

The Effect Of Religion On The Process Of Sustainable Development Economy (In Terms Of Thrift)

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“We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.”

An Indian proverb.

Abstract

In this study, we have tried to emphasize that from the perspective of sustainable development economy, the factor of religion affects communal incidents in our social life.

Since religion, a need for a person, who is a member of a community, presents itself as a reality of a society as well. Sustainable development aims at protecting and exploiting natural resources in the most effective way. The concept of sustainable development put forward with no hesitation entails its implementation in all societies throughout the world and requires governments to take responsibilities for this matter. Sustainable development gives priority to a person's health, happiness and adaptation to his environment. It is out of question to separate or isolate religion, one of the most prominent features of life forms, from the social, cultural or economic dynamics of a community.

Our religion, Islam, which regards happiness of individuals and societies as essential in the world and hereafter, sets rules to live our lives in harmony and in a well-balanced way. It also orders us to sensibly spend what we have earned according to the limits of thrift. Everyone is going to be asked to answer the questions of how he made a living, where and how he spent it. While spending his money, he is required to take his needs, instead of his wills, into consideration and not to spend too much or waste it by staying away from any extreme expenditure. Apart from the warning against spending on the areas forbidden by the religion, there is insistence on being thrifty and frugal.

Extravagance/waste is one of the most serious dangers that a sustainable development economy can ever confront. Since as an outcome of waste, individuals and naturally communities will start to lose all the facilities and things they have already possessed, and face the challenges and deprivations ensued from their absence. They will turn out to be a dependent population. Today, while people are starving in many parts of the world, it is hard even to state the limits of the waste that some of us have caused.

We should not neglect that we can make use of our religion's, Islam's, orders and prohibitions in order to stop waste and encourage to be frugal in the work process of sustainable development economy. We have tried to explain in detail the hadiths, our Prophet's statements, and verses which are the essential references of our religion.

Keywords: Thrift, Religion, Verse, Hadith, Sustainable Development, Waste

1.INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development has the meaning of programming today's and tomorrow's life and development in such a way that it maintains the balance between humans and nature, responds to the needs of next generations and facilitates their development without depleting natural resources. Sustainable development is a concept with social, ecological, economic, spatial and cultural dimensions. This is a process of progress that increases life standards by focusing on such subjects which aim to diminish the disaster risks as economical development and preserving ecological system along with socio-cultural progress, political stability and determination.

While defining sustainable development, the most significant factor may be the balance between 'today' and 'tomorrow'. For the generations of both today and the future, it is of importance to reach economical, social and ecological aims, that is, developmental aims in a well-balanced way. Long-term planning and thinking.

Each person has the duties and responsibilities to his Creator, prophet, the religion he serves, himself, spouse, children, parents, siblings, natural environment and society. A person

is going to be questioned for what he has done with his eye, ear, hand, foot and heart along with all the knowledge, actions, spiritual and physical blessings given to him.

“Our religion taking individual and social peace and happiness as a basis sets rules to live life in a balanced way and orders to properly use what we have earned with respect to the criteria of thrift. Each person is going to be asked how he has earned his life and what he has spent his savings on. He has to consider his needs rather than desires while sending his savings. Expenditure is banned in the areas prohibited by Allah; and the principle of not wasting is set for the situations permitted by the religion”. (Ergenekon, 1996)

Our religion is such a religion that never permits abuse or colonialism as extreme wealth and luxurious expenditure are banned by Islam. Prevention of expenditure on luxury could not encourage capital accumulation as much as it was in the west since such transfers of financial assets as offerings and alms forestalled getting extremely rich and maintained a well-balanced fiscal distribution in society.

Allah states in one verse “ Your riches and your children may be but a trial: whereas Allah, with Him is the highest, Reward.”.(at-Teğabun, 64/15)

This verse demonstrates that property is sedition. Here, sedition means a matter of testing. Otherwise, if its literal meaning was taken into consideration, it would be necessary to get rid of world’s assets. However, our Almighty Lord orders Muslims to work for the world as much as they should do for hereafter. Displaying property as sedition, He implies the anarchy and depression caused by not being able to use it to good advantage. In one account, while walking, our Prophet and his friends came across with a young man working very ambitiously. When some said “I wish this young man was working for something related to hereafter instead of worldly”, our Prophet said: “Don’t say so; if he is working in order not to go around begging or need someone’s help, he is on Allah’s track. If he is making a living for his old parents or children, he is still on Allah’s track. However, if he is working to show off or swing the lead, he is on devil’s track.”

Spending the physical and spiritual belongings in vain is called extravagance. Therefore, if a person unduly spends his money, property, time or natural resources, what he does is extravagance. In other words, it is also called waste.

Millions or billions of dollars goes for nothing owing to extravagance, the varieties and damages of which are too many to count. Therefore, a man who witnesses people and children starving does not choose food, throw bread into the bin, waste food. Besides, considering the cities and countries in shortage of water does not waste energy. As being aware of the people who cannot make ends meet, he does not care luxurious goods and does not waste his money.

Varieties of waste: waste in food and drink, clothes, time, information, health, energy resources, etc.

Thrift is necessary not only for particular social strata but all individuals of a society as well. For this reason, thrift spreading in all social strata allows the middle class to get stronger.

“Three significant tenets of Islam played an important role in the course of economic development.

The first of these tenets is the basis that all the things on the Earth are created for all humans. The second important principle is the one that prevents luxury and grandeur (the principle that bans the building to show off). Finally the third principle is the one that

ascertains the necessity of learning and teaching all kinds of science and knowledge. It also underscores that keeping such knowledge hidden is forbidden by the religion". (Bilgiseven, 1987)

The Almighty Allah has created all the beauties and blessings for us. We have been trusted with all these beauties and blessings given by Allah. All the blessings Allah has granted on us such as life, health, children, property, title, etc. could be test items. We are going to be questioned if we wasted them and how we used those blessings. Regarding to our topic, Allah says "Then on that day you shall most certainly be questioned about the boons." (Tekasür, 102/8)

On this topic, our prophet also said that: On Judgement Day, no one can move away from his tracks unless he is questioned about where he spent his life, his actions, how he made a living, what he spent his money on, how he used his body and health (Tirmizi, Kıyame, 1)

One of the tenets our glorious religion, Islam, adopts is being economical and moderate. Being economical and moderate amounts to one being prudent about everything including spending, talking, drinking and eating.

"The opposite is waste. Waste means going to the extremes in any subject, deviating from the right and true, transgressing the limits, spending the chances and assets on unnecessary things or abundantly." (Yazır, 1992)

In short, waste means spending the blessings a person possesses unduly and extremely (Şamil, İslam Ans. "İsraf") In Islam, waste is banned by verses and hadiths. "O Children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: But waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not the wasters". (Araf, 7/31)

"And give to the near of kin his due and (to) the needy and the wayfarer, and do not squander wastefully. Surely the squanderers are the fellows of the Shaitans and the Shaitan is ever ungrateful to his Lord." (İsra, 17/27) Verses clearly display this ban.

The verse describes waste as ingratitude to Allah and the ones doing so as Satan's sibling, which proves how horrible 'extravagance' or 'being lavish' is.

Our prophet says "Eat, drink, wear and give alms without being arrogant or without wasting" (Buhari, Libas, 1)

This hadith attracting our attention gives an opinion about how meticulous Islam is on the subject of 'waste'. Our prophet once visited Sa'd, one of his friends. Meanwhile, Sa'd was performing his ablution. When Resulullah noticed that he was using water more than necessary, he asked what the waste was that. When Sa'd asked whether there was waste in performing ablution, our prophet responded "Yes, even if you perform your ablution in flowing river" (İbn Mace, Taharet, 48). Our religion asked us not to overuse water even from a flowing river even for religious services.

The Almighty Allah created everything in balance. Humans must be moderate in all areas of life including expenditure.

Islam takes the necessity as a basis in spending money, goods and property; and bans spending in vain. Expenditure must be correlated with the necessity, not income. Even if our income increases, our expenditure should not go beyond the limits of our necessity. Just like in all areas, Islam orders to be moderate by staying away from the extremes of being lavish or stingy. In our religion, this criteria is regarded one of the features of a perfect Muslim.

As regards to the topic, Allah says: "Make not thy hand tied (like a niggard's) to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach, so that thou become blameworthy and destitute." (Īsra, 17/29) In another verse:

" Those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just (balance) between those (extremes)." (Furkan, 25/67). In the verse, while being mean and lavish is criticised, being moderate is praised; and this attitude is mentioned is one of the features of Allah's slaves.

When we look at the verses and hadiths, it is clear that we are asked not to waste our assets, goods, properties while buying what we need. And this way of acting is emphasized as one of the features of a perfect Muslim.

"O Children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: But waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not the wasters." stated in Araf 7/31.

In the verse, on the one hand a person is ordered to eat and drink and on the other hand not go to extremes in those actions. In other words, just like in everything, there must be a moderate way even for eating and drinking.

"He may say (boastfully): "Wealth have I squandered in abundance !. " Thinketh he that none beholdeth him?" (Beled, 6-7)

As stated in the verse below, negligent people ignore a simple fact: Our Holy Lord has granted countless blessings to humans including flesh, air, food, the devices they use. Whatever is on the earth and heaven along with all visible and invisible grants and livelihoods is at his disposal. A man's duty is to use what has been given to him in a moderate way and not to waste In the Koran, Allah warns that humans are going to be questioned about the blessings given to them in hereafter with the question "Then on that day you shall most certainly be questioned about the boons." (Tekasür, 102/8)

In the Koran, Allah says, "O Children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: But waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not the wasters." (Araf, 7/31) He also states the believers should benefit the blessings and forbids their waste. However, it should be underscored that not wasting does not amount to rejecting the wealth, limiting the expenditure on the areas that Allah gives permission or being unfair to ourselves. The single criteria here should be whether the expenditure has been for Allah's will or not.

Muslims both thank for the blessings and be very careful about not wasting. Considering the verse, "Those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just (balance) between those (extremes)." (Furkan, 25/67), they use food, water, clothes, things provided by technology as much as they need.

2.CONCLUSION

Extravagance harms both an individual and the whole society. This leads our family and nation to be poor. A lavish person always tries to spend money recklessly. As he is used to spending money a lot, when he is short of money, he tries illegal ways to make money. Sometimes, he becomes a burden on the shoulders of his family, society and country since he is in despair help of the others. It is quite often to see such occasions in society. Wasteful people and nations get disappointed sooner or later. They find themselves in the abyss of despair and hopelessness.

Not only individuals, countries and nations could be prodigal as well. Prodigality even depletes seemingly countless troves. I could deplete forests, ores, water and sources of petrol and electricity. The exhaustion of such reserves causes those nations to be in need of the others.

The negative effects of waste become more influential in today's financial life. In the old days when economies depend on agriculture, the discrepancy between welfare and poverty was not as visible as it is a present. In today's industrialised communities which are transforming into communities of information, there are people who live far beyond the level welfare along with the ones trying to survive in abject poverty. Over industrialism, arms race and insatiable greed of the colonialists to find more raw materials damaged the agricultural areas which have a vital importance on the Earth. Therefore, the West's finances which currently depend on over consumption and waste confront dire straits. Such troubles affect all the economies in the globalized world. Although the west have managed to maintain financial welfare so far, they admit that at present resources are limited; water and food with a crucial role in conserving prosperity have always been wasted recklessly and from now on humans do not have the luxury of squandering.

For a society to survive, individuals have duties to the community they live in. Besides it is essential to keep social balance and peace and to ward off any factor that may cause tension among people.

Sustainable development aims to the protection and effectively use of natural resources. The concept of sustainable development put forward with no hesitation entails its implementation in all societies throughout the world and requires governments to take responsibilities for this matter. . It is out of question to separate or isolate religion, one of the most prominent features of life forms, from the social, cultural or economic dynamics of a community. It is out of question to separate or isolate religion, one of the most prominent features of life forms, from the social, cultural or economic dynamics of a community.

Our religion Islam, focusing on the peace of individuals and society both in the world and hereafter, sets rules to live life in a well-balanced way, and orders us to duly spend what we earn by paying attention to the criteria of thrift. A person is going to be asked how he made a living, how and on what he spent his money. Our religion asks us to take our needs into consideration rather than our desires when it comes to spending, and also we are encouraged not to waste or go to the extremes. There should be no expenditures on the areas forbidden by the religion and there is strong insistence on being thrifty and moderate.

We have tried to explain in detail the hadiths, our Prophet's statements, and verses which are the essential references of our religion. In this study, we have tried to emphasize that from the perspective of sustainable development economy, the factor of religion affects communal incidents in our social life. Since religion, a need for a person, who is a member of a community, presents itself as a reality of a society as well.

We should not ignore that we can make the most of our religion's orders and prohibitions as regards thrift and preventing waste in the process of sustainable development economy.

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