



# An Integrative Model of Waqf, Sadaqah and Takaful for Poverty Alleviation through Empowering Women Farmers in the Rural Gambia

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## Abstract

The agony of poverty on the globe is rather a perplexing one; despite the growth of global economies and advances in science and technology, yet over 700 million people is living in extreme poverty globally. Approximately 241 million are from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries, with just 9 of the Low-Income countries accounting for more than 40%. Despite these interesting statistics on poverty, the OIC countries housed more than two-thirds of the world's energy resources and 40% of its natural resources and yet accounts for more than half of the countries under the Low Human Development Index (HDI). According to the World Bank estimates, the COVID-19 pandemic could push about 70-100 million people into extreme poverty. The pandemic is drastically changing the poverty dynamics globally with Sub Saharan African countries deem to be the most affected. The Gambia, a member of the OIC and Sub Saharan African, has 48% of her population living below the poverty line with an HDI ranking of 174 out of 189. The Gambia produces only half of the food it needs, with acute malnutrition at 10%, and 23% of children are stunted. As conventional policies have been deployed over the years to fight poverty, it is only fair to raise the curtains on the potentials of Islamic Social Financing that can also complement the global efforts in eradicating poverty. As a conceptual paper, this study employed qualitative methods to present the potentials of agricultural investment through a hybrid model of waqf, sadaqah, and takaful to aid women farmers of the rural Gambia in financing their agricultural activities.

*Keywords:* Poverty, COVID-19, agricultural investment, waqf, sadaqah, takaful

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Global Poverty Level

Despite the vast improvement in the economic well-being of billions of people, about 10% (736 million people) of the world's population still dwell in extreme poverty (i.e. less than US\$1.90 a day), 50% of which are under 18 years of age, 80% of people living on less than US\$1.90/day, resides in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa and 1.3 billion people are living in multidimensional poverty (UNDP, 2020). The majority of these people are vulnerable to climate change disasters, disease outbreaks, increased crime rates and other social vices. Hence, the level of obnoxious situation instigated by poverty gave rise to inequality and an avenue for social strife.

Islamic Finance has recently registered positive progress growth with a global asset of about US\$3 trillion IFSB (2019). However, it is failing to adequately address the alarming level of poverty in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries. This is due to the inadequate creation of sufficient economic activities among member countries to lift the poor and destitute out of this obnoxiousness. Despite a total of 57 member countries the OIC accounts for almost one-fourth of the world's population. Despite that, the aggregate GDP of these member countries accounts for less than 9% of the global GDP. According to COMCEC (2019), approximately 241 million people are living under US\$1.90 a day in OIC countries, with

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just 9 of the Low-Income countries accounting for more than 40%. Despite these interesting statistics on poverty, the OIC countries housed more than two-thirds of the world's energy resources and 40% of its natural resources and yet accounts for more than half of the countries under the Low Human Development Index (HDI).

### *1.2 State of Poverty and Agricultural Development in the Gambia*

As a member of the OIC, about 48% of Gambia's population lives in poverty with an HDI ranking of 174 out of 189. According to the World Food Programme (WFP) (2019), Gambia produces only 50% of the food it needs, with acute malnutrition at 10.3%, while 23% of children are stunted. Agriculture serves as the major economic growth driver in the Gambia, contributing over 20% of the GDP and providing employment and income for over 70% of the population. Farming activities serve as the main source of income for the majority of the populace living in the rural that rely on erratic rainfall. Despite the viability of the agricultural sector, farming activities are vulnerable to climate change crisis such as erratic rainfalls, drought, floods, lack of farm implements and inadequate farming skills, which subsequently impact the availability of food supply (WFP, 2019).

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors in the Gambia for economic development. The crop-sub sector alone generates about 40% of the foreign exchange earnings. Also, about half of the population dwell in rural areas, and agriculture remains a predominant source of employment and economic growth along the value chains, from production, processing to marketing. Crop production provides about 75% of the household incomes and employs 70% of the labour force, accounting for over 20% of the GDP (FAO, 2019).

Women comprise 78% of the economically active population who work in agriculture compared to 57% of men. Although more women than men work in agriculture, they, however, are not accorded the same rights as men, such as land, credit, implements, technology, and access to markets (FAO, 2019). The growth in the agricultural sector is about half of the national target because of the insufficient investment and inadequate output, which is aggravated by persistent gender inequalities and inaccessibility to farm inputs. The most exposed people are regularly at the peril of being unable to procure sufficient food. Crop production fell by 26% because of long dry spells in 2017 (WFP, 2019). Aggravating to this, fluctuating market prices had detrimental effects for vulnerable households, who spend half of their meagre income on food. Therefore, the intervention of Islamic social financing instruments like waqf, sadaqah and takaful can improve the agricultural sector and, consequently, the living standard of the people as the Gambia is a Muslim majority country.

## **2. Literature Review**

The prominence of agricultural productivity in reducing poverty, especially in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) like the Gambia and many other Sub-Saharan African countries, is well recognized in academic literature. The majority of the households in Sub-Saharan African countries depend on subsistence agriculture for their livelihood. However, the striking level of poverty in these regions impedes the ability of these people to realise the full potentials of agricultural productivity. Hence, enhancements in agricultural activities like mechanisation, higher quality improvement in farming techniques, and crop yields will significantly impact the lives of these indigenous since the majority of them are involved in it to provide a living for their families.

### *2.1 Empirical evidence of poverty alleviation through an upsurge in agricultural productivity*

Agricultural productivity has been defined as a measure of total output per hectare, per unit of input, yield, or worker. However, according to Mellor (1999), "*regardless of which measure is used, empirical studies support the idea that improvements in agricultural productivity are important for poverty reduction*". Schneider and Gugerty (2011) identified in their literature that there are several paths via which upsurges in agricultural productivity can mitigate poverty, including employment generation, rural non-farm multiplier effects, real income changes, and food price effects. However, these are hindered by lack of technology adoption, initial asset endowments, and constraints to market access may all inhibit the ability of the poorest to participate in the gains from agricultural productivity growth. Dhahri and Omri (2020) concluded that ending poverty and hunger in developing nations depends on the development of the agriculture sector, the inflows of FDI, and the composition of foreign aids given to the host countries.

Extensive literature has backed with empirical evidence that agricultural productivity significantly reduces the level of poverty. Dhahri and Omri (2020), Datt and Ravallion (2007), Byerlee et al. (2005) and Timmer (1995) all did studies on the impact of agricultural productivity on poverty reduction using a variety of productivity measures, and all the results point to a significant reduction in poverty. According to Badibanga and Ulimwengu (2020) in their study on agricultural productivity and poverty concluded additional agricultural investment coupled with improved agricultural inputs productivity will speed up a country's pace toward achieving growth and poverty reduction targets. Irz et al. (2001) stated that a percentage of growth in agricultural productivity reduces the poverty headcount ratio by about 1% to 2%. Equally, Irz et al. (2001) found that every 1% increase in agricultural GDP leads to a 1.61% increase in the incomes of the poorest quintile. Moeis et al. (2020) and Thorbecke and Jung (1996) in their study on poverty in Indonesia also concluded that the majority of poverty reduction is as a result of massive growth in agricultural productivity.

According to Mellor (1999) and Dhahri and Omri (2020), an increase in agricultural production (output) will lead to lower food prices, an increase in farmers' income, which will result in their increased demand for the goods and services produced by the non-farming rural poor, hence, the multiplier effect. Thirtle et al. (2003) and Moeis et al. (2020) also mentioned that agricultural growth by increasing both production and employment gave rise to a significant benefit for both poor farmers, landless labourers, and the rural poor through the non-farm economy.

Schneider and Gugerty (2011) explained the multiplier effects of how an increase in agricultural productivity on the respective stakeholders and the economy at large can alleviate poverty. This explains that an increase in agricultural productivity will lead to increased output. Hence, a decreased in real food prices and increasing demand for food result in increased on-farm employment. These will result in an increased farm household real income, hence, triggered the demand for non-food goods and services, which give rise to off-farm employment. This increase in non-farming household real income causes an increase in real wages that cause a decrease in the poverty level.

In the case of the Gambia, this multiplier effect will result in an increase in both on-farm and off-farm employment with an increase in real income, thus, enabling these women, who are mostly the bedrock of their families, to be able to provide food for the family and send their children to school. However, the poverty among these women causes the stoppage of their children's education, and in some families, all the children have to stop schooling as a result of the dilemma of sustenance, education, and healthcare. Therefore, the impact of agricultural productivity in alleviating poverty cannot be overemphasised in the Gambia and other Least Developed Countries.

## *2.2 Islamic Social Finance Instrument*

This study aims at establishing the connection between agricultural investment and productivity. Hence, the paper proposes an unconventional model of financing agricultural investment through Islamic Social Finance (ISF) tools. The proposed model will deploy the ISF concepts and instruments in the form of waqf (Islamic endowment), sadaqah (voluntary charity), and takaful (Islamic insurance). The main tool of the proposed model (WST-Hybrid Model) will be centred on waqf, supported by sadaqah and takaful. This is because the waqf properties or resources may not be enough or available at the same time and because sadaqah as a voluntary charity comes in many forms and can qualify as little as removing a stone on the pathway. Sadaqah will serve as a buffer in raising funds as it can be raised and distributed without much restriction.

Hence, through sadaqah, people with expertise in agriculture can volunteer by transferring their expertise through training and mentorship to farmers. On the other hand, the takaful will serve as a safety net for the sustainability of the model. This will be the vehicle through which part of the income generated from the returns of the agricultural investment will be invested into the takaful scheme and serve as a protection and support for farmers who may experience poor productivity. Therefore, the sadaqah and takaful as ISF tools are relevant to the model as they provide support and sustainability

### *2.2.1 Waqf*

Waqf (plural Awqaf) refers to an endowment made by a Muslim for a religious, educational, or charitable cause. It also means detaining, withholding, or retaining an asset, for instance, like a property, land, cash, or cash equivalent, to deter it from been saleable and alienable while directing its usufruct to a legal channel of spending (Elasrag, 2017). According to Kahf (2015), waqf refers to "holding certain property and preserving

it for the confined benefit of certain philanthropy and prohibiting any use or disposition of it outside that specific objective". Muhammad (2015) stated in the Arabic language, the term waqf means "*habs*" (to obstruct, shut off, confine or retain). In the Islamic law, it means to retain property that is specific and owned whose ownership is transferable and it can be benefitted from while the property itself remains, and this is by spending disposal of it, while the financial proceeds go towards something permissible and existent.

According to Magda et al. (2016), waqf is referred to as a "financial charitable act established by withholding immovable and movable properties to perpetually spend its revenue to fulfil public or family needs, based on the preferences and conditions set by the founder. Once the property is created as a waqf, it can never be given as a gift, inherited, or sold. It belongs to Allah (SWT), and the waqf property remains intact. Only its generated revenue is channelled to its beneficiaries". As an imperative socio-economic development instrument, hence, if implemented appropriately, the results can be drastic in alleviating poverty and improve the living standards of people. Waqf has been in existence since the pre-Islamic era; however, it begins to flourish and innovatively administered during the Islamic era up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was estimated that awqaf properties in terms of agricultural lands in certain Muslim communities like Turkey (Ottoman caliphate), Egypt, Syria, and Morocco were up to more than two-thirds of the total land. Hence, these countries use these said properties to address the economic problems of their people by reallocating such resources from existing consumption to invest into productive areas that create revenues for future consumption of their people, hence, the economic perspective of waqf. Thus, waqf, in an economic sense, indicates a sacrifice of an opportunity cost between present consumption and investment for future consumption (Kahf, 1998).

Although there are no direct rulings on waqf in the Quran, the hadith provides a detailed description of waqf, as narrated in the following hadith and numerous others;

(1) *Ibn Umar reported: Umar acquired land at Khaibar. He came to Allah's Apostle (may peace be upon him) and sought his advice regarding it. He said: Allah's Messenger, I have acquired land in Khaibar. I have never acquired property more valuable for me than this, so what do you command me to do with it? The Prophet (S.A.W) said: If you like, you may keep the corpus intact and give its produce as Sadaqah. So Umar gave it as Sadaqah declaring that the property must not be sold or inherited or given away as a gift. And Umar devoted it to the poor, to the nearest kin, and to the emancipation of slaves, aired in the way of Allah and guests (Sahih Muslim: Book 13, No. 4006).*

(2) *Uthman ibn Affan narrated that he heard Allah's Messenger (SAW) say, "If anyone builds a mosque for Allah then Allah will build for him the like of it in Paradise."* (Sahih Muslim: Book 4, No. 1084).

#### *2.2.1.1 Types of Waqf*

The scope of awqaf is colossal and comes in various forms and kinds; however, for this study, we will limit our focus on the property and cash form of waqf. Property waqf is the most common form of awqaf, and it is a waqf where the bequeathed assets are in the form of physical assets like housing, buildings, mosques, hospitals, education centres, orchards, farmlands, and other beneficial properties for the community. As waqf properties cannot be given as a gift, inherited, or sold hence, they become inalienable and perpetual for communal beneficent.

As a modern type of awqaf, "cash waqf" is quite distinct from the other forms; here, the bequeathed asset is in the form of cash. Hence, it is imperative to note that waqf properties are not limited to only immovable but movable assets, too, as explained by Magda et al. (2016). According to Lahsasna (2010), "cash waqf is a mobilization fund from donors based on perpetuity and investing them in productive assets that provide either usufruct or revenues". Thus, the redistribution or apportioning of such funds to agricultural activities, especially for women empowerment and poverty alleviation, can be a productive venture and a path towards achieving SDG 1.

#### *2.2.2 Sadaqah (Voluntary Charity)*

Sadaqah is an Arabic word derived from the word "*Sadq*," which referred to truth or righteousness. In Islam, all righteous actions are considered as sadaqah, even the removal of a harmful object from the footpath. Sadaqah refers to the spending from one's belongings and capabilities in the way of Allah (SWT) ( to help the

poor, needy, orphan, destitute, etc) in seeking His pleasure and mercy. Hence, sadaqah plays an integral part in the life of a Muslim's faith. The holy Quran affirms this in the following verse (Al-Baqarah: Verses 261 and 277) respectively;

*“The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed which grows seven spikes, in each spike is a hundred grains. Allah multiplies His reward for whom He wills, for Allah is vast and knowing”.*

*“Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds and establish prayer and give zakah will have their reward with their Lord, and there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve”.*

According to Bensaïd and Grine (2013), “Charitable spending is not limited as means of spiritual purification, but also as an instrument for building socio-economic sustainability and social reforms resulting in the well-being of an individual and society in the world and hereafter”. Therefore, extending a hand in support of women vendors and farmers to get established, financing the schooling of orphans, providing food, shelter, and clothing for the destitute, settling the medical bills of patients, reaching out to the community, and providing assistance in the provision of clean drinking water, milling machine centres, building schools, hospitals, markets, roads, etc., all this fall under the purview of "*sadaqah-tul jaaria*" (an everlasting charity). The benefit of sadaqah is not limited to the spiritual world but the material world too; hence, it serves as a deterrent and protection against different kinds of evil and related negative afflictions of this world. Sadaqah expiates sins and prevents punishment on the Day of Judgement. Therefore, these abundances of dual benefits for both worlds and the inclination of Muslims towards sadaqah will only continue to grow, hence, contribute to the sustainability of the socio-economic status of the society and institutions (Htaya et al., 2013).

### *2.2.3 Takaful (Islamic Insurance)*

Takaful is a word derived from the Arabic verb "*Kafala*," which means to take care of one's needs (Zulkifli et al., 2012). Therefore, the contract between at least two parties agreeing to jointly guarantee one another in the event of a loss, as a consequence of being afflicted by a calamity, defines the term takaful. However, the origin of takaful can be traced back to over 14 centuries ago in the Arabian Peninsula of Mecca during the pre-Islamic era where it was a custom of the pagan Arabs for a killer to pay blood-money as compensation to the family of the slew. Later on, this custom was approved by Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) due to its merit to avoid feud and war among the community.

Islamic Financial Services Board (2009) defined takaful as the “Islamic counterpart of conventional insurance and exists in both Family (and “Life”) and General forms. Takaful is derived from an Arabic word that means a joint guarantee, whereby a group of participants agrees among themselves to support one another jointly for the losses arising from specified risks”. Hence, conceptually takaful is a form of insurance but one that is participatory and based on risk-sharing by parties on a cooperative principle rather than a risk transfer to a third party as in the case of conventional insurance.

As one of the most vulnerable sectors, the agricultural industry usually encounters issues related to drought due to erratic rainfall causing extreme temperature, pests, and diseases, etc., which usually affect the quality and yield of the crop production. There is also a potential risk of fluctuation in market prices of commodities due to various macroeconomic factors. These challenges can only get severe for the women farmers who are most susceptible. Therefore, it is deemed necessary to include takaful in the proposed integrative model as a mitigating factor to reduce the risk of default and burden on the farmers in the event of such losses. As a cooperative entity, the takaful will not only serve as a guaranteed element, but one which will also motivate the participants and reduce moral hazard as no member will like to be the root cause of the downfall of the project at hand. Hence, it will serve as a safety net for the farmers. As a Muslim majority country, the Gambia has yet to establish a central institution responsible for the administration of waqf, sadaqah, and related charities for socio-economic development. Hence, this study envisages the existence of these institutions and thus, their impact on agricultural productivity as a poverty alleviation mechanism.

### 3. Discussions

This is rather a conceptual paper, thus, descriptive and theoretical and employed a qualitative research method. Hence, the paper focuses on the literature by describing the level of poverty in the Gambia and the potentials of agricultural productivity investment through waqf, sadaqah and takaful funding structures to achieve both the National Development Plan, National Social Protection Policy, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) most especially poverty and hunger elimination (SDGs 1 & 2). Therefore, the paper is based on the concept of implementing a blended model of waqf, sadaqah and takaful with a *Mudarabah* contract in the agricultural investment project. To the extent of the researcher's knowledge, there is no research or literature of such for the Gambia at the time of writing this paper.

#### 3.1 The Components of the Proposed Integrative Model of Waqf, Sadaqah, and Takaful

This model is based on a quartette relationship between the sources of endowment (waqf and sadaqah), NAWFA (*Wakil*), Farmers, and Takaful (Islamic Insurance). Whereby the latter serving as a security element for the sustainability of the project

##### 3.1.1 The National Women Farmers Association (NAWFA)

National Women Farmers' Association (NAWFA) is a membership-based association of 48,000 women farmers, operating in 1074 villages clustered in 74 smaller associations, which started in the late 2000s to initiate a development programme on integrated crop and livestock production, processing, and marketing. The purpose of the programme is to promote commercial agriculture among women farmers, which will encourage and support women to do farming as a business. Therefore, as an already established body that coordinates the affairs of local women farmers in the country, NAWFA will serve as an agent (*Wakil*) for the waqf institution in the execution of the project under the proposed Model.

##### 3.1.2 The Sources of Endowment

The sources of the endowment will come from the awqaf and sadaqah donated by individuals and institutions to the waqf institution, which will include both cash and kind. The targeted endowments through the awqaf and sadaqah are but not limited to cash, agricultural lands, farm implements, tractor, threshing machines, fertilizers and manures, seeds, and pesticides. These endowments will be used to fund the local women farmers through the coordination of the National Association of Women Farmers (NAWFA).

##### 3.1.3 The Concept of *Tabarru'*

*"Tabarru'"* is an Arabic word (literally referred to as a donation); it is a shared responsibility and guarantee principle which explicitly mentions that the money donated by the participants it is purely to assist fellow participants in the scheme who require assistance according to the terms agreed as long as these terms are parallel with the Shariah rulings (Zulkifli et al., 2012). In this model, *"Tabarru'"* is the voluntary donation made by the participant (The Farmer) for the spirit of cooperation and sisterhood hence, fulfilling their obligation of mutual help and joint guarantee. These funds will be used to help the farmers that experienced poor harvest due to natural disaster or climate-related issues. Therefore, participants will ripe a dual reward firstly being issued through *halal* means ( $\neq$  Insurance) and secondly the benefit of charity, as the contribution by a participant is not only meant for the contributor but other members in the takaful scheme.

##### 3.1.4 The *Mudarabah* Contract

Saleem (2013, pp. 112) in his book entitled "Islamic Commercial Law", defined a *Mudarabah* as follows: *Mudarabah* is derived from the Arabic word "*daraba*," which means travelling for trade. *Mudarabah* refers to a contract in which one of the parties provides capital (*Sahib Al-Mal*), and the other contributes expertise, labour, and entrepreneurial skill (*Mudarib*) to conduct a particular business in which both parties would share profit.

In essence, the waqf institution will ensure a *Mudarabah* contract between (NAWFA) and the Farmers at the time when the Farmers will receive the agricultural inputs from the waqf and sadaqah sources (*cash, land, farm implements, machines, seeds, fertilizers, manures, and pesticides*) via NAWFA to cultivate. The NAWFA serves as a *wakil* (agent) for the waqf institution to distribute the resources among the Farmers, and the waqf institution will determine the profit-sharing ratio between the NAWFA and Farmers in the model while levying a 10% compulsory contribution of the profit ratio allocated for the takaful.

The outcome of this paper is a proposed integrative model of waqf, sadaqah and takaful for enabling local women farmers in the Gambia to have access to agricultural inputs to cultivate and earn a living. The model is a quartette nexus between the Waqf institution, NAWFA, the Farmers, and the Takaful firm. The latter serves as a support and security system for the sustainability of the project, as elaborated above. The model will avail the women farmers in the rural Gambia to have accessibility to farmlands, farming implements, fertilizers, seeds, animal breeds, and value-added mechanisms to achieve large-scale production and marketing of the agricultural produce.

### 3.1.5 Description of the Integrative Model of Waqf, Sadaqah, and Takaful (refer Figure 1)

1. The Source of Funding for the project will come from the awqaf properties and will be supported by sadaqah contribution by individual and corporations as support.
2. Both financial and physical resources are being released to the *Mudaribs* (Farmers) through NAWFA, the agent (*Wakil*).
3. A *Mudarabah* contract is signed between the *Wakil* and *Mudaribs* (i.e., NAWFA and FARMERS).
4. The Resources are disbursed to the different Specialised Farmers (crop producers, vegetable farmers, poultry management and animal husbandry).
5. This is the turnover of farming activities.
6. The principal amount is refunded back to the Waqf fund (for a cyclical investment of another batch/group of farmers).
7. Profit realised from the sales of the goods is shared between the *Wakil* and *Mudaribs* and the takaful contribution on a profit-sharing ratio of 30%:60%:10%, respectively.
8. NAWFA receives 30% of the profit realised from the sales of the agricultural produce.
9. A compulsory 10% of the profit paid as a contribution to the takaful firm by farmers as a membership contribution for the unforeseen circumstance that might affect any farmer in the scheme.
10. The Farmers receive a 60% profit from their farming activity.
11. The takaful firm pools the *Tabarru'* contribution by farmers into the general takaful fund.
12. The takaful firm invests in the general takaful fund.
13. The operational cost of takaful is deducted from the fund.
14. The profits or surplus realised from the investment is shared between the participants (Farmers) contribution in the takaful scheme, and the takaful firm will be on a profit-sharing ratio of 50%:50%.
15. The takaful firm uses its 30% share of the profit to cover its administrative expense and 70% to pay off dividends to shareholders of the firm.

As mentioned above, the model is a quartette relationship of the Waqf institution, that will be responsible for the distribution of the resources and the allocation of the profit-sharing ratio between the NAWFA (*Wakil*/agent of the Waqf institution) and the Farmers as illustrated below. A 30% of the profit will go to NAWFA as an agent fee, a 10% of the profit will be paid as *Tabarru'* contribution to the takaful firm for the sustainability of the project, and the remaining 60% of the profit goes to the Farmer.

## 4. Conclusion

The Women farmers in the Gambia are fundamental pillars in their respective families who are actively involved in agricultural activities to provide sustenance for their loved ones. However, these women face countless gender discrimination and stigma in trying to access agricultural inputs like farmlands, implements, fertilizers, manures, seeds, etc., for cultivation. Regardless of the enormous amount of agricultural aid coming into the country from donor organisations, we are yet to see a change in the status quo or uplift these women and their families from the shackles of abject poverty. Therefore, it is only prudent to test the strength of the recently flourishing Islamic Social Financing mechanism blossoming in other OIC countries. Hence, the proposed model for local women farmers in the agricultural sector since agriculture serves as the backbone of the Gambian economy with an employability rate of over 70% of the population and contributing over 20% to GDP. The reason for the women-centred approach of this model is that the women farmers comprise 78% of the economically active population who work in agriculture compared to just 57% of the men and the

women farming activities are year-round while that of the men is seasonal. These women whom most of the times are the ones involved in farming, and with little gains from the outputs, they provide food and educational expenses for their children. However, the model can also be replicated for the men too in the long run for more inclusive sustainability.

This model can ensure efficient and judicial use of resources by the Waqf institution under strict Shariah principles. NAWFA, which is the umbrella body of the national women farmers, will serve as the *Wakil* (agent) of the Waqf institution in the distribution of the resources to the farmers and monitoring of the project. The Waqf Institution will determine the distribution of the profit realised from the cultivation by the farmers. As a first-hand experience of the prevailing situations of these women and their willingness to prosper from their predicaments, that implementation of such a project can drastically change their status and pull them from the depths of poverty on to the plateau of self-sustenance and food sufficiency.

#### 4.1 Policy Implications and Recommendations

The establishment of a fully-fledged Waqf institution and the operation of the proposed model can yield a significant result in the quest to attain the major national policy plans like the National Development Plan (2018-2021), National Social Protection Policy (2015-2025), and Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2030). As enshrined in the 2018-21 National Development Plan (NDP) strategic priority areas; “a modern, sustainable, and market-oriented agriculture and livestock sector for increased food and nutrition security, income and employment generation, poverty reduction, and economic transformation, agriculture is viewed as a prime priority sector to achieve the country's development goals” (NDP, 2017). In the year 2015, the government of the Gambia, in collaboration with the UNDP and UNICEF (Banjul offices), drafted a National Social Protection Policy with the sole aim of poverty eradication and improvement in the social welfare of the Gambian people as enshrined in the policy mission statement i.e. “The long-term vision (2015-2025) for social protection is to establish, by 2035, an inclusive, integrated and comprehensive social protection system that will effectively provide protective, preventative, promote and transformative measures to safeguard the lives of all poor and vulnerable groups in The Gambia and contribute to broader human development, greater economic productivity and inclusive growth” (UNICEF, 2015).

To extend the arguable significance of this study to the development goal of the Gambia; a consistency can be drawn from the country's strive to meet the United Nations SDGs Agenda of 2030, which are centred around eradicating poverty and ending hunger, provide good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequality, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace, and justice strong institutions and partnership to achieve the goal. Most importantly, these above-mentioned contemporary policies are consistent with the core aims of eradicating all forms of poverty, good health and well-being, good education, and sustainable social, economic, and environmental existence. These global strategies and policies have been the core values and objectives of Islamic law (*Maqasid Shari'ah*), which dated back fourteen centuries ago. In his book "*Al-Mustasfa min 'Ilm al-Usool*" (On Legal theory of Muslim Jurisprudence), Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali outlined the five objectives of Islamic law (*Maqasid*), which can be traced both explicitly and implicitly from the holy Quran and the teachings and traditions of the noble Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) as follows; (1) Protection of religion, (2) Protection of life (3) Protection of intellect, (4) Protection of progeny and (5) Protection of wealth, further illustrates in Table 1.

Table 1: Relationship between Maqasid and SDGs, NDP and NSPP

| Maqasid Shariah (MS)         | SDGs 2016-2030      | NDP 2018-2021   | NSPP 2015-2025 |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| MS1: Protection of Religion  | SDGs:4,5,10,16      | NDP-SPs: 1      | NSPP-PAs: All  |
| MS2: Protection of Life      | SDGs:1,2,6,7,14,15, | NDP-SPs: 1,3,4  | NSPP-PAs: All  |
| MS3: Protection of Intellect | SDGs:3,4,9,11,12    | NDP-SPs:2,4,5,8 | NSPP-PAs: All  |
| MS4: Protection of Progeny   | SDGs:3,17           | NDP-SPs:7       | NSPP-PAs: All  |
| MS5: Protection of Wealth    | SDGs:8,16,17        | NDP-SPs:5,6,8   | NSPP-PAs: All  |

Notes: NDP-SPs: National Development Plans Strategic Priorities; NSPP-PAs: National Social Protection Policy Priority Areas

\*Source: (Imam Al-Ghazali: *Al-Mustasfa min 'ilm al-usul*, SDG 2030, NDP 2017 & NSPP 2015)



This study emphasises the need to establish a full-fledge Waqf institution to complement the socio-economic development projects and programs of the country amid the post-COVID-19 recovery strategy planning. However, the political will and commitment for implementation are paramount, public sensitisation and awareness campaigns to induce acceptability of Islamic Social Finance among the populace are eminent. A reform in the judiciary and educational infrastructure will be essential for this realisation to be more politically and socially sustainable.

The state has a prominent role in the successful realisation of this project since it is the mandate of the state to provide a peaceful and harmonised society by upholding social justice and transparency. The state should also promote the establishment of an Islamic financial system as an alternative for the Muslim community whose religion forbids the transactions of usury and related activities, which is the fundamental premise of conventional finance. The Islamic finance system will enable the proper distribution and redistribution of wealth through waqf, zakat, sadaqah, and other ISF tools to effectively complement the state efforts in alleviating poverty in the country. There should be a reform in the educational sector to cater for the training of people in Islamic finance and Islamic wealth management to fill the gap in human resources.

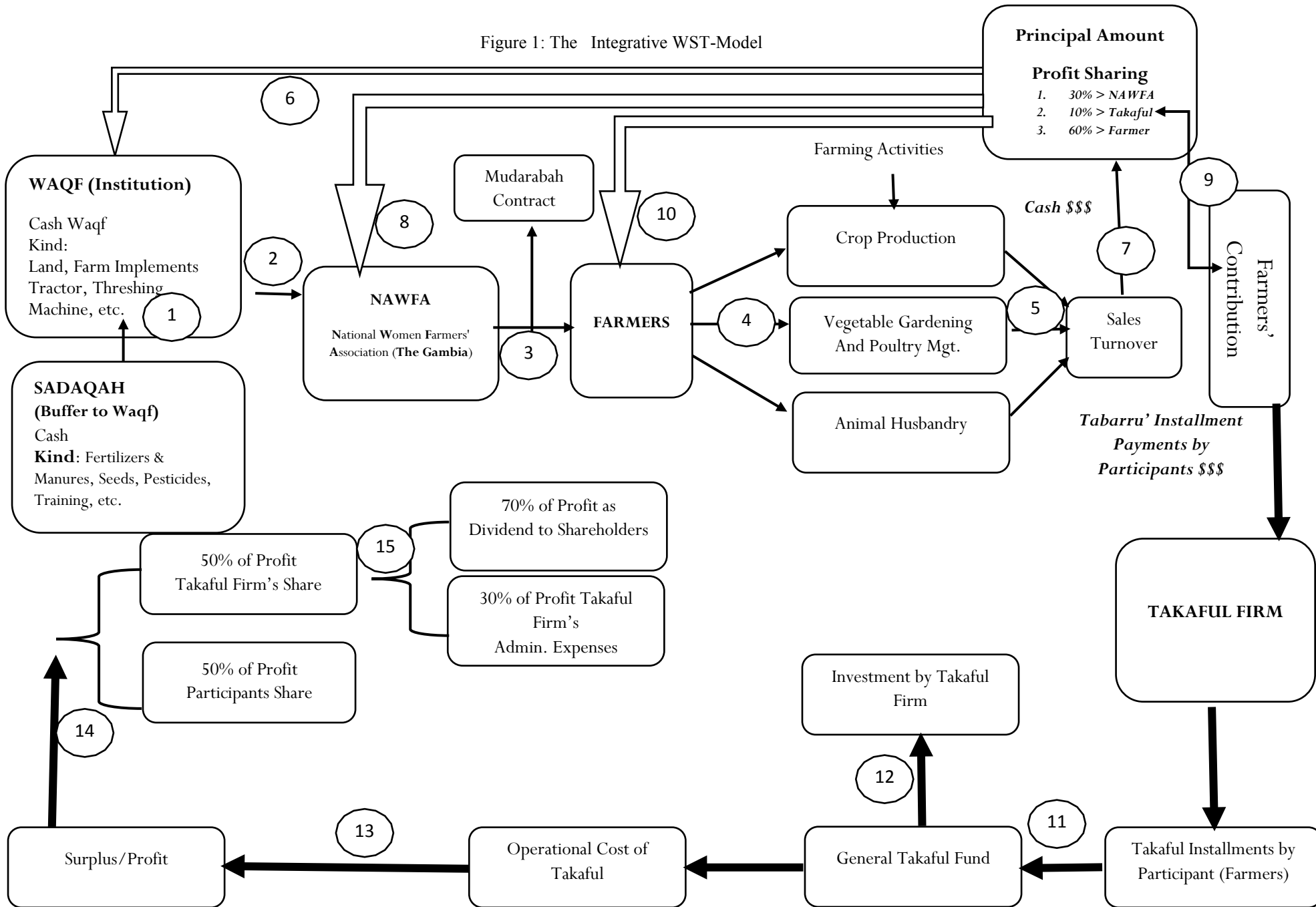
Thus, the study recommends the provision of an alternative financial system (Islamic) in The Gambia by the Central Bank with a Shariah regulatory body (Islamic Finance Jurisprudence experts) to achieve financial inclusiveness as a significant number of the population prefer not to bank with the conventional banks as a result of usury and manner of operations which are against their religion and belief. Hence, with such a financial system and an established national Waqf (Endowment) institution that can harness resources of the country and channel them to affect a positive impact on agricultural productivity as a poverty alleviation mechanism. Therefore, the idle land and other related assets can be put to useful activity if such institutions are available.

This study will serve as a roadmap and springboard for policymakers to better channel the state resources in the most productive areas of the country's economy, which is arguably agriculture, and it has the potential to achieve more than half of the above-mentioned sustainable national goals because of its multiplier effect on the lives of Gambians.

#### *4.2 Future Research Areas*

This study proposed an integrative waqf model to provide funding for women farmers in rural Gambia. Hence, a future study can also look into the awareness and readiness of the Gambian populace to accept the Islamic financial system. It will be interesting for a future study to assess the availability of waqf properties in the Gambia to measure the level of potential impact on national development. All this may be futile if the current legal system cannot accommodate the establishment of a national waqf institute. Therefore, a study reflecting the possibility of how the current legal system can afford the establishment of a national waqf institute in the Gambia is imperative.

Figure 1: The Integrative WST-Model



Source: Author own

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