



## THE ROLE OF MUSLIM FAMILY AWARENESS FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF SOKOTO STATE, NIGERIA

**Hassan Malami Alkanchi**

Department of Islamic Studies, Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic, Sokoto State  
[hassanalkanchi@gmail.com](mailto:hassanalkanchi@gmail.com) ; +2348069260202

**Dr. Ahmad M. Gusau**

Dept. of islamic studies, Federal University, Dutsin-Ma, Katsina  
[amgusau@gmail.com](mailto:amgusau@gmail.com)

**Mustapha Umar**

Department of Translation  
Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic, Sokoto State

**Sulaiman Umar**

Sokoto State Teachers Service Board  
[sulaimanu121@gmail.com](mailto:sulaimanu121@gmail.com)

**Sambo Shehu**

Department of Islamic Studies  
Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic, Sokoto State  
[Samboshehu66@gmail.com](mailto:Samboshehu66@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*Islam encompasses all aspects of human life and it does not leave anything untouched, including family life. Islam considers family as the first and best school in which children have been taught moral values in accordance with the dictates of Shariah. Hence, the objectives of the Shariah law comprises all ingredients of human development with particular emphasis on individual welfare on earth. Accesses to adequate resources or income is the most important mechanism of human development. Conversely, filling these mechanisms is the most interest, and the main challenge of many Muslim communities. The methods of descriptive, empirical, historical, and analytical were used in data collection and analysis. This paper focuses on the role of Muslim family awareness towards human development in Sokoto State, Nigeria with a desire to enlighten people to be aware of their major responsibilities towards their families. In addition, the paper strives to develop the significance of Muslim family towards human development and inclusively addresses the challenges faced by Muslim family towards promoting human development. The findings reveal that in as much as Muslims stick to the Islamic teachings, a better and well-harmonized family can be established. Therefore, the paper recommends that Islamic awareness is always needed and effective programs should be planned to enlighten people through training, skills and job creation.*

**Keywords:** Muslim family, human development, well-being, society.

### Introduction

It is basically relevant that this paper focuses its attention to discussing the roles of Muslim family awareness targeted for human development. The aspects discussed in the paper are: human development and poverty, human development viewed through Islamic perspective, historical background of human development in Sokoto State, human development in Muslim family, discussion of major findings and

analysis of empirical data. The paper concludes and makes some recommendations together in a discussion form.

### HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

It is essentially important to know the concept of human development from the Islamic perspectives. Therefore, human development can be defined as social, cultural and political as well as an economic process of increasing development of the wealth as received by all individuals based

on fairness in the distribution of the wealth. Earlier studies postulate that profitable development is necessary; however, according to Islamic law, the accomplishment of human wellbeing is more complete as it also incorporates moral excellence and economic welfare. Hence, Islam requires the realization of human well-being; both worldly material and eternal life.

The source of continuous under development and poverty is the problem of access to economic opportunities and social welfare (such as health and education), and injustice. The Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (S.AW) uphold that human development is a genuine objective, which must be recognized in any country. This is imperative to integrate spiritual and non-material and needs for a justifiable material and human development as Islam incorporates and standardizes all aspects of life through a complete and unified system. To understand this, Almighty Allah says:

*There are no moving (living thing) creatures on earth, nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you. We have neglected nothing in the Book, and then unto their Lord they (all) shall be gathered<sup>1</sup>.*

The above verse suggests that nothing had been left in the matters of human wellbeing because Almighty Allah has provided them all the necessary mechanisms to attain what would enhance their lives. Therefore, their duty is to seek the bounties that Allah has provided them on earth.

Furthermore, the system of human development is no doubt recognized on the basis of Islamic law. This declaration agrees with the doctrines of *Maqasid Shari'ah* that places priority on the general life and well-being of every single individual. Consequently, the crucial goal of social and economic progress, in the light of *Maqasid Shari'ah*, is to provide a complete charter and also a yardstick for hu-

man development on a broader scale. Emphatically, in line with the objectives of *Maqasid Shari'ah*, five basic magnitudes of human development would be highlighted below:

- i. Spiritual (faith), which is core in Islam.
- ii. Human life
- iii. Education intellect, which must be attached with piety and consciousness of Almighty Allah).
- iv. Social prosperity, (which is in tandem with the rules and requirements of Islamic way of life).
- v. Economic wealth (from permissible sources).<sup>2</sup>

From the normal objectives of economics, the scope of human development focuses on physical factors such as health, education and income. Nevertheless, in Islam, equitable income, education, health, social justice, distribution, clean environment, comfortable housing, religious accountability and human rights among others are the fundamental parts of human development. This is the reason why Almighty Allah enjoins heads of the families to provide shelter according to their means to their family members and to those who have other rights. Allah (S.W.A) says:

*Lodge them (the divorced women) where you dwell, according to your means, and do not treat them in such a harmful way that they be obliged to leave. And if they are pregnant, then spend on them till they deliver... Let the rich 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.<sup>3</sup>*

Unquestionably, *'adalah* (justice) and *Tawhid* are vital cores in easing continuous human development issues such as un-

employment, low living standards, insecurity, poverty, crimes, illiteracy and child mortality as well as corruption. Nevertheless, the disgraceful situations observed by most societies today are due to lack of Almighty Allah's consciousness and prevalence of injustice. All the Prophets that were sent by Allah reinforced their message on the need to raise human beings as creatures of Almighty Allah, to be conscious of Him and to uphold justice and eliminate all systems of abuse of human rights, corruption and unfairness, oppression in the society. Certainly, to achieve the desired goals on human development, social justice, human rights need to be upheld along with the physical and non-physical variables with justice and consciousness of Almighty Allah and human welfare; the world would be comfortable to all.

Simultaneously, Almighty Allah called upon human beings to acknowledge and advocate His oneness and unity and to institute justice amongst themselves and with other creations. For instance, Allah, the Almighty says:

*O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even though it be against yourselves, your parents, or your kin, be the rich or poor, Allah is a Better Protector to both (than you). So follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you may avoid justice, and if you distort your witness or refuse to give it, verily, Allah is Ever Well-Acquainted with what you do<sup>4</sup>.*

The above verse indicates that so long as human beings need improvement in their social lives, they should maintain justice, even if it may be against any of their relatives or against themselves. This further shows that justice is among the solid foundations of human development. The verse buttresses two things; that is consciousness of Allah and justice as earlier

highlighted. Human beings have been enjoined to acknowledge three things upon which two are clearly stated in the verse.

In another surah, Almighty Allah says:

*O Dawud! Verily! We have placed you as a successor on earth, so judge between men in truth (and justice) and follow not your desire for it will mislead you from the path of Allah. Verily! Those who wander astray from the Path of Allah (shall) have a severe torment, because they forgot the Day of Reckoning.<sup>5</sup>*

From the above verse, it is clearly indicated that human beings have been placed as successors (Khalifa) on earth, but not as mere successors, rather to establish justice and judge between men in truth. Hence, if they need to be upgraded and developed rapidly, they should establish justice between themselves. Moreover, from the verse, one may further understand that only Muslim family that maintains justice and fairness would live a contented life without any quarrels.

### **Historical Background of Human Development in Sokoto State**

#### **Location of Sokoto State**

Sokoto State is one of the largest States in Nigeria and it is situated in the Northwestern part of the country. It is the headquarter of Sokoto State Government and the seat of the most renowned Islamic Caliphate in Nigeria, known as the Sokoto Caliphate founded by the great Islamic scholar, Sheikh Uthman bn Fodiyo in 1809 (Wikipedia 2002).

#### **The History of Human Development in Sokoto**

From the historical record, Munir and Oder argue that human underdevelopment started due to the fact that serious-economic issues or contradictions in Hausaland were the major issues that infiltrated the society. Sheikh Usman Bn Foduye, the key figure among the founding fathers of the Sokoto Caliphate, in his book, *Kitab*

*al-Farq*, believed to have complained intensely the general societal disintegration, which includes among other things: corruption, oppression, self-indulgence and frivolity, arbitrary exercise of power without natural and religious respect to the rule of law<sup>6</sup>.

To appreciate the role of Sokoto State government in particular, regarding the sustainability of human development in the education sector, about 10,120 families are currently benefiting from the conditional cash transfer introduced by the state government purposely to enhance girl child education in the state. According to Alhaji Musa Lumu, who was a former chairman of Gwadabawa area made this known in Sokoto. He further stated that the families were given N15, 000 each to allow the female children to go to school. He stated that the Governor, Alhaji Aminu Waziri Tambuwal has invested so much for ensuring sustainability of child education programmes and support from basic to tertiary levels in order to move the state forward educationally.<sup>7</sup>

Islamically, to appreciate the role of Muslim family and to serve as the remedies of the human underdevelopment in Sokoto State Nigeria, Kuftako argues that Muslim family from the Islamic point of view, is not a mere means of satisfying animal instincts, nor is a family's home merely an abode for sleep or other social life. In fact, it represents an educational environment for both spiritual sublimation and intellectual development. In addition, it is a place where there is a mutual noble sentiment particularly between husband and wife and among the members of the family in general.<sup>8</sup>

Recently, research shows that Sokoto state is particularly subject to environmental degradation. Land, water, and soil fertility have been seriously depleted because of intensive cropping and overgrazing, and droughts have become increasingly common occurrences in the area. Since most of the rural population practices subsistence farming, the decline of the resources brings acute food shortages and greater poverty.<sup>9</sup>

### **Human development and poverty**

Barrientos and Nino Zararzua<sup>10</sup> provide a linkage between human development and poverty. Firstly, poverty remains a key challenge in the world today and confronting this challenge needs what the writers describe as social assistance that is designed to reach out to the world poorest people. Secondly, to achieve alleviation of poverty; it is proved that to achieve such target there must be a combine income transfer with preferential access to health and education services. Unobjectionably, health and education serve as the most significant components in poverty alleviation in any given society. This clearly reaffirmed the relationship between poverty alleviation and human development. In recognition of the significance of human development, the United Nation (UN) dedicates more resources to develop the quality of human development especially in the developing and under-developed countries. With this development, human developments indicators have been developed to measure economic development of countries. This proves the direct linkages of human development and economic growth.

It may be concluded that most of the contemporary Muslim societies in the globe, the systems and institutions that prevail and especially how they are being managed by the ruling authorities represent gross deviation from the main teachings of Islamic principles. This is the reason why Mirakhor & Askari<sup>11</sup> clarify that for any society to call itself Islamic, it must be confirmed by the effective operations and compliance of Islamic systems or rather the principles. They further opined that nowadays, Muslim societies, the core elements of the institutional structure that would designate a system as Islamic are, by and large, notable for their absence. In view of this, much urgent attention is needed, particularly for Muslim family awareness to concentrate on the development of their children especially in the area of education health and human well-



being for effective management of the resources in Sokoto state, in the Northern part of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

### **Discussion of Major Findings**

What comes under this heading is an attempt to discuss and analyze the major findings that were discovered in the above discussion to understand how Muslim family played an important role in achieving a sustainable human development to the people of Sokoto state Nigeria. In addition, to figure out the areas that need to be considered for providing a better improvement to the people of the state. Thus, the fact is that Islam as a religion, which encompasses all aspects of human endeavour, health, education, knowledge, wellbeing, welfare, discipline, security, and care for all aspects of development of human society. The Islamic economic system emphasizes on the need for human value, worship, morals, ethics and development are some of the result for Allah's guidance in which man can develop himself and his society to a larger context and people around him from all development of physical, moral, spiritual, health, education, economic and political endeavour.

Today, promoting education, health, and economic development is the focus of many countries including the developed countries. Many nations in the world are currently aspiring to achieve and promote human development in all their spheres of life. However, the focus of every country depends on its needs and goals. It is commonly noted that, most countries including the Muslim nations have a deeply vested concern on provision of employment, alleviation of poverty, security, development of agricultural sector, investment promotion and more importantly promoting and industrial development particularly by the developing third world nations. This clearly indicates the necessity and importance of focusing on the area of Muslim family and human development.

The role of Muslim Family awareness for human development is to provide a sound and unique ways in order to make

the society very effective toward enhancing human development activities to lead a proper and better quality of life. Education, health and economic activities have played a significant role in individuals especially for the development and progress of family life at every spheres of live. Providing peace, security, unity and co-existence within the family arena is a great important aspect, which will foster love, brotherhood among each other. It also provides highly important segment, which leads the family to be standard, and well educated family members that contribute their quota to human development. Education will play an important role for providing employment reducing poverty, providing security and better social well-being; economic well-being of individuals, which, leads to human development family may become self-reliant.

Parents, families and communities have certain roles and responsibilities to discharge on their children and society in promoting human development. Many of these responsibilities are mandatory and Allah, the Most High will question them about the treatment of their children on the Day of Judgment. The most significant of these obligations are the right to be brought up properly and sound health as well as education. The father and mother are going to be held responsible before Allah.

The above suggests that children should be given sufficient, sound and adequate moral guidance for the betterment of their entire lives. They should be inculcated with good morals and values, they should be taught the right and wrong, true and false, good and bad, correct and incorrect, appropriate and inappropriate values. Islam sees that if parents and families fulfill their duties toward their children in terms of providing them proper discipline, maintenance, moral ethical and religious education, this may lead to a successful life and later promote a better family atmosphere and better social environment. In addition, Muslim families contribute to sound education in the society where indi-

viduals explore all aspects of human development by participating actively in all developmental ramifications and in keeping with Islamic socio cultural values.

The above discussion highlights clearly the outcomes that emanate from the discussion. For example, it is clearly shown that a family must be built on a sound consciousness of the Almighty and this will help in eradicating any kind of immorality and corruption in the society. Therefore, it is indicated from the various literatures that Muslim family awareness in Sokoto State has reached a high level of consideration in the sense that the government supported and advocated for the development of human welfare by providing a standard education to its citizens. For instance, the State as earlier mentioned has provided N15, 000 to each family just to allow particularly the female children to go to school.<sup>12</sup>

This further suggests that Sokoto state government did her utmost ability in providing education to its citizens. With this, we might say that Muslim family awareness is achieved in the State and has played an important role in keeping and discharging one of its responsibilities to the family members.

It has to be noted that education is the bedrock of any meaningful development of the society. Likewise, it is essential in our life. Education is a useful tool in the inculcation of skills, habits, attitudes and values. In supporting the government and family awareness efforts in providing a standard education, Ukeje argues that education is a civic right of every citizen, be it male and female to become educated in every society in Nigeria. This is because; education provides the framework for preparing the young members of the society; socially, intellectually and morally to contribute effectively in the society for better future generations. In fact, nations focus on education as an instrument for human development and nation building<sup>13</sup>.

In view of the above, it should be noted that Islam teaches that the institution of the family and marriage is divinely ordained

and viewed as the cornerstone of the society. Accordingly, the rights and obligations of family members on each other are specified and a spirit of consultation is promoted so that the family can function as a single harmonious unit. The role of the husband and wife are complementary, rather than competitive, and family relations should be built on the foundation of mutual love, compassion and cooperation. The scope of family solidarity extends beyond the immediate family to include the extended family.<sup>14</sup>

Various Qur'anic verses highlight categorically the responsibilities of husband against his wife. For instance, Allah enjoins upon human kind to understand the wisdom behind the leadership of men over women, in which he says:

*Men are the protectors and providers of women, because Allah has made one of them to excel the other, and because they spend (to support them) from their means...*<sup>15</sup>.

From this verse, it is understood that men should be the heads of the family. Almighty Allah placed them in such a position just because of the maintenance that He obliged them to take for their family members, particular their wives. A Man is required to protect his wife and provide her with all the necessary means and to feed her according to his means. This teaches the Muslim family to understand that a stable family is the one that the head stands and protects the dignity of his family in such a way that the rights and responsibilities that Islam instituted on him are discharged in accordance with the dictates of Shari'a. This includes providing good education, health, security, and protecting the entire family from any unexpected problem.

Indeed, education is a key to the eradication of poverty and ignorance in any society at the same time open the door of economic buoyancy, social advancement and civilization. Furthermore, education is a key to eradicating poverty and eliminating the hardship of children living in

critical condition such as misery and deprivation across the world. It is agreed that the influence of education on Muslim families cannot be estimated because it is the bedrock of his development from every angle of the Muslim individual. Therefore, the mechanism enables economic progression as well as a tool that guides informed decision making. Mr. Al Gurg opines that children that were educated are in better position to get themselves out from poverty and any life backwardness. Similarly, parents that are well versed are better oriented on aspects that would improve and ensure the development of their children physically and materially.<sup>16</sup>

### An Analysis of Empirical Data

Based on what the present research observed, Muslim family awareness may be a significant tool that can boost and enhance human development as buttressed under the discussion of education and family responsibilities from the Islamic perspectives. Thus, as much as the people of Sokoto state needs to be developed, socially, economically, and morally, the critical challenges of poverty, unemployment as well as illiteracy must be addressed through family awareness. This is because Islam did not leave anything undigested. For instance, Allah declared that:

*“We have neglected nothing in the Book (The Glorious Qur’an)”*.<sup>17</sup>

This indicates that there are no problems that cannot be solved in Islam. In this regard, the following diagram will show the rate of illiteracy, unemployment, and poverty that hindered a rapid human development in Sokoto state of Nigeria,

Table 1, showing the rates of illiteracy, unemployment, and poverty in Sokoto State, Nigeria

Rate of illiteracy	Rate of unemployment	Rate of poverty
50% for teachers	17.9%	81.2%

Source: Secondary Data (2018)

With the above table, Muslim family awareness needs to be implemented everywhere in the State in order to tackle the challenges of illiteracy and to provide the necessary measures that would help children to go to school. According to the executive secretary of the Universal Basic Education Commission in Sokoto, there are some unqualified teachers in basic school in the State.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, Dr. Shamsuddin Usman, former Nigerian Minister of Finance, lamented, “Northern Nigeria remains, and represents the only place in the world that has the highest number of children that are not going to school in the world arc in Northern Nigeria.”<sup>19</sup>

To appreciate the effort of Muslim family awareness in conjunction with the Sokoto State government intervention, one needs to refer to the speech delivered by the Sultan of Sokoto at the National conference on Islam and the Education of Girl Child, which was organised by the Abuja-based Centre for Regional Integration and Development (GRID). As the keynote speaker, the Sultan of Sokoto who at the same time was the chairman of National council of Islamic Affairs in Nigeria said:

*We must appreciate the great transformation, which Islam brought to the life of the Girl-Child and to women in general. Girls were not only neglected during the Jahiliyyah period but were regarded as a source of shame to their families. Many of these girls were buried alive by their own parents. Islam put a stop to this ignorable practice and accorded equal treatment to both male and female. It was also the religion of Islam, which conferred on the girl the right to education and consequently the ability to comprehend her rights and obligations and to play an effective role in the affairs of her society. The historical record of women Islamic*

*scholars and saints as well as women leaders is there for us to learn and behold.*<sup>20</sup>

Family involvement in education is utmost thing to be given priority. This is because when parents and families are well educated, their children do better in schools and grow up to be more successful in life. Most importantly, all parents and families can enjoy the benefit of pivotal role that education play to the family members, who will later weave the life of every member of the society. Children are entitled to a number of rights from their parents; education is one of the most important rights that every parent must provide to their children. Family awareness is indeed significant and so essential, which Muslim must seriously take as a mechanism of poverty eradication. Based on what this research discovered, family awareness is indeed needed to be improved in Sokoto State and its environs. To understand that, Islam enjoins parents to respect the children right to education, it is so vital to note that Islam does not limit education to mere knowledge but encompasses religious and moral training.

From the above, family awareness did not only mean that parent should provide education to their children but also to encourage them to be involved in their children academic activities and observe the performance of their children. This will guide them to know the level of their performance and understand the impacts of their schooling. It is said that no matter how parents concentrate on their children, indeed they will save much the lives of their children from acts of immorality. It clearly shows that, effective moral training is not always coming from the admonition and advice but from parents' endeavours and appraisals.<sup>21</sup>This is what is dearly stated in the famous tradition of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), which said.

*"Seeking knowledge is compulsory for all Muslims (male and female)".*<sup>22</sup>

From here, it may be said that the Sokoto State government in its efforts to provide

and improve the standard of education particularly to the girls in the State is the fact that it complies with the Tradition of the Prophet- which says,

*"He who provide good upbringing to three daughters shall go to paradise". A man asked. "And what if one has only one daughter?" The Prophet (PBUH) replied, "He too",*<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, the government of Sokoto State, in its effort to reduce the rate of unemployment in the state reported that no fewer than 7, 200 youths were empowered under the Youth Employment and Social Support Operation (YESS) in Sokoto State. The State coordinator of (YESSO) Malam Junaidu Haliru stated this during a training workshop for local government coordinators. According to him, 1,200 youths would be selected from each of the six local government areas.<sup>24</sup>

In respect of poverty, the Sokoto State in Nigeria was among the major states with a very high rate of poverty, this might be due to the critical challenges of socio-economic aspect, which causes the backwardness of human development in the state. According to National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) Sokoto state has retained its position as the poorest State in the country, with 81.2 percent poverty rate.<sup>25</sup> This was five years ago. Nevertheless, with the role played by government and various agencies and organization as well as the Muslim family awareness, the situation is gradually changing.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The above discussion played an important role in the components that enhance human development. Such components comprise of Muslim family awareness, government intervention, and stakeholders which served as important variables that highlighted the mechanism of human development. For a society to be developed, there is a need for Muslim family awareness implementation. This research indicates that Islam is always moving with modern time, that is why social, moral, and economic as-



pects have been elaborated. It is also understood that with government intervention and family awareness, a stable family can be established because all the rights and obligations that Almighty Allah instituted upon heads of the families would be discharged accordingly. In this research therefore, it is observed that what causes underdevelopment in most of the Muslim societies is the negligence of Shari'ah provision and the neglect of the leaders on what is obliged on them to discharge. Hence, it could be said that the people of Sokoto State would be developed religiously and socially when they implement what this research is highlighting. It may be recommended that Sokoto State government should support and help the implementation of Muslim family awareness by providing the necessary mechanism that would actualize the program. Hence, with this paper, every husband as a head of his family shall implement what he is expected to do in terms of providing his family members a good education through which his family may be saved from the calamities of poverty and improve spiritually and materially.

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