WAQF FINANCING OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE ARAB WORLD: A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SURVEY

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ABSTRACT

The absence of sufficient literature could stimulate a debate and open opportunities for research to develop further interest in using Waqf as a viable mode of financing education. This paper conducts a bibliography survey of Waqf literature written in the Arabic language, and critically reviews the related literature to Waqf-based education. With the help of field-study, 79 materials on waqf have been found. An analysis of the literature shows that a majority of the literature deals with waqf laws, both classical and modern. By ranking these literatures, the study shows that much attention appears to be paid to Waqf-based education. The paper further suggests that more research should be held in the area of financing education through waqf, to mobilize additional resources for education in the Arab and Muslim World.

Keywords: Waqf, Higher Education, Arab World.

1. INTRODUCTION

The voluntary sector or community sector (also non-profit sector) is the sphere of social activity undertaken by organizations that are non-profit and non-governmental, such as NGOs, Endowments, Foundations, Trusts, and Waqf. This sector is also called the third sector, in reference to the public sector and the private sector. This sector includes a multitude and diversity of organizations, from small local groups to large, international organizations that enrich the lives of communities in a variety of ways. Some are structured as political federations, others more like corporations. Their contributions include delivering services, advocating on behalf of a group or cause, encouraging self-help, advancing religious faith and practice, facilitating economic development and providing financial support to other organizations. Some are considered “charities” (depending on legislated rules often established at a national level) and some are not.

The presence of a large third sector is sometimes seen as an indicator of a healthy economy in local and national financial measurements. With a growing number of non-profit organizations focused on social services, the environment, education and other unmet needs throughout society, the nonprofit sector is becoming increasingly central to the health and well-being of society. NGOs are responsible for the promotion of certain causes whether it is in health, education, labor, environment, and other fields of life. The Urban Institute recorded, that an estimated 2.3 million nonprofit organization operate in the United States, and approximately 1.6 million nonprofit organizations were registered with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in 2010.

Therefore, non-governmental organizations are desirable in a society. For example, NGOs, Foundations, trusts, and Waqf institutions. However, the focus of this study will be on Waqf, which is an Arabic word meaning assets that are donated, bequeathed, or purchased for the

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purpose of being held in perpetual trust as ongoing charity (sadaqah jariyah) or for a general or specific cause that Islam regards as socially beneficial. This condition of perpetuity has led over the years to a considerable accumulation of societal wealth such that awqaf has become an important sector dedicated to the social and economic improvement of Muslim society.

The importance of the Waqf sector is seen in terms of the huge assets it controls, in its social expenditure, in the number of people it employs, and in its significant contribution to the economy, which accounts for as much as 10 per cent of the GDP of some countries (Dafterdar, 2010). With such a significant economic output, and growth in the number, size and diversity of non-profit organizations entrusted with Waqf properties for their social programs, Waqf as a faith-based charitable institution is no longer seen as exclusively religious. Waqf has generated interest well beyond the confines of philanthropic activists and fiqh and Shariah scholars. With a broader business focus, it has become clear that the sector is in fact an industry and is being subjected to increased scrutiny by governments and regulatory authorities.

Waqf Institutions are Islamic not-for-profit entities which are involved in a vast array of social, cultural and economic activities. They are not part of government even though many perform a public service. Their operations encroach into all sectors of the economy and include a wide range of industries, including but not limited to real estate, education, healthcare, social services and recreation. Waqf constitutes a distinct sector, neither public nor private – a sector with its distinctive rules and characteristics. Waqf institutions come in different structures and include government agencies, non-government organizations, incorporated and unincorporated associations. Being a Waqf organization does not necessarily mean being small. A considerable number of them are large-scale organizations operating in different countries, controlling substantial assets, and employing significant number of people. Major hospitals, universities, museums, and many NGOs are Waqfs (Dafterdar, 2010).

Waqf has always played fundamental role in socio-economic life of Muslims. Muslims have been encouraged to dedicate their valued objects for religious purpose to be a permanent source of blessings goodness (Sadaqah Jariah) for them. It was a major source of employment for a large number of populations in various capacities. Waqf also provides goods and services towards religious institutions, such as mosques and schools or even welfare schemes like water supply and highway facilities.

The history of Waqf is very rich with an impressive record of achievements in serving the poor in particular and enhancing the welfare in general. Various kinds of Waqf were established including the cash Waqf, Waqf for public utilities, education and research, and health care. Furthermore, there were Waqf of grain to be used as seeds, and Waqf to provide loans to persons who need financing and providing services and supplementary income to low income people. Waqf has been highly supported by Muslims who are very keen to do good deeds. Thereafter the Muslims expanded the uses of Waqf. Starting from cemeteries, decorating the Masajed, and birds feeding, to a larger Waqf and more significant in the social solidarity, such as construction of hospitals and schools. The Muslim traveler Ibn Jubayr narrated many of his observations of the broad scope of Waqf in different part of the Muslims state. All this confirms that the Waqf is the oldest human practice of voluntary effort been carried out by the Muslims. (Habib, 2004)
Therefore, Muslim societies depended essentially on Waqf for the provision of education at all levels, cultural services, such as libraries and lecturing, etc., scientific research in all material and religious sciences and healthcare including the provision of physicians’ services, hospital services and medicines. For instance, it is reported that the Island of Sicily, under Islamic rule had 300 elementary schools. All of them were built through Waqf funding; and all of them are provided with Waqf revenue for payment of teachers and school supplies. The number of high schools and universities in each of the major Islamic cities, such as Al Quds, Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo and Nisapur were in the tens to hundreds. There were universities specialized in different areas of sciences, such as medicine, chemistry and Islamic studies. These included universities like Al Qurawiyin in Fez, Al Azhar in Cairo, and Al Nizamiyah in Al Mustansiriya in Baghdad (Kahf, 1998).

However, Higher education in Arab countries is considered a recent phenomenon. In the past decades, most Arab students studied mainly at a few Arab universities spread in the Arab World, in addition to studying in universities in Turkey, Pakistan, Europe, USA and India. According to the Middle East Brief, no.36 May 2009, Higher learning is deeply rooted in the history and societies of the Arab Middle East. After the seventh century and the islamization of the Arab world, local religious schools known as madrasa became the main institution of higher learning in the Middle East. They established and disseminated educational standards that are still applied in present-day universities, such as the separation of master’s from doctorate programs, tenure, and protections for academic freedom.

Madrasa (school or college for the study of the Islamic religion) like al-Azhar in Cairo (Egypt, 970AD) and the Qarawiyyin in Fez (Morroco 859AD), Al Mustansiryah in Iraq (1227 AD) originated in intellectual movements such as humanism and scholasticism, which nurtured the subsequent flourishing of Western scholarship after the twelfth century. During the same period, other institutions of the Arab world such as hospitals, libraries, observatories, and private homes known as “academies” undertook the development of the nonreligious sciences, inspired by intellectual tradition of the ancient Greeks. The most famous of these academies was the Beit al Hikma (House of Wisdom) in Baghdad, where numerous disciplines within the sciences (astronomy, physics, mathematics, medicine, chemistry, geography) flourished until the sixteenth century.

Yet the Ottomans, who ruled the Arab world throughout this period, strove as early as the eighteenth century to get their Empire back into the academic game. In 1720, the Sultan Ahmed III sent delegations of scholars to Europe in order to obtain translations of Western scientific books. This pattern reached its peak during the reign of Mohamed Ali (r. 1805–49), when dozens of modern institutions of higher learning were established on the European model, mainly in Egypt (Abu-Orabi, 2012).

Since the eighteenth century the European missionaries, followed by American Christians, founded dozens of schools and institutions of higher learning in the Middle East, while the French established institutions of higher learning in North Africa. Thus, neither the globalization of higher education nor “Westernization” is a new trend in the Middle East. Until 1953, only 13 public and private universities were established in the Arab World. Most existing private universities were very old and mostly foreign. For example, in Lebanon there were two pioneering institutions, namely the American university in Beirut established in 1866 and Saint Joseph University in 1875. It is recorded that Al-Azhar University in Cairo is the oldest formal university. Known (970AD) and it is also argued that Al-Qarawiyyun University in Fez is the first university in the world that was established (859 AD). Those universities were funded by the Islamic Waqf (Endowment).
In Saudi Arabia the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), acquired funding of a total US$ 10 billion through Waqf (Abu- Orabi). Moreover a report published by The Economist in 2007, has placed Saudi Arabia on seventh place ahead of France, Russia, Italy, Spain, Malaysia and many other countries in the field of higher education and scientific research. This is due to: The availability of funds spent on students in the field of higher education, the percentage of allocations for higher education in the general budget, the total number of external students, and the number of business administration institutes. Despite the development of higher education through Waqf in Saudi Arabia, such an institutional effort in many Muslim countries is still lagging.

The idea of exploring the role of waqf, in financing education in the Arabic region has not been forthcoming. One of the major reasons for this is the absence of sufficient literature that could stimulate a debate and open opportunities for research to develop further interest in using Waqf as a viable mode of financing perhaps not only in the Arab world but in the entire Muslim world.

Studies show that non Arabic speaking in the Muslim world still have no access to relevant literature in financing education through Waqf. Unfortunately, there has been no concerted efforts to conduct a bibliographical study and critically review the extant of the literature, in order to identify a viable research area, that can become the foundation of furthering studies in financing education through Waqf. Furthermore, efforts are also lagging in bridging the gap between literature in the Arabic and non Arabic speaking world, and sharing such resources would be important in enhancing research, particularly in the area of financing education in the Arab and Muslim world. Therefore, this paper will fill this research gap, by conducting bibliographic survey of Waqf – education literature in Arabic and also conducting a critical survey of these literatures to identify vital areas for further research on financing education through Waqf.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method to be used in this study is based on comprehensive library research. In order to acquire a comprehensive list of references in the area of Waqf, various libraries will be referred to both, physically and through a web-based archive. Various databases will be explored; however, the author will focus the research data only on the Arabic literature on Waqf. The final list of literature will be compiled, categorized, and ranked in ways that will help facilitate and prioritize the potential areas.

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS:

Table 1 below presents an overview of Waqf bibliographic output based on the type, amount and percentage of the entire literature accessed during the research period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>References Surveyed</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Books</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Papers</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Thesis/ Dissertations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 1, there is a total of 79 research data that was compiled by the author. All of the data consist of work that is available to the researcher. According Table 1, a total of 5 different categories were used to differentiate the myriad forms of the data, this includes, Books, Articles, Papers on conference, Thesis, and others. Referring to the table above, Papers, which includes conference, occasional, working, discussion, and seminar papers have the largest number of available data with a total of 36, while Books came close at 32, representing 45.6% and 40.5% respectively. While, the least available data is under the others category, which the author was only able to find 1 data, in the form of a brochure published by King Abdul Aziz University, the number is represented by 1.3% as stated above.

It is important to note that the sorted references in the list were then ranked by stars, ranging from one to three stars in ascending order of importance, where a three star reference is the most important and one star reference is the least important. The criteria used in the ranking includes type of reference, the prominence of the author, the subject matter and the publisher, this is to assist the readers in locating important and significant data.

As mentioned above, the researcher has compiled literary work according to their respective ranking. The number of literary work under one star is 48 in total, while work under the two star category is 26 and the three star work are 5 in total, which sums up to 79 literary work altogether. The author ranked 5 articles, with three stars in alignment with the subject matter, which is in regard to higher education, while the other categories lack this important element.

Table 2 below present the major areas of the waqf literature output based on the areas, sub areas, amount and percentage of the entire literature accessed during the research activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Sub-areas</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fiqh &amp; Usul al Fiqh</td>
<td>Methodology &amp; Rulings</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Theory &amp; History</td>
<td>Concept, Principles &amp; evolution</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Economics &amp; Finance</td>
<td>Performance, Decision making, Resource allocation, Socio-economic role, Management and Development</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Financing Education and Development.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Politics &amp; Public Policy</td>
<td>Governance, Maslahah, and Siyasah Shariyah</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 2, the researcher has decided to categorize the data in different areas, namely, Fiqh & Usul al Fiqh, Theory & History, Economics & Finance, Education, and Politics & Public Policy. Also, it is important to note that the author also divides the areas into sub-areas which can be seen above. The largest data that was collected under a single area is Economics &Finance, which has 27 sources of data that was collected under the area, representing 34% of the total data. This may have resulted from the presence of broad sub-areas. While, Fiqh & Usul al Fiqh and Theory & History have both attained 19% and 21.5% of the total data respectively, both of these areas represent the legislative block of Waqf, where combined will increase to 40.5%. However, the area with the lowest percentage is Politics & Public Policy, with only 9%, which only represents 7 out of the total 79 sources.
Furthermore, the most important area in this research, which is Education, is recorded as the second lowest with only 16.5% percent or 13 data in total, despite being the most important area in Waqf, it seems that the data regarding education, mainly in the Arabic world is lacking.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, despite some of its limitations, this current research survey as a necessary springboard catalyst for future research in numerous areas in the study of waqf. The data will be made available under the bibliography list towards the end of this paper. This list also provides the relation between Waqf and other disciplines, in addition to suggesting areas for future research especially for English-speaking researchers. Needless to say, the ultimate success of the output would depend on effective utilization of the list by relevant future researchers.

REFERENCE


