

## **Zakat and Agricultural Productivity in Babura, Nigeria: Empowering Small-Scale Farmers to Achieve the 2<sup>nd</sup> SDG**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this study is to explore how Zakat funds can be leveraged to empower small-scale farmers to facilitate enhanced agricultural outputs and contribute to the 2<sup>nd</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of eradicating hunger in Babura Local Government Area of Jigawa State, Nigeria. It is an undeniable fact that Zakat funds are meant for the eight prescribed recipients as enshrined by the Quran, this study through a painstaking and contextual consideration drawing from the opinions of Muslim Jurists seeks to elucidate how this form of almsgiving can mobilize financial resources essential for agricultural improvements in the context of Babura small-scale farmers. This exploration aims to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the multifaceted role of Zakat in transforming agricultural practices within Babura Town. Qualitative secondary data were sourced from Islamic classical literature, academic journals, books and reports from reputable organizations. The data were evaluated to ensure relevance, credibility and reliability and also validated using data triangulation and comparing findings of other studies. The data were analyzed thematically. The research shows that zakat can significantly improve agricultural productivity among small-scale farmers in Babura Town and contribute to the realization of 2<sup>nd</sup> SDG. It is recommended that Babura LGA Authorities should partner with local zakat committees to integrate zakat funds into local agricultural policies which can improve access to essential agricultural resources, ensure efficient funds distribution, and train the farmers on sustainable agricultural practices.*

**Keywords:** *Agricultural Productivity, Babura, Sustainable Development Goals, and Zakat*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Without food that comes through agriculture, human life on earth can be synonymous to impossible. The importance of agriculture can not be overemphasized. In Nigeria, agriculture plays a key role in providing food and contribute significantly to the country's food security. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), agriculture accounted for about 24.45% of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the second quarter of 2023 (Oluwaseun, 2024). The sector employs around 70% of the Nigerian

labor force which directly supports food production. Additionally, agricultural activities in Nigeria contribute with about 90% of the food consumed locally. However, those engaged in agricultural practices are mostly the low-income class, whose engagement into farming are solely meant for self consumption not commercial especially in northern States of the country.

On one hand, Zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam that is conditionally obligated upon certain group of individuals Muslims to give out as a form of charity. Likewise the

recipients are also clearly spelt out (Quran 9:60). It is an essential pillar of Islam that embodies the principles of charity and social welfare, serving as a mechanism for wealth redistribution within Muslim communities. In the context of agricultural productivity, particularly in areas like Babura, Nigeria, the implementation of Zakat can play a transformative role in empowering small-scale farmers. It is essentially linked to providing financial assistance to the poor and needy (Ismail et. al., 2023). In this contemporary world where human being experiences complex social structure and changes, the need for exploring an innovative social financial instruments that can potentially cater for community well-being is increasingly becoming necessary. Hence, the emergence of concepts such as: Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR), Social Safety Net (SSN), etc. However, Ismail et. al. (2023) noted that there is also a growing interest among researchers to explore the intersection between the roles of zakat in promoting sustainable development, particularly in the domain of agriculture to promote food security, protect natural resources, and contribute to climate change issues.

Babura, a town sitting at the northwest senatorial district of Jigawa State, Nigeria, is the administrative headquarters of Babura Local Government Area (LGA). The town is situated near the Niger Republic border, giving it an economic advantage. Agriculture is a significant economic activity in Babura. People, especially the struggling class, engaged in farming crops like millet, sorghum, maize, and groundnuts. The town also benefits from cross boarder trade due to its proximity to the Niger Republic. Geographically, Ahmed (2024) states that Babura is characterized by a semi-arid climate, which influences its agricultural activities. The town is part of the

Sudano-Sahelian zone, which experiences a shorter rainy season and a longer dry season.

Generally, the socio-economic development of any society is in one way or the other depends on sustainable food provision. Perhaps, this is among the reasons why 'Zero Hunger' is the 2<sup>nd</sup> and most important of the 17 SDGs. In Babura town, agricultural productivity is relatively low to the extent that the agricultural output cannot be sufficient to feed its people. The inhabitants rely on agricultural importation through Niger Republic boarder. Several factors contributed to this, first; the farming activities are mainly for self consumption and usually engaged by the low-income households, whose 70% can be classed into the recipients of zakat. Second; the area is Sudano-Sahelian, with short rain session and longer dry session (Ahmed, 2024). Despite efforts made by the State government to empower small-scale farmers, yet the area could not improve its agricultural productivity for years.

In order to achieve sustainable economic and social well-being, agriculture is a most pursuit. It's therefore, imperative to innovatively create more supporting financial instruments for the households' farmers. Babura being a Muslim dominated town, with 99% Muslim population, zakat funds can be a handy dandy intervention that can significantly impact the agricultural productivity if utilized effectively. It resonates within the broader objectives of social welfare through redistribution of wealth among the less fortunate. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), established by the United Nations in 2015, aim to address global challenges including poverty, inequality, and food security. The achievement of the second SDG, which focuses on ending hunger and promoting sustainable agriculture can therefore be supported through empowering small-scale farmers. Therefore, systematic implementation of zakat funds channeled towards empowering

small scale farmers in Babura town can promote agricultural productivity, as financial support derived from zakat is potentially capable of improving agricultural practices. (Sarea, 2020).

This study explores how Zakat can be strategically utilized to enhance agricultural productivity among small-scale farmers in Babura. Through providing financial support and resources using Zakat contributions, these farmers can improve their farming practices, access better technology, and ultimately increase their yields. The intersection of Islamic philanthropy and agricultural development presents a unique opportunity to not only uplift individual livelihoods but also contribute to broader economic growth and food security in Nigeria. The study also discusses how Zakat can be leveraged to empower small-scale farmers to facilitate enhanced agricultural outputs and contribute to the 2<sup>nd</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of eradicating hunger. It is an undeniable fact that Zakat funds are meant for the eight prescribed recipients as enshrined by the Quran, this study through a painstaking and contextual consideration drawing from the opinions of Muslim Jurists seeks to elucidate how this form of almsgiving can mobilise financial resources essential for agricultural improvements in the context of Babura small-scale farmers. This exploration aims to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the multifaceted role of Zakat in transforming agricultural practices for sustainable food security and uplifting the livelihoods of smallholder farmers within the Babura district.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of *zakat* in socioeconomic development has been a subject of significant research and policy discussions. Aina-Obe (2022) postulated that Zakat is a mechanism for

social welfare system providing financial support, poverty reduction, and social protection for those in need within society. Implementing Zakat as a small scale support for farmer will function as an effective mechanism to enhance and transform numerous lives financially, promote socio-economic empowerment, fulfil religious obligations, and provide educational assistance to the underprivileged, thereby fostering socially and morally responsible conduct within the Muslim community. As one of the five pillars of Islam, zakat is a form of obligatory almsgiving intended to redistribute wealth and reduce economic disparities. Its potential as a development tool, especially in agricultural sectors within developing regions, has been explored in various studies, pointing to its effectiveness in promoting financial stability, reducing poverty, and enhancing productivity. This literature review synthesizes existing scholarly work on the intersection between zakat and agricultural productivity, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, and assesses its implications for achieving the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of zero hunger. This review examines key literature regarding Zakat's role in agricultural development, and its alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 2: Zero Hunger.

Drawing from the literature on Zakat discourse, it is discovered that the zakat funds are centered to poverty alleviation programs that focuses on giving out financial aids to the poor and needy. Therefore, literature on Zakat and poverty reduction are all over (Miah, 2021). However, there are very much few studies in relation to other dimensions of zakat particularly agriculture that serves as the major source of livelihood to the greater proportion of most societies. The study on Zakat's influence on agricultural productivity, particularly in regions like Babura, Nigeria, intersects

multiple fields, including economics, religious studies, and development policy. Zakat is fundamentally designed to redistribute wealth and support marginalized populations. In the context of Babura town, researches in relation to social and economic activities were conducted, but there were literally no studies that fact check the potencies of zakat in promoting and enhancing agricultural productivity. However, there are few researches; in form of students' unpunished theses that discuss zakat and poverty reduction in Babura town.

### CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

#### *Concept of Zakat*

Integral to Islamic finance, Zakat serves a dual purpose that transcends mere economic transactions. It operates as a socio-religious obligation, compelling individuals to contribute a portion of their wealth to assist those in need to foster a sense of community and social responsibility. Zakat literally means purification, and this meaning can be observed from the Qur'an where the al-Mighty Allah says: "Take from their wealth a charity, so that you might purify and sanctify them..." (The Qur'an, 9:103). The meaning according to the verse refers to the spiritual holiness and purification. Linguistically, the word is used in Arabic language to denote growth and increase (Yusoff, 2012). Zakat is named so, due to its positive spiritual impact on both increasing and purifying the wealth – from which it is taken – as well as safeguarding it from dangers and other adversities, (Sumai et al., 2019).

In Islamic economies, zakat is defined variously by classical and modern Muslim scholars. Imam al-Qardawi (1999) defines zakat in his work – *Fiqh al-Zakah* – as the compulsory financial worship, a fixed right in wealth, with specific requirements, conditions, and eligibility criteria, aimed at purifying wealth and help the needy. Al-Mawardi (1989) in his work *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya* sees zakat

as the determined right in the wealth of Muslims, to be distributed among the categories specified by the Qur'an, to purify their wealth and soul. Bin-Nashwan, et al., (2021) asserts that, all Muslims, male and female, who possess Nisab (zakatable amount) are required by law to pay zakat annually, which is a set amount drawn from capital or savings such as animals, commercial ventures, farm products, paper money, and precious metals like gold and silver. Ibrahim (2015) defines zakat as an obligatory charity provided by wealthy Muslims to a specific group of individuals known as Asnaf (Zakat-eligible) upon reaching a specified level of income known as Nisab (zakatable amount). Suprayitno et al., (2017) states that, apart from (Kharaj) taxes on land and agricultural produce, zakat is considered one of the most significant sources of funds available within the Islamic economic and financial system. It also stands among the main sources of income to an Islamic government used to mitigate socioeconomic challenges. Furthermore, zakat can be defined as one of the Five Pillars of Islam, and an obligatory almsgiving that mandates Muslims to give out a certain percentage of their money to qualified beneficiaries in accordance with Islamic law (Shariah). It serves as a social justice tool to redistribute wealth among Muslims as well as a spiritual obligation.

From the definitions, it can be drawn that, zakat can simply be seen as the obligatory transfer of a portion of one's wealth to the poor and needy, calculated at a rate of 2.5% of certain types of assets annually. It serves to purify the wealth of the giver and promote economic equality among Muslims. In other way, it can be taken as a compulsory and stipulated amount payable by Muslims, who possesses certain degree of wealth called Nisab, and received by certain group of individuals called Asnaf (zakat-eligible).

Therefore, zakat serves as a means of loosening the concentration of wealth and dispersing it to where it is needed most to purposely reduce economic disparities for better social understanding. In a simple term, zakat can be the act of shifting some portion of wealth from the wealthy individuals to poor. It is equally important to understand that, paying out zakat is not binding upon every Muslim; it is only due when a person owns certain amount. However, it is not given to any person, rather to its legally prescribed recipients (The Qur'an 9:60)

#### ***Agricultural productivity***

Agricultural productivity means the efficiency and effectiveness with which agricultural inputs – such as labor, land, water, and capital – are transformed into outputs, typically in the form of crops or livestock. It is measured using metrics like output per unit of input, crop yield per hectare or livestock yield per head (Movilla-Pateiro et. al., 2021). The concept of agricultural productivity denotes both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of agricultural production. Quantitatively, it measures the amount of produce generated per unit of input. Qualitatively, agricultural productivity includes improvements in the quality of agricultural outputs that are influenced by factors such as soil health, seed variety, and sustainable farming practices (Tilman et al., 2011).

Agricultural productivity is influenced by a number of factors such as; technological advancements, farm management practices, public policies, environmental conditions, and access to resources such as fertilizers, irrigation, and modern machinery (Pretty et al., 2018). These elements play a critical role in determining productivity levels and are essential to understanding productivity disparities across different regions and types of farming systems. High agricultural productivity is considered vital for achieving sustainable food system, reducing poverty,

eradicating hunger, and promoting economic development, especially in developing countries where agriculture forms the backbone of livelihoods (World Bank, 2020).

In the context of sustainability, improving agricultural productivity also involves increasing yields while minimizing the depletion of natural resources, preventing environmental degradation, and mitigating contributions to climate change. Sustainable agricultural productivity emphasizes practices that protect ecological balance, including crop rotation, integrated pest management, and precision farming (Godfray & Garnett, 2014). This perspective corresponds closely with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2, which targets the eradication of hunger and the promoting food security.

#### ***Small-scale Farmers***

Small-scale farmers are individuals or group and families who operate agricultural enterprises on limited land holdings and with minimal capital and resources. This concept is often defined by the scale of operation, typically characterized by farm sizes under two hectares, though definitions can vary across geographical locations and institution (IFAD, 2021). Small-scale farming is highly significant in the agricultural sector, as these farmers produce a substantial portion of the world's food supply, particularly in developing countries where small scale agriculture forms the backbone of rural economies (Lowder et al., 2016).

With regard to socio-economic impact, small-scale farmers engage in subsistence farming or small-scale commercial agriculture. Subsistence farmers primarily engage in farming mainly for household consumption, while small-scale commercial farmers may cultivate crops or raise livestock to sell in domestic markets. Despite the critical role they play, small-scale farmers frequently face

numerous challenges, including limited access to credit, modern technologies, high-quality seeds, fertilizers, and secure land tenure (Hazell et al., 2010). These limitations often affect their productivity and resilience, making them particularly vulnerable to economic, environmental, and climate-related shocks.

Improving small-scale farmers is essential for reducing poverty and enhancing food security. Studies suggest that small-scale farming, when supported through appropriate means like zakat funds, can contribute significantly to socio-economic development, providing employment opportunities and stabilizing rural communities (World Bank, 2020). Access to resources such as agricultural extension services, microfinance, grants such as zakat funds, and market linkages has been shown to improve productivity and income for small-scale farmers, contributing to broader developmental goals (IFPRI, 2019).

Small-scale farming is also crucial as the farmers are more likely to engage in traditional, diversified agricultural practices. Integrating small-scale farmers into sustainable agriculture initiatives can promote food security, protect local ecological system, and reduce environmental degradation (Altieri & Toledo, 2011). These practices resonates with the 2<sup>nd</sup> SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) that emphasize inclusive and resilient growth in agriculture. Supporting small-scale farmers through investments in infrastructure, cooperative models, and technology can enhance their productivity and encourage their resilience which can ultimately create more inclusive and sustainable food system. Studies emphasize the importance of multi-sectoral partnerships that provide small-scale farmers with the resources they need to thrive. (Fan et al., 2013).

### ***The 2<sup>nd</sup> United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)***

SDG 2: Zero Hunger is the second United Nations Sustainable Development Goal,

which aims to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030. This goal addresses the complex issues of hunger and agricultural sustainability, recognizing the need for a holistic approach – this may require partnership with zakat committees – to achieve food security and well-being across all population segments (UN, 2015). SDG 2 is grounded on the principle that food security and sustainable agricultural practices are essential for broader socio-economic development, particularly in developing countries where food insecurity is most prevalent (FAO, 2021). It comprises multifaceted dimensions focused on eradicating hunger and malnutrition, increasing agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, ensuring sustainable food production systems, and fostering agricultural resilience in the face of climate change and other environmental challenges. The goal seeks to end hunger by ensuring access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food year-round for all people, with particular attention to the poor, vulnerable, and infants. It also aims to end all forms of malnutrition by 2030, with a special focus on addressing the nutritional needs of children, adolescents, pregnant and lactating women, and older persons (UN, 2019).

Another critical aspect of SDG 2 is its emphasis on supporting small-scale farmers and promoting equal access to land, resources, and market opportunities. Smallholder farmers, especially in developing nations such as Nigeria, play a pivotal role in food production, yet they often face constraints such as limited access to technology, finance, and knowledge. Empowering these farmers is seen as a pathway to achieving sustainable increases in agricultural productivity and rural income growth (IFAD, 2021). The goal focuses on sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices that improve

productivity, preserve ecosystems, and adapt to climate change, helping to reduce agricultural risks posed by drought, flooding, and other extreme weather events (Pretty et al., 2018).

Achieving SDG 2 requires coordinated efforts across sectors be it faith-based or nonreligious efforts. Investments in rural infrastructure, and advancements in agricultural technology can all be a good for better sustainability in food system. Additionally, international cooperation, organizations and other partnerships are emphasized to mobilize resources, share best practices, and ensure that global food systems are both resilient and equitable. The fulfillment of SDG 2 is essential to achieving other Sustainable Development Goals, as food security is interlinked with poverty reduction, health, education, and environmental sustainability (Foley et al., 2011).

### **EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

A study by Ismail et. al. (2023) from Indonesia have explored and elucidated the role of zakat institutions as key players in the collection and distribution of the funds. He suggested that the institutions can leverage the resources and their expertise to support and promote sustainable agricultural practices. With their extensive networks and reach, Zakat institutions can contribute to the adoption and implementation of sustainable agricultural techniques in rural communities, where agriculture often serves as the primary source of livelihood. The role of Zakat institutions in promoting sustainable agriculture practices goes beyond mere financial assistance; it can encompass training and capacity-building programs to farmers, educating them about sustainable farming techniques and the benefits of adopting such practices (Ismail et. al., 2023). Additionally, Zakat funds can be utilized to establish demonstration farms, where farmers

can learn about sustainable agriculture methods and witness their positive impacts.

He further noted that, in the context of Indonesia, limited resources and land, labor shortages, and collaboration constraints are the major hindrance to agricultural productivity. The agricultural sector faces a labor shortage, leaving mostly elder workers and other struggling class. Data from Indonesia, have shown that a collaboration between Dhuafa and Agriculture Healthy Indonesia is successful in reducing the poverty severity index of the community by doing a program called AHI-DD P3S. According to him, this program has reduced the number of farmers living below the poverty line from 96 percent down to 75 percent. What obviously contributed to the success of the program is that it was not focused on the fund distribution only, but also empowering the farmers and assisting them to improve the quality and performance of their agriculture outputs. Similarly, a study by Atah (2018) argues that Zakat as one of the Islamic Social Finance Instruments can be used to lessen poverty level in rural areas by empowering small-scale farmers to enhance their agricultural productivity. The local food security can be improved through incentive provision to the local farming activities through utilizing Zakat-based Salam forward contract. It shows that the Zakat fund could plays a much better role in promoting the sustainable agricultural practices and even poverty alleviation.

Agriculture remains a critical sector in developing economies, directly influencing food security and economic stability. Small-scale farmers, often constrained by limited resources and technology, face significant challenges that impede productivity (World Bank, 2018). Enhancing agricultural productivity requires a multidimensional approach that includes access to financial support, education, and sustainable farming

practices (Adesina, 2020). The linkage between Zakat and agricultural productivity is an emerging area of research. Empirical evidence from studies in regions with similar socio-economic characteristics suggests that Zakat can be a catalyst for agricultural growth. According to Iqbal and Siddiqui (2019), directing Zakat funds toward agricultural inputs—such as seeds, fertilizers, and farming equipment—can boost productivity and income for small-scale farmers. This, in turn, contributes to the broader goal of achieving food security and reducing poverty. Babura, a region in Nigeria known for its agricultural reliance, presents an interesting case for applying Zakat in this sector. The distribution of Zakat aimed at empowering small-scale farmers can potentially enhance their productivity and stability (Aliyu, 2021). Such targeted efforts align with the framework of SDG 2, which seeks to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture (United Nations, 2015).

Despite its potential, the literature also points to significant barriers. For instance, the effectiveness of Zakat distribution is often hindered by inadequate governance and regulatory frameworks (Ahmed & Abdullahi, 2020). Research by Usman et al. (2018) highlights that while Zakat holds promise as a source of financial empowerment, its impact can be diluted by mismanagement or lack of strategic implementation, particularly in the context of rural agricultural settings. Moreover, the cultural perception and practical application of Zakat vary, which can affect its efficacy in addressing agricultural needs. Ensuring that Zakat is used for productive investments, rather than solely for immediate consumption, requires a paradigm shift in how religious and community leaders approach Zakat distribution (Sani & Musa, 2019).

The literature emphasized the potential of Zakat as a transformative tool for enhancing agricultural productivity and empowering small-scale farmers in areas like Babura. This can be achieved through strategically directing Zakat to support agricultural inputs and farmer education, it resonates with and promotes the achievement of SDG 2. However, realizing this potential requires a concerted and coordinated effort to address challenges related to governance, awareness, and effective implementation. Therefore, integrating religious practices like Zakat with development strategies offers a unique approach to addressing rural poverty and food security. Further, researches that focuses on locations likes Babura are needed to provide deeper insights and guide policy recommendations that harness the synergy between faith-based giving and sustainable development.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study employed qualitative research method to investigate the role of Zakat funds in promoting sustainable agriculture. Secondary data were utilized and the sources include; Islamic classical literature, academic journals, books and reports from reputable organizations. The collected data were evaluated to ensure relevance, credibility and reliability, as well as validated using data triangulation principles. The data were also analyzed thematically by identifying and synthesizing key patterns and themes, and also by comparing finding of different studies to validate the study's findings.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Intersection of Zakat and Agricultural Development in Babura Town***

Though Muslim scholars both classical and modern hold three major differing opinions with regard to using Zakat funds for non-Qur'anic beneficiaries, but it is quite clear from

their opinions that agricultural productivity can be supported using Zakat funds. The major divergent views they hold are:

1. **Traditional View:** Classical exegetes such as Ibn Kathir and Al-Qurtubi in their Tafsir emphasize that Zakat should strictly adhere to the eight categories listed in Surah At-Tawbah (9:60) (Murni et. al., 2023). They argue that any deviation from these categories is not supported by Shari'ah. Ibn Hajar in Fath al-Bari further notes that Zakat is a specific right prescribed by Allah with defined recipients, and distributing it outside these categories could undermine its intended purpose.
2. **Context-Based Flexibility:** The Maliki school of thought is generally more flexible in interpretation, with scholars like Imam Malik suggesting that Zakat funds can be adapted according to the needs of the time, as long as it benefits the community and resonates with Shari'ah principles (al-Rawi et. al., 2023). In his book *Fiqh az-Zakat*, Qaradawi argues for a pragmatic approach to Zakat distribution, allowing funds to be directed toward community welfare initiatives if they serve the interests of the poor and fulfill the spirit of Zakat.
3. **Public Welfare Projects – Broader Interpretation of 'Fi Sabilillah':** Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah: In his book *Sabil al-Muhtadin fi Ahkam al-Zakat*, Bin Bayyah supports the idea that '*fi sabilillah*' can include social welfare projects, such as education and healthcare, which ultimately benefit the poor and uphold Islamic social justice (Kunhibava et. al., 2024). Dr. Muhammad Al-Buti in *Fiqh al-Zakat* and other writings, interprets '*fi sabilillah*' broadly, supporting its use

for projects that contribute to societal benefit, such as infrastructure, when they address communal needs and are done in the interest of the needy. In *Majmu' al-Fatawa*, Ibn Taymiyyah advocated for the discretionary use of Zakat to promote communal harmony and social stability, which could include aiding both Muslim and non-Muslims in need under certain conditions, especially if it benefits the broader Muslim community.

These opinions represent a wider application and usability of zakat funds that range from strict adherence to Qur'anic categories to more flexible, needs-based applications that consider modern welfare and humanitarian contexts. Their views reflect ongoing discussions among scholars to balance traditional jurisprudence with contemporary social realities. It's therefore derivable that using Zakat funds are subject to scholars' interpretations. Going by the second and third opinions, promoting agricultural productivity that involves improving the efficiency, outputs, and sustainability of agriculture to enhance food security, increase rural incomes, and support economic growth can be incorporated into the wider social wellbeing that seeks to serve the interest of the poor. In this context, zakat funds can serve as an important instrument for uplifting small-scale farmers, especially non-commercial, of Babura Town.

The redistributive nature of Zakat not only alleviates poverty but also facilitates access to essential resources such as seeds, fertilisers, and agricultural training, enabling farmers to enhance productivity and food security. This highlights the capacity of Zakat to foster a resilient agricultural sector, thereby empowering small-scale farmers and supporting the broader goal of achieving the 2<sup>nd</sup> SDG of eradicating hunger in all its forms. The funds mobilized through zakat can be used to

support agricultural practices, in terms of technology, infrastructure, and policies that can contribute to higher crop yields, better-quality products, and more resilient farming systems.

### ***Zakat Funds and Small-Scale Farmers for Enhanced Agricultural Productivity in Babura***

Looking at the current landscape of Nigerian economy and Babura agricultural productivity, it's of urgent need that small-scale farmers need social financial intervention that can help their agricultural practices. Investing zakat funds into agricultural initiatives can significantly enhance their productivity. Supporting them to acquire improved seeds, enough fertilizers, and modern irrigation techniques – for starting dry season farming, can substantially increase their crop yields. Furthermore, Zakat funds can be used to facilitate access to essential training and resources, enabling farmers to adopt best practices in sustainable agriculture. For instance, programmes focused on soil management and integrated pest control can lead to healthier crops and reduced reliance on harmful chemicals, which can ultimately benefit both the environment and public health. Additionally, establishing cooperative societies funded by Zakat can empower small-scale farmers by harnessing collective resources for purchasing equipment and accessing markets, thus enhancing their bargaining power and profitability. Through these interventions and its likes, zakat funds can effectively transform agricultural landscapes, promoting food security and economic resilience among vulnerable farming communities. This resonates with Atah's (2018) assertion that Zakat funds can be used to lessen poverty level in rural areas by empowering small-scale farmers to enhance their agricultural productivity.

### ***Realization of 2<sup>nd</sup> SDGs in Babura Town through Zakat Funds***

In Babura Town, realizing or achieving the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the SDGs requires strengthening agricultural practices for productivity which can significantly help in eradicating hunger and fostering economic development. If the vulnerable farmers of Babura Town are empowered using zakat funds by providing them with access to improved seeds, sustainable farming practices, and essential resources, the agricultural output can be significantly increased, leading to better food security and income generation which means eradicating hunger. Moreover, as productivity rises, the potential for income diversification expands, which ultimately lead to satisfying the entire population. De Janvry and Sadoulet (2010) asserts that empirical evidences support the argument that increases in agricultural productivity are directly correlated with reductions in hunger and poverty levels, particularly in areas such as Babura where agriculture remains the main livelihood source. The integration of zakat into agricultural initiatives presents an innovative approach to contain the food need of the population. This not only addresses immediate economic needs but also lays a firm and abiding societal transformation.

The relationship between agricultural productivity and eradicating hunger in Babura is very important as the town grapples with socio-economic challenges exacerbated by the closure of Niger-Nigeria land borders. Evidence suggests that initiatives aimed at improving agricultural output not only foster economic stability but also directly contribute to lifting communities out of hunger. Through utilizing local agricultural resources empowered using zakat funds, small-scale farmers in Babura Town can be supported and encouraged to contribute to the broader goal of the United Nations' SDGs of zeroing hunger and promoting food security and self-reliance.

### **Summary of findings and Conclusion**

The findings from this research highlight the potential of Zakat as a formidable tool to enhance agricultural productivity among small-scale farmers in Babura, Nigeria, which in the long run contribute significantly to the achievement of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). Integrating zakat funds into agricultural policies of Babura Local Government Authority, can facilitate ease access to crucial resources such as seeds, fertilizers, and irrigation systems for dry season farming, which are sometimes inaccessible to the small-scale farmers. Furthermore, establishing partnerships with local Zakat committees could ensure that funds are disseminated more efficiently and transparently. To maximize impact, it is essential to create training programs focused on sustainable farming practices and financial literacy, equipping farmers with the skills necessary to utilize resources effectively. Ultimately, the integration of Zakat into agricultural policies not only uplifts individual farmers but also strengthens community resilience and food security, aligning seamlessly with the broader objectives of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SDG.

In the end, the integration of zakat into agricultural productivity initiatives demonstrates a promising pathway for improving the livelihoods of small-scale farmers in Babura, which in the end help in promoting agricultural productivity in and eradicating hunger. Providing financial support and farming equipment and other resources enables farmers to access modern agricultural inputs and technologies, which in the long run significantly increases crop yields and food security (Ogunniyi, 2019). The energetic effect of zakat on agricultural practices supports not only the farmers economically but also facilitates sustainable agricultural ecosystem that is crucial for eradicating hunger in communities. Future research should explore

the long-term impacts of these initiatives on broader socioeconomic indicators within the community.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

To practically achieve the desired outcomes, this study proposes the following recommendations

1. Institutional Integration of Zakat strategies into Agricultural policies: There is an urgent need for Babura Local Government Authority to blend its agricultural policies to create a sustainable, yet shari'ah-compliant funding model for small-scale farmers. This will facilitate easy access to critical inputs such as seeds and fertilizers, and it will undoubtedly enhance productivity and reduce hunger. While implementing this, it is recommended that a joint committee on Zakat–Agriculture that involves local authorities, scholars, and farmers should be initiated. The representatives can ensure transparent management and equitable distribution of resources.
2. Boosting Functional Efficiency and Sustainable Farming Practices: To achieve the maximum impact, the target farmers need to be trained in modern and sustainable agricultural techniques, climate-smart practices, and financial literacy. These programs will, undoubtedly, enhance their productivity. The local government authorities can, by this recommendation, partner with educational institutions like universities, and other development agencies to deliver continuous technical support.
3. Monitoring, Accountability, Policy Advocacy and Community Awareness: A comprehensive monitoring and

evaluation framework need to be put in place to track how Zakat funds are utilized and assess their impact on food security and poverty reduction in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. In this way, collaboration with national and international organizations—such as the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), UNDP, and local NGOs—will strengthen accountability and attract additional support for scaling up successful agricultural models. However, there is a need for strategic and active advocacy to enlighten the local community about the prospect of using Zakat funds for agricultural development. This community sensitization campaigns are necessary to promote understanding of Zakat's transformative potential in agriculture. As it fosters public trust, compliance, and collective ownership of initiatives aimed at eradicating hunger and achieving sustainable development.

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