The Basic Imperatives Of Islamic Welfare State
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Abstract

“The natural worth of anything consists in its fitness to supply the necessities and serve the convenience of human needs”. Welfare state always strives to put in place the necessary impetus that will ensure the material and spiritual wellbeing of people in its domain. Islamic Welfare State (IWS) mould the social, economic, cultural and political engagements as a complementary whole guided by the basic principles (Shari’ah), to establish a society where justice, equity and economic prosperity are prominent, as well as maximize the benefits of worldly life and the hereafter. This paper seeks to examine the interrelationship between the political and economic contents of the basic principles (Shari’ah) and discusses the nature and functions of the Islamic State towards enthroning a better society in the light of basic imperatives (principles) within the framework of financial constraints.

Key words: Islamic Welfare State, Shari’ah, Basic Imperatives, Ideal State and Maslaha (Public Welfare)

1. Introduction

It is all said and done that the efficacy of Islamic Welfare State (IWS) is to provide Maslaha (public welfare) to the people. Islamic economics strives to ensure that necessary mechanisms and imperatives are put in place with Shari’ah guidance to achieve spiritual and material wellbeing of the people (Chapra, 1995). Islam has a set of goals and values encompassing all aspect of human life, be it social, economic and political. Since all aspects of life are interdependent and the Islamic way of life is a consistent whole, its goals and values in one field determine the goals and values in the other fields as well.

The IWS first evolved in Madina at the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his first four successors. The philosophy and ideology of this state are to be found in the Qur’an and the Sunnah (Prophetic tradition). The rationale behind the IWS is that “all sovereignty belongs to Allah” and the state is one of the means that brings human beings closer to Him (Kahf, 1991). Islamic scholars perceived the objective and notion of IWS in different but aligned views; al-Mawardi (1398/1978), defined
the IWS as a framework that continue the function of prophet hood in safeguarding religion and managing the worldly affairs. Ibn Taimiyya (1969), in his candid opinion, believed that the objective of statehood is that “all religion be to Allah and that Allah’s word is supreme.” In the same vein, Ibn Khaldun (1958), explain the relation between the management of worldly affairs and the supremacy of Allah’s words, and worldly affairs are judged with reference to their benefits in the hereafter. Deducting from the above, IWS is a sovereign and independent body or institution whose objectives and operations as well as principles and practice conform to Islamic principles (Shari’ah) towards spiritual and material wellbeing of the people.

2. Pre-conditions for IWS

The IWS is a rigorous, coherent and sophisticated body of established rules and regulations which are divine pertaining to economic, social and political forces towards the achievement of human welfare, both spiritual and material. To establish this body, there are some conditions that must be established before the dream of IWS could be realized. Thus, The basic imperatives or pre-conditions for ensuring Islamic welfare state are;

a. Authority and Organization (the state)

Islam condemns anarchy and disorder in society. Therefore, the Qur’an (2:205) and the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) stressed the need for organization and authority in the Muslim society. This stress is also vividly reflected in several statements as well as actual behaviour of his companions and in the ideals of Muslim Jurists. Umar, the second caliph (R.A) emphasized that “there could be no ideal society without an imam (sovereign) and there could be no imam without obedience (Al-Tantawi, 1959).” Shafi’i, one of the famous jurists recorded the mood of his age (150-204 A.H.) by stating that; “there is consensus among Muslims scholars that there must be a caliph (Imam) in a Muslim society” (Al-Halabi, 1940:419). Likewise Ibn Hanbal stressed that; “the absence of an imam could only result in disorder”. Ibn Khaldun in his The Muqaddimah (1958:191) emphasized that “the institution of caliphate is a shari’ah obligation and that Muslims are obliged to establish and maintain it.”

Similarly, opinions were expressed by Ibn Taymiyah in his treatise As-Siyasah ash-Shar’iyya (The Priciples of Religious Government) [Beirut, 1961:138], Shah Wali-Allah in his Hujjat-Allah al-Balighah (1953:601) and a number of other scholars to explain how religion and state are indissolubly linked. Without the power (shawkah) of the state, religion is in danger. Without the discipline of the revealed law (shari’ah),
the state becomes a tyrannical organization. Thus, the state is viewed by Islam as an instrument for the realization of the ultimate goals, spiritual and material, of the people in a society. Such an attitude toward the state is quite natural since Islam advocates certain goals and values which make the Muslim Ummah a natural confederation of states. This idea was expressed beautifully by the famous Muslim poet and thinker Muhammad Iqbal (1954:155) when he stated that, “the state according to Islam is only an effort to realize the spiritual and material pursuit in human organization.” However, the authority exercised by the state is not absolute, it is a trust from Allah and it is to be exercised in accordance with the terms of the trust as laid down in the Shari’ah.

b. Mutual Consultation (Democratic Orientation)

Authority and organization should be exercised in a democratic passion as opined in the Qur’an;

“And consult them in affairs” (3:159), “And they conduct affairs by mutual consultation” (42:38), “Sovereignty is for none but God.” (12:40), “Is it not His to create and to govern.”(7:54). Shari’ah as a divine law regards Allah as the sovereign and when this principle is recognized by the people, the authority for its establishment resides in the hands of the general public and is to be exercised in the light of the Qur’an and Sunnah through the democratic process of consultation with the people/community or its rightful representatives.

The sovereignty of Allah implies the rule of the divine law as revealed by Him in the Qur’an to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and as elaborated in the Sunnah during the course of his mission. Man as the vicegerent of Allah on the earth can neither make nor abrogate the Divine Law. Man must necessarily submit to it because Allah the all-knowing in His great wisdom is the best guide of man in all his affairs (Chapra, 1995).

c. Welfare Commitment/Returning the Trust

It is mandatory for Islamic state to foster good life and welfare to its people. The Qur’an clarify this, where Allah says “the mission of the Holy Prophet is defined to be a merciful blessing (Rahmah) for all mankind (2:107). Some manifestation of these merciful blessing are stated vividly in the Qur’an. These include, among others, fostering of “good life” (hayah al-tayyibah) and “welfare” (falah), provision of ease and alleviation of hardship, generation of prosperity, nurturing a climate of love and affection, and ensuring freedom from moral corruption, hunger, fear and mental tension. Hence, all institutions including the state, should reflect a character of the merciful blessing, and cater to welfare of everyone in the society.
However, the welfare function of Islamic state was particularly stressed by Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) when he stated: “Any ruler who is responsible for the affairs of Muslims but does not strive sincerely for their wellbeing will not enter Paradise with them (narrated by Muslim, 1:126)”. Welfare is compatible with Islamic state and it should be the driven force guiding its policies and programs. The companions of the Prophet appreciated this welfare role of the Islamic State as is evidenced by numerous utterances of the early Caliphs and their instructions to their governors. Umar (R.A), wrote to Abu Musa, once a governor of a province: “the best man in authority is he under whom people prosper, and the worst among them is he under whom people encounter hardship (Abu Yusuf, AH 1332).” Muslim jurists have all unanimously held that the catering to the welfare of the people and relieving them from hardship is the basic objective of the Shari’ah and hence, of the IWS (Chapra, 1995). The evidences in the Qur’an and Sunnah and the writings of Islamic scholars on the welfare commitments of the IWS is so overwhelming that it would be absolutely unjustified not to perceive Islamic State (IS) as a “welfare state.”

d. Shari’ah Pursuit and Welfare Strategy

The strategy for ensuring welfare in Islam is by harmonizing the spiritual and material pursuit of life. All human efforts whether material (economic), social, educational, scientific goals are spiritual as long as they conform to Shari’ah injunctions. In Islamic state, the basis of Shari’ah is wisdom and welfare of people in this world and the hereafter. The concept of welfare can neither be exclusively worldly, nor purely in the hereafter but rather combining both to achieve the optimum welfare in this life (material) and the hereafter (spiritual). This is of course a general indication of what is implied by welfare in Islam. More specific positions have been taken by the Shari’ah on many issues, to be precise, welfare of individuals in an IS can be realized if there is a conducive (proper) environment for a fuller realization of Islamic values in the minds of people as well as the society, and adequate fulfilment of all basic material needs of life (education, food and clothing, suitable job, comfortable housing, generally healthy environment, and adequate transport facilities). The fulfilment of these spiritual and material needs of individuals and society would necessitate the playing of a vital role by the state in the economic system of Islam.

Nevertheless, it must be stress here that it is basically the moral responsibility of individual to cater for his own needs through his own volition and effort. Islam categorically condemns begging and sloth while placing high grades on hard work.
The Prophet (PBUH) said: “beg not anything from people.” And “A man has not earned better income than that which is from his own labor” (Abu Dawud, 1:382). Also, Umar (RA) the second caliph emphasized hard work by saying: “none of you should stay away from seeking livelihood and say ‘O God! Give me sustenance’ for the sky will not rain gold and silver, and seek of the bounties of God and be not a burden on others.”

3. Role of Islamic Welfare State

Some of the functions of the IWS with respect to the economy in achieving welfare objectives are stated as follows;

**Poverty Alleviation**

Islam considers poverty as a social as well as ideological evil and may lead to Kufr (disbelieve) by making one indulge in acts that befit only an infidel and rebel against religion (Chapra, 1995). It is to such an evil grip, the Prophet (PBUH) sought Allah’s refuge from poverty: O lord, I seek your refuge from infidelity (kufr), poverty and destitution (faqr); and I seek your refuge from paucity (qillah) and humiliation (dhillah).

Any poverty alleviation scheme has to be based on an inquiry into the causes of poverty. Low level of income and growth, inefficient functional distribution leading to concentration of income in few hands, lack of equal opportunity and malpractices in the economy are the roots of poverty in any society (Ahmad, 1991). IWS uses two preventive measures to alleviate poverty in its domain; control of ownership and the prevention of malpractices in the economy (market). The absolute ownership of everything (all resources) belongs to Allah, man as a vicegerent of Allah is a trustee for utilizing resources as enshrined in the condition of the trust which gave him the status of secondary ownership of the resources. Considering the selfish nature of man, Islam avoids the concentration of wealth (resources) in few hands. The IWS control resources which are of public use especially land (which includes water, farmlands, mineral deposits and other natural resources having similar properties) to ensure that each individual has equal right over the use of the resources. To this end, the state responsibility of providing basic needs is enhanced as well as the achievement of its welfare objective.

In preventing malpractices in the economy, the IWS and Islam prohibit gambling, hoarding, false advertising and cheating consumers, bribery, and Riba (interest). This is further emphasized in the Qur’an where Allah said “O ye who believe! Squander not your wealth among yourselves wrongfully except it be a trade by mutual consent
If all such malpractices are effectively controlled, income concentration and its resulting evil of poverty and deprivation might be prevented to a great deal in the society.

**Macroeconomic Stability**

Islamic welfare State follows the general principle of justice and honesty in measuring the value of commodities and money, more specifically the real value of money. Market forces left alone to determine value is not humane because extremes and imbalances may occur. One of the most serious problems of contemporary societies is persistent inflation with accompanying decline in the real value of money and monetary assets which further cause distortions in the economy. IWS stood in constant opposition to such phenomenon, in fact, stability in the real value of money and commodities are vitally important not only for sustained growth in the economy, but also for justice and economic welfare (Chapra, 1995).

Stability in the economy depends on the level of honesty and justice exhibits by such economy, that is why the Qur’an unequivocally stressed the importance of just measure of value; “And give full measure and weight with justice (6:152), “So give full measure and weight without defrauding men in their belongings and do not corrupt the world after its reform. This is better for you, if you are believers (7:85). The verses should be considered to apply not only to individuals, but also to society and the state and should not be limited or confined merely to conventional weight and measures but to all measures of value. Through appropriate measures of monetary, fiscal and income policies with direct control of money value, wages, prices and income distribution as enshrined in the shari’ah, the IWS achieves this objective of economic stability.

**Protection of Life and Property (Law and Order)**

Islamic state through the divine mood of the Shari’ah must strive to maintain law and order within its jurisdiction, so that properties and lives of the citizenry are protected for their welfare. The prophet (P.B.U.H) emphasized on the importance of security and stability in the society and condemns any threat on the people’s peace and mindset. In his remarkable terse but powerful farewell pilgrimage address, in which he forcefully enunciated a number of principles for the socio-politico-economic system of Islam, he declared: “Your lives and your properties are as sacred as this day of Hajj” (Sahih Muslim, vol.2 p.889:147).
However, law and order is ideologically inherent in IWS which constituted moral values, ethical connotations, individual freedom, love and affection, and mutual help. It is the duty of the IWS to establish a morally served society and ensure moral health of its people not necessary by coercion but through education, training and create a conducive environment for younger generation imbued with the teachings of Islamic moral norms and enforcement of Islamic values as well as prescribed penalties for violators. The institution charged with law enforcement in the IWS is the Hisbah, office in which the officer called muhtasib (supervisor or inspector) has the task to promote good and prevent evil, as outlined in the Islamic ethical code. The muhtasib, then, is entrusted with the maintenance of public morals and standards in the city especially in the marketplace. He is also to detect and punish immorality, the use of false weights and measures, the adulteration of wares, and similar offences, and generally to enforce the Islamic rules pertaining to honesty, propriety, and hygiene, these functions are called Hisbah (ibn Taymiyyah, 1976).

**Justice (Adl)**

It is the duty of the Islamic state to induce fair play within its boundaries without any discrimination. As the prophet (P.B.U.H) opined in the farewell pilgrimage address: “Between Muslims there are no races and no tribes, the best among you is he who must regards God, think deeply about what I said” (Sahih Muslim, vol.2 p.889:147). In another development, the Prophet is reported to have said: “Communities before you strayed because when the high committed theft they were set free, but when the low (poor) committed theft the law was enforced on them. By Allah, even if my daughter, Fatimah, committed theft I will certainly cut her hand” (Sahih al-Bukhari, vol.8 p.15) and the Prophet also said: “Whoever humiliates o despises a Muslim, male or female, for his poverty and paucity of resources will be disgraced by Allah on the Day of judgement” (Ibid. p.199). When it comes to relationships, Islamic State must play a significant role in establishing justice to its people, be it rich or poor, white or black and ruler or the ruled.

**Social Security and Equitable Distribution of Income**

Since all resources are gifts from Allah to all human beings (Qur’an 2:29), there is no reason why they should remain concentrated in few hands. Islam emphasises distributive justice and incorporates in its system a program that contain some essential elements; making arrangement for training and rendering assistance in finding employment for those unemployed and looking for work in accordance with their ability, enforcing a
system of “just” remuneration for those working, making compulsory arrangement for old-age pension, providing assistance to those who, because of disability, physical or mental are unable to support themselves or to attain a respectable standard of living by their own efforts and collecting as well as distributing zakkah (Chapra, 1995).

IWS is committed to human brotherhood, social and economic justice and wiping gross inequalities of income and wealth. Such inequalities could only destroy rather than foster the feelings of brotherhood that Islam wishes to create. A Muslim society that fail to establish and guarantee such a humane standard is not worthy of the name IWS as the Prophet (PBUH) declared: “He is not a true Muslim who eats his fill when his next-door neighbour is hungry” (Sahih al-Bukhari, vol.2 p.52:113). However, Islam believes in distributional equity so the state should stick to this rule through just remuneration, creating incentives for entrepreneurship and intensifying wealth distribution through the system of zakkah, and other institutions based on “Halal” (activities allowed by the Shari’ah) and “Haram” (activities prohibited by the Shari’ah) codes.

International Relations and National Defence

The key responsibility of the Islamic State is to uplift the spiritual and material wellbeing of its people. With respect to the wider sphere of mankind and the Muslim Ummah (community), it is the responsibility of the IWS to contribute toward the spiritual and material uplift of mankind. If the state has available resources, it should provide assistance to relieve hardship and promote growth and accelerate development in deserving countries. As it relate with other countries, the principle guiding this relationship is not far fetch in the light of Islamic teachings, i.e. cooperate in all matters contributing to “righteousness” and “piety” and to refrain from cooperating in “aggression” and “sin” (Qur’an 5:3). And also, to work positively for the welfare of mankind through a bond of universal brotherhood, common ideology and manifest greater solidarity and cooperation in all fields of life, enhance the unity and dignity of the people (Ummah) and the glory of Islam.

Nevertheless, while working for peace as the basic objective, the IWS should do its utmost to strengthen its defences protect itself from any aggression against its faith, territory, freedom and resources since the Qur’an enjoins: “And prepare against them whatever force/strength you can” (8:60). This preparedness should be in form of men and hardware, including compulsory military services, efficient training, high morale and diversification of sources of supplies if these cannot be produced locally or in collaboration with other Muslim countries. In compliance with the Islamic teachings,
the military strength of the IWS should be used only for just cause and manner against those who nurture, or resort to aggressive designs, as captured in the Qur’an “And fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress limits for Allah loves not the transgressors” (2:190).

4. Financing Welfare in Islamic State

Islamic Welfare State needs finance to live up to its obligations, to this end, it mobilize resources/funds through various sources which are condoned by the Shari’ah. The sources are:

Zakkah (Poor Tax)

Islam obliged the payment of zakkah by those whose income falls within the range of paying it. Zakkah is a compulsory institution for redistribution of income and wealth from the rich to the poor Muslims in the society. Anybody who denies this obligation of zakkah ceases to be a Muslim (Qur’an, 2:43). It is also obligatory on a Muslim if he/she owns a nisab (the minimum amount of any zakaable asset that makes it liable to zakah) for a year. The nisab is different for different assets categories: (1) 85 grams for gold, cash, other financial assets, merchandise etc.; (2) 595 grams for silver; (3) 950 kilograms of agricultural produce; (4) different numbers for different animals in livestock (5 for camels, 30 for bovine animals and 40 for sheep and goats) and (5) any amount for treasure trove. The rates of zakkah are: 2.5% for category (1) and (2); 10% for agricultural produce irrigated by rainfall, and 5% if irrigated by the farmer; 20% for treasure trove; and different rates for different categories of livestock (al-Qardawi, 1973:168).

There is a general consensus among jurists that collection and disbursement of zakah is essentially the responsibility of the Islamic State. This was the practice during the period of the Prophet (PBUH) and of the first two caliphs, Abu-Bakr and Umar. Abu-Bakr even used coercion against those who refuse to pay zakah to the state. It was Uthman, the third caliph, who allowed the payment of zakah directly to the needy. Abu-Bakr al-Jassas, the renowned commentator of Qur’anic legal injunctions, argues on the basis of the Qur’anic verse: “Take alms out of their assets to cleanse and purify them thereby” (9:103), that it is the duty of the state to institute a system for the collection of zakah.

However, zakah funds are disbursed essentially to the needy and deserving people. The expenditures of zakah are clearly enumerated in the Qur’an where Allah said: “The
zakah is for the poor, the needy, those employed to administer it, those whose hearts are desired to incline (to the truth), freeing slaves, those in debt, the way of Allah and the wayfarer—an injunction from Allah, and Allah is all Knowing, Wise” (9:60). Thus, the proceeds from zakah serve as a means relieving people from hardship and abject poverty and help the IWS to live up to its obligation.

**Income from Natural Resources (Ma’adin)**

Allah in the Qur’an said: “It is He that created for you all that is on the earth” (2:29). The term ma’adin refers to all natural elements which are extracted from land except clay (Iqbal and Khan, 2004). There are various rulings governing the ownership of the mineral resources, but to be precise, one of the major rulings of fuqaha is that, all citizens have a share in the minerals (Ibid.). Therefore, the Islamic State is entitled to exploit them efficiently so that, part of the income generated are expended on public goods to complement public welfare. Resources provided by Allah have great potential in view of the importance of minerals wealth such as petrol, natural gas, phosphate, coal, gold, iron, zinc, limestone, uranium, diamond etc. However, these resources vary from country to country in terms of availability and quantity, their exploitation either by the state or private sector presupposed efficiency which will encourage the mobilization of funds for financing welfare.

**Taxes**

Apart from the zakah, the IWS has the right to impose taxes in order to generate a reasonable amount of funds for financing welfare in its domain. This assertion is clearly explained by the Prophet (PBUH): “In your wealth there are also obligations beyond the zakah” (al-Darimi, vol.1, p.385). The fundamental principle guiding Islamic jurisprudence is that a smaller benefit (welfare) is sacrificed to attain a larger benefit (welfare) and a smaller sacrifice is imposed to avoid larger sacrifice. All the rightly guided caliphs especially Umar, Ali and Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz are reported to have stressed the need for tax collection with justice and kindness, and it should not be beyond the ability of the people to bear and should not deprive the people of the basic necessities of life (Abu Yusuf, 1352AH).

In the same vein, Abu Yusuf indicate that, a just tax system is the one that leads to increased revenue for the state and the development of the country. Ibn Khaldun reflect the same trend of thinking during his time on the question of justice in the distribution of the tax burden by quoting from the letter of Tahir ibn al-Hamis to his son who was the Governor of a province then: “So distribute taxes among all people with justice
and equity, making them general and not exempting anyone because of his nobility or wealth and not exempting even your own officials or courtiers or followers. And do not levy on any one a tax beyond his capacity to pay”. From this view, a progressive tax conforms to the provision of Islam for mobilizing funds in Islamic state to finance welfare. This will ensure social justice and equitable distribution of income.

**Kharaj (Rental Fee)**

Kharaj was one of the major, perhaps the biggest source of revenue to Islamic States in the past. It is a rental fees on the land that becomes the property of the Islamic State as a result of its liberation by the Muslim troops. A consensus among the companions of the Prophet (PBUH) emerged during the time of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) to keep such lands as the property of the state and lease them to people for a fixed rental fee or a crop-sharing arrangement (Iqbal and Khan, 2004).

Nowadays, the IWS may surrender land at its disposal to people for a fixed rent to mobilize funds/income for financing welfare projects. The rate at which this rent should be charged by the state is not universal rather depends on the area and fertility of land under review, this framework will guide the state in setting the rate of the rental fees with justice and equity. This source of public revenue as a distinct head has no scope in modern time even though some Islamic writers consider it as the most potent source of public revenue (Salama, 1983).

**Borrowing**

Siddiqi (1995) explore whether early Islamic State ever borrowed. He did not found a single case of public borrowing during the time of the four rightly guided Caliphs; Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali, (may Allah be pleased with them). Therefore, he resort to whether the Propet (PBUH) as head of state ever resort to borrowing. He found six authentic instances where the Prophet (PBUH) borrowed for public needs. Based on the ahadith, Siddiqi was able to establish the permissibility of borrowing by an Islamic State.

The Prophet (PBUH) borrowed in small amount as well as large, from Muslims and non-Muslims, and there was no coercion in his borrowing (Siddiqi, 1995). Two issues are raised in relation to modern times borrowing; can Islamic state borrow from non-Islamic state? Can it borrow on interest basis? There is no doubt that borrowing from non-Muslim foreign countries is permissible as long as the lender does not impose any condition that deviates from the Maqasid al-shari’ah (Islamic Principles). Nowadays,
borrowing on interest has become a norm. Nevertheless, it has no place in the shari’ah. In some instance where the Islamic state is in dire need (Idtirar), the state could resort to borrowing on interest because in case of idtirar, it is universally accepted to grant temporary permission for unlawful things (Siddiqi, 1995).

Borrowing serves as yet another option for Islamic state in mobilizing funds to finance welfare. The loan should be strictly interest free and tallies with the Maqasid al-shari’ah but where the state is in dire need and the possible channels of borrowing to it are interest-based, then it is permissible for the state to borrow in order to finance welfare and achieve malaha in the society.

**Sadaqah (Voluntary Contribution)**

Islam strive to establish the principle of benevolence in any social setting so that kindness and good gesture will create a society where brotherhood, cooperation and equality are prominent. To this end, Allah made resources available to mankind in such a way that some have in excess of their needs while others find it difficult to survive. It is expected that, the rich in the society should surrender some value to those that are in need. Most at times, poverty in any society deteriorates as a result of putting in the mind of the people the principle of kindness and good gestures.

To buttress the above points, Allah in the Qur’an said: “Whatever you spend of anything, Allah will replace it and He is the best of providers” (34:39). In furtherance to this, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was reported to have said: “Allah said; O son of Adam! Spend and I will spend on you” (Reported by Muslim, 2/690). From this view, the shari’ah emphasised voluntary contribution to those in need and it is evident that Sadaqah is a means of poverty reduction for both the giver and the receiver.

At state level, until conquest improved the finances of the Bayt al-mal, voluntary contributions is used to finance many expeditions by the Prophet (PBUH). The most famous of this is the expedition to Tabuk when Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) contributed half of his wealth while Abu-Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) contributed all his wealth. The total fund collected was huge and several infrastructural projects were financed. The most important application of this source was for meeting the needs of the poor both at individual and state level. Unfortunately, modern government are not making use of this important source. If properly managed, Sadaqah has a lot of potentials. Islamic Institution of Waqf (Charitable deeds) plays a significant role in this respect (Iqbal and Khan, 2004).
5. Islamic welfare State: “Ideal” or “Richest”?

Islamic Welfare State is an ideal state which strives to improve the spiritual and material wellbeing of its people with available resources at its disposal. Ideal as used here, emphasize on (a) spiritual uplift of human society with no moral laxity and corruption (b) general economic welfare with available resources (c) distributive justice and equity with the absence of exploitation. On the contrary, rich state is the one with available stock of wealth and resources sometimes more than its needs. But this does not qualify it to be ideal, unless the resources are harnessed optimally in ensuring the spiritual and material welfare of its people. For example, we may call Nigeria a rich state but not an ideal one because the abundant stock of wealth and resources at its disposal did not do away with antagonistic features of corruption, moral laxity as well as injustice in the distribution of wealth which further lead to high rate of poverty.

The Islamic Welfare State has inherent ideals through the shari’ah (divine rules) which guides it operations in administering the affairs of the people in the society. IWS is a rich and at the same time ideal. This ia qualified in the Qur’an where Allah (SWT) said: “And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out from difficulty. And He will provide for him from sources he never could imagine” (65:2-3). When Islamic ideals are incorporated in state affairs, it makes resources allocation more efficient and highly organized in achieving state objective of providing spiritual and material wellbeing of its people.

6. Individual Freedom and IWS

The whole process of welfare revolves around the framework of individual freedom. The Qur’an and the Sunnah provides the Islamic views of individual freedom (right) as he/she engages in day to day activities in the society. In the Noble Qur’an, individual freedom or rights are explained clearly in form of protection of honour (49:11-12), right to security of private life (24:27), freedom of expression (22:41), freedom of association (3:10), right to basic necessities of life (51:19), right to equality before the law (9:11) and freedom of enterprise and participation in state affairs (42:38). Prophet Muhammad PBUH in his address on the occasion of the farewell Hajj, said: “your lives and properties are forbidden to one another till you meet your lord on the day of resurrection”. In view of the above, it is the duty of the IWS to safeguard the freedom or rights of its citizens as enshrined by the Shari’ah. Nevertheless, unlike the free market economy where individual is free to enter or engage into any venture he/she deems fit to maximize profit without regard to public welfare, in IWS individual engagements are
controlled by the principles of Halal (allowables) and Haram (forbidden) codes as well as considering its impact on public interest. It is a norm in Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence), to forgo (sacrifice) individual welfare (interest) for public welfare (interest) to achieve the general wellbeing of individuals in the society. Individual freedom serves as one of the identity of Islamic Welfare State and the most important pillar of the Islamic faith is the belief that man has been created by Allah and is subservient to none but Him (Qur’an, 13:36). Also, one of the primary objectives of the Prophet Muhammad’s mission PBUH is to release mankind from all burdens and chains enslaving it (7:157).

This assertions not only provide the essence of individual’s freedom in an Islamic charter but also subject man to the sovereignty of Allah in all aspect of life which essentially implies subordination of man to moral values as enshrined in the Qur’an and the Sunnah (Chapra, 1995). It is the goal of achieving individual freedom that the Islamic state incorporated in its system the essential element of free enterprise after weighing it to its norms and values. Nevertheless, the institution of private property, market mechanism and profit motive have been integrated in the Islamic system in such a way that an appropriate part of the production and distribution of goods and services is left to individuals and voluntarily-constituted groups enjoying freedom in their dealings and transactions (Mawdudi, 1960).

However, upon all the emphasis given to individual freedom in the Islamic state, social welfare (public welfare and interest) has a place of absolute importance in Islam. Individual freedom does not enjoy a place independent of its social consequences in the society. It is condoned only as long as it is in line with public interest or the overall spiritual and material goals of the Islamic Welfare State. At the same time, it should not be in conflict with public interest, in such a situation public or social interest will supersede individual interest as the general principle of welfare provision in the state.

7. IWS, Capitalist State and Socialist State (A Brief Comparison)

Capitalism and socialism are secular ideologies and morally neutral. Mixed capitalism emphasized freedom of enterprise, profit motive, keen competition, minimal state intervention (Laissez-faire policy) and zeal for accumulation of wealth. Socialism emphasized equality of people in the distribution of income and collective ownership of means of production based on the principles of dialectical materialism. By implication, the former ideology lacks morality, justice and equity while the later remain passive on individual freedom, incentives and hard work.
In contrast, IWS is neither capitalist nor socialist because it has its own unique guiding principles, values, goals and identity where individual freedom of enterprise and public interest working simultaneously to achieve the general welfare (spiritual and material) of people. Moreover, Islam is fully committed to human brotherhood with social and economic justice, equitable distribution of income and individual freedom within the context of social welfare. Although, both capitalism and socialism preached efficiency in the distribution of income, in capitalism this recognition is an outcome of group pressure, while in socialism it is accompanied by negation of individual freedom. Islam State achieves this through inherently divine mechanisms of the shari’ah that create a society that is morally served within the framework of individual freedom with spiritual and legal imperatives to safeguard public interest, moral constraints against unearned income, and social obligations to ensure a just distribution of income and wealth hence, IWS bears no resemblance to any other form of state.

8. Contemporary Islamic States

Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy. However, according to the Basic Law of Saudi Arabia adopted by royal decree in 1992, the king must comply with Sharia (Islamic law) and the Quran, while the Quran and the Sunnah (the traditions of Muhammad) are declared to be the country’s constitution, no political parties or national elections are permitted (Madawi, 2010). The economy of Saudi Arabia is a command one seeking to achieve Maslaha within the framework of the Shari’ah.

Many Muslim countries have incorporated Islamic law in part, into their legal systems. some Muslim states have declared Islam to be their state religion in their constitutions, but do not apply Islamic law in their courts (Hatem, 2010). Islamic states which are not Islamic monarchies are usually referred to as Islamic republics such as the Islamic Republics of Pakistan, Mauritania, Iran and Afghanistan (Moschtaghi, 2010). Pakistan adopted the title under the constitution of 1956. Mauritania adopted it on 28 November 1958. Iran adopted it after the 1979 Revolution that overthrew the Pahlavi dynasty. In Iran, the form of government is known as “Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists”. Afghanistan was run as an Islamic state (“Islamic State of Afghanistan”) in the post communist era since 1992 but then de facto by the Taliban (“Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan”) in areas controlled by them since 1996, and after the 2001 overthrow of the Taliban the country is still known as the “Islamic Republic of Afghanistan”. Despite the similar name, the countries differ greatly in their governments and laws. Pan-Islamism is a form of religious nationalism within political Islam which advocates the unification of the Muslim world under a single Islamic state, often described as
a caliphate. The most famous, powerful and aggressive modern pan-Islamic group that pursues objective to unifying Muslim world and establish worldwide caliphate is wahhabi/salafi jihadist movement Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Hatem, 2010).

9. Conclusion

The IWS represents a divine system of administering the affairs of people towards their spiritual and material welfare as enshrined in the Qur’an and the Sunnah. Ensuring maslaha (Public Welfare) in this world and the hereafter is the main goal of IWS. It is clear from the above that, the IWS is unique in ideology, superior in operations, exceptional in strategies and all encompassing in affairs. With necessary imperatives put in place, the policy trust of IWS is anchored towards creating an ideal environment for the realization of human welfare (spiritual and material) through Shari’ah provisions (Qur’an and Sunnah). Moreover, there is a complete integration of economic, social, political and cultural spheres of life towards achieving good life in this world and the hereafter.

In view of the above, IWS is the perfect system for the realization of human welfare, guided by the Islamic principles that coherently and rigorously explain every aspect of mankind’s activities and provide solution to every problem bedeveiling mankind and his society hence, maximizing individual and social welfare.

References


