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Editor, IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies (IJRCS)

Research Management Centre, RMC

International Islamic University Malaysia

53100 Gombak Campus

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Tel: (+603) 6421 5002/5010

Fax: (+603) 6421 4862

Website: <http://journals.iium.edu.my/irkh/index.php/ijrcs>

Comments and suggestions to: alwialatas@iium.edu.my

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Makmor Tumin

Demystifying the Religionisation of Commercial Begging in Northern Nigeria: The Revival of Philanthropy among Muslims

Aliyu Alhaji Rabiū,¹ Ibrahim Dahiru Idriss,² and Sani Rabiū³

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Abstract: This paper explores the concept of *ṣadaqah* (voluntary charity) in Islam, emphasising its role in encouraging Muslims to fulfil their social responsibility by providing financial assistance to the poor and needy. *Ṣadaqah* not only benefits the recipients, but also offers spiritual rewards to the giver from Allah (SWT). Just as *zakāh* (obligatory almsgiving), *ṣadaqah* strengthens social bonds and reduces economic disparities. In Northern Nigeria, the practice of *ṣadaqah* has been intertwined with the phenomenon of commercial begging, particularly among young students of Islam (*Almajirai*). This study critically examines the misassociation of commercial street begging with *ṣadaqah*, presenting an authentic Islamic perspective to promote genuine philanthropy among Muslims. Utilising qualitative research methodology, the study analyses data to highlight the potential of *waqf* (religious endowments) and *zakāh* as sustainable solutions to societal needs. It advocates for empowering the youth through education, entrepreneurship, and vocational training to reduce begging and foster peace and prosperity in the region. By addressing these issues, this paper aims to bridge the gap between religious teachings and contemporary challenges, offering practical solutions rooted in Islamic principles.

Keywords: *Ṣadaqah*, philanthropy, *maqāṣid al-sharʿah*, religionisation, commercialisation, begging, Northern Nigeria

Introduction

Islamic teachings elevate charity as a noble pursuit, with *zakāh* serving as an obligatory form of charity aimed at ensuring the equitable distribution of wealth and resources among individuals of diverse economic backgrounds. *Zakāh* involves collecting a specified percentage from the affluent and distributing it to designated beneficiaries. As outlined in the Qurʿan:

Al-Ṣadaqāt (here it means *zakāh*) are only for the *fuqarāʾ* (very poor people), and *al-masākīn* (poor people) and those employed to collect (the funds); and to attract the hearts of those who have been inclined (towards Islam); and to free the captives; and for those in debt; and for Allah's cause (i.e. for *mujāhidūn*—those fighting in the holy wars), and for the wayfarer (a traveller who is cut off from everything); a duty imposed by Allah. And Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise. (Surah At-Tawbah: 60)

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) further emphasised this by instructing, “Inform them that Allah has made it obligatory for them to pay *zakāh* from their properties, and it is to be taken from the wealthy among them and given to the poor among them” (Sahih

¹ Aliyu Alhaji Rabiū is a PhD Candidate at International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, ISTAC-IJUM. His is also a lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Gombe State University, Nigeria. Email: aliyurabiū39@gmail.com

² Ibrahim Dahiru Idriss is a lecturer in the Department of Primary Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum Yobe State, Nigeria. He is also a PhD Candidate at the Department of Usul al-Din and Comparative Religion, International Islamic University Malaysia. Email: ibrahimdahiruidriss@gmail.com

³ Sani Rabiū is a lecturer in the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Gombe State University, Gombe State, Nigeria. Email: srabiū@gsu.edu.ng, srsani84@gmail.com

al-Bukhari, Book 24, Hadith 478). The practice of *zakāh* not only benefits recipients, but also purifies givers and their wealth from impurities. As stated in the Qur'an:

Take *ṣadaqah* (alms) from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it, and invoke Allah for them. Verily! Your invocations are a source of security for them, and Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower. (Surah At-Tawbah: 103)

The primary aim of *zakāh* is to bridge the socioeconomic gap within society. Similarly, *ṣadaqah*, a voluntary form of charity, is highly recommended for Muslims as a rewarding act. Unlike *zakāh*, *ṣadaqah* has no minimum threshold (*niṣāb*), making it accessible to a broader range of Muslims. Each individual can contribute according to their means. As Allah (SWT) advises:

Let the rich man spend according to his means, and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him. Allah will grant after hardship, ease. (Surah Al-Ṭalāq: 7)

Historically, Muslims have upheld a strong sense of brotherhood (*al-ukhuwwah al-Islāmiyyah*) and solidarity, supporting one another and receiving aid from the public treasury (*Bayt al-Māl*). Consequently, the impoverished in Muslim communities were generally well cared for, and begging was discouraged. The Prophet encouraged labour-intensive endeavours over begging, advising individuals to seek dignified and noble means of subsistence. This approach fostered respect, love, and economic prosperity within Muslim societies.

Northern Nigeria holds some of the highest poverty rates in the country. According to the 2022 National Multidimensional Poverty Index, 63% of Nigerians live in poverty, with Muslim communities in the region being disproportionately affected due to various socioeconomic factors (Muhammad & Usman, 2024). This highlights the urgent need for holistic approaches to effectively address this complex issue (Shuaibu, 2024). With over 75 million people in Nigeria trapped in poverty, there is a pressing need for mechanisms, such as Islamic microfinance, to provide sustainable solutions (Salina et al., 2014). Poverty has increasingly permeated the socioeconomic landscape of Nigerian Muslim communities, leading to the commercialisation and religious misinterpretation of begging, particularly among the young students of Islam (*Almajirai*) and impoverished individuals. This practice is being wrongly legitimised with religious and commercial significance, necessitating a re-evaluation of the socio-religious narratives surrounding begging.

In response, this article aims to demystify the notion of legitimising begging and, instead, emphasise the revival of philanthropy as a socioeconomic and spiritual remedy to begging among Nigerian Muslims. It discusses the significance of *zakāh* and *ṣadaqah* in Islam, their role in promoting socioeconomic equity, and the historical aversion to begging in Muslim societies. It also highlights the rise of poverty and begging in Nigerian Muslim communities and challenges the erroneous religious and commercial associations with this practice. Instead, it advocates for a return to genuine philanthropy to address underlying issues and foster a more prosperous and compassionate Muslim society in Nigeria.

Literature Review

This section aims to explore and analyse existing scholarly works related to the phenomenon of the religionisation of commercial begging in Northern Nigeria. By examining relevant literature, this review provides a comprehensive understanding of the background and context

of the issue, laying the foundation for reviving philanthropy among Muslims in the region as a potential remedy.

Commercial begging, once a rare occurrence in Northern Nigeria, has become a prevalent socioeconomic challenge. This practice involves able-bodied individuals engaging in begging for monetary gain, blurring the lines between genuine charity and exploitative endeavours. The rise of this phenomenon has led to the religionisation of begging, where the act is attributed religious significance, further complicating the matter. As highlighted above, well-researched sources on Islamic mechanisms of poverty alleviation confirm that historical Islamic teachings and practices discouraged begging and emphasised on the importance of genuine philanthropy (Ahmed, 2004).

Understanding the roots of the religionisation of commercial begging in Northern Nigeria requires examining the socioeconomic context of the region. The literature emphasises the need to address these underlying issues to curb the prevalence of commercial begging and promote sustainable solutions. Some studies have pointed out how misconceptions about earning religious blessings and merit by giving alms to beggars may influence the behaviour of both givers and recipients. Understanding the religious perspectives of charity, including *zakāh* and *ṣadaqah*, and the proper channels for their distribution are essential in debunking the misguided association between begging and religious virtue.

Furthermore, an examination of the literature reveals the impact of external factors, such as urbanisation and globalisation, on the dynamics of begging in the region. These factors have introduced new challenges and opportunities for beggars, affecting traditional support systems and societal perceptions of the practice. To address the religionisation of commercial begging and the remedy of reviving philanthropy among Muslims, previous research have emphasised the significance of education and awareness campaigns. Such interventions can play a crucial role in dispelling misconceptions, promoting proper channels for charitable giving, and encouraging alternative means of livelihood for those engaged in begging.

Researchers have advocated for a proper understanding of the roots of the religionisation of commercial begging in Northern Nigeria, considering the socioeconomic context of the region. They have discussed the impact of poverty, unemployment, and the breakdown of traditional support systems on the rise of begging as an alternative means of survival (Adebayo et al., 2014). Likewise, exploring the role of cultural and religious beliefs in perpetuating the practice of begging and addressing the religious perspectives on charity, including *zakāh* and *ṣadaqah*, is crucial (Oluwole, 2016). Some studies have also concentrated on analysing the impact of urbanisation and globalisation on the dynamics of begging in Northern Nigeria (Okonkwo & Ikoru, 2018), which is another important aspect for consideration. To effectively address the challenges associated with the religionisation of commercial begging and to revive philanthropy among Muslims, there is a dire need to emphasise the significance of education and awareness campaigns (Yusuf, Ibrahim, & Hassan, 2019).

This literature review section provides an overview of existing research on the religionisation of commercial begging in Northern Nigeria. It highlights the complex socioeconomic factors contributing to the rise of this phenomenon and sheds light on the cultural and religious influences shaping perceptions and behaviours related to begging. This review sets the stage for further empirical research and interventions aimed at curbing the practice of commercial begging and fostering a revival of genuine philanthropy among Muslims in the region and beyond.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the phenomenon of the religionisation of commercial begging in Northern Nigeria and its impact on philanthropy among Muslims. The data primarily comprised library resources, including scholarly articles, books, and reports, as well as the researchers' personal experiences and observations. Thematic analysis was conducted on the collected data to identify recurring themes related to the religionisation of begging as well as factors influencing philanthropic practices.

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the study, the researchers engaged in prolonged observation of the activities and lifestyles of beggars over time, gaining a deeper contextual understanding of the socioeconomic and cultural dynamics at play. Ethical considerations were meticulously observed throughout the research process, ensuring respect for the dignity and privacy of all participants.

The study's findings are presented with detailed descriptions of themes and insights derived from the qualitative data analysis. These findings are contextualised within the broader socioeconomic and cultural landscape of Northern Nigeria. Additionally, the discussion incorporates relevant literature and Islamic principles to interpret the findings, thereby addressing the implications of promoting genuine philanthropy while tackling the challenges posed by the religionisation of begging among Muslims in the region.

Findings and Discussion

Commercial begging among Muslims in Northern Nigeria has significant socio-religious implications for individuals, families, and society as a whole. This section presents the obtained research findings, aiming to demystify the religionisation of begging and explore the potential of Islamic philanthropy to address the root causes of this phenomenon. The findings focus on the adverse effects of commercial begging, the distortion of Islamic teachings related to charity and social welfare, and the impact on the dignity of the needy. Through a comprehensive discussion, the researchers highlight the significance of the results and the potential impact of reviving philanthropic practices among Muslims in Northern Nigeria.

Causes of Commercial Begging among Muslims in Northern Nigeria

Commercial begging in Northern Nigeria is a multifaceted issue with various underlying causes stemming from socioeconomic, religious, and cultural factors. The region witnesses a significant number of individuals resorting to begging as a means of survival. This analysis delves into the possible causes of commercial begging in Northern Nigeria and how they contribute to the problem. These causes are presented as interconnected factors rather than in any order of preference.

Socioeconomic inequality. A leading driver of commercial begging is socioeconomic inequality. The region suffers from staggering high levels of poverty, unemployment, and income disparity, leaving many individuals with limited opportunities to secure a livelihood. According to a report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the poverty rate in Nigeria is estimated at 40%, with Northern Nigeria accounting for a significant proportion of people living in poverty. This indicates that a considerable segment of the population lacks access to basic necessities, such as food, shelter, and healthcare, compelling them to turn to begging to meet their daily needs.

Mismanagement of Islamic social welfare systems. Islamic social welfare systems, such as *zakāh*, *waqf* (endowments), and *sadaqah*, are intended to provide a safety net for the less fortunate. However, the mismanagement of these resources has contributed to the rise of commercial begging. In many instances, these funds are not effectively and equitably distributed, leaving those genuinely in need without adequate support (Ahmed, 2020). This creates a gap that commercial beggars exploit, leading to an increase in the number of beggars in the region.

Homelessness. The lack of affordable housing and displacement due to conflicts and natural disasters have rendered many people homeless (Yusuf, 2017). This makes it extremely challenging for them to access basic necessities, forcing them to resort to begging as a means of survival.

Disability. Many individuals with disabilities face discrimination in the job market and have limited access to education, making it challenging for them to earn a livelihood (Adedibu & Jelili, 2011). As a result, they are compelled into begging for survival.

Unemployment. High unemployment rate is a significant cause of commercial begging. The region struggles with a lack of job opportunities, particularly for young people (Gloria & Samuel, 2012). Many young people also lack the necessary skills and education to secure employment, leading to an increase in this demographic resorting to begging as a way to make ends meet.

Family rejection, neglect, or disownment. Many individuals who are rejected, neglected, or disowned by their families have nowhere else to turn and must resort to begging to survive (Makama et al.).

Rural-urban migration. The migration of individuals from rural areas to urban centres in search of better employment opportunities and living conditions has contributed to the rise of commercial begging (Oluwole, 2016). However, the lack of opportunities in these areas force many into begging as a last resort.

Orphanage. Many orphans lack access to education and basic needs, making it challenging for them to secure employment. This forces them into begging as a means of survival.

Old-age insecurity. Many elderly individuals do not have access to basic needs, such as healthcare and housing, and must resort to begging for survival (Yakubu, 2019).

Divorce. Divorce contributes to commercial begging, as many divorced women and their children lack financial support, making it challenging for them to access basic needs (Oluwole, 2016). This forces them into begging as a means of survival.

The prevalence of commercial begging among Muslims in Northern Nigeria is a complex issue resulting from a combination of socioeconomic challenges and cultural factors. Poverty, unemployment, inadequate social welfare systems, homelessness, disability, and family dynamics are all intertwined causes that force individuals into begging for survival. Additionally, cultural norms and religious misinterpretations play a role in perpetuating the practice of commercial begging. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that involves improving access to quality education and economic opportunities, enhancing the distribution of social welfare systems, addressing cultural norms, and fostering a more nuanced understanding of Islamic teachings on charity and self-sufficiency. By tackling these underlying causes, Northern Nigeria can work towards reducing the prevalence of commercial begging and uplifting the livelihoods of its vulnerable population.

Effects of Commercial Begging among Muslims in Northern Nigeria

Commercial and non-commercial begging have far-reaching adverse effects on individuals, families, and society in Northern Nigeria. Beggars and their families often endure harsh living conditions, including lack of shelter and food, exposure to extreme weather, verbal abuse, accidents, and harassment from fellow beggars, municipal officials, and police. Moreover, commercial begging leads to a lack of self-esteem, community disrespect, vulnerability to criminals and ritualists, discrimination, and stigma. Disguised beggars can perpetuate crimes in homes, markets, and communities, exacerbating safety and security challenges in the region. Child abuse is another concerning consequence, as adult beggars use children as guides, depriving them of education and parental upbringing, and leading them towards drug abuse and criminal activities.

The effects of commercial begging can be categorised into the following dimensions:

Economic. Commercial begging perpetuates poverty and dependence, hindering economic growth and deterring investors and tourists in urban areas (Fatai et al., 2020).

Social. The presence of beggars creates a sense of insecurity and distrust among residents, especially when children and vulnerable individuals are exploited for begging purposes (Hassan & Ibrahim, 2019).

Psychological. Children forced into begging experience low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety due to their harsh circumstances (Idris & Adeyemi, 2019).

Health. Beggars face unsanitary conditions, leading to the spread of diseases, while children are additionally exposed to physical and emotional abuse.

Education. Many children are unable to attend school, limiting their future opportunities and perpetuating the cycle of poverty (Yusuf, 2017).

Security. The presence of beggars can be exploited for criminal activities, making it challenging for law enforcement agencies to maintain law and order in urban areas (Ibrahim, 2019).

Addressing the effects of commercial begging in Northern Nigeria requires tackling its underlying causes. Widespread poverty and mismanagement of Islamic social welfare systems play a crucial role in driving individuals to beg for survival. By addressing socioeconomic inequality, improving access to education and employment opportunities, and ensuring proper distribution of social welfare funds, the region can work towards reducing the negative effects of commercial begging and improving the overall wellbeing of its people.

Demystification of the Religionisation of Commercial Begging

In Northern Nigeria, commercial begging has been intertwined with religious justification, using sacred texts to legitimise the practice.

And in their properties there was the right of the beggar, and the *maḥrūm* (the poor who does not ask the others). (Surah al-Dhāriyāt: 19)

Many argue that the above Qur'anic verse and other sources support the act of begging, claiming it as a religious obligation. They stress the virtue of giving charity to the poor and

needy, implying that commercial beggars are fulfilling this religious duty. However, the true essence of Islam lies in maintaining the dignity of the needy and promoting self-sufficiency. The commercialisation of begging in Northern Nigeria has led to the distortion of Islamic teachings on charity and social welfare. Many beggars in the region use religion as a means to seek alms, leading to the “religionisation of begging.” This practice contradicts Islamic teachings that emphasise the importance of earning a living through honest and dignified labour.

For instance, Prophet Muhammad emphasised:

The upper hand is better than the lower hand. The upper hand is the one that gives, and the lower hand is the one that receives. (Sahih Bukhari, Book 24, Hadith 507)

The above Hadith encourages believers to work hard to earn a living and offer help to those genuinely in need, rather than becoming perpetual recipients of charity. Islam indeed recognises the right of the beggar in the wealth of the affluent, as stated in the Qur’an (Surah al-Dhāriyāt: 19). However, this refers to genuine cases of destitution and necessity, not those who turn begging into a profession. The Qur’an also urges believers not to repulse the beggar (Surah al-Ḍuḥā: 10), emphasising kindness and compassion. Nevertheless, this should not be exploited to justify a business venture based on begging. Islam promotes charity, but not at the cost of perpetuating a cycle of dependence and undignified livelihoods. Allah (SWT) states in the Qur’an:

And those in whose wealth there is a known right. For the beggar who asks, and for the unlucky who has lost his property and wealth, (and his means of living has been straitened). (Surah al-Ma‘ārij: 24-25)

The above verse encourages Muslims to support those genuinely in need. It is a call to address the root causes of poverty and provide opportunities for dignified means of livelihood.

By addressing the root problems of poverty, unemployment, and social inequality, the religionisation of commercial begging can be thoroughly debunked. Islamic social welfare systems, such as *zakāh* and *ṣadaqah*, are meant to help the poor and needy, but they must be properly administered to ensure the correct people receive aid. It is essential to educate the public about the proper practices of charity in Islam. Islam promotes compassion, but this virtue should not be used to support the begging industry. The focus must be on empowering those in need through education, job opportunities, and initiatives to combat poverty (Abdulrahman, 2020).

Muslims in Northern Nigeria can work together to eliminate or reduce the religionisation of commercial begging and improve the socioeconomic wellbeing of their communities by upholding the true teachings of Islam and tackling the causes of poverty.

Islamic Textual Proofs against Begging

Islam, through the teachings of the Qur’an and the Hadith, discourages and even condemns begging as a means of livelihood. Prophet Muhammad provided clear guidance on this matter, advising his followers to avoid begging and maintain their dignity and self-sufficiency. In a Hadith, he likened begging to scratching the flesh off one’s face, emphasising the humiliation and degradation associated with it. He encouraged people to save their face by refraining from begging, except in cases of dire need or when asking from a ruler: “Whoever begs from people to increase his wealth, it is as if he is asking for live coals, so let him ask for a little or a lot” (Al-Nasā’ī, Book of Zakāh, Hadith 2601-2602).

The Qur'an also provides insights into the category of people deserving aid. Allah (SWT) describes the poor as those who are restricted in His cause and are unable to travel in search of a livelihood. These individuals are dignified since their needs may not be apparent to others, yet they do not go about begging:

(Charity is) for *fuqarā'* (very poor people), who in Allah's cause are restricted (from travel), and cannot move about in the land (for trade or work). The one who knows them not, thinks that they are rich because of their modesty. You may know them by their mark, they do not beg of people at all. And whatever you spend in good, surely Allah knows it well. (Surah al-Baqarah: 273)

The above verse emphasises the importance of helping those who are genuinely in need without resorting to begging. In another Hadith, Prophet Muhammad defined true poverty as when an individual lacks enough money to satisfy his needs, yet his condition is neither known to others so he may receive charity, nor does he beg from people:

The poor person is not the one who goes around asking people and is given a morsel or two, or a date or two. The poor person is the one who does not find enough to satisfy him, but the people do not realise that he is needy, so they do not give him charity, and he does not stand up to beg from people. (Muslim, Book of Zakāh, Hadith 1039)

The consequences of engaging in begging are also highlighted in another saying of the Prophet, in which he warned that a person who continuously begs from others will come on the Day of Resurrection without any flesh on their face: "A person keeps on begging until he will come on the Day of Resurrection without any flesh on his face" (Bukhari, Book of Zakāh, Hadith 1405).

The Prophet also compared begging for the wealth of others to increase one's own possessions with asking for live coal, meaning that it is a harmful and dangerous pursuit: "It is better for one of you to take a rope and bring a bundle of wood on his back and sell it, rather than asking someone who may give him or not" (Bukhari, Book of Zakāh, Hadith 1410).

Islamic scholars have similarly elaborated on the prohibition of begging and the importance of seeking righteous means of livelihood. Based on the textual evidence above, it is clear that begging is strongly discouraged unless the person is in a state of extreme necessity and has no other means of survival. This also emphasises the importance of relying on Allah (SWT) and seeking lawful ways to earn a living. Begging is not befitting for Muslims who seek to maintain their dignity and honour. The emphasis should be on working diligently and seeking lawful means of income.

Islam discourages and disapproves of begging as a means of livelihood. The teachings of Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an emphasise the importance of self-sufficiency, maintaining dignity, and seeking lawful means to earn a living. The textual proofs and explanations from Islamic scholars reinforce the message that begging should only be carried out in cases of extreme necessity and as a last resort, when all other options have been exhausted. By adhering to these principles, Muslims can uphold their self-respect and contribute to the betterment of their society.

Philanthropy in Islam: A Viable Solution to Begging

Islam recognises the importance of social welfare systems to maintain socioeconomic balance in society. To bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, Islam has institutionalised three essential concepts: *zakāh*, *ṣadaqah*, and *waqf*. These concepts, if properly implemented, have

the potential to ensure equitable circulation of wealth and alleviate the need for begging. In the modern financial industry, the conglomeration of these concepts is known as philanthropy.

Zakāh, one of the pillars of Islam, is a compulsory form of charity. Allah (SWT) has specified the categories of beneficiaries entitled to receive *zakāh* proceeds in the Qur'an:

Al-Ṣadaqāt (here it means *zakāh*) are only for the *fuqarā'* (very poor people), and *al-masākīn* (poor people) and those employed to collect (the funds) ... (Surah At-Tawbah: 60)

The Qur'an and Hadith contain numerous textual proofs that encourage Muslims to engage in acts of charity, including *zakāh*, *ṣadaqah*, and *waqf*. Prophet Muhammad repeatedly emphasised the significance of giving charity and caring for the less fortunate:

Charity does not decrease wealth. (*Sahih Muslim*, Book 12, Hadith 157)

Protect yourself from hell-fire even by giving a piece of date as charity. (*Sahih al-Bukhārī*, Book 24, Hadith 531)

If Muslims in Northern Nigeria adhere to the teachings of Islam regarding philanthropy, the sight of beggars on the streets and the need for door-to-door begging could be greatly reduced. Islamic philanthropy has the potential to transform Muslim societies from economic woes to prosperity, fostering social cohesion, peaceful coexistence, and security of life and property, all of which serve the important objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*).

Scholars and experts on Islamic philanthropy have emphasised the transformative impact of *zakāh*, *ṣadaqah*, and *waqf*. For instance, renowned Islamic scholars have highlighted that philanthropy in Islam is not merely about giving money, but also about sharing resources, time, and knowledge to empower the less fortunate. They stress the importance of combining traditional forms of charity with modern development initiatives to address poverty and societal challenges effectively. Moreover, Islamic scholars, such as Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, advocate for a comprehensive approach to philanthropy that includes investment in education, healthcare, and infrastructure development. They believe that by utilising *zakāh*, *ṣadaqah*, and *waqf* to support long-term sustainable projects, Muslim societies can uplift marginalised communities and eliminate the need for begging.

In a nutshell, Islamic philanthropy—encompassing *zakāh*, *ṣadaqah*, and *waqf*—offers a viable solution to begging in Muslim societies, including in Northern Nigeria. By adhering to the principles and teachings of Islam, Muslims can create a society with equitable wealth distribution, empowered individuals, and reduced dependence on begging. Scholars and experts on Islamic philanthropy emphasise the transformative potential of these practices, urging the integration of traditional charity with modern development initiatives to address poverty and societal challenges effectively. Through Islamic philanthropy, Muslim communities can achieve the noble objectives of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, fostering social cohesion, peaceful coexistence, and security of life and property.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has demystified the notion of the religionisation of commercial begging in Northern Nigeria and highlighted the misalignment of this practice with the principles of Islam, which encourages genuine philanthropy through *zakāh* and *ṣadaqah*. The study has underscored that while Islam promotes *ṣadaqah* and charitable giving, it neither endorses nor supports begging, especially on a commercial scale. Begging, except in extreme

situations, contradicts the principles of Islam, which encourage self-reliance and community support.

The social, economic, religious, moral, and security challenges posed by commercial begging underscore the urgent need to address the root causes of poverty and socioeconomic imbalances prevalent among Muslims in Northern Nigeria. This study has emphasised that Islam itself provides a solution through its embedded mechanisms of *zakāh*, *ṣadaqah*, and *waqf*, which can effectively equalise socioeconomic disparities and alleviate the need for individuals to resort to begging for sustenance.

As a recommendation, the revival of the spirit of Islamic philanthropy is crucial in addressing the prevalent issue of begging in the region. By strengthening the institutions of *zakāh*, *ṣadaqah*, and *waqf* and promoting a culture of genuine philanthropy, Muslims in Northern Nigeria can support one another and uplift those in need. Through such efforts, the lost past glory in social, economic, and political wellbeing can be reclaimed by the Muslim community.

Limitations and Further Research

While this paper has provided important insights into leveraging Islamic philanthropy to counteract commercial begging in Northern Nigeria, several limitations should be considered. Firstly, focusing on distinct groups within the region would result in a more detailed understanding of localised sociocultural dynamics. Conducting research on perceptions and attitudes towards *zakāh*, *ṣadaqah*, and *waqf* could also reveal the underlying beliefs that shape philanthropic engagement.

Longitudinal impact assessments are critical for analysing the long-term benefits of philanthropic programmes on poverty alleviation and hunger reduction. Diversifying participant demographics can ensure greater generalisability, while comparative studies across locations with different socioeconomic conditions can reveal adaptable effective practices. Investigating policy and institutional frameworks is essential for informed advocacy and policy recommendations that will ultimately lead to more equitable and prosperous societies.

Although this study has provided a solid foundation, addressing these limitations and conducting further research is crucial. By refining interventions based on a deeper understanding of the dynamics of Islamic philanthropy, collective effort towards a wealthier and more self-sufficient Northern Nigeria can be achieved. This research trajectory aligns with the overarching goal of fostering compassion, solidarity, and self-reliance within the region.

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