

The Historical Narrative of Lanao Sultanate in the 17th Century until the 21st Century and its Zakat practices from Sunni-Islamic perspectives

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ABSTRACT

Zakāt is one of the five pillars of Islam. Sociologically, the Lanao Sultanate zakāt system is one of the few of the unexplored Islamic practices of the Meranaos of the Lanao Sultanate. Literature studies show that there is a sizable research gap vis-à-vis the Sunni-Islamic perspectives on zakāt system of the Meranaos. To fill in this research gap, this paper explores in-depth the Sunni-Islamic perspectives on zakāt practices of the Meranaos. This research used secondary data sources such as books, theses, and journals. This study serves as a reference material for the researchers whose research interest is on the zakāt system of the Muslims in the Philippines. This study contributes to the body of knowledge and academia on Islamic civilization in Southeast Asia as well as on the significant impact of the Lanao Sultanate into the lifeways of the Meranaos. This study also recommends that the law makers shall enact policies that promote and regulate the zakāt practices in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), which policies could be used as a tool to alleviate poverty, and to promote the distribution of wealth in order to attain the quality of life of the Ummah (Muslim community).

Keywords: Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao; Zakāt; Lanao Sultanate; Sunni; Meranaos

INTRODUCTION

The *Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao* is the archaic name of the Lanao Sultanate. It can be translated as the Four Lake-Based Emirates, meanwhile, the said lake refers to Lake Lanao. These Four Lake-Based Emirates are Bayabao, Unayan, Masiu and Baloï. Within these Four Lake-Based Emirates are forty-three confederate sub-states called *agamas*. The Lanao Sultanate was founded in the early 17th century after its traditional leaders-the *datus* (chieftains) seceded from the Magindanao Sultanate. The Lanao Sultanate had the traditional laws i.e., the *taritib* and *igma* or the *adat* (traditional laws), and Shari'ah (Islamic laws).

The political structure of Lanao Sultanate consists of council of elders, house of board of advisers, the house of *bais* (titled ladies), *imāms* (prayer leaders), *kalis*

(judges), *gurus* (teachers), *askars* (army), *pananalsilas* (genealogists), defence units headed by a *radia-laut* (naval and army commander), and the forty-three sultans who ruled the *pagawidan* (supported) states and *pagawid* (supporting) states.

The sultans of the *pagawidan* states were the executive bodies of the fifteen royal houses of the Lanao Sultanate. Whereas, the sultans of the *pagawid* states were also governors called *m'babaya ko taritib* who were at the same time the legislative bodies or law-makers of the four states of Lanao. The founders of Lanao Sultanate were inspired by the Qur'ānic teachings on establishing an Islamic leadership. They quoted from a Qur'ānic verse which they translated into Meranao language, it says, "*Hay so miyamaratiyaya na onotiniyo so Allāh, onotiniyo so Rasulollah (SAW) nago so mga datu iyo. Okaka samok kano nandud kano ko kitabo o Allāh nago so sabdan o Nabi Muhammad (SAW),*" which means, "O you who believe! Obey Allāh, and obey the Messenger (Muhammad), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) If you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allāh and His Messenger, if you believe in Allāh and in the Last Day. That is better and most suitable for final determination." Undoubtedly, the Qur'ānic verse as quoted above is taken from Sūrah AnNisā, 4:59 (Macabando, 2005 & 2008).

This means that the Lanao *datu*s who founded the Lanao Sultanate were aware of the Qur'ānic verse above and its meaning which guided them to establish the Lanao Sultanate in 1616.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Foundation of Lanao Sultanate

The Lanao Sultanate was founded by Lano *datu*s when they separated from the Magindanao Sultanate during the preparation of the enthronement rites of Sultan Kudarat whom to be enthroned as the Sultan of Magindanao (Hadji Abdul Racman, 2020). Sultan Kudarat reign as Sultan of Magindanao in 1616 CE, this date was based from the Dutch source (Laarhoven, 1986).

The *taritib* and *igma* or *adat* traditional laws of the Meranaos in Lanao were the bases of leadership of Lanao Sultanate. During the foundation of Lanao Sultanate, its founders founded the fifteen *pagawidan* sultanates and the twenty-eight *pagawid* sultanates. They also determined the other administrative divisions of the four states of Lanao such as the '*ulamā*', *imāms*, *gurus*, *bais* (queens or sultanah) and others (Hadji Abdul Racman, 2020).

According to Shinzo Hayase (2007), Sharīf Kabunsuan founded the Magindanao Sultanate. Sharīf Kabunsuan an Arab-Malay married Bae Angintabo, a Meranao noble woman from Malabang, Lanao, whom gave birth to Sharīf Makaalang.

Shinzo Hayase (2007) states that when Sharīf Kabunsuan got old, he relinquished his title to his son Sharīf Makaalang who reigned in 1536 to 1556; who was then succeeded by his son Sharīf Bangkaya who reigned in 1556 to 1578; then he was succeeded by his son Dimasangkay Adil who reigned in 1578-1596 (ibid.). According to Cesar Adib Majul, Dimasangkay Adil was succeeded by Gugu Sarikula

who was succeeded by Kapitan Laut Buisan, who was the youngest brother of both Dimasangkay Adil and Gugu Sarikula. Kapitan Laut Buisan reigned in 1597 to 1616/1619; then he was succeeded by his son, Sultan Kudarat who reigned in 1616/1619 to 1671 (Majul, 1974).

During the Spanish colonial period, the Lanao Sultanate and Magindanao Sultanate combined their naval and military powers, and they regularly exchanged their knowledge on making bladed weaponries, and staged warfare exercises. The Lanao Sultanate provided Iranon and Meranao warriors to the Magindanao Sultanate to form a naval and military forces in their fleet (Hadji Abdul Racman, 2020). The legitimate traditional sultans who ruled the Magindanao Sultanate from the 17th century until the recent century were descendants of Bae Angintabo and Sharif Kabunsuan, the founder of Magindanao Sultanate (ibid.).

The Lanao Sultanate is geographically located in Lanao del Sur today. There are four provinces that surround Lanao del Sur, namely, (1) Lanao del Norte in the northwest, (2) Bukidnon in the east, (3) Magindanao, and (4) Cotabato in the south. Lanao del Sur is bordered by Illana Bay to the southwest. It is teemed with hills and volcanoes, and endowed with green forests, wildlife, flora, and fauna (ibid.).

Characteristics of Lanao Sultanate

The leadership style of Lanao Sultanate is a collective leadership which promotes unity, strong brotherhood and equality of the Meranaos. It is also a consultative Monarchy which is equivalent to Monarchical Democracy. The Lanao Sultanate was divided into division and each division was then divided into sub-division (Hadji Abdul Racman, 2021).

The *pagawidan* (supported) sultans of the fifteen royal houses assume the authority, powers, control, and supervision over their respective *pangamong* (sultanate/state/county). The fifteen supported sultans of the fifteen royal houses were being assisted by the twentyeight houses of peers or policy or law-makers from the twenty-eight supporting states. The main function of the houses of peers is “to legislate local customs, traditions and laws but subject to the joint concurrence of the royal houses, council of elders and the board of advisers” (Macabando, 2005). The council of elders and the boards of advisers are both advisers to the royal houses and the houses of peers. The decision-making process in the Lanao Sultanate is not a monopoly of the sultans but it is based on the consensus of the council of elders and the boards of advisers and other traditional leaders of different *agamas* or towns (ibid.).

The Lanao Sultanate’s Geo-Political Divisions

There are four major states of the Lanao Sultanate i.e., Unayan, Masiu, Bayabao and Baloi. The ruling clans of each state traced their line of ancestry from Sharif Kabunsuan. The State of Bayabao has three *sukus* (districts) namely, Poona-Bayabao, Lumba-Bayabao, and Mala-Bayabao. In total, the three districts of Bayabao has nine *panoroganan*/superordinate sultanates (executive bodies) and twelve subordinate sultanates (legislative bodies). Bayabao was the largest state in terms of number of its executive and legislative bodies combined. Masiu was divided into the East and the West Masiu. Masiu has only two *panoroganan*/superordinate sultanates (executive bodies) and four subordinate sultanates or legislative bodies. It was the 3rd

largest state in terms of number of its executive and legislative bodies combined. Unayan has two districts namely Butig and Domalondong. Unayan has three *panoroganan*/superordinate sultanates (executive bodies) and eight subordinate sultanates (legislative bodies). It was the 2nd to the largest state in terms of number of its executive and legislative bodies combined. Baloi has no district. It is at the same time a *panoroganan*/superordinate sultanate and has an executive body. Baloi has four subordinate sultanates (legislative bodies). It was the smallest state (Hadji Abdul Racman, 2020).

During the Spanish period, the Lanao and Magindanao Sultanates had *askars* who maintain peace and order in Lanao and Magindanao; their military and naval forces regularly join the naval forces of Sulu Sultanate. These joint forces were forged for military expeditions against the Spanish forces and military bases in the Islands of Visayas and Luzon. The Spanish forces were composed of Spanish men and Christianized Filipinos from the Islands of Visayas and Luzon. The Spanish leaders used the Christianised Filipinos in their policy of wars against the Muslim people in Mindanao whom they called Moro (Hadji Abdul Racman, 2020).

The Christianized Filipinos were used by the Spanish colonialist to invade the territory of the Meranaos and other Muslim tribes in the Philippines. Mamitua Saber (1980) narrates that the Spaniards colonial forces pursued military, and spiritual campaigns towards the Meranao people in the shores of Lake Lanao. It was on April 4, 1639, when a Spanish conquistador Corcuera sent the first Spanish expedition to the Meranao inhabitants of Lake Lanao areas. This expedition was composed of Spaniards and hundreds of troops of Boholanos who were natives from the island of Bohol in Visayas-the central part of the Philippines. These campaigns were jointly commanded by Captain Francisco de Atienza and a Portuguese Recollect missionary, Fray Agustin de San Pedro. Atienza and San Pedro managed to entering alliance with some of *datus* (chieftains) of Lanao. In 1640, Corcuera sent Don Pedro Bermudes Castro to Lake Lanao. Don Pedro Bermudes Castro established a garrison to establish the Spanish sovereignty in the areas of the Meranao people in Lanao. Later, the Meranaos became suspicious and were alarmed by the threat of subjugation, hence, they drove back the Spaniards to the coastal town in Mindanao. They also burned the Spanish installations in Lake Lanao. After this incident, the Spanish forces never return to the Meranao areas in Lake Lanao for over 250 years.

According to Mamitua Saber (1980), “the Meranao people maintained their independent nation under the *pangampong* (state/sultanate or county) organization which was free from European domination.” (Saber, 1980). When the Americans came to the Philippines, they fought against the Spanish forces in the Philippines for political control and power over the Philippines.

According to Helen R. Tubangui, et al., (1982) the war between the United States of America and Spain ended after signing of the Treaty of Paris which was signed in December 10, 1898. Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States of America which it paid \$20,000,000 to Spain to compensate for the cost of infrastructure which Spain has done to the Philippines (ibid.). In the 19th century, the Meranaos were again struggling to resist another superior force, the Americans, and then later, the Imperial Japan who came during the Word War II.

The Socio-Political and Religious Structure of the People of Lanao Sultanate

According to Mamitua Saber and Mauyag M. Tamano (1985), “some tentative formulations might be stated about the narrow gaps between ranks for their significance in behavioral relationships. Although an individual generally derives his prestige from his kin group status, there is a categorical ladder of individual ranks” (ibid.). These ranks can be observed within the Lanao Sultanate’s communities, as follow:

1. A *pagawidan* sultan: a highest rank, even higher than *pagawid* sultan;
2. A minor *pagawidan*: a titled man, a rank higher than a minor *pagawid* titled man;
3. A *pagawidan* non-titled man, a social rank higher than a *pagawid* non-titled man;
4. The rank of male enjoys is higher than that of the female;
5. The rank of adults is higher than children, and
6. The rank of slaves is the lowest rank (ibid.).

This categorical ladder of individual ranks in Meranao societies in Lanao Sultanate shows that there was a social hierarchy between individuals in terms of social status, age, gender, ancestral origin or descent lines, particularly in terms of whether a person is from the *pagawidan* and *pagawid* clans or not. The *pagawidan* sultans and their followers occupied fifteen *pagawidan* (supported) states, and the *pagawid* (supporting) sultans and their followers occupied twenty-eight *pagawid* states. At that time, there were fifteen *pagawidan* clans, and twenty-eight *pagawid* ruling clans of four states of Lanao. There was also *lipongan*, the lowest organizational stratum in the four states of Lanao (Madale, 2002).

Mamitua Saber and Mauyag M. Tamano (1985) state that, “with the Moriatao Balindong (descendants of Balindong) as the capital, the Taraka District territory (where the sultan of Masiu still maintains his influence even after the succession of communities in West Masiu) has been divided into *lipongan* groups of villages.” The class of the members of *lipongan* was lower compared to that of the members of Moriatao Balindong. Individuals or groups who established a separate mosque gained an autonomous status. In the past, the *lipongans* in Taraka were called *agamas*.

According to Sultan Monsing Macabando, the political structure of the Four States of Lanao is like the political structure of the Philippines national government which has executive branch, legislative branch, and judiciary branch. The fifteen now sixteen *panoroganans* or the sixteen royal houses of the royal sultans were the chiefs of the executive powers of the Four States of Lanao, and the twenty-eight houses of peers or the *duwa pulo ago walo a m’babaya ko taritib* are the policy/law-makers or the legislative bodies of the four states of Lanao. The house of the ‘*ulamās*’ constitutes the judiciary powers of the four states of Lanao.

The four states of Lanao has the house of the council of elders equivalent to an executive secretary and judiciary, the house of four landmark sultanates, the house of the ladies, and the house of board of advisers (Brecht-Drouart, 2011). The four landmark sultanates were the places of intersection and demarcation of sultanates, known as the *Pat a Inged a Kiasosoludaan o Bangsa o Pat a Pangampong sa Ranao*. The house of the ladies were the titled ladies i.e., *bai-a-labi*, *potri-[Maamor]*, *paramata*, *bai-a-labi-a-gaus*. *Bai-a-labi* was the highest-ranking title among the royal titles for ladies. “The ‘*ulamā*’ were classified into three groups: *imāms*, *kalis* (Arabic *qādīs* for judge), and *gurus*.” The *imāms*, *kalis*, and *gurus* officiate the spiritual, social, and

religious affairs of the Four States of Lanao. They were also the religious and spiritual leaders of the *agamas* (communities) (Hadji Abdul Racman, 2020).

Nagasura T. Madale says that the four states of Lanao have *pananalsilas* or the reciters of genealogy (ibid.). The *pananalsilas* were responsible in writing the genealogy of the ruling classes of the Lanao Sultanate. This genealogy was known as *salsila*. The *pananalsilas* memorized the content of the genealogy and they recite the lines of descent in the genealogy during the crowning ceremony of the royalties and royal wedding ceremony. The members of the ruling clans and the commoners refer to their *salsila* to trace up the roots of lineage and the blood-line connections of a prospect bride and groom.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Sunni Perspectives on Zakāt

According to Jastaniah Abdulazis Saddiq (1982), historically, there were eight major sources of income recognized in the early Islamic state. *Zakāt* was one of them. Jastaniah Abdulazis Saddiq explains *zakāt* and other sources of income as follows:

1. *Zakāt* is mandatory and must be paid by adult Muslims. The charity (*ṣadaqāt*) is voluntarily paid by adult Muslims.
2. *Al-'Ushūr* is a form of tax that is imposed on imported goods from countries that are at war with an Islamic state. Its amount is one-tenth of the goods' value.
3. *Al-Jisyah* is another form of tax that is imposed on every physically fit non-Muslim. Paying it will make the state guarantee the full protection of the lives and property of the non-Muslims residing in Islamic state. Women, children, the disabled, and religious leaders of non-Muslims were exempted from paying it. During the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the amount of *al-jisyah* paid was only one *dīnār* (ibid.). The amount *al-jisyah* paid changed during the time of Umar. He made it four *dīnārs* for the wealthy, two *dīnārs* for the middle class, and one *dīnār* for the poor.
4. *Al-Kharāj* is the revenue derived from conquered land which belong to the state. It is a tax imposed on both Muslims and non-Muslims on the use of state own land.
5. *Al-Fay'* refers to property by the government without war.
6. *Al-Ghanā'im* (booty) one-fifth of the property seized in warfare goes to the Muslim treasury (*baitul māl*). The remaining four-fifths is to be divided among the soldiers.
7. *Zarā'ib* were taxes collected by the state from the rich, payment is based on their ability to pay it.
8. *Al-'Ushr* is a tax collected by the state from the agricultural produce. The amount to be paid is one-tenth of the produce's value if the land is naturally irrigated or one-twentieth if the land is not naturally irrigated (ibid.).

Islamically, a portion of collected income from the taxes which were paid to the state's treasury must be spent for the poor. Allāh (SWT) said in the Qur'ān, 'As-*ṣadaqāt* (here it means *zakāt*) are only for the the *fuqarā* (poor) and *al-Masākin* (the needy), and those employed to collect (the funds); and to attract the hearts of those who have been inclined (towards Islam); and to free the captives; and those in debt; and for the Allāh's Cause (i.e., *mujahidūn*) – those fighting in a holy battle), and for the wayfarer (a traveler who is cut off from everything); a duty imposed by Allāh. And Allāh is All-Knower, All-Wise,' (Qur'ān, Sūrah At-Taubah, 9:60).

The collected taxes must be spent wisely in all areas that promote social development, social welfare, and the physical security of the state. According to Peter G. Gowing (1979), Islamically, it is obligatory for a free, sane, adult Muslim to pay annually, in cash or in kind, the *zakāt* of one fortieth of the value of all property he owns for one year which is in excess of property required as necessities of life. The *zakāt* may be paid to religious officials, or to authorized collectors by the community. In the Maranao societies, the Maranaos paid *zakāt* to the *zakāt* collectors particularly the religious leaders i.e., *imām*. The *zakāt* payers pay *zakāt* to the *imām* at the mosque (ibid.).

Islamically, the state must give a portion of collected *zakāt* to the needy. Generally, there are different categories of people who deserves to be given a portion of *zakāt* collectives, they are the poor, slaves, debtors, travelers, *zakāt* collectors, and those engaged in struggle in the cause of God (i.e., *jihād* or holy war) (ibid.). According to Peter G. Gowing (1979), “some pious Muslims prefer to distribute the *zakāt* directly to the poor people in their communities. The Meranaos recognize that beyond the duty of the annual *zakāt*, it is meritorious to give voluntary alms or charity (*ṣadaqāt*) to the needy-and this is done especially in connection with *Hariraya Puasa* festival, often in the form of rice or money distributed to the poor” (ibid.).

In Lanao context, on giving *zakāt* or *kandiyakat* (giving out share for the poor) is fixed if and when the source of *zakāt* is rice. According to Manganacan M. Orogan, *kandiyakat* “is religiously fixed to provide one ganta for every ten gantas of rice. Before measuring the cleaned rice, the farmer would whisper: *imanto na pagasad ako na isibay aken so diyakat ka*, which means, I will start measuring and I will set aside the portion for the alms. The distribution of the *diyakat* [*zakāt*] for the poor signals the end of whole process of farming.” (ibid.).

The individuals who are giving their *zakāt* give it voluntarily and directly to *miskin* (poor), specially if the source of *zakāt* is rice. Rice is the most common commodity in Lanao, and it is the main product of the Maranao farmers in Lanao areas.

On Administration of Zakāt

The Meranaos in Lanao are adherents of Sunni Islam, and they follow the *madhab* (school) of Imām al-Shāfi-ī (Gowing, 1968). The Sultanate system is the traditional governance of the Meranaos which co-exists with the existing governance in the Philippines today. The foundation of the religion of the Meranaos is the Qur’ān which is a universal message of Allāh (SWT) that was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

Zakāt is one of the five essential duties of Muslims which they are bound to observe, and it is one of the five pillars of Islam. According to Jastaniah Abdulaziz Saddiq (1982), *zakāt* is mandatory and must be paid by adult Muslims. According to Peter G. Gowing (1979), Islamically, it is obligatory for a free, sane, adult Muslim to pay annually, in cash or in kind, the *zakāt* of 1/40 of the value of all property he owned for one year which is in excess of property required as necessities of life (ibid.).

Zakāt is paid for the welfare of the poor and for the way of Allāh. The collected taxes must be spent wisely in all areas that promote social development, social

welfare, and security of the state. In Lanao Sultanate, the Meranaos pay zakāt to religious officials or to state authorized zakāt collectors in the community such as *imām*.

The school of Shāfi-ī prescribed that only Muslims pay zakāt on following property: (1) crops from the field which are planted for food; (2) among fruits, grapes and dates are mentioned in the tradition; (3) camels, cattle, sheep, and goats; gold and silver; and merchandise. It is permitted to give the zakāt directly to the persons who have claim to it (Tokhais, 1982).

In this context, there are different viable questions raised such as: what are the Islamic rules in paying zakāt? Who is responsible in collecting zakāt? Who appoints the person incharge in collecting zakāt? And what are his qualifications?

The zakāt collector can be delegated or appointed by the authority i.e., caliph or delegated governor. The qualifications of zakāt collector are: he must be free (not a slave), Muslim, just, and he must be knowledgeable with the Islamic rules of collecting and distributing the zakāt. These qualifications are expected from a delegated poor-rate collector. However, such knowledge on poor-rate may not be required if the poor-rate collector is appointed by the authority (Al-Mawardi, 1996). Al-Māwārdī, a Sunni scholar explains that “the office of legal management, therefore, has to do with collection and distribution, with pertinent to each.” (ibid.).

This means that the judge may also collect and distribute the poor-rate if there is no delegated or appointed person to collect and distribute the poor-rate. The office of legal management may give instructions on zakāt rules to whomever is appointed by the state to collect and distribute it.

Al-Māwārdī (1996) says, “if the alms officer enjoys delegated powers [meaning he is delegated to collect poor-rate], he may follow his own judgement on points of disagreement among jurists, neither following the opinion of the leader nor that of public; the caliph may not specify for him how much to collect.” This means that the delegated alms officer or poor-rate collector may follow his knowledge on poor-rate rules if the basis of his knowledge on poor-rate does not violate the Islamic rules on poor-rate.

Ibrahim Abdulrahman Tokhais (1982) says that a caliph or sultan may collect zakāt. Caliph Abū Bakar himself collects zakāt himself during his time as caliph. Abū Bakar says, “I swear to God that if they were to refuse me a female kid (sheep or camel or cow) which they used to pay to God’s messenger, I would fight with them over refusal of it.” (ibid.).

This means that paying of zakāt is important religious obligation, hence it was mandated to pay zakāt. It is paid in favor of the poor and the needy. It is a state institution; hence the state is mandated to collect and distribute it (ibid.). In comparison, in Meranao societies in Lanao, Peter G. Gowing (1979) says that in the Meranao people pay zakāt to the zakāt collectors particularly the religious leaders i.e., *imām* and *kali* which they pay at the mosque (ibid.). This practice corresponds to Al-Māwārdī’s view on paying the poor-rate to mosque officials. The *imām* and *kali* are trustworthy, respected and generally obeyed by the people. They have immense

knowledge on the teachings of Islam including the Islamic rules on poor-rate so that they are entrusted to collect the poor-rate and distribute it.

Currently, there is no zakāt laws in the Philippines Constitution or laws, hence, there is no government agency in the Philippines that regulates and manages the zakāt system in the Philippines. Peter G. Gowing (1979) explains that “some pious Muslims prefer to distribute the zakāt directly to the poor people in their communities. Muslim Filipinos recognize that beyond the duty of the annual zakāt, it is meritorious to give voluntary alms (*ṣadaqāh*) to the needy and this is done especially in connection with *Hariraya Puasa* festival, often in the form of rice or money distributed to the poor.” This means that in Lanao, there is no restriction to people in case they would give directly their zakāt and *ṣadaqāh* to the needy individuals.

In Lanao context, paying zakāt was fixed in case the source of zakāt is rice. According to Manganacan M. Orogan (1980), *diyakat* (giving of zakāt) “is religiously fixed to provide 1 ganta for every 10 gantas of rice. Before measuring the cleaned rice, the farmer would whisper: “*imanto na pagasad ako na isibay aken so diyakat ka*”, which means, I will start measuring and I will set aside the portion for the alms. The distribution of the *diyakat* for the poor signals the end of whole process of farming.” (ibid.).

Rice is the most common commodity in Lanao and it is the main product of the Meranao farmers. The individuals whose wealth is not from rice or farming, usually, consult the *‘ulamā* (scholars) or the *imām* on how much amount of money or value, which is to be deducted from their wealth i.e., gold, merchandise, livestock, rents from agricultural land, income garnered from rents of their business establishments or shops, salary, business, etc. for zakāt.

Who are individuals entitled to receive zakāt? Allāh (swt) says in the Qur’ān, ‘As *sadaqāh* (here it means zakāt) are only for the *fuqarā* (poor) and *al-masākin* (the needy), and those employed to collect (the funds); and to attract the hearts of those who have been inclined (towards Islam); and to free the captives; and those in debt; and for the Allāh’s Cause (i.e., *mujahidūn*)—those fighting in a holy battle), and for the wayfarer (a traveller who is cut off from everything); a duty imposed by Allāh. And Allāh is All-Knower, All-wise’... (Qur’ān, Sūrah At-Taubah, 9:60).

This means that aside from the poor or needy individuals, the slaves, debtors, travellers, zakāt collectors, and those who are engaging in struggle in the cause of Allāh are entitled to receive zakāt. The social gap and economic gap are wide in Lanao, hence, high poverty. The Meranaos also give voluntary alms or *sadaqāh*. The poor and the needy receive voluntary alms i.e., cash, food or in kind from their relatives who have means of support. Other needy individuals, usually, go to their neighbors, or they go around to different places, from house to house, they would then inform the household owner of their dire situation, and would ask sincerely from them any amount, voluntarily, which is from their heart, meaning not by force or intimidation.

The Meranao tribe adhere to their belief system which supports this kind of method i.e., asking for voluntary support from others, to elaborate on this, the Meranaos believe in *tulak balah*, in this belief, they give money, food or in kind voluntarily to the poor or to the stranger, by doing this, this would block any bad omen

or bad lucks that are coming to their way. Hence, giving little amount of money voluntarily to the poor comes easy and smoothly.

The Meranaos also believe that doing simple act of kindness to others will be rewarded in the hereafter and increases their wealth and blessings. Slavery was abolished long time ago since the coming of the Americans to the Moro land during the 2nd World War in 1945. Thus, there were no slaves in the Meranao areas who would be entitled to receive zakāt.

In the 1970s, during the height of the Mindanao conflict in the Philippines, there were rampant human rights violations against Muslims in Mindanao in the Philippines. These violations were committed by the armed forces of the government, the military. The Muslim or Moro rebels who fought in the cause of Allāh were *mujahidūn*. The leaders and members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) were entitled to receive zakāt in cash or in kind. The Moros who were victims of human rights violations saw the *mujahidūn* as heroes.

When the Moro separatist movement has declined due to the aggressive peace talks between the leaders of the MNLF and the National government, the collection of zakāt for the *mujahidin* got stopped, as a result, the zakāt payers gave their zakāt to the mosque officials like the *imām*. The rest dropped their zakāt and their voluntary alms to the donation boxes or *baital mal* in the mosques. Since the Philippines government does not allocate funds for the construction of mosques, some of the collectibles in the mosques were used for the construction of mosques, improving and repairing the mosques.

The Meranaos give other forms of voluntary alms i.e., in kind, cook food, raw food and voluntary service to others. In Meranao societies, the *imāms* do not receive salary from the treasury of the national government, however, they were considered as zakāt collectors, thus, they may take a portion of the zakāt collectibles, justly. Islamically, the zakāt collectors are entitled to receive a portion of zakāt.

Zakāt (charity or alms giving) reminds the rich and well-off Muslims of their duty to the poor members of the Islamic societies, and it strengthen the feelings of brotherhood among Muslims by sharing of a portion of their wealth to the disadvantaged Muslims.

Zakāt has benefits in the Muslim societies as it 'teaches the Muslims to share what Allāh (SAW) has granted them to take care of those who are less fortunate; it also helps the Muslims avoid being selfish; it also develops the personality of the poor person by providing for him a sense of solidarity with others in society; it increases wealth and allows it to be blessed; zakāt maintained a balance in society, and it reminds blessings of Allāh and encourages being grateful to Almighty Allāh.' Zakāt makes the Islamic faith of the Meranao communities socially stronger as it empowers the disadvantaged Muslims while it eases their financial burden.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommends that the zakāt system of the Lanao Sultanate in the old days, and the contemporary Meranao societies, be further investigated by scholars and researchers under the lens of the Islamic views of the contemporary and classic Muslim scholars on zakāt system. The Philippines Constitution does not provide laws on zakāt system in the Philippines, hence, there is no government institution in the Philippines that regulates and manages the zakāt system in the Philippines. Thus, it is recommended that the policy-makers in the Philippines shall enact laws on establishing zakāt institution in the Philippines that applies to the Filipino Muslims only. These laws shall include the collection of zakāt and its distribution.

It is also recommended that the Meranao communities may elect among themselves the most qualified trusted-scholars and physically fit educated individuals who have immense knowledge on zakāt system, whom, they would be in charge in the collection of zakāt and its distribution to those who have moral rights to receive it. It is recommended that the national government units of the Philippines must coordinate with the local government units in the Muslim areas in the Philippines to create an accessible institution that caters the zakāt collection and zakāt distribution. In doing so, it would solve the widening social gap and economic gap among Muslims. This will eradicate poverty among the Muslim tribes in the Philippines. This will also create equality and economic equity among the Muslim tribes in the Philippines.

CONCLUSION

The existing practices on zakāt system among the Meranaos in Lanao del Sur today and in the old days corresponds to the Sunni Islamic perspectives on zakāt system. The zakāt system and practices of the Lanao Sultanate in the 17th century did not change until the 21st century. This study shows that rice is the most common commodity available in Lanao and it is the main product of Meranaos. Thus, the rice farmers gave their zakāt in the form of rice. The Meranaos consult the scholars and the *imām* on the amount or value to be taken out from their wealth i.e., gold, merchandize, livestock, agricultural land, income from rents, salary, business, etc. for zakāt. In Meranao societies, zakāt is also given directly to zakāt recipients i.e., the poor, etc.

It was not mentioned in the Qur'ān and in the Haḍīth that the collected zakāt cannot be used for mosque construction. In addition, the Qur'ān and the Haḍīth do not prohibit the use of zakāt for mosque construction. So, in the Meranao societies, the collectibles in the mosques were used for the construction of mosques, improving the mosque, and repairing the mosques. This practice is common among the Meranao societies since the Philippines government does not allocate funds for the construction of mosques. It shows in the study that the collection of zakāt and its distribution to the members and leaders of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) facilitated the operation of the MNLF in the 1970's. The MNLF members were *mujahidūn*, thus they became instant recipients of zakāt. This study shows that there is a need and demand for creating an institution that cater the collection of zakāt and its distribution. This study also shows that the collection of zakāt and its distribution can solve the wide-ranging social gap and economic gap among the Muslim tribes in the Philippines. The

collection of zakāt and its distribution will eradicate poverty among the Muslim tribes in the Philippines.

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