



Social Duties and Responsibilities of the Muslims for Peace and Development: Bangladesh Perspective

Review Paper

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Abstract

Allah the Almighty has given some duties and responsibilities to the human being. He has made some duties and responsibilities obligatory and some optional for mankind. These duties and responsibilities start from personal level to family, social, institutional even state level of development and peace. The main objective of this research is to determine the social duties and responsibilities that have been given by Islam and to what extent the Muslims in Bangladesh are practicing them. In the present days many Muslims in Bangladesh as well as in the world is not following the instructions of Allah the Almighty properly; even many of them do not know about their duties and responsibilities which have been given by their creator. The research found that the so-called modern system of living has made people more materialistic and driven them away from spirituality. They are detached from the divine teachings in family, society, institutions, and even the state. That's why there occur many misdeeds regularly in our family, society, and the state which hinder development and peace in the country. In a Muslim majority country like Bangladesh, people should follow the instructions of the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah regarding their duties and responsibilities to ensure peace and development.

Keywords: Social responsibilities, Muslim, Qur'an, sunnah, peace, development

1. Introduction

About 1.8 billion Muslims are living in the world which is the second religious community in the globe (Lipka and Hackett, 2017). The Muslims are becoming highly controversial in the present time and facing lots of problems. Many Muslims have forgotten their specified duties and responsibilities given by the Almighty Allah and remain busy only for themselves. But Muslims should not be busy only for themselves but they need to do some works for others. With cooperation and collaboration, a developed and peaceful society can be built. Bangladesh is a Muslim majority people's country where 90.4% of the people are Muslims (Pew Research Center, 2011). All people are not equal in society. Some citizens are wealthy and some are almost destitute. It is desired that the wealthy persons would spend a portion of their assets for the uplifting of the deprived people. It is one of the fundamental responsibilities of a Muslim. There are so many duties and responsibilities given by Allah the Almighty in every sphere of life but the major duties and responsibilities will be addressed in this article. The objectives of this research are to determine the social duties and responsibilities that have been given by Islam and to what extent the Muslims in Bangladesh are practicing them. On the other hand, to find out the positive impact of performing social duties and responsibilities as well as

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negative results of not performing the social duties and responsibilities will also be the objectives of this research.

2. Literature Review

Social duties and responsibilities in Islam mean to us that the individual members of the society work together to fulfill the general needs of society. Each member of the society is aware of not only that he has rights, but also that he has duties and responsibilities towards others, especially those who are unable to fulfill their own needs. Islam pays careful attention to building society, providing several texts and legal injunctions to bring about the society described by Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) when he said: "The believers, in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other, are like a single body; if one limb feels pain, the whole body becomes feverish and restless" (Sahih Muslim, 6258).

Therefore, social duties and responsibilities in Islam are not based on material interests, even if such interests form an integral part of it. It extends far beyond such concerns to embrace all the needs of the society and its members, whether they are material in nature, spiritual, intellectual, or otherwise. Social duties and responsibilities in Islam are not only concerning other Muslims; it extends to all of humanity, irrespective of their different beliefs and ways of life. Allah says: "Allah forbids you not, concerning those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loves those who are just" (The Holy Qur'an, 60:8). This mutual responsibility exists because of the honor and dignity of every human being. Allah says "We have honored the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favors, above a great part of our creation" (The Holy Qur'an, 17:70).

3. Methodology

This is a qualitative research work which was done mainly by studying the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith of Prophet Mohammad (Sm.) which will be considered as a primary source, as well as the secondary sources like journals, books, and reports, will be used. It also has included experiences gathered by living, involving in different social activities in different multicultural societies at home and abroad.

3. Definition of the Few Contents of the Topic

There are a few important components of the article that need to be defined briefly which are as follows:

3.1. Definition of Muslim

The words Islam and Muslim come from the root word (سلم *slm*) in Arabic which means peace. According to the Quran, a Muslim has surrendered to Allah and His commands and believes in pure Tawhid (the oneness of Allah) that is not tainted with any Shirk (partnership with Allah). It must be noted that a true Muslim is one who not only believes in Islam but practices it in his life. So, Muslims should submit themselves to Allah the Almighty and believe in the prophets as well as they should also act according to Islam's social teachings like respecting other people's rights in society and its teachings that relate to one's personal life like fasting and praying (Islam Quest, 2010).

3.2. Concept of Development

Development is the process in which someone or something grows or changes and becomes more advanced. Development is fundamentally a process of change that involves the whole society and its economic, socio-cultural, political, and physical structures, as well as the values system and way of life of the people (Alexander, 1993). Sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987).

3.3. Concept of Peace

Peace is a stress-free state of security and calmness that comes when there's no fighting or war, everything coexisting in perfect harmony and freedom. Peace means freedom from war and violence, especially when people live and work together happily without disagreements (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). Peace has its broader meaning but in brief, we can say where there will be no poverty, injustice, discrimination, and people will love each other, co-operate with each other, respect each other then peace will be ensured there.

4. The Area of Social Duties and Responsibilities

Islam considers social duties and responsibilities to be one of its fundamental objectives. It extends to all the people similarly. Allah says: "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise (each other)). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things) (The Holy Qur'an, 49:13)". The social duties and responsibilities start with the Muslim and his personal life, extend to his family, then to the society, and finally to all the diverse societies that exist on the earth.

4.1. Duties and Responsibilities to Oneself

Every person has some duties and responsibilities for himself. He is responsible to keep himself pure, cultivate good manners, reform his faults, do well, and refrain from evil. Allah says: "He has succeeded who purifies it, and he has failed who instills it [who corruption]" (The Holy Quran, 91:9-10). Allah has prohibited suicide by saying: "And do not kill yourselves" (The Holy Quran, 4:29). Almighty Allah was forbidden for a person to take things that harm his health. Preserving life and property are among the most important objectives of Islamic Law. Allah says regarding intoxicants: "O you who believe, wine, gambling, idolatry, and divination are all an abomination of Satan's handiwork, so avoid them that perhaps you might be successful. Satan wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with wine and gambling and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and prayer. Will you not, then, abstain? (The Holy Qur'an, 5:90)". There are many Muslims not following the advice of the Holy Qur'an and Hadith in Bangladesh although they claim themselves as Muslims. Suicide, divorce, drinking wine, gambling and violence are increasing day by day in society because of disobeying the order of Allah the Almighty.

4.2. Duties and Responsibilities to Family

Family is called primary institution where children get their basic lessons. But this family system is breaking down in Bangladesh as well as in the world bringing lots of suffering to society. Sociologists attribute the rising rate of divorce to individualism, lack of patience and moral education, and cultural gap between partners (UNB, 2014). Islam gives a guideline on mutual duties and responsibilities among family members. Our prophet Mohammad (Sm.) said: "A man is a guardian over his household and he is responsible for those in his care. A woman is a guardian over her husband's household and she is responsible for those in her care" (Saḥīḥ al-Bukhari, 6719). Household duties and responsibilities are divided among family members in a way that guarantees the material and spiritual foundations of the family. Allah says: "O you who believe, protect yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones. (The Holy Qur'an, 66:6)". In another verse, Allah says: "The believing men and women are protectors of one another; they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong" (The Holy Qur'an, 9:71). Islam encourages the cultivation of love, care, cooperation, and affection between the husband and wife in their conjugal life. Allah says: "And from His signs is that He created for you mates from amongst yourselves to find comfort in and he placed between your affection and mercy (The holy Qur'an, 30:21)". Islamic way of life has established several principles to establish peace and harmony in the family. First: Preserving the rights of the husband and wife: Allah says: "And they (the women) have rights (over their husbands) similar to (their husbands') rights over them" (The Holy Qur'an, 4:34). Second: Good conduct between the husband and wife: Islam encourages good conduct between the husband and wife. Allah's Messenger

(peace be upon him) said: "The believers who have the most perfect faith are the best in conduct, and the best men among you are the ones who are best to their wives" (Sunan at-Tirmidhi, 628). Our prophet Mohammad (Sm.) was the best in treating his wives and was the kindest and most gentle husband. He was very forgiving and tolerant. Prophet (Sm.) said: "The best among you is the one who treats his family the best, and I am the one who treats his family the best" (Sunan at-Tirmidhi, 3895). Third: Providing maintenance for the family: Islam has made maintenance of the wife obligatory upon the husband. Allah says: "Let the wealthy man spend according to his means; and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend from according to what Allah has given him. Allah does not put a burden on a person greater than what He has given him (The holy Qur'an, 65:7)". Fifth: Taking care of children: Islam stresses the children to be cared for and properly brought up, making it the most important duty of the parents. Allah says: "The mothers shall nurse their children for two whole years if they desire to complete the term of suckling (The holy Qur'an, 2:233)". The father of the child shall bear the cost of the mother's food and clothing on a reasonable basis. The right of proper upbringing is also clearly stated. Allah says: "O you who believe! Protect yourselves and your families from the Fire (The holy Qur'an, 66:6)". Our prophet Mohammad (Sm.) said: "Order your children to pray when they are seven years old, and when they become ten, beat them if they fail to do so and separate their sleeping quarters" (Sunan Abu-Dawud, 495).

4.3. Duties and Responsibilities to the Society

The individual in Muslim society is responsible to help each other for the greater interest of the society. Allah says: "The believers, men, and women, are protectors of one another; they enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, perform the prayer, keep the fasts, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah will have mercy on them. Surely Allah is Almighty, All-Wise" (The Holy Qur'an, 9:71). The individual, moreover, is commanded to play an active and effective part in society. Allah says: "Help one another in righteousness and piety but do not help one another in sin and transgression" (The Holy Qur'an, 5:2). Mohammad (Sm.) explained the unity between the members of the society and the feelings of mutual responsibility and said: "The believers, in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other, are like a single body; if one limb feels pain, the whole body becomes feverish and restless" (Sahih al-Bukhari, 5665).

4.4. Duties and Responsibilities towards the Elderly

Elderly people are very vulnerable and helpless all over the world. In Bangladesh, most of the elderly face various challenges in financial issues under the existing social security programs (Ferdousi, 2020) but Islam pays special attention to elderly people. Almighty Allah says: "If one of them or both of them attain old age in your lifetime, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them, but address them in terms of honor. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy and say, My Lord, bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was young" (The Holy Qur'an, 17: 23-24). Prophet Mohammad (Sm.) said: "Whoever does not show mercy to the young and honor the elderly is not one of us" (Sunan at-Tirmidhi, 1919).

4.5. Duties and Responsibilities towards the Poor and Destitute

Poverty is a common phenomenon in the developing country like Bangladesh where a big number of people lives under the poverty level. It is a good sign that in the last couple of years poverty level is decreasing significantly. The 2019 global Multidimensional Poverty Index (PMI), released and mentioned that the population in multidimensional poverty in Bangladesh had dropped to 74.4 million in 2014 from 93.7 million in 2004 (*The Daily Star*, 2019). Islam encourages voluntary acts of charity by describing the importance of worldly life and life hereafter. It encourages voluntary acts of good to help the poor while at the same time prescribing the mandatory Zakah to ensure the needs of those who do not have the resources to fulfill their basic needs. Allah Almighty says: "Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds); for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to Truth); for those in bondage and debt; in the cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer: (thus is it) ordained by Allah, and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom" (The Holy Qur'an, 9:60).

4.6. Duties and Responsibilities to the Neighbors

Neighborhood relationship is losing day by day in Bangladesh especially in the city life. Sometimes we do not know who lives in our next-door apartment although we claim us as Muslims. But Islam has given great stress to be kind to neighbors and maintaining good relations with them. Allah says: ...and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, the poor, the neighbor who is near to kin, the neighbor who is a stranger (The holy Qur'an, 4:36). Our prophet Mohammad (Sm.) said: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should honor his neighbor" (Sahih Bukhari, 6110). Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said "Gabriel continued to advise me to treat neighbors well until I thought he would make them my heirs" (Sahih Bukhari, 5668). If we follow the guidelines of Islam regarding the relationship with a neighbor, we can reduce crime and bring peace as well as development in the society.

4.7. The Rights of the Guests and Foreigners

In the present day, we do not properly honor and take care of the guests and foreigners. To some extent, we fail to ensure their security in our country as well as in the world. But Islam encourages honoring guests and foreigners, ensuring them good hospitality. Prophet Mohammad said: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should honor his guest" (Sahih al-Bukhari, 6136).

4.8. Exchange of Gifts

We can be closer to each other by exchanging gifts. Islam encourages exchanging of gifts to make social bonds, spread affection, and love throughout society. Mohammad (Sm.) said: "Exchange gifts, it will cause you to love one another" (Sahih Al-Bukhari, 594).

4.9. Creating Employment Opportunities

Many people are beggars and unemployed in Bangladesh. They can be a big workforce and contribute to the development of the country. Islam encourages capable people to engage in employment and prohibits begging. We should mention here an event that occurred at the time of the Prophet (Sm.). A man came to Mohammad (Sm.) begging, so he gave him a silver coin and ordered him to buy an axe and go to the wilderness to collect wood and then return after some time. When the man returned, he informed Prophet (Sm.) that he had earned enough to fill his needs and even gave some money in charity. Allah's Messenger (Sm.) then said: "That one of you should take his rope and go collect wood is better for him than to go around begging people, whether or not they give anything to him" (Sunan Abu Dawud, 1641).

5. Conclusion

Muslims have so many duties and responsibilities at the personal, family, social, and state-level but many Muslims rarely do their duties in the present days. It has been clearly stated in the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah that the duties and responsibilities for the Muslims are the crying need at present to ensure peace and development in Bangladesh. Many Muslims in our country do not have Islamic Education which is considered to be the foundation of the Muslim education system. They also have a lack of modern education like science, arts, and commerce in combination with Islam. At present we find, many Muslims are Muslims by name and birth but they are not practicing Islam which is the main demand to be a real Muslim. We find few important things in our short discussion which are as follows: Firstly, Islam has given lots of duties and responsibilities to the Muslims along with their basic practice of Iman, Salat, Saum, Zakah, and Hajj. Secondly, all Muslims especially Muslims in Bangladesh need to be educated in Islamic Education. Thirdly, they should be the model for other religious community people with their activities like helping the poor and destitute, making good relationship with family members, relatives, and neighbors, showing respect to the guests, foreigners, and elderly people, ensure justice without any discrimination among parties, colors, sects, and classes of the people. Finally, we need to minimize the misunderstanding among different sects of Muslim and non-Muslim communities by regular dialogue. If the Muslims in Bangladesh as well as in the

world follow the rules and regulations of Islam, they can ensure development and peace in worldly life and life hereafter.

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