

The current efforts made in some parts of Nigeria in the area of assisting the needy through zakat collection and distribution can be attributed to giant stride made by some state governments and non-

government organizations in constituting committees, boards or agencies as the case may be with the sole aim of zakat and distribution. While some committees are financially supported by their state governments with substantial amount of money as an endowment funds, some committees rely on collections made from the wealthy individuals [32].

Sokoto State Zakat and Endowment Commission began as *Sadaqat* Committee around 1988 and became a non-profitable Zakat and Endowment Organization in 2007 and upgraded to Zakat and Endowment Commission in December 2016. The commission was established and funded by Sokoto State Government of Nigerian. Presently, it is under the leadership of Muhammad Lawal Maidoki a humanitarian and *Da'awa* activist for over 30 years [33].

The mission of the Commission is to become a formidable zakat and endowment institution that could cater for the less privileged in the society, country and beyond, while its vision is to establish a solid and reliable system of zakat and endowment collection, management, distribution and investment for the benefit of the needy in the society [34].

Objectives of the Commission

- Overall collection, management and distribution of *zakat* and endowment.
- Charity activities (Fisabilillah) in the areas of assisting needy in settling medical bills and provision of other health services.
- Provision of shelter and settling of debts.
- Rehabilitation of psychiatric patients.
- Orientation and training of new converts to Islam
- Welfare packages and training for orphans and disable to enable them become self-reliant.
- *Da'awah* and public enlightenment activities on the significance of *zakat* and endowment in Islam.
- Investment in *halal* businesses [35].

Functions of the Commission

- To organize the administrative and financial affairs based on principles of transparency, accountability and best practices.
- To collect up to 60% of the *zakat* due, leaving 40% to the payee to be distributed to his close relations who are entitled.
- To require, accept and approve *zakat* declaration from persons eligible to pay *zakat*.
- To constitute such number of committees as may be necessary through which complaints of non-payment of zakat can be referred to and determined.
- To make policies, plans, rules and regulations necessary for conduct of its affairs and realization of its objectives.

- To invest zakat funds or surplus in ways that will meet the objectives of the commission and serve the purpose of zakat.
- To maintain an account with banks into which funds and resources of the commission are kept.
- To exercise such other powers necessary for the due discharge of its functions in accordance with the provision of Shari'ah [³⁶].

The Role of the Commission in Poverty Alleviation in Sokoto State

Zakat and Endowment Commission established by Sokoto State government to ensure effective management of *zakat* and endowment for the benefit of the needy people as well as improving the social security, religious harmony and economic growth of its citizenry is playing a vital role on poverty alleviation in the following areas:

- Ramadan Package and Zakat Distribution
- Workshops and Seminars
- Medical Assistance to the Needy and Sick in the Society.
- Empowerment
- Outreach Programmes
- Zakat Collection and Distribution at Districts Levels
- World Psychiatric Day
- *Udhiyyah* (Sacrifice) for Orphans
- Distribution of Clothing Materials to Orphans for Eid-al-Fitr Celebration.
- Assistance to Orphans and Needy People.
- Human Resources Development.
- Payment of Monthly Allowance to People with Disabilities.
- Treatment and Rehabilitation of Mentally ill Patients.
- Enlightenment and Publicity.
- Ramadan Grains Distribution to Needy People.

Ramadan Package and Zakat Distribution

About 9000 orphans across Sokoto State had benefited from Sokoto State Zakat committee's gesture (Ramadan Package). Each of the orphans received a new clothing materials ranging from Shadda brocade, Atampa (for Female) and ₦1000 cash to enable him/her celebration Sallah in joyful mood. Other items distributed include; 3000 bags of rice (50kg each), 5 grinding machines, and 5 sewing machines, one unit of freezer and power generator as well as zakat collated by the district committees [³⁷]. This was just an example of the annual activities of each Ramadan by the Commission.

Workshops and Seminar

From the inception of Sokoto State Zakat and Endowment Commission to date it had successfully carried out more than twenty (20) workshops and seminars. It was of recent that the Commission

commended for efficient facilitation and collaboration with Islamic Research and Training Instituted (IRTI) an organ of International Development Bank (IDB) where a four day workshop on *Zakat* and *Waqf* Management in Nigerian was conducted. The commendation was made by leader of the Islamic Development Bank's team for the training workshop who is also the head of the Islamic Research and Training Institute of the Bank (IRTI) Dr. Abdul-Kadir Chachi during the closing ceremony of the workshop which took place at Shukura Coral Hotel Sokoto on 25 April, 2017. Dr. Abdul-Kadir Chachi describes the hospitality as well as the commitment of the officials of Sokoto State Zakat and Endowment Commission not only unique but also an indelible gesture that would remain green in the minds of the participants of the workshop [³⁸].

Medical assistance to the needy and sick in the society

This is one of the most important programmes of the Commission which cost over six million naira (₦6,000,000) out of the monthly grand of thirty five million naira (₦35, 000,000.00, equivalents to USD \$97,222.2) from the state government and local government councils [³⁹]. An estimated number of 36,580 beneficiaries were recorded from the gesture to alleviate their suffering by making the following health services available to them:

- Provision of drugs and other related medical services through selected pharmacies and hospitals.
- Laboratory tests and blood donation to these who cannot afford the cost.
- Payment of medical bills for surgery and other operations in recognized health facilities across the country.
- Periodic cash assistance to welfare committees in local government based Rural Health Centers.
- Collaboration and sponsoring some of the patients with orthopedic cases.
- Provision of special food items and other needs of patients with diabetes, hypertension or sickle cell anemia.
- Provision of drugs to our patients.
- Medical bills settlement for admitted patients through welfare committee at various health institutions.

The total amount spent on health intervention Programme for the year 2015 alone is seventy two million Naira (₦ 72,000,000) [⁴⁰]. Dahiru Adamu, a beneficiary of health assistance from the Commission stressed that his medical bills were settled with ₦15,000 monthly up to the date prescribed by the physician likewise his laboratory test bill of ₦4000 was settled by the Commission. He expressed his satisfaction and prayed for the success of the commission [⁴¹]. Isa Musa stated that, the commission assisted him with drugs worth of ₦15, 000 and food assistance of N5000. He

expressed his happiness and advised the wealthy people to take part in the activities of the commission [⁴²].

Alaramma Mustapa Aliyu Jaji is among the beneficiaries of health assistance from the commission whereby 70% of his medical and surgical expenses were settled by the commission which amount to ₦290,000. He prayed for the promotion of the commission and call on wealthy people to purify their minds and submit their *zakat* to the commission because it is easier for the needy to consult the commission than the rich people [⁴³]. Malam Lawal Garba Argungu stressed that Zakat and Endowment Commission plays a vital role in contributing 95% assistance to the poor patient who cannot afford their operation bills, investigations such as M.R.I, C&T scan, Lab investigations etc. The commission also assists in transporting patients to their various places whenever the need arises, taking care of the corpse to cemetery etc. He expressed that, patient welfare committee assisted over 386 patients within the month of august 2017. “ I would like to use this opportunity to call on the stakeholders to please look for the minimum assistance they can render to the needy patients from their obligations (*zakat*) and endowment to alleviate their suffering [⁴⁴].

In addition, Sokoto State Zakat and Endowment Commission has spent the sum of ₦66,900,000.00 as cost of settling medical bills and assistance to 20,520 needy patients that cannot afford the bill of their treatment or purchase of prescribed drugs in the year 2016 [⁴⁵].

Empowerment

Sokoto State Zakat and Endowment Commission has trained 400 women on various business skills and provided them with small scale business capitals. The commission also assisted 1600 women with capitals to continue their business. They were selected from 86 districts across the state.

In his address during the opening ceremony of the training programme, the chairman of commission described the programme as one of the commission's effort to encourage widows, old aged women and divorcees to be self-reliant and enterprising by giving them a training on modern way of producing some daily needs in their areas such as detergent making of different modern and local cakes, groundnut oil processing and other businesses [⁴⁶].

Outreach Programmes

The Commission in collaboration with Islamic Medical Association of Nigeria (IMAN) organized an outreach programme to treat patients with epilepsy and psychiatric problems in the 85 districts of the state. The chairman of the commission Mal. Muhammad Lawal Maidoki, highlighted the plan of the outreach which is aimed at treating over Six thousand psychiatric and

epilepsy patients, he said the commission invited medical doctors and health personnel from different health institutions who are duly registered members of IMAN in addition to those from Kware psychiatric hospital and we made all the necessary arrangement for the teams to visit the patients in their areas, we also ensure adequate supply of drugs to be given to the patients during the visit this is in addition to plan to admit those with critical conditions and periodic provision of drugs on timely basis to those who may need them to ensure complete treatment [⁴⁷].

Zakat Collection and Distribution at District Levels

The district level *zakat* committee could be described as backbone of the commission this is because they serve as grassroots committees based at headquarters of each of the 85 districts. The committees serve as links between the commission and people residing in their domain, as such they were empowered to collect *zakat* and *waqf* and manage them within their jurisdiction. In addition they collect different necessary data for the commission such as list of orphans, needy people and people with disabilities in their area. It is based on this the commission receives a comprehensive report from each of the 85 districts on its annual collection in terms of *zakat* and endowment after which the commission liaised with the district to arrange and supervise the distribution exercise at each district level. The total *zakat* collected and distributed for the year 2015 was estimated at one hundred and seventy four million, four hundred and fifty thousand, two hundred and seventy Naira (₦174,450,270 equivalent to \$ 484,584.08). The distribution was conducted from February– October 2016 while the member of beneficiaries was 8786 [⁴⁸].

Udhiyyah (Sacrifice) for Orphans

The Sokoto State Zakat and Endowment Commission have provided eighty five (85) bulls which were slaughtered for orphans as *undiyya* only during the last year's Eid-al-Kabir (i.e. 1438/2017) across the State. Over twelve million, three hundred and twenty five thousand naira (₦12,325,000) was spent on the gesture aimed at putting smile on the faces of the orphans by providing them with fresh Sallah meat, creating a sense of belonging and preventing them from begging for meat among others [⁴⁹].

Distribution of Clothing Materials to Orphans for Eid-al-fitr Celebration

This is an important gesture worth mentioning that the commission provides clothing materials for orphans across 85 districts in Sokoto State. The idea is to enable the orphans celebrate Eid-festivities happily like any other child whose parents are alive. The quality of the materials provided created a sense of belonging instead of agony, joy instead of sadness and festive mood instead of lonely [⁵⁰].

Assistance to Orphans and Needy People

As part of the efforts of Sokoto State Zakat and Endowment Commission to bring succor to orphans and needy people in the society, orphans and needy people committee is responsible for identifying and screening of children who lost their parents and could not be catered for by any guardian or family relation as well as widows and other aged people so that they can be assisted with some of their basic needs. In 2014 the commission disbursed the sum of twenty four million and two hundred thousand Naira (₦24, 200,000) to two thousand 2000 beneficiaries [51]. In an interview with Malam Bala Arkilla who received the gesture of two bags of rice and five thousand naira expressed his appreciation and satisfaction to the Commission and head of Gundumar Arkilla, Alhaji Aliyu Hassan Liman Ubadoman Arkilla [52]. Similarly, Muhammad Badamasi benefitted from the gesture with ten thousand naira (N10, 000) and expressed his appreciation to the efforts of the Commission and advised wealthy individuals to give some percentage of their Zakat to the Commission to improve its effects [53]. Shehu Abubakar benefitted with two bags of rice and sum of N5000. In expressing his gratitude, he appealed wealthy people to give out their Zakat to the commission [54].

In fact, a total sum of thirty six million five and fifty thousand Naira (₦36, 550,000) was spent by the Commission in the year 2015 in the area of assistance to orphans and other categories of needy people [55].

Human Resources Development

In line its policy and schedule of activities in the area of human resources development i.e. skills enhancement and provision of capitals and tools to promote small scale business for self-reliance endowment, the commission provides capital in form of cash, sewing machines, freezers and other requested business tools to the needy people ranging from youth, widows and family heads to enable them start a business of their choices.

In 2015, the Commission spent a total sum of sixty five million, three hundred and twenty nine thousand naira (N65, 329,000.00) to promote human resources development. The beneficiaries were selected from eighty five (85) districts across the State [56].

Payment of Monthly Allowances to People with Disabilities

Another rewarding gesture of the commission is that of assistance to people with disabilities ranging from lepers, blinds, cripples and other people with special cases of physical disorders. The Commission is saddled with responsibility of payment of monthly allowances of six thousand five hundred Naira (₦6, 500.00) to each of the 6,866 beneficiaries in this category whose names and other particulars were

enlisted in the payment voucher of the commission, Sokoto state Government ensures prompt release of forty five million, six hundred and eighty three thousand Naira (₦45, 683,000.00) every month for disbursement to this category of needy people. The idea for this is to support this category of people to meet some of their basic needs, discourage them from street begging, and encourage them to be self-reliant by engaging in petty trading or small scale businesses in addition to fighting indolence and other social vices especially among the youth with disabilities [57].

Treatment and Rehabilitation of mentally ill patients

As it has been over the years, the committee for the treatment and rehabilitation of patients with psychiatric and related problems were given prominence by ensuring that they were diagnosed, treated and rehabilitated through Federal Neuro Psychiatric Hospital Kware. The commission maintained its collaboration with the hospital by ensuring prompt release of two million Naira (₦2, 000,000), monthly as payment for admission, drugs and medication for out-patients and admitted cases referred to the hospital by the commission.

Similarly, the commission facilitates the rehabilitation of the treated patients and re-integrating them into the society by linking them with their relative, providing them with befitting clothes, food items and some amount of money to enable them start a business and a new life so that they cannot be stigmatized. In 2015, the Commission sponsored the treatment and rehabilitation of 3,651 mentally ill persons at the rate of seventeen million, six hundred and twenty two thousand, five hundred and eighty five Naira (₦17,622,585) which was just an example of an annual [58].

The Sokoto State Zakat and Endowment Commission observed world psychiatric day set aside by the United Nations to sensitize the public on the menace of increasing number of psychiatric cases across the globe and the way to assist the victims as well as provide solution to the problem.

The Chairman of the Commission stated that, the Commission spent over twenty four million naira (N 24,000,000) for cases and rehabilitation of the treated victims. This according to him is in addition to provision of small scale business capital, cloth and transport fee to the victims. Over thirty thousand (30,000) psychiatric cases were treated by the Committee in collaboration with Federal Neuro Psychiatric Hospital Kware who serve as service provider [59].

Enlightenment and Publicity

In line with the aim and objectives of the commission on the issues of enlightenment, publicity

and educating Ummah on significance of zakat and endowment in Islam, the commission organizes and ensures the effective coverage of its activities through the following events:

- Sponsorship of 30 minutes programme on Radio and television stations on both local and International stations.
- Coverage of events on print media in forms of special feature columns, interviews and news mostly on weekly papers and magazines.
- Production of monthly magazines in English or Hausa such as Zakat and Endowment in Sokoto state and *zakka da wakafi a jihar* Sokoto.
- Annual production of giant stride and compendium on Sokoto state zakat and endowment commission.
- Organizing enlightenment tours and outreach programmes to districts level to sensitize Muslims on the need to ensure the prompt submission of their zakat to the district level committees [60].

Ramadan Grains Distribution to Needy People

In Ramadan 1435A.H/2014, the Commission distributed 8500 bags across the state. The commission in collaboration with officials from the ministry for religious affairs went round to ensure that only deserved people were given. The distribution is a routine activity during the month of Ramadan annually to reduce hardship of the poor and needy persons in the society [61].

Challenges facing the Commission

- Higher demand of number of disable waiting to be enlisted in the monthly payment from all local government areas.
- Duplication of request letter to various committees by one person resulting to delays in screening and verification of the beneficiaries.
- Lack of participation from wealthy individuals by assisting their needy people directly.
- Lack of awareness on the importance of zakat as an instrument in poverty alleviation and development

of the society. The Commission used to do enlightenment campaign but not yielding results.

- Ignorance of the beneficiaries and mis-management of the benefit [62].
- Individual zakat is not functioning very well; it is measured at the rate of 5% only.
- Lack of man power [63].

CONCLUSION

From the forgoing discussion of the role of the Sokoto State Zakat and Endowment Commission, it's apparently that the Commission has achieved immensely in the poverty alleviation in the State. The Commission has successfully recorded a number of achievements which include the following:

- The programme curtailed the number of street disable beggars in the State.
- Some of the beneficiaries became self-reliant by investing the little money in small businesses such as animal husbandry, trading, forming poultry knitting etc.
- Thirty four thousand eight hundred and fifty three (34, 853) patients were treated and rehabilitated by the Commission at the cost of one hundred and forty two million, eight hundred and twenty one thousand, nine hundred and eighty Naira (₦ 142,821,980 equivalents to \$ 396,727.7) from 2009-20016.
- In 2014, the commission spent four hundred and twelve million and two hundred thousand naira (₦ 412,200,000.00 equivalents to \$ 1,145,000) as monthly assistance to disable people.
- Endorsement of Malam Muhammad Maidoki as Deputy Chairman of Zakat global body in 2016 is one of the remarkable achievement in the State and the country.

Finally, the researcher calls upon the government, wealthy individuals and other philanthropists to join hands in collaboration with the Zakat and Endowment Commission in complementing its efforts in poverty eradication and alleviating hardship of the masses.

Endnotes and References

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- ¹⁹ Qur'an: 7:156.
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