

AN OVERVIEW ON WORLD FOOD RESOURCES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCES TO UNILEVER

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ABSTRACT

Global politics is revolving around the war of resources to achieve as much as resources which could be sufficient for unlimited period. Food resources are the main objectives on which the developed nations of the world stressed a lot since the old times. European powers occupied Asia and Africa to plunder their wealth as well as to capture the food resources of these regions and export food stuff to European countries. Unilever which was called Lever Brothers was the main exporters of margarine and edible oils. Monopoly on the world food markets by few so-called multinational firms has restrained other food companies of different countries to participate in the global food business, which resulted uneven distribution of wealth.

INTRODUCTION

The politics of food and agriculture can vary very dramatically from country to country, depending most of all on the level of industrial development. Governments in non-industrial developing countries have tended to tax rural agricultural producers and to subsidize urban consumers. By contrast, governments in industrial countries tend to subsidize rural producers and tax urban food consumers. When nations undergo rapid industrial development, they tend to switch the bias in their food and agricultural policies accordingly. In this century, Japan, Taiwan, and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) have all switched from taxing farmers and subsidizing consumers to taxing consumers and subsidizing farmers.

Why these divergent policy patterns? The tendency of non-industrial countries to subsidize food consumers is a part of “urban bias”. The political of urban bias have included [1] a pro-industry, anti-agriculture bias among elites in postcolonial developing countries (likewise among Marxist-Leninist elites in centrally planned societies); [2] the political disorganization and low social status of remote rural villagers in most developing countries; and [3] the political threat to regime survival that can be presented by urban food consumers, rich and poor alike. These consumers in developing countries are especially sensitive to food prices because a relatively larger share of their total income tends to be spent on food purchases (often nearly 50 percent).

The policies of taxing farmers and subsidizing consumers have frequently gone wrong in the developing world, especially in those countries that have been command economies. Where implicit taxes on farmers have been steepest—for example, in much of sub-Saharan Africa, and also historically in the Soviet Union – food production failed to keep pace with either population growth or demands for dietary enrichment. In most African countries, food crop production has declined on a per capita basis since independence. It is popular to blame this adverse trend on cash cropping, but in most of Africa nonfood cash crop production per capita has actually declined more rapidly than food crop production.

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and testament! The dhimmis are protected of God and the prophet. Respect the covenants entered into with them, and when necessary fight for their interests and do not place on them burden or responsibility, which they cannot bear.⁴⁰

Jizyah is a capitulation tax, which is levied by the Islamic State upon citizens who are of a different faith, but claim protection (am m). Jizyah, thus, guarantees the security of their life and property. It is founded upon a direct injunction of al-Qur'an 9:29. In the era of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, the poor, sick, old and also those non-Muslim were exempted from Jizyah who participated in military service.⁴¹

'Umar ibn al-Khattab was so apprehensive about prosperity and welfare of the non-Muslim subjects of the Islamic state. Once, when Hudayfah and 'Uthman ibn munayf returned with amount of Kharaj (tax on non-Muslims) from the area of river Tigris, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab asked them if they had received from the Dhimmis more than what they could pay? Juhaytah replied, "whatever is left with them is much greater than what has been received". 'Uthman replied, "I have left with them double to this". Hearing this 'Umar ibn al-Khattab explained the importance of this problem in these words: "By Allah! If I remained alive I will grant the widows of Iraq so much so that they shall not be in need (of financial aid) of any caliph after me".⁴²

SOCIAL SECURITY & OLD-AGE BENEFITS

The department of social security had not only opened its door for the Muslims but also for non-Muslims. As a matter of fact, it was a complete system of social insurance. Once 'Umar ibn al-Khattab saw an old and blind man begging. He asked, "Who are you and why are you begging?" he replied, "I am a Jew, payment of Jizyah, economic needs and old age has forced me to beg". Hearing this, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab caught him by his hand, took him to his home and granted him whatever was available. Then he sent an order to the treasurer, saying, "Consider the case of this person and the others of his age", "By Allah! We cannot be good, if we benefit from his bloom but leave his barren to destroy. In the Holy Qur'an adaq are for the needy and the destitute. And in my opinion the needy here means the poor Muslim and word Masakin refers to the needy and the poor of people of the scripture". He granted Jizyah concession to all people of that sort and fixed their stipends from the Treasury.⁴³

STIPENDS FOR NON-MUSLIM

The poor were given stipends from the treasury without any distinction of religion. Instructions were sent to the treasury officer that in the Qur'anic injunction that adaq were for the poor and the needy, the "poor" should be understood to mean the Muslim poor, and the "needy" the poor among the Jews and the Christians".⁴⁴

CONCLUSION

The main features of the social security system introduced during the reign of Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattab can be enumerated as follows:

- Social, economic, and political justice prevailed.
- A complete system of social security for all the citizens irrespective of class and creed.
- Food, apparel, shelter, necessary medical cares, education, matrimonial aid, old age benefits, stipends and other social services were provided to all the needy citizens of the state.
- Concentration of wealth, exploitation, profiteering, interest, hoarding, black-marketing etc. were strictly prohibited.

SOCIAL SECURITY THROUGH OLD AGE INVESTMENT

‘Umar ibn al-Khattab used to ask the recipients of stipends, to invest their money in the purchase of herd and cattle, for their future economic survival, because of the possibility that the future governments would not be able to give them stipends.²⁸

SOCIAL SECURITY THROUGH LOANS FOR ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Loans were given to the merchants for a fixed period by the treasury department as business partners on Mudariba (profit and loss sharing) basis.²⁹

SOCIAL SECURITY THROUGH INTEREST FREE LOANS

Caliph ‘Umar ibn al-Kh-b introduced an interest-free loan service, with a guarantee of repayment, for those who had temporary needs. The caliph himself had access to it for his private needs. It goes without saying that the “Nationalisation” of lending without interest was the necessary concomitant of the prohibition of interest in Islam. Caliph ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab used to lend public money even to merchants for fixed periods, and the Treasury participated with them in a percentage of their business returns, participated not only in gain, but also in the event of losses.³⁰

SOCIAL SECURITY THROUGH PAYMENT OF DEBT

Indebted persons were helped by the treasury department to pay off their debts.³¹

SOCIAL INSURANCE

Another application of the State expenditure was for a kind of social insurance. If somebody was found guilty of involuntary homicide and was unable to pay the blood money, required by law, out of his own means, the government came to his help under this head of budget.³²

SOCIAL SECURITY THROUGH STIPENDS

The government gave yearly stipends to widows, married and unmarried women,³³ young men,³⁴ immigrants.³⁵ The stipends for the children were given from their time of birth.³⁶ The expenses of nursing and breeding for the new-born child. In the beginning a child was given 100 Dirham per annum, which was increased later on.³⁷ For the unclaimed children a stipend of 100 Dirham was fixed.³⁸

GENERAL SOCIAL SECURITY

During the reign of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab in important cities guesthouses were constructed to serve as rest houses. Roads and bridges were constructed for public use. On the road from Madinah al-Munawwarah to Makkah al-Mukarramah, shelters, wells, and meal houses were constructed at every stage, to provide boarding and lodging facilities to those travellers who get tired before reaching their destination or run short of the provision. Canals were dug to irrigate fields as well as to provide drinking water for the people. Ab M canal was nine-mile long canal, which brought water from the Tigris to Basra. Another canal known as Maqal canal was also dug from the Tigris. A canal known as the Am r al-Mu’min n canal was dug to join the Nile to the Red Sea.³⁹

SOCIAL SECURITY FOR THE NON-MUSLIMS

In an Islamic State the non-Muslim minorities are called Dhimmis, which means, the protected of God and the Prophet (peace be upon him). Islamic Shariah assures the basic material needs of the non-Muslim subjects of an Islamic State. On one occasion, Caliph ‘Umar ibn al-Kha b said, “To him who will be the Caliph after me, I commend my wish

PRIMARY NEEDS**SOCIAL SECURITY THROUGH PROVISION OF FOOD**

During serious drought or famines in Arabia, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab asked the provincial governors of Syria, Iraq, and Egypt to send food-grains and other necessities of life for the citizens, which were distributed among the people according to the family size. Meals were cooked at the State level and all persons from interior of the desert who took refuge in Madinah al-Munawwarah were fed daily at state expense. According to one account as many as 40,000 persons were fed every day.¹⁸ And according to another tradition, every month, two weights of wheat, two of Olive oil, and two of vinegar were given to every Muslim and also to the slaves.¹⁹

SOCIAL SECURITY FOR THE POOR AND DISABLED

During the famine of year 18 AH, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab appointed several persons to serve the hungry with meal twice a day. In those days, when the persons from different parts of the country rushed to Madinah al-Munawwarah in search of food, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab saw a person eating with his left hand. He asked him as to why he was eating with his left hand. The person replied, "O slave of Allah! My right hand is busy". 'Umar ibn al-Khattab asked, how come? He replied, "it was cut off in the battle of Mu'tha". 'Umar ibn al-Khattab hearing this 'Umar abn al-Khattab sat beside him and asked while he was weeping, who helps you in ablution? Who washes your head? Who cleans you clothes? Then he appointed a servant to help him; allotted him a house and also provided him with the necessities.²⁰

NECESSARY MEDICAL CARES

Once, seeing some non-Muslim lepers on his way back from a journey, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab issued orders that they should be provided maintenance from the State funds.²¹

SECONDARY NEEDS**SOCIAL SECURITY THROUGH EDUCATION**

One of the top most priorities in the Islamic social system is education. 'Umar ibn al-Khattab appointed teachers for boy's education who were paid from the treasury department.²² According to Wudayf ibn 'A, there were three persons in Madinha al-Munawwarah who used to teach the children. 'Umar ibn al-Khattab paid them 15 Dirhams from the treasury department.²³ The governors were ordered by 'Umar ibn al-Khattab to provide the list of the best Qurra' (those who could recite the holy Quran according to the rules of recitation), so that they may be appointed on higher stipends for mass education around the country.²⁴

SOCIAL SECURITY THROUGH MATRIMONIAL ALLOWANCE

Unmarried poor, of both sexes, were financially assisted from treasury department to lead a married life. 'Umar ibn al-Khattab wrote to Zayn ibn 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khattab the governor of Kufah, to give matrimonial allowance to the unmarried needy persons.²⁵

SOCIAL SECURITY THROUGH OLD AGE BENEFITS

Yearly stipends were given by the government of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab to old men and women.²⁶ The Caliph 'Umar, on seeing an old Jew begging, brought him to his house. He gave him some cash and ordered the treasury officer that such people who could not earn their living should be granted stipends from the public treasury.²⁷