

Naeem ul Haque. *Transforming the Inchoate Duty of Samaritanism into an Obligation.* Islamabad, Pakistan: Innovative Development Strategies. 2014. 302 pages. Pak Rupees 600.00

“Transforming the Inchoate Duty of Samaritanism into an Obligation” is the last book of Naeem ul Haque’s life. It is edited by Uzma Cheema and Nina Gera and published by the Innovative Development Strategies (IDS), Islamabad. The book contains seven chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the purpose of the book and the issues discussed in it. Chapter 2 deals with the challenges of global poverty, while Chapter 3 links poverty with the changes in international law, mostly associated with aid and grant to developing countries. Chapter 4 defines the official development assistance (ODA) and discusses the history and issues related to it. In addition to that, Chapters 5 and 6 throw light on the various cases for and against the aid. The last chapter of the book, Chapter 7, discusses the transactional efforts to transformational outcomes.

The book starts with discussion of one of the major issues facing the world, i.e. the alleviation of dehumanising global poverty. It starts with explaining how most of the developing countries are trapped in the vicious circle of low incomes, savings, and investment. The author argues that, therefore, these countries need continuous and quality (ODA). The aid, in general, is a small amount to mark significant impact on any country’s development but it puts pressure on revenue of every government.

Chapter 2 points out several key poverty challenges that the world is facing currently. Expressing his views on extreme poverty, the author argues that it is probably the single worst feature of shining and progressive world. Eight million people are dying just because of poverty in developing countries. Out of seven billion people in the world, three billion are living below the poverty line according to two dollar a day poverty line, which is based on purchasing power parity (PPP). Twenty percent of the population goes to bed starving every night, 885 million do not have access to safe drinking water, 26 billion lack basic sanitation and a million children do not reach the age of five.

Reduction in poverty requires a wide spectrum of measures including qualitative, attitudinal and institutional changes, adoption of sound macroeconomic and inclusive growth policies, improvement in governance, strengthening the mechanism and processes for the mobilisation of domestic resources, encouraging the flow of investment, and securing adequate and high quality concessional resources and technical assistance from external partners. Apart from discussing severity of poverty and its possible eradication policies, the chapter also discusses various issues related to poverty, such as income poverty and poverty trap, causes of poverty, and impact of different global policies on poverty.

Chapter 3 deals with the international law. The chapter elucidates major concerns, needs and expectations of developing countries related to international law to shape economic development and the transfer of concessional resources from rich too poor countries. Moreover, the transformation of international law is explained in the historical context from the era of Christian European Nations (1648 – 1856) to the era of peace-loving nations (1042-to date). Different forms and sources of international law, such as right to development, hard and soft law, community law,

UN charter and General Assembly resolutions are discussed in detail that have normative effect on the world. Emphasising the global governance, Haque discusses several key issues and challenges for classical models of international law, including moral and legal orders of governance.

ODA is one of the forms of international transfers. These transfers are from the government of developed countries to the government of developing countries in the form of financial transfers and technical assistance. Chapter 4 elaborates different types of ODAs, ODA's historical importance and issues pertaining to it. Importance of ODA for economic development is a major thesis of this book, which is intensively discussed in this chapter. After the discussion on the financial crisis, the chapter explains that the importance of ODA has increased substantially. It discusses several dimensions of ODA, including bilateral and multilateral development assistance. Author emphasises on the quality of ODA instead of quantity of aid in this chapter. The author defines quality of ODA as the per dollar capacity of aid to increase development and reduce poverty.

Chapter 5 discusses the case against aid. Three types of critiques are discussed in this chapter i.e., critiques by ultra-right, ultra-left and disappointed friends of ODA. Ultra-right challenges the concept of development assistance that aid is provided to break the vicious circle of poverty but this does not end it but results in wastage of vast resources of taxpayers of affluent countries. They oppose the poverty trap way of thinking. The ultra-right supports internally financed development. They suggest developing countries to finance their projects internally instead of getting aid from developed countries. Quoting Helen Hughes, who was an Australian economist, the author, says that provision of aid reduces the impetus for political reforms and other beneficial market reforms.

The ultra-left critics, on the other hand, oppose the ultra-right's critique. Nonetheless, they also oppose the benefits from aid. According to them, aid provision to developing countries is just for the masses and it does not benefit the poor. In addition, they strongly argue that imposition of conditionalities lead to many political and economic costs. The disappointed friends of ODA belong to a specific group who used to advocate the benefits of aid but due to lack of empirical evidence they started opposing it. Besides the three school of thoughts, this chapter comprehensively reviews the quantum of aid, which has, although, increased over the last seven decades but is insufficient to have any impact, especially on poverty. For instance, just to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets, the total amount of aid needed is four times the amount provided to the developing countries. Therefore, the impact of aid to achieve MDG targets is insignificant due to non-provision of substantial aid.

Discussing the quality of aid, the author argues that aid provided did not focus on development and poverty reduction. According to the author, the four major focuses of quality are maximum efficiency, fostering institutions, reducing burden, and transparency and learning. Although few efforts were made to improve the quality of aid in the Paris Declaration 2005 and the Accra declaration 2008 but improving the quality faces problems in implementing agenda due to corruption and misgovernance.

Chapter 6, in contrast to chapter 5, reviews the arguments in support of aid. Discussing three important aspects involved in aid effectiveness, this chapter explains

that self-interest is vital for utilising aid. Haque argues that if self-interests are based on greed then aid is anti-development. The second aspect is ethical consideration of the developed countries towards developing countries that deals with moral responsibility to help fellow countries. Third aspect deals with obligation, which emanates from the Rawl's concept of imperative of justice. It states that even if institutions are efficient and well-arranged but are unjust then it is not the best for development. Arguing in favour of aid, this chapter points out possible positive points of aid, namely it fills the gap of resources to achieve sustained economic growth, which helps in eradicating poverty. Aid effectiveness depends on institutions and policies of recipient countries, therefore, reforms are necessary. At the same time, the policies of the recipient country need to be consistent. Citing many empirical studies, the author argues in favour of aid effectiveness. For instance, the World Bank research suggests that the ODA can directly lift thousands of people out of depths of poverty.

The last chapter deals with paradigm shift of international law as well as behaviour of countries and implementation of strategies. It also discusses fault lines of neo-liberal and neo-conservative policymaking. Author agrees that just giving aid is not a solution to the problem of poverty. Several prerequisites are required to get maximum benefits from aid. The author, in this book, has tried to develop an argument in favour of aid. According to the author, even though aid may not be as beneficial as it is advocated but if developed world wants to help in the development of developing countries then they should be allowed to do so through aid. However, the author contends that the objective of aid should not be charity but a matter of right. To strengthen his claim, the author quotes Mahbub ul Haq:

“... a framework should be based on some internationally accepted needs of the poor rather than on the uncertain generosity of the rich. ...” (p. 220)

Although the book comprehensively reviews the impact of aid in the developing countries, nevertheless, few aspects have remained untouched. For example, Clemens, *et al.* (2011) discuss several possibilities for aid to effect growth, which are absent from the empirical literature cited in the book. Also, one of the most vital of these aspects is the timeframe of aid to impact growth, inequality and poverty, which is also not touched upon in the book. Inequality is among the top reasons for severity of poverty, which has markedly increased both within and across countries. Since 1980s income inequality has risen in more countries than it has fallen. For example, income share of very few developing countries notably Brazil, China and India has increased while, income share of African countries has declined by 2 percent of global income.

The book reviews the aid among the important determinants of poverty reduction but link between inequality and poverty due to aid particularly is not established. Most importantly, the amount of aid is not substantial to improve the situation of developing countries unless the prerequisites discussed in the book are fulfilled or aid is provided in the on-going projects in the developing countries, which help them to mitigate the problem of having lesser finances. Instead of following donor-driven agenda blindly, the governments of each country can work with the donor agencies to form a policy in which

interest of all stakeholders are taken into account. This would help in effectively implementing the aid money to reduce inequality and poverty.

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REFERENCE

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