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Islam, Poor and the Needy:

The acts of helping poor and the needy are compulsory for all able male and female Muslims. Quran and Prophet Traditions make clear that almsgiving (zakat) and charity (sadaqah) works are compulsory and are to be given to the needy. Zakat, which is a third among five tenets of Islam refers to spending a fixed portion of one's wealth for the poor, needy, zakat collectors, people whose hearts need to be reconciled, slaves, those in debt, in the way of Allah, and the travelers in the society. The Quran is further explicitly categorized those who are qualifying for the charity and almsgiving by defining the poor into ‘miskin’ and ‘fakir’ and insist on assisting both the ‘miskin’ and ‘fakir.’ Also, it has been commented that people who fall under poor category

Include orphans and foundlings, widows and divorcees, prisoners and their families, unemployed and homeless, students, those who can not afford to marry, disaster

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victims, in need of medicine or dignified funerals.\footnote{2} Furthermore, Islamic law divided alms into two categories. One is the compulsory zakat, which is partly a poor-rate, normally payable to the state or private institutions for redistribution. Also, individuals pay themselves to the appropriate needy persons. It can be paid in terms of cash, kinds or food. It was fixed at one-tenth of the annual harvest and a comparable proportion of other wealth above a certain minimum. The other category is voluntary sadaqah to the needy. Whereas zakat is necessarily institutionalized, sadaqa is characteristically personalized. Their relative importance is therefore a valuable indicator of the nature of charity in Islamic world.\footnote{3}

The aim of Islamic charity is to ensure minimum means of livelihood to each and every individual and productive use of economic resources for the material wellbeing of the community. The basic orientation “is the mutual sharing of the community’s income between the affluent and have-nots.” Charity in Islamic law is the expression of thanks for Gods bounties to his creatures. The belief that charity pleases God and brings God’s blessing determined Muslim behaviors in many basic acts of economic importance in Islamic states. Generally, Charity


institutions play a significant part in the distribution of wealth in a society. Large group of destitute were and still benefited from this.\textsuperscript{4} Charity institutions are playing a major role in addressing the socioeconomic needs of Muslims.

The acts of providing zakat and sadaqah were performed during the Prophet Muhammad’s time and afterward. Prophet and its successors were responsible in collecting zakat in Muslim areas. Charity works evolved to help those who were poor and sick such as blinds and lepers in the community. Also, the \textit{Bait- al- Mal} (House of Charity or House of Money) was introduced for helping the needy, orphans, widows, travellers and the poor. Generally, \textit{Bait- al- Mal} was a financial institution responsible for the administration of taxes. It served as a royal treasury for the caliphs and sultans, managing personal finances and government expenditures. Further, it administered distributions of zakah revenues for public works.\textsuperscript{5} Later, these charity institutions developed in Muslim states in Iraq and under Ottoman Empire from eighth century onwards.

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{4} Halil Inalcik, \textit{An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire}, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) pp 46-47
\end{itemize}
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Poor and the needy in Zanzibar history:
Much has not written about the life of the Muslim population in Zanzibar prior to the late eighteenth century. However, it is demonstrated that trade activities began to grow in Zanzibar from the late eighteenth century. By the early nineteenth century, Muslims traders from Oman, India, Persia, and the other Swahili coastal Towns such as Mombasa, Lamu and Kilwa traded in Zanzibar. The seasonal pattern of monsoon winds played a major role in the cross-ocean pattern that developed between the East African coast and the Islamic world of western Asia. Muslim traders in Zanzibar had benefited from these trading activities which mostly concentrated in Zanzibar Town. It was probably that zakat and sadaqa were delivered to the poor and the needy when profits were obtained through trade activities.

It is however, important to know the factors that led to the presence of the needy, the beggars and the poor people in relation to the nineteenth century Zanzibar history. The needy, the beggars and the poor emerged in the society for several reasons such as famine, calamity, epidemics, slavery condition, loss of family and property due to war and political in security. Throughout the nineteenth century, Zanzibar was hit by several devastating epidemics which killed many people. Cholera, smallpox, and dengue fever destroyed many people in Zanzibar Town. The works of nineteenth century British geographers, administrators and medical doctors showed


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that many people died because of these epidemics. Many of these epidemics were started in the northern ports and spread to Zanzibar through migration and trade contacts between the northern traders and the East African traders. For instance, in 1831, cholera epidemic started in Bengal, India and spread in many ports of the East African coast including Zanzibar and killed thousand of people in Zanzibar Town. Also, smallpox epidemic which started in Muscat in 1857 ravaged many people in Zanzibar Town.⁷ As a result of all these epidemics, many people lost their families and there were a lot of people who needed help from the others.

Furthermore, slave trade and slavery in nineteenth century Zanzibar prompted misery and sufferings. As a result, a lot of poor people were to be found in the streets waited to be rescued. Slaves were brought to Zanzibar from the interior of East and Central Africa to work in Zanzibar since the early nineteenth century. It was estimated that Zanzibar received about 25,000 slaves annually from the mainland areas. Before 1845, some of these slaves were re-exported to Asia to work as domestic and plantation slaves in Oman, India and Persia. Mainly, two types of slavery operated in Zanzibar throughout the nineteenth century. There were urban and rural slaves, who worked in commercial and domestic areas and clove plantations respectively. The urban slaves were employed to work in

the houses of Arabs, Indians and Swahili and in business areas such as in the ports hauling cargoes to and from the custom areas and in godowns. Many rich and poor people as well in the Town owned the slaves. Most of these urban slaves were poor who had no land to live or work on. The rural slaves were advantageous since they were allowed by their masters to work on their private plots for their food and some of the food were retained and sold to the Town’s market.

Besides, during the nineteenth century there were poor Muslim migrants who came to Zanzibar to look for shelter and economic opportunities in the prosperous Zanzibar Town. From the early nineteenth century, a lot of Comorians migrated to Zanzibar due to epidemics and wars which occurred in Comoro leaving many Comorians itinerant. Most of the Comorian migrated in Zanzibar fearing the endemic intestine divisions and attacks from Madagascar which ravaged the southern islands and Mozambique between 1815 and 1822. Also, the Hadhrami from Yemen migrated to Zanzibar in the late eighteenth century and again in 1870 looking for shelter in Zanzibar Town. Serjeant noted that among the Hadhrami migrants to Zanzibar, there were the da‘if and maskin, who

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accustomed to menial labour. They were industrious, and hardworking. While in Zanzibar Town, they remained as loners, despised for their lowly occupations such as water carriers and rope makers.\(^9\) The above-mentioned groups of poor represented the large groups of affected people. However, there is an indication that there were also poor individuals who had not fall under these bigger categories. For instance, there were the needy people who drawn in the sea or those who were hunger victims.

**Rescues for the poor: Charity Institutions and charity works in nineteenth century Zanzibar Town.**

The early attempts to rescue the poor and the needy among the Muslim community of Zanzibar, however, had been noted to start from the mid decades of the nineteenth century. Between 1840s and 1870s, the Oman Arab rulers in Zanzibar took the initiatives in helping their poor slaves. For instance, in 1830s, Said b. Sultan, (1832-1856) the first Oman ruler in Zanzibar set aside vast sections of *Kiumgani* (suburb) for the settlement of his manumitted slaves and free clients. Also, his closet advisors and relatives as well, Suleiman b. Hamed al- Busaidi and Hamoud b. Ahmed al- Busaidi made grant of lands for homes and farms to their slave and clients. They endowed a waqf\(^1\) land for the uses of their slaves. By establishing pious endowment for the use of poor was considered a form of *sadaqa* (alms) a gift to God and as a way of

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cementing ties between the masters and their slaves.\(^{10}\) However, these charity works excluded poor slaves whose masters were not rich.

Furthermore, the European missionaries started to involve in charity works in Zanzibar from 1860s. The American and European missionaries came to Zanzibar when Africa was opened to the works of missionaries following the abolition of slave trade in the world from the early nineteenth century. One of the missionaries' aims was to spread Christianity by converting people to this religion. Many Missionary societies had paid attention to the former slave trading centers in order to win over the emancipated slaves. Most of the European missionaries concentrated in Zanzibar Town for two reasons. One, the Town was a slave trading center hoping to proselytize the emancipated slaves. Two, these missionary groups used Zanzibar Town as a gateway to the interior of East Africa looking for more people to join Christianity. The earliest missionary groups to show interest in extending their services in urban Zanzibar was the American Missionary Board founded at Boston in 1819 by several Missionaries societies in America. They visited Zanzibar Town in 1840 and they met Said b. Sultan. It was reported that the

reasons for their visitation was to introduce schools, dispensary and then the full conversion. However, the American Missionary Board society paid no immediate attention to Zanzibar. They established their missionary works in southern part of Africa from the mid nineteenth century.

Besides, the German, the French and the British missionaries came to Zanzibar to look for opportunity of evangelizing the people. They established several sick and poor houses and hospitals. The earliest were the French Roman Catholic Mission, who started the charity works in Zanzibar Town in 1860. The mission included six sisters from a French order based in Reunion who established an orphanage for freed slave children. They reported that there were no any works of charity or asylum in Zanzibar at that time. They found that many sick and poor people were abandoned in the streets and the aged dying extended on the ground. Also, they reported that young people, children, women whose eyes and legs were eaten by hideous sores were let to die in the streets. Furthermore, in 1890, the French Missionaries established a house for poor and aged and sick people at the outskirt of Zanzibar Town at Welezo. Since, there was no charity works to cover all the poor in the Town, many of the poor Muslims were brought in the French Missionary center. It interfered with their religious practice.

12 Abbe Fava, The Hospital in Zanzibar under the French Mission, 1899
Apart from that, the University Mission for Central Africa, (UMCA) a British missionary society, which was instigated by David Livingstone, opened its activities in Zanzibar Town by the mid 1860s. They established a sick house in 1864, which was funded by the Wells Tozer Fund. Also, they established the hospital and the Sick Comforts Fund, in 1879. Although, these services were directed to the emancipated slaves but they were opened to the Muslim people as well. The purposes of these poor houses and charity centers were to attract people to Christianity. Generally, the works of charity works in nineteenth century Zanzibar lacked the institutional organization to cover poor Muslims in Zanzibar Town. The available option was through attending at the Missionaries charity centers. The long term effect was the Christianization of poor Muslims who received charity services from the Missionaries centers.

There was a possibility that poor and needy Muslims were helped at Sufi centers (zawiya) and Islamic teaching centers that began to sprout in Zanzibar Town from the late nineteenth century. Almost, all dominant Sufi orders (tariqas) in East Africa had their branches in Zanzibar from the late 1890s. They included the Qâdiriyya, the Shâdhiliyya, the Rifâ‘iyya, the Askariyya, the Ahmadiyya-Dandarâwiyya-Idrîsiyya, Naqshibandiyya and the Alawiyya. These orders insisted on charity works

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among themselves and in helping poor and the needy in general through their Sufi literature. For instance, the Qâdiriyya order used *Sirr al- Asrar* (The Secret of Secrets) which was written by Sh. Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (1077-1166), a founder of Qâdiriyya *tariqa*, who was born in Jilân, Persia and died in Baghdad, Iraq. This book contains the very essence of Sufism, giving a Sufi explanation of the fundamental duties of Islam, prayer, fasting, alms giving and pilgrimage.¹⁴ Normally, lodges of *zawiya* centers became the philanthropic institutions which helped to mitigate the hardship. They supplied meals and temporary accommodation to clients, distressed, travelers, pilgrims and beggars. Most of Sufi leaders (*sheikhs*) involved in almsgiving and had instituted to their disciples in many Sufi centers in the Muslim world.¹⁵ The writings on Sufism in Zanzibar had not mentioned about charity works in their *zawiya*, but the work of Nimtz¹⁶ on Sufi activities in Tanzania mainland mentioned about the charity activities of Sheikh Ramia, a Qâdiriyya *tariqa khalifa* at Bagamoyo. Sheikh Ramia was involved in helping poor Muslims and non Muslim as well, in his *zawiya*. This attracted many non-Muslims in the mainland to join Islam in the mid twentieth century.

The Islamic learning institutions had for a long time served as places of helping students who enrolled in these

¹⁵ Rodríguez- Manas. Charity and Deceit: The Practice of the Ita’m al-ta’am in Moroccan Sufism, *Studia Islamica*, (Vo. 91, 2000) p 60
institutes for learning purposes. Muslim students who moved from their home land to other areas for learning purposes were relied on assistances from charity institutions and individuals. These Muslim students were given zakat as they were qualified for it. The history of Riyadh Mosque in Lamu, Kenya is an illustrative example of how poor Muslim of slave descendants, were given assistances from the local Sharif from the late nineteenth century.\(^7\) It is not clear whether Islamic centers in Zanzibar Town provided assistances to the students who attended religious studies in their centers.

**Charity works in the twentieth century, 1900-1945**

From the early 1900s up to the end of the Second World War, the charity works in Zanzibar had extended to involve the charity works which were provided by the community groups, and the British colonial state in collaboration with the Missionaries groups in Zanzibar. The British colonial government’s assistances to the poor and the needy were provided through the Missionaries centers up to 1945. Zanzibar became a British Protectorate in 1890. By 1914, Zanzibar became a British colony in which all the internal and external affairs of Zanzibar were under the British. The Oman Arab rulers in Zanzibar remained in the throne without political and economical power. The British colonial state in Zanzibar funded the charity works for paupers, sick and aged people, poor people, lepers and T. B. patients organized by the British and the French Missionary societies. By 1912, the

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\(^7\)P. Leinhardt, ‘The Mosque College of Lamu and Its Social Background’, *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, (Vol. 53, 1959) pp 229-242
colonial government in Zanzibar used Rs. 30,000 annually for lepers and Poor House under the French Missionary. The same facilities were provided by the British UMCA's nuns in Pemba. They also received assistances from the Colonial government. However, the involvement of the Church societies in the charity works was resisted by Muslims who did not prefer to send their lepers and T.B patients in these centers unless the government put forces on sending lepers to these Missionary lazarettos and T. B Sanitarium. Those who joined in these centers were destitute Muslims. The implication of sending Muslim poor, lepers and T.B patients to the Missionary centers as it had been noted earlier made most of these poor and old people to become Christians involuntarily.

The colonial government involvement in helping the poor and the leper in conjunction with the missionaries caused a lot of disturbances to Muslim poor and lepers. This came in the notice of Muslim communities in Zanzibar Town. For instance, in 1947 the Mwongozi, the weekly private newspaper reported on the matter. One of the reported cases showed that Muslim lepers were not treated according to Islamic laws when dying. The Muslim community in Zanzibar asked the government to return the Muslim lepers to their family to be buried. The government responded by showing that a quite number of the leper inmates of Welezo arrived in a moribund condition and were incapable of giving names and addresses of relatives on entering the institution. He also

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reported that at Welezo, Muslim lepers were buried according to their customs but no such facilities for TB and paupers were provided.\textsuperscript{19} This problem was solved through contributions which were provided by Muslim philanthropists who donated money to the Provincial government to help Muslim paupers and T.B patients.

To the large extent, the establishment of Waqf Commission in 1905 did not help much in solving the problem of poor and needy Muslims in Zanzibar. Normally, Wakf in the Islamic state is a primordial institution for the distribution of zakat and sadaqah with a basic social and economic integrative function. The Waqf properties are important for helping poor people in any Muslim Community. However, the institutionalization of Waqf in Zanzibar robbed the poor and the needy what they had in the Waqf properties. The Waqf dedication activities done by Arab landlords were undermined by the colonial state in Zanzibar from the early nineteenth century. The former Waqf private activities were interfered by the colonial state after the institution of the Waqf Commission. The Wakf Commission had authority to codify and execute wakf law in order for the administrators to deal with wakf property.\textsuperscript{20} As result of this government interference, a lot of Waqf lands were transferred from individual poor to the government.

The increasingly intimidation to the poor people of urban Zanzibar and Pemba started with the imposition of hut tax

\textsuperscript{19} ZNA AB 2/339 Leper Settlement at Welezo
\textsuperscript{20} ZNA HD 10/14 Appointment of Waqf Commissioners, 1916-1922

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and ground rents to the former wakf lands of the poor. By 1897, hut tax and ground rents were established to force the people to work after the abolition of slavery in Zanzibar. Between 1910 and 1911 the government tried to evict people from the plantation established on Waqf land. The new land owners in urban Zanzibar collected rents in these former Waqf land and more pressure in collecting rents from the Waqf properties increased in the early 1920s when the British administrators passed the 'Increase of Rent Restriction Decree of 1922.'\textsuperscript{21} It became significant that those poor who benefited from Waqf lands had to look for new means of living.

Apart from that, the Community groups provided charity works to the poor and needy people of their community. It however hindered the provision of charity services to the other Muslims who were not members of these communities. Sometimes, these charity activities were the works of individual philanthropists in the community. Robert G. Gregory described the nature and function of Asian charitable organization by showing that the major impetus to philanthropic activity of Indians was the lack of service availability specifically to Asians in East Africa.\textsuperscript{22} However, the Indian communities in Zanzibar were involved in charity works to help their community members from the late nineteenth century when many of these Muslim Indians, like Tharia Topan became

\textsuperscript{21} ZNA HD 10/14 Appointment of Waqf Commissioners, 1916-1922, Laura Fair
\textsuperscript{22} Laura Fair, \textit{Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945}, pp 129-141

wealthier through trade activities. Many of these Indian Muslims had begun to settle in Zanzibar from the early nineteenth century.

The earliest charity works among Indians started in 1897. Ismail Ramjee, an Indian Khoja built a ‘Daram Salah’ at Malindi, Zanzibar Town to accommodate Indian Muslim travelers and destitute. It had two floors and thirty-six houses facing the courtyard. In the ground there was a room for sick travelers and a hall for local weddings. Shops in the front were for the upkeep of the house.\textsuperscript{23} By 1960s, about fifteen charity houses and caravanserais were operated by Indian Community in Zanzibar Town. The Indian charity activities in Zanzibar reflected the religious charity activities back home in India for Muslim and non Muslim Indians. In places like Calcutta, Madras or Bombay some efforts were made to help the poor by providing shelters from the early nineteenth century. Also, money was raised for institutions such as orphanage and hospital for poor through the individual funds from that period.\textsuperscript{24} The Arab community in Zanzibar established the same facilities in Zanzibar, though the numbers were not large as among the Indians. In 1900, the Ibadhi Oman Arabs established a house for the travelers at Hurumzi and it was called an Arab Lodge House.

Furthermore, the other community groups, such as the African community from the mainland established charity works among their community members, while in

\textsuperscript{23} ZNA BA 104/6 Zanzibar Gazette, 24/2/1897
\textsuperscript{24} Waltraud, Ernst, \textit{Mad Tales from the Raj, The European Insane in British India 1800-1858,} (New York and London: Routledge, 1991) p 34
Zanzibar. These charity works involved the collection of money from the members to help sending home the deceased family members or helping individuals in disasters. After the abolition of slavery in Zanzibar in 1896 and the introduction of wage labor economy from 1900, many people from the mainland of Tanzania, Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi, and Congo came to Zanzibar to look for job opportunities available in Zanzibar Town. By the early twentieth century, many of them were employed in infrastructure projects, of expanding the wharf, building of the Bububu railway and construction of roads that operated in Zanzibar Town. Others were involved in plantation works as welders in government clove plantations confiscated from the Oman Arab ruling class and managed by the Department of Agriculture.²⁵

Increasingly, there was the formation of ethnic welfare groups to help their members. For instance the Nyamwezi from Central Tanzania and the Manyema from Eastern Zaire formed their associations from the early decades of the twentieth century. Most of these Nyamwezi and Manyema were Muslims, who were converted to Islam through Muslim Arab traders who penetrated in their lands from the mid eighteenth century looking for ivory, and slaves and exchanged them with beads and cloth. For instances, there was the Belgian Congo Club which was formed in 1933 in Zanzibar Town by people coming from Congo. In 1937 it changed into the Manyema Union to

²⁵ Zanzibar Protectorate, Annual Report, 1900
support a cluster of eastern Congo people. There was also the Wanyamwezi Association which was formed by Wasukuma, Wanyanyembe and Wasumbwa in 1930s. The Association had owned rest houses in Zanzibar and Pemba for Nyamwezi immigrant clove pickers in 1940s. However, most of these ethnic groups, involved in internal conflicts, which hindered smooth operation of their charity activities. Also, neighborhood women’s groups involved in helping each other in community affairs such as weddings and funerals began to evolve in urban Zanzibar around this time. The problems of many of these neighborhood groups were that poor women were not invited to join as most of their activities involved contribution of money from members themselves.

Efforts after the II World War:
New efforts in helping the needy, orphans, paupers, destitute and older people were started after the Second World War. The British colonial administrators, in collaboration with the community groups and individual philanthropist involved in the charity works to cover many poor and needy people in Zanzibar. The colonial government’s efforts in helping the poor started after the formation of Development Department in 1946 which involved in Community development works through the British government funds. Apart from that, the Social Welfare Department was established in the same year which involved in social welfare activities such as opening of ‘Women’s Economic Programs’ in urban and

26 ZNA AB 12/30 The Manyema Association
rural areas which involved in small scale production activities by using local resources. The small scale production activities helped women to feed their families.

Furthermore, the formation of ‘The Zanzibar Voluntary Social Welfare Society’ in 1947 led to the extension of charity works in Zanzibar. The colonial stated initiated its formation by organizing a meeting of all societies and community groups in Zanzibar Town. The aim of the Society was to find means to help poor and aged who were beggars in the street, blind and infirm who were hungry and homeless. Between 1947 and 1963, the Voluntary Social Welfare Society involved in the establishment of Men’s and Women’s craft centers to assist the poor and blinds of Zanzibar and Pemba. They made baskets, mats and brushes, which were sold to many local shop owners in Zanzibar. These poor and blinds who involved in these projects were given monthly salary. It helped them to buy most of their necessities.28

By 1953, many paupers were given shelters at the government buildings. The government through Social Welfare Department had three buildings at Holm wood in Zanzibar Towns for paupers. Also, the government had involved in other self help activities to help the poor by owning 600 shares at Upland Tea Estate of Ceylon Ltd. The profits from the shares were used to maintain and help the poor. Besides, the individual philanthropies donated money to assist in charity works. The major


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contributor was Tayabali Karimjee Jivanjee, a Khoja Indian who assisted in many other social welfare and humanity works in Zanzibar. For instance, Tayabali Karimjee Jivanjee involved in the construction of Zenubhai Karimjee Tuberculosis hospital at Dole in rural Zanzibar in 1953. He also provided funds for the construction of Hassanali Karimjee Jivanjee (HKJ) hospital in Zanzibar Town in 1955. Also, in 1956, Karimjee donated store for storing handcraft materials and finished articles made by poor and blinds in Zanzibar Town. Before that, the society had received from Burjor H. Daruwalla, a secretary of Cosmopolitan Sports Club, 1055 Tshs. to be spent for lepers and poor in 1947. The Society had also received contribution from Seif b. Salim Trust of Mombasa in 1953.\(^\text{29}\)

Also, the Zanzibar Voluntary Social Welfare Society in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare involved in collecting funds from the Muslim population in Zanzibar through Mosque. Normally, collection boxes were put in every mosque in Unguja and Pemba to collect money in the form of charity (sadaqah). The money was then sent to the Zanzibar Voluntary Social Welfare Society to be distributed to the poor. Apart from that, the Zanzibar Voluntary Social Welfare Society involved in organizing recreation activities, such as fete, cinema shows and jumbo sales in order to funds charity works in Zanzibar. For instance in 1955, the Society received contributions from the proceeds from shows in Sultana.

\(^{29}\)Zanzibar Protectorate, the Zanzibar Voluntary Social Welfare Society, Annual Report, 1953- 56
cinemas in the Town, which were used in the repairing of the government almshouses?

Moreover, the Department of Social Welfare received annual grants from the central Government and Township Council in order to cover the charity works. The department widen the charity activities by giving allowances to blinds and infirm and those families with distress and for those who were unemployed. For instances, in 1955, 268 people were assisted in urban and rural Zanzibar. Also, there was the establishment of Swahili Poor Fund in 1955 to assist African community in Zanzibar. Most of these Swahili people were economically poor in comparison with the Arab, and the Indians in Zanzibar. Generally, by the end of the British colonial period in Zanzibar, many poor people were benefited through these charity works. These charity works were extended through the collaborative works of individual Muslim, Muslim community in Zanzibar and through the government assistances. The Waqf Commission, however, played a part in providing funds for charity works for welfare of the Muslims in Zanzibar in education and health matters. The Commission’ involvement in distributing sadaqah to the poor was minimal.

30 Zanzibar Protectorate, the Zanzibar Voluntary Social Welfare Society, Annual Report, 1955-60
Conclusion:
The Muslim charity works and charity for Muslim population in Zanzibar had a long history. From the available sources these charity works started from the mid nineteenth century dominated by Muslim individuals, the Omani ruling class and the Missionaries societies. They focused in small groups of people who were clients of Omani landlords or emancipated slaves. From the early twentieth century, the charity works extended to cover many poor and needy Indians and other community groups in Zanzibar. The much focused and extended charity works were established after the Second World War with support from the government, individual philanthropists and the all Muslim population in Zanzibar through daily mosque collections, (sadaqah). Up to the late colonial period, the needy and the poor people in Zanzibar were benefited through these charity activities. Many of these charity activities were developed in urban Zanzibar since normally the poor and needy concentrated in the towns and cities. In rural areas, most of the poor and needy were looked after by the relatives or by their community leaders.

After the 1963 Zanzibar independence and 1964 Zanzibar Revolution, most of the charity activities were funded by the Zanzibar Government. The government established ‘Orphanage House’ at Forodhani, ‘the Old and Aged People House’ at Sebleni. The Department of Social Welfare still involve in providing monthly allowances to the old people. There is a need of establishing more
private charity institutions to help the poor, the needy, orphans and older people. The Waqf Commission is still remain with the same duty of administering the Muslim property. There is a need as well for the Waqf Commission to involve in charity works.
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