

Islamic Economics system In the Eyes of Maulana Maududi-An Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Attempt has been made to investigate the Islamic Economics System from the perspectives of Maulana Maududi. He is one of the greatest thinkers that Islamic world has ever produced. He was a great scholar, and has written a large number of books, articles and booklets on different aspects of Islam. Economics has been one of the fields of his interest. It may be said that at least in the Sub-Continent, he was the person, who has established "Economics of Islam" as a separate branch of knowledge. In this context, he has highlighted the characteristics, principles and objectives of this system. On the pattern set by him, a large number of Muslim economic thinkers have followed his line of thinking. According to Maulana Maududi basic principles of Islamic economic systems are: private ownership, limits of *halal* and *haram*, economic equality, free economy and welfare role of state. Whereas this system is established to achieve the objectives of human liberty, simultaneous development of material and moral growth, establishment of justice, equal distribution of wealth, fulfillment of basic needs of people and co-ordination between different groups of society.

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1. INTRODUCTION

No doubt Maulana Maududi was a great thinker & religious scholar. He has written a voluminous literature on different aspects of Islamic ideology. One dimension of his knowledge is economics of Islam. No doubt he is the person who has played a deciding role to shaping Islamic economy as a separate branch of knowledge (Chapra 1988:14). He has written on different aspects of Islamic economics, and it is almost impossible to review the varying dimensions of his economic thoughts

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in an article. This is the reason that, only one aspect of his economic views i.e. how he had seen the Islamic economic system has been selected to discuss in this article. As a matter of fact, he recognized that Islamic economic system means that basic principles and objectives, which *Shariah* has set for our lives in general and particularly for economic aspect. These principles and objectives are those foundation stones on which the building of Islamic economic system can be built at any time and anywhere, according to the needs and requirements of that society and time. The society that wants to adopt these principles and objectives can set up the details of the system, which are universal and independent of time and place. This is the reason that structure of the building may be different but the soul will remain same (Maududi 1977).

In the following lines a brief analysis of those principles and objectives on which Islamic economic system is based in the eyes of Maududi, and the difficulties in their application.

2. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF ISLAMIC ECONOMIC SYSTEM

According to Maududi, the basic principles of Islamic economic system are as follows:

2.1 Private Ownership

The important features of basic principles of Islamic economic system are as follows:

Western point of view accepts the absolute right of people, on their income and wealth (Spencer 1993:18). But according to him in Islam this right is not absolute. From Islamic perspective *Allah* is the owner of each and everything, which people have. *Allah* has given them right to use, and has also described the guidelines for their consumption. Now it is the duty of the people to follow that orders and use their income and wealth in accordance with those rules and regulations (Maududi 1971:306).

No doubt, in line with other Muslim thinkers, Maududi has introduced the moral divinely ordained aspect in this principle, from which western concept is completely barefoot. It also gives superiority of Muslim concept over western thinking.

But the main problem is that a big majority of the people could not understand the same. Moreover there is not any mechanism, which except a moral appeal to pressurize the people to adopt it. Due to this reason its practical application becomes a difficult task.

According to him the items which are God gifted and mankind do not have any role in their preparation, if some people want to use them on commercial basis then government has the right to impose tax on them (Maududi 1977). But he did not explain whether government has the right to stop them or not?

A person, who gets a part of natural resources and makes it fruitful with his ability, then he will be the owner of that thing (Maududi 1959:124-128.).

If a person has the ownership of some assets, in accordance with the rules of *Shariah*, then government does not have any right to reduce his rights of ownership or nationalize them. And if, government do the same then it is an open oppression (Maududi 1977). In this way he has almost *Islamic Economics system In the Eyes of Maulana*

closed the doors of nationalization of any private property.

In the same way, he is not ready to impose any restriction on earning of wealth, subject to the condition that, these earnings are from *Halal* sources.

On the same line, ownership of land is lawful up to unlimited extent and no limit can be imposed on it (Maududi 1969:105.). He completely agrees with other Muslim thinkers, who are thinking on the same line (Usmani 1990:10).

However, in some of his writings he is ready to impose some restrictions on these unlimited rights but with conditions, and the same is with the land (Maududi 1977).

Most important point is this that he is not ready to distinguish between income from human labor and income from any asset and accepts it as *halal*. For its justification; he gives the examples of heirship, endowment and gifts which are lawful. Hence, on the basis of it, income from any sources is lawful except that it is not the result of *haram* sources as mentioned in Shariah. This situation makes the institution of private ownership as sanctioned cow. Nobody can touch it, but here are lots of undefined ifs and buts.

2.2 Limits of *Halal* (lawful) and *Haram* (unlawful)

According to Maududi only those economic activities will be allowed in an Islamic economic system, which are permissible in *Shariah*, and all those transactions which are in the category of *haram*, can not be allowed.

2.3 Concept of Economic Equality

He recognizes the diversified capabilities in human beings, and due to which income of all persons will be different in nature and consequently inequality in income is created. He advised to stop this inequality because the way of Islam is different from capitalism and socialism (Maududi 1941:10). But he did not highlight any concrete mechanism, suggested by Islam, to solve this basic economic problem. Somewhere he also suggested that, Nizam-e-Zakat can solve this problem. But what will be the way to achieve it by imposing this system.

2.4 Free Economy

He admitted that an Islamic economy will be a free economy and will be based upon the forces of demand and supply forces. Price mechanism is the basic instrument for the allocation of resources and remuneration of factors of production. But again this market will not be a completely free market like *laissez-faire* economy. But in a situation in which government has a very limited role in the economy to monitor demand and supply forces, and also cannot restrict private ownership. It is almost impossible that *Shariah* rule will be able to control the forces of demand and supply.

2.5 Role of State

In an Islamic economy role of state will be to provide all the essential facilities to the public. Since it will be a welfare state, hence state will perform all those functions which are expected from such *Islamic Economics system In the Eyes of Maulana*

type of government. Government can also impose taxes other than *zakat* (Maududi 1962:354-355).

It is quite interesting that, on one side it is claimed that, *zakat* system is the solution of all economic problems. On the hand it is allowed that government can impose taxes other than *zakat*. It is an open contravention (Farooq 2004:234).

3 OBJECTIVE OF ISLAMIC ECONOMIC SYSTEM

He did not describe the objectives of Islamic economic system at one particular place. But these can be derived from his different writings. Sometimes he calls them principles, sometimes elements and sometimes objectives (Khan 1983:31). These are as follows:

3.1. Human Liberty

One of the basic objectives of Islamic economic system is to safeguard the human liberty. So that, every human being will be free to take decisions about him-self. It is not an absolute freedom, but subject to the limits which are necessary for the collective welfare of society. In other words, Islam do not interfere in the personal freedom of the man, but restricts it where this freedom will become a danger for the society (Maududi 1977).

3.2. Relationship between Material and Moral Development

Another important objective of Islamic economic system is that material and moral development will be simultaneous. In the other words, on the one hand economy will grow at its optimum level, and on the other hand, this system will create good moral values in the public (Maududi 1977).

Definitely it is almost an impossible task. History provides a lot of examples, which prove the fact that with increase in wealth, rapid fall in moral level of society occurs. And ultimately societies are destroyed. In case of Islamic economic system what will be the mechanism, with which it will be possible is never discussed by him. Even all Muslim thinkers have put the same claim, but none of them has described its mechanism.

3.3. Distribution of Wealth.

With the increase in wealth, its equal distribution (up-to maximum limit) is another objective of Islamic economic system. This objective can be achieved, on one hand by developing the moral values in the society and on the other hand by effective enforcement of law. These laws will be restricted to concentration of wealth in society.

In a society, in which role of government is quite limited and full protection is given to unlimited private ownership, how this objective can be achieved? Definitely it puts a big question mark for Muslim economists.

3.4. Fulfillment of Basic Needs of Men

In a capitalist economy the basic problem is: How to increase the level of production? But in an Islamic economy, the basic objective of the society is to fulfill at least basic needs of the society.

Resources allocated to achieve this objective are just opposite to western thinking (Khan 1983:31).

No doubt it is an ideal objective but practically impossible. The main problem is that measurement of needs of a man and the whole society is not possible. It is completely a relative term and changes from time to time and place to place. In such a situation when measurement of need is not possible then how resources will be allocated on this basis.

3.5. Co-ordination between Different Groups of Society

Another objective of Islamic economic system is to create co-ordination between different groups of society. Taking the first step, efforts are being made to eliminate different groups e.g. the groups which they have and which they do not have or capitalist and labor groups etc. The institutions are also being built to eliminate such types of groups. On the second step, if some groups are established, which are the ultimate result of evolution of society, then Islam offers them the way of coordination to minimize the possibilities of clash between groups of the society (Maududi 1977).

The situation is quite the same with this objective also. Question arises as what mechanism will be adopted for this purpose? Its answer is anxiously awaited.

4. CONCLUSION

Maulana Maududi as the founder of Islamic economics has sketched the principles and objectives of Islamic economic system, which are derived from *Qur'an and Hadith*. These principles and objectives themselves are questionable due to lack of continues sources. But the main question is: How to implement them? Almost all Muslim thinkers, including Maududi, have just described them but none of them paid attention on the applied form of these principles and objectives. This is the reason that Islamic economics till to date is no more a theoretical subject. It is the need of the time to think on the applied form of these principles and objectives floated by Maududi.

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