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## **EMPOWERING EDUCATION AMONG ASNAF THROUGH DISTRIBUTION OF ZAKAT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MAQASID SYARIAH**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the empowerment of education among the asnaf through the distribution of zakat according to the perspective of maqasid syariah. This study presents the debate of scholars regarding the distribution of zakat to strengthen the education of asnaf and its implementation in Malaysia. This study was conducted using content analysis methods through deductive, inductive, and comparative methods. Studies show that, through the perspective of maqasid syariah, the distribution of zakat to asnaf can increase the level of education of this group.

**Keywords:** asnaf zakat; education; maqasid syariah.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Zakat is a social responsibility mandated by Allah SWT. Zakat is also a responsibility of the government that is closely related to the system of government of a country. Neglecting to pay zakat and failing to distribute it effectively is an offence to the law of Allah SWT and the hadith of Rasulullah SAW. In the aspect of education, zakat plays a big role in

ensuring that the asnaf get a perfect education for the well-being of their lives.

Although the collection of zakat is getting better, it still raises a lot of debate and problems. According to Hairunnizam Wahid et al. (2009), the problem of the distribution method, the distribution of zakat to eligible or not asnaf, and the problem of poverty that still exists even though the distribution of zakat has been implemented, has disfigured the performance and achievement of the zakat institution itself.

Nasrul Hisyam Nor Muhammad et. al (2012) stated that the collection of zakat in the State of Pahang showed an increase in performance from 2000 to 2010. However, the rate of distribution of zakat in the state is still low at only 51.6% in 2006 (Md Hairi Md Hussin. (2009).

Although the number of poor asnaf is declining as a result of zakat fund assistance, a minimal increase in their monthly income puts them simply above the Poverty Line Income (PGK), allowing them to easily fall back into poverty if applicable changes in economic conditions, especially for those on the fringes. Therefore, it is very important that the educational program be enhanced for the asnaf. This article will focus on the aspect of zakat distribution to strengthen education based on the perspective of *Maqasid Syariah*.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted using document analysis methods and statistical data. The selection of this method is believed to meet the objectives of the study because this research refers to concepts, meanings, definitions, characteristics, doctrines, and understandings. Three data collection procedures through document research.

## **OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this study is to examines the empowerment of education among asnaf through the distribution of zakat according to the perspective of *maqasid syariah*.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Zakat comes from the Arabic word. According to Ibrahīm Unīs et.al. (1985). Zakat comes from the original meaning of the language is "*al-zakāb*" from the basic word "*zakā*" which means fertile or increased. It also generally means blessing, growing, clean and good.

According to Ibn Manẓūr (1956), zakah if viewed from a linguistic point of view carries several meanings, namely blessings, growth, purification, goodness, cleansing and praiseworthy. Fuqaha Mazhab Syafii defines zakat as a rate determined from several types of property that must be issued by certain groups with certain conditions. (Al-Nawawī (2001).

According to Al-Qaraḍāwī, Yūsuf. (1999). asnaf is a group that is entitled to receive zakat through the provisions of Allah SWT. Zakat cannot be distributed by the authorities according to their own arrangements unless it must be in accordance with the provisions of Allah SWT. The evidence for determining the asnaf of zakat has been clearly stated in the Qur'an. Through surah al-Taubah verse 60, Allah SWT has explained those who are entitled to receive zakat through His word:

*Indeed, the alms (zakat) is only for the fuqara, and the masakin (poor) and amil who take care of it and the converts whose hearts are tamed and for the slaves who want to free themselves, and those who are in debt and to (spend) the way of Allah, and the travelers (the decision) on the way. (al-Taubah (9): 60)*

The verse clearly shows that there are eight groups of people who are entitled to receive zakat. The eight groups are *al-Fuqara* (the poor), *al-Masākīn* (the poor), **amil**, *Muallaf Qulūbuhum*, *al-Riqāb* (slaves), *al-Ghārimīn* (the debtors), *Fi Sabilillah* (the people who fought in the path of Allah) and finally *Ibn al-Sabil* (a traveler).

Some modern scholars expand the meaning of *Fi Sabilillah* as a distribution of zakat to all forms of virtue and goodness (*khairāt*) in this world and the hereafter to draw closer to Allah SWT for anyone who needs help. Among the scholars who pioneered this view were Imam al-Marāghī, Syed Qutub, Rāsyīd Redā, Maḥmūd Syaltūt and Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī.

According to al-Marāghi (1985), *Fi Sabilillah* is a word that gives space to every activity that can achieve the pleasure of Allah SWT. This means that every activity that aims to get closer to Allah SWT such as jihad fighters, performing Hajj and students who need help should receive the distribution of *Fi Sabilillah*. These funds should also be used for the purpose of managing deaths, building bridges, building dams, building mosques and all things that benefit Muslims. Such charitable work must be aimed at strengthening religious and national affairs and not for the benefit of the individual.

According to Syed Qutub (1970), *Fi Sabilillah* is an asnaf that has a wide scope, encompassing all the benefits of society to uphold the word and greatness of Allah SWT, especially to complete the needs of jihad and train volunteers. *Fi Sabilillah* also includes efforts to build Islamic dakwah centers and explain Islamic law and law to all walks of life.

According to Rāsyīd Reḍā (1354H), the word *Fi Sabilillah* is targeted at the welfare of all Muslims in various forms and programs widely. This program aims to strengthen the demands of religion and the country. In addition, this program also covers Islamic Shariah issues such as providing administrative facilities, management and defense equipment. Even the distribution of *Fi Sabilillah* should be used to provide military medical facilities and train the preachers to preach abroad through organized Islamic organizations as practiced by non-Muslim religious organizations.

According to Maḥmūd Syaltūt, *Fi Sabilillah* is for the common good and should not be used for the benefit of the individual. The most important provision is to equip the national defense with sophisticated equipment so that it is not easily colonized. These funds should be distributed for the purpose of financing hospitals for the public, roads and railways. In fact, this fund can also be used to train skilled preachers to convey the teachings of Islam and repel the propaganda thrown by the enemies of Islam. Activities that can live and maintain the teachings of the Qur'an should not be prevented from getting zakat assistance for this asnaf. Therefore, this asnaf is the most widely understood asnaf. This Asnaf can be interpreted as the whole spiritual and physical program as long as it is for the benefit of the people.

Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī (1999) states that fighting for the religion and law of Allah is implemented through the path of war at certain times and

places. But there are times like today, attacks on Islamic thought become more important and critical than physical attacks. If the *jumbur fuqaha* limited the distribution of asnaf *Fi Sabilillah* only to the needs of war, today we see new forms of war. Among them are attacks in the form of intellectual, spiritual and Islamic da'wah. This war demanded the struggle of da'wah and pen to defend the Islamic faith and sharia.

The development of education is seen to have a great impact on transformation the life of asnaf zakat. This development starts with the lowest stage i.e. pre-school up to tertiary level. This educational development program provide assistance such as school fees, school uniforms, school supplies, sponsorship of scholarships to local and foreign undergraduates, as well as the provision of zakat to the memorizers of the al-Quran. Through economic development, knowledge for business and entrepreneurship provided also provide capital and hardware assistance business (Hassan & Nur, 2016).

From the Arabic point of view, the word *maqāṣid* is a plural word *maqṣad* meaning straight, frugal, simple, towards something, meaning or intention. The most appropriate meaning of *maqāṣid* here is purpose, purpose or objective. (Al-Fayyūmi, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad (1987); Ibrahīm Muṣṭafa et. Al (1998)).

Wahbah al-Zuhaylī (2007) also defines the *maqāṣid syarīah* as *maslahah* that is to be achieved behind the texts either in the form of *kuliyāt* or *juziyyāt*. This Maqāṣid covers the goals, outcomes and meanings that sharia wants to achieve through the determination of the law at all times and places.

*Maqāṣid syarīah* in the distribution of zakat is based on the principles of *sharia* contained in *al-Darūriyyāt al-Khams* which is to preserve religion, soul, mind, family and property. Preserving these five things is not only agreed upon by Islam alone, but other religions also recognize its importance. (al-Syāṭibī, Abū Ishāq (1991).

Muhammad Firdaus Suhaimi (2021) has conducted a study on Training program in developing asnaf in Selangor. The study found that LZS has implemented training development programs in the form of entrepreneurship and economics programs, spirituality and career development. These programs are designed specifically for the purpose of removing asnaf from poverty and destitution as well as

building a noble personality by no longer expecting assistances from the Selangor Zakat Board.

Based on the views of scholars, it can be concluded that the distribution of zakat to strengthen education is very significant from the aspect of legal debate as well as current practice in Malaysia. This distribution of zakat can be implemented across asnaf who need educational assistance whether they are the poor, converts, people who are in debt (*gharimin*), *Fi Sabilillah* and *ibnussabil*.

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The table below describes the theoretical framework of the distribution of educational zakat to asnaf. it can be divided into three main aspects namely *daruriyat*, *hajat* and *tabsiniyat*.

**Table 1:** Level of Importance of *Maqāṣid Syariah* (adapted from Azman Ab Rahman *et. Al*, 2017)

Level of Importance of <i>Maqāṣid Syariah</i>	Strengthening	Controls/ Restrictions
<i>Ḍarūriyyāt</i>	The maintenance of the asnaf intellect is like educational assistance. Examples of asnaf <i>Ibn al-Ṣabil</i>	Controlling the damage of asnaf thinking such as control over alcohol and drug abuse.
<i>Hajjiyyāt</i>	Development of asnaf intellect such as educational assistance. Example of <i>asnaf Ibn al-abil</i>	Eradication of ignorance/ illiteracy among asnaf.
<i>Tabsiniyyāt</i>	Instructions to do something worthwhile	Prohibition from engaging in negligent activities.

## RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Maqāṣid syarīah in the distribution of zakat is to preserve the human mind. Word of Allah SWT:

*But those who are steadfast and profound among them and those who believe, all believe in that which has been sent down to you (the Quran) and that which has been sent down before you, - especially those who establish prayer and those who pay zakat, and those who believe in Allah and the Last Day; They are the ones to whom We will give him a great reward. (Al-Nisa' (4): 162)*

In this verse, Allah SWT explains about the characteristics of people who will receive great rewards by Him, namely those who have deep knowledge, believe in the Qur'an and the books revealed to the previous prophets, establish prayers, pay zakat and believe in Allah and the Last Day. In this verse, it is stated that the nature of people who have deep knowledge is those who also pay zakat. (Al-Ṭabarī, 1388H).

Preserving the faith and purifying human thought is very important to connect human beings with Allah SWT so that the goal of a Muslim's life is clearly based on the true *maqāṣid*. (Al-Qaraḍāwī, Yūsuf. (1999). Education is a basic need (*ḍarūri*) for every human being. Therefore, to meet this need, it needs constant finance. There are those who are less fortunate financially to continue their education, such as the poor and needy asnaf who only rely on educational zakat to pay school fees and to get school aid.

From the point of view of *ijābī*, the distribution of zakat funds through educational programs such as knowledge development activities, soft skills, lifelong learning and empowerment of human capital is seen in line with *maqāṣid syarīah* at the level of *ḥājīāt* in preserving the mind (Azman Ab Rahman, Siti Martiah Anwar ,2014) Similarly, the right to think which includes freedom of thought and expression in the current context, includes the establishment of research centers in strategic thinking, libraries, adult classes, efforts to eradicate illiteracy and the establishment of education and training centers (Muhammad Yusuf Khalid, Mohd Rumaizuddin Ghazali and Dzulkifli Abdul Razak (2015).

For example, the selection of *Ibn al-Sabil* as one of the asnaf recipients of zakat has certain wisdom, especially for the purpose of knowledge development. This is because among the objectives of seeking knowledge is to deepen knowledge and take lessons from the creation of Allah SWT on earth. (Al-Daghistānī, Maryam Aḥmad. (1992). Word of Allah SWT:

*Say: Travel on the earth, and see how Allah has created the creation from the beginning; then Allah will start the creation again (in the hereafter) in the form of a new event. Lo! Allah is Able to do all things.* (al-ʿAnkabūt (29): 20)

Among the signs of a servant's obedience to Allah SWT is to abandon all evils. Next, a Muslim must remember Allah SWT by doing obedience such as traveling to see the signs of His greatness and the effects of the previous ummah whether the goodness of the obedient or the consequences of the disobedient. (Al-Rāzī, Fakhruddin Ibn Ḍiya 'al-Dīn . (604H).

The distribution of zakat to asnaf such as *Ibn al-Sabil* is a *salbi* approach to reduce the illiteracy rate among the Muslim community. The intellect is more important than lineage and property. Therefore, Islam strictly forbids the consumption of alcohol or drugs in the slightest. This is because it is able to eliminate the function of the mind. When the mind is insane, it will bring harm to oneself and others. Drunk people will do things beyond their sanity such as adultery and rape. No less also by taking drugs, a person will commit crimes such as stealing, robbing and killing. (Azman Ab Rahman, Muhammad Ridhwan Ab Aziz (2016).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Education zakat fund helps the Malaysian government in addressing the problem of education among the poor and needy. For example, RM 35,545,304.00 was allocated in 2012 by the Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Resam Melayu Kelantan (MAIK) Kelantan to a total of 28.696 recipients. Meanwhile, in the state of Johor, a total of RM11,250,000.00 education zakat fund was given to 3087 students by Majlis Agama Islam Johor (MAIJ). (MAIK, MAIJ website on 31 November 2016) Meanwhile, Lembaga Zakat Selangor LZS has allocated RM 1,115,752.00 to help asnaf



*Fi Sabilillah* in 2018. (JAWHAR, 2020). This clearly shows that zakat funds also allocated huge funds in education.

Preserving the mind at the level of *tahṣiniyyāt* is like staying away from activities that can cause forgetfulness, listening and seeing something that is not beneficial. These things will not interfere with the existence of thought and cause difficulties if ignored. (Zaharuddin Abdul Rahman (2012) The words of the Prophet SAW from Abū Hurairah r.a:

*One of the perfect signs of one's Islam is to leave something useless.  
(Ibn Mājah, Abī 'Abdullah Muḥammad Ibn Yazīd. (1417H).  
Al-Syaibānī, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal. (1995).)*

Therefore, being able to distribute zakat to asnaf who need help to increase the level of education to achieve the objectives of maqasid syariah in the preservation of the mind is very important. This is especially when looking at the various economic constraints faced by the community especially during the COVID-19 pandemic which affected various layers of society.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the distribution of zakat is very important to be implemented for asnaf who need to improve the level of their education. This is in line with the maqasid syariah, which emphasises the preservation of the mind as an aspect that must be given priority. Along with current developments, the aspect of education implemented online, especially with the existence of the COVID-19 pandemic, requires asnaf to be empowered so that they do not lag behind in the aspect of education. The increase in the cost of education due to the effects of this pandemic needs to get the attention of Zakat Management Centers throughout the country so that education among asnaf can continually be preserved.

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