

An Analysis of the Effects of Poverty on Individual/Social Mental Health and Harms Reduction Strategies from the Perspective of Sahifah Sajjadiah

Fatemeh Zhian 

Department of Quranic and Hadith Sciences, Faculty of Humanities Hazrate- Masoumeh University, Qom, Iran.

*Correspondence should be addressed to Ms. Fatemeh Zhian; Email: f.zhian@hmu.ac.ir

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Abstract

Background and Objective: Since the formation of human societies and civilization, achieving welfare has been one of the most important concerns of humans, and it affected their mental health and many of their thoughts, functions, rituals and culture. All rulers and leaders of human societies have claimed that one of their goals is to eradicate poverty or, at least, reduce its negative effects. Imams (pbuh) had recommendations for reducing poverty and its adverse effects. Although the text of Sahifah Sajjadiah is in the form of prayer, it addresses some of the bad effects of poverty and provides solutions for eliminating them. This shows the mental health of human has been very important to Imam Sajjad (pbuh). The present study tries to investigate and analyze these issues in an attempt to find the level of importance of and attention to different dimensions of mental and social health in individuals from the perspective of Imam Sajjad and to find the approaches to reducing the adverse effects of poverty in the recommendations presented by him.

Methods: This is an analytical library-based study that tries to extract and analyze the adverse effects of poverty and present individual solutions for reducing them drawing on and analyzing the prayers in Sahifah Sajjadiah and the related studies in the fields of psychology, social sciences, and economics. The author did not report any conflicts of interest.

Results: From Imam Sajjad (AS) point of view, poverty puts mental health of individuals and society at risk, but there are ways to control the spread of economy and reduce these harms.

Conclusion: In Sahifah Sajjadiah, people's mental health is viewed from various perspectives and the solutions offered to get out of the unhealthy economy are mainly in the form of advices offered to individuals rather than to governments. This indicates that the abnormal situation caused by the unhealthy economics can be controlled by the individuals themselves.



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Summary

Background and Objective

Economic problems of individuals and the unhealthy economy of society affect a wide range of individual and social lives. Poverty affects mental and physical health, education, stability of families, social corruption and even air pollution. In contrast, prayer and communication with God can reduce or eliminate many of these effects.

Research has shown that it is wise to measure deviations with economic characteristics (1). Tabatabai believes that the main cause of deviations is the two factors of wealth and poverty (2, 3). Numerous studies have examined the relationship between poverty and crime. Research in Italy has shown that 60 poor families account for 85 to 90 percent of all crimes in that country (1). In the psychology of crime, the impact of poverty and wealth on the increase in crime is

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inevitable (4). One psychologist says that most criminals are poor, but most of the poor are not criminals (1).

Imam Sajjad (pbuh) in Sahifah Sajjadiyah has focused on the phenomenon of poverty, especially the psychological traumas associated with it, and the ways to reduce them.

In this article, some of the effects of poverty on the mental health of individuals and ways to reduce these injuries and the importance of mental health of individuals and the role of people, apart from governments, in controlling such harms can be extracted from religious texts such as Sahifah Sajjadiyah, which has not be dealt with in the previous studies.

Methods

Through a descriptive-analytical method and utilizing library and electronic resources, this study, without being influenced by other compilations, first tried to extract the negative consequences of poverty for one's mental health and strategies for reducing it from the prayers of Imam Sajjad (pbuh). Then, it was analyzed more precisely using the modern sciences, especially psychology and economics. Therefore, we used books and articles on Islamic sciences, psychology, and behaviorology and some works in the field of economics from 1981 to 2019.

Results

From the point of view of Sahifah Sajjadiyah, the abundance of wealth and attachment to it can have consequences such as pride, revolt, arbitrariness, oppression, abandonment of foresight, disloyalty and makes one fall into a gradual decline. And poverty has psycho-social effects, including distress of the mind, feeling of inferiority, inability to work, humiliation in front of the rich people, and reduced social status.

Some of the strategies that Imam Sajjad (pbuh) has offered to prevent the harms of poverty and the resulting social and mental disorders are: reforming materialistic attitudes, trusting God, asking for blessings from God, ignoring others' wealth, avoiding anxiety and too much concern about living standards, trying to earn a living as usual, having the right economic plans to earn and spend money, avoiding extravagance and practicing moderation in accordance with one's real (not fictional) needs, donating to charity and lending money to people in need, which have a significant impact on the mental health of the charity recipient and benefactor, respecting and preservation of the human personality of the poor, and not considering wealthy people as more noble

because of their wealth, which retains poor people's social dignity and reduces their sense of inferiority.

All of the aforementioned harms and solutions have been confirmed in psychological studies and experiments and social sciences.

Conclusion

Islam has a comprehensive view of human personality and even when it invites him/her to pray and talk to God, it does not neglect his material and financial needs. Imam Sajjad (pbuh) focused on the four domains of thinking, feeling, functioning and social feedback in expressing the effects of poverty. This indicates that Imam has paid a special attention to the basics of mental health, which constitute the thoughts and ideas of the person, and mental health or disorders, which create favorable or unfavorable feelings within the person, and its consequences, which include the practical feedback provided by individuals and the society.

Although one of the main duties of governments is to promote social and economic justice, eradicate poverty and reduce its adverse effects, community members and poor people themselves must also be addressed to alleviate the psychological and social consequences of poverty, so that the psychological and mental disorders caused by the economic situation do not cause problems to the poor households and, consequently, the social system.

The solutions outlined in Sahifah Sajjadiyah for alleviating harms associated with poverty mainly include recommendations provided to people and not to governments because, first, individuals should not always wait for government action to eliminate or reduce poverty, but rather to solve problems with their knowledge and skills. Second, governments ruling the Islamic land (especially Yazid) in the era of Imam Sajjad (pbuh) suffered from corruption and were faced with such problems as confronting small and large uprisings (5), and, therefore, in this situation they certainly were not successful in the eradication and elimination of poverty.

Although human societies have always been plagued by financial and problems in earning a livelihood, the psychological pressure and harms caused by financial problems is increasing in the modern era. In Imam Sajjad's view, poverty results in such problems as distress of the mind, feeling of inferiority, inability to work, humility in front of rich people, and reduced social status.

The strategies that Imam Sajjad (pbuh) has presented in dealing with the harms of poverty

show his comprehensive view of human psychosocial health and show that it is possible for a person to control the chaotic economic conditions on his/her own.

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Conflict of interest

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