Mosque as a religious building for community development
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Abstract
In these days many scholars are looking for a theory of community development in order to support motivation, growth, and improvement of the community. Some points on this matter will be discussed in this paper. These points are as follows: What does community development mean? What is the proposed theory? What are the conditions for applying the theory? and what will happen when the community members apply it?

Mosque Theory will recognize the vitality of individuals and community. When the people go to the mosque as a religious building, their capabilities for improving the activities will be developed. This theory tries to show what should be done and also what will be its achievement. The purpose of the theory is to utilize individual and community vitality for Moslem community development. Through this theory, people develop their community through five new occasions: (a) Forming brotherhood relationship in the community, (b) Learning new things, (c) Creation of knowledge, (d) Leaving sin and (e) Divine Mercy.

This paper is a moral arguments for community development and discuss some patterns that are eligible for community. This paper should be read by Muslims as well as anyone interested in community development.

Introduction

One of the challenges that most of the countries face today, is how they can develop their community. Of course, development has some different meaning across different cultures. People in different countries deals with different issues and challenging to achieve development of their community. But, the tendency to achieve a safety and friendly community is among most of the countries especially Islamic nations.

Now, Islam is the fastest growing major monotheistic religion in the world. Muslims comprise about one, fifth of the world’s population and constitute a majority in more than forty nations. Undoubtedly, Islam is the religion, which has purposely laid its foundation on human community. There are many Ayah (verses) in Quran, which call the people to live together in community. In some of the Ayah, Allah says:

The believers are members of one family; you shall keep the peace within your family and reverence GOD, that you may attain mercy. [49 : 10];

Do not quarrel, for then you will be weak in hearts and your power will depart [8: 46];

Help one another in goodness and piety . . . [5:2]

There are many such verses that exhort the Muslims to build the Moslem community on the foundation of unity and harmony acquiring and protecting its spiritual and material benefits and distinction.

Islam has based its laws on monotheism, and secondarily on noble moral values. Through belief in monotheism, people motivate to follow the truth, and believe that it is the best thing which may benefit them, no matter it is accompanied by worldly benefit or not; because that which is with Allah, is better and more enduring. According to this logic, every action will be done for the pleasure of Allah, and Allah is Aware of what they do.
After arrival of Islam in different countries, the religious functions were mixed with other functions. Mosques have been the first religious buildings that were constructed in new converted Islamic countries. It had social, political, and judicial functions and the new Muslim communities residents were structured by Mosque. It has also been a place for cultural exchanges in Muslim communities.

In this paper, we try to examine the impact of mosque on community’s development. For this purpose Mosque theory will be introduced. This theory aims to ensure personal and community well-being.

The objective of this paper is to provide an issue on community development. For this purpose, this paper is consisted of four sections. Section I provides some about what we mean by community development. Section II gives an overview on the mosque history. Section III explains the Mosque Theory, which is the core of this study. Section IV presents the conclusion.

I. What do we mean by community development?

Community is called as the field of communication of individuals. Different individuals have different behavior in their community. The main reason of people behave is because of their personality and it results from internal and external living environment. By internal we mean mostly house and by external we mean community. Assuredly, external living environment has more impact on shaping a person than his house.

Development is known as an upward directional movement from lesser to greater level [4]. Some papers have mentioned the objectives of development as higher incomes, longer life expectancy, lower infant mortality, more education and so on[4]. Community development is not simply a matter of one person but, is a set of cooperative activities. Community can be developed by its inhabitants who contribute to its activities and also in response to the contact and interaction between human beings. From this perspective, a person become a community’s member if s/he communicate and cooperate with other communities' members and participate in the community activities.

People collaboration does not occur by accident; it must be planned. If people collaboration is achieved, the human relations within a community will become coherent. The formation of member’s values and knowledgeable skills, occurs through their participation in the community activities.

By searching in the history of community development, it can be seen that development is a process, not a program and is an activity of the community as a whole. It cannot be compelled or carried out by administrative or external agencies on behalf of the population. Human beings are the ultimate resource and ultimate determinant of the development process. Development occurs only at the points where humanity recognizes its power to determine results. Development strategy should aim to release people’s vitality.

What do we mean by community development and how it can be achieved? In this paper, community development is described as an upward directional movement of community from lesser to greater levels of theology and theocentirism, moralization, creativity, choice and accomplishment. This process will take place by a range of different religious motives. Therefore, religion is utilized behind the community development. This concept of development is important for understanding this paper.

It should be remembered that Islam is a religion to be practiced collectively therefore, all good things if they are done together has more of a reward than the same things done alone. In the
Quran does not Allah address Muslims as believer but, always as believers. Thus Muslim are supposed to work collectively in a congregation and participate in most of the acts. The most important religious building between Moslem community has been the mosque and historically, place of worship has always been closely integrated with their daily life. Congregational prayers, as well as prayers and rites associated with religious observances and important phases in the lives of Muslims take place in mosques. It is a place where children can receive an Islamic education, a place where community functions can take place with Islamic guidelines and a place where Muslim men can communityize with other Muslim men and women with women, young boys with young boys, and girls with girls.

II. History of the mosque

The word ‘mosque’ is derived from the Arabic word, ‘Masjid’, meaning literally ‘place of prostration’. One of the first things that the Prophet Mohammed "Peace be upon him" did when he entered Medina, was to build a mosque, the mosque of Quba[1]. After that, building a mosque become as an Islamic tradition of Muslim Communities and it become symbol of Islam. The mosques have been the center for Islamic activities as it used to be in the mosque of the Prophet in Medina. In this mosque, not only prayers took place, but it was a school of knowledge where companions used to study the Quran and ask questions. It was a place for the government to receive delegations from foreign countries. It was a treasury from which charity work was done and it was a war-room where decisions and planning for wars imposed on Muslims were made[5].

Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque in Isfahan Iran .2Fig

The Prophet said, ‘Come forward to the prayer, and do not be among the negligent’. When the voice of the muezzin is heard from the tops of minarets, the Muslim is better to go to the prayer.
Before offering the Prayer they must be in good shape and pure condition. It is necessary to wash the parts of the body which are generally exposed to dirt or dust or smog.

Throughout the history of Islam, the mosque has developed to serve various functions and purposes. It has been a place for seeking Islamic Knowledge for Muslims and non-Muslims. It has been a center for prayer and blessing, communication and discussion, teaching and learning, giving assistant and receiving assistant, and so on. There have been collection and distribution of Sadaqa and Zakat (Obligatory alms given by Muslim) in the mosques. Different classes especially classes of Quran recitation have been set up there. So, we can say, from the beginning, mosques have been the activity buildings for the development of the Muslim communities. It has been a place of unity and brotherhood of the community.

By looking at the history of mosque, it will be found that mosques have often been built by community inhabitant, and some mosques have been the focal point of complex of building associated with it; these served as hospital, religious schools (madrases), shelter for travelers etc. In the old times or even today the traditional source of financial support for all Islamic religious institutions such like mosque have been the vaqf, which is a religious endowment. Support maintenance of the mosque has been every community inhabitant responsibility. It has been considered as the House of Allah, then Muslim have took care of it as good or better than they take care of their own house and their family. Most member of the community irrespective of his financial status does something for their mosque. Those who can give, they give money. Those who cannot give money, work in someway.

For understanding the influence of mosque on one Moslem community, it is good to have a glance at the Iran revolution history. We will find that, mosques had important community roles during the 1970s in Iran. Mosques played a prominent role in organizing people for the large demonstrations that took place in 1978 and 1979. Since that time the mosque’s roles have continued to expand. Until now, mosques play important political and community roles as well as religious ones in Iran.

III. Mosque theory for Community development

In the space of this section I will try to provide an outline of mosque community development theory. How dose mosque have impact on communities?, is likely as a question about the role that a mosque plays in the process of development.

Understanding the development factors of community needs to daresay that most important elements in a community, is its human being. Human beings have to be placed at the center and view all aspects in relation to human motivation and action. Also, it should be believed that human is one of the creatures of god, not as creator of god. According to the Quran, a human being is, by definition, an abd (a worshipper and servant of Allah). The whole of a Muslim's life is meant for the praise and worship of and submission to Allah.

The community development is always involved between two kind of poles, theocentric and irreligion, trust and despair, congregational and subjective, socialism and individualism. The vitality of community is subject to many factors and the utilization of it depends on the level of attitude, interest, brotherhood relationship, devotion and knowledge. The greater level of spirituality of the community will enhance these factors’ level.

To change a Moslem community from an inactive community into an active community different techniques can be used. In this paper, Mosque Theory is introduced. If this theory put into practice, it could significantly improve the Moslem community.
What is the mosque's role in the community. Here, we need to distinguish how the mosque involves in community development. Mosque theory start from this point that, the daily five-time prayers are obligatory for every adult and sane Muslim, and performing in congregation; is Sunnah and highly recommended, as it is a tradition established by the Prophet. In the other hand, the intelligent members of the community should encourage people to come to the mosque. When the people understand the gist and spirit of the mosque and be interested in it, they will go to the mosque. By attaching to the community mosque, half of the problems will be solved. After going to the mosque become their habitude, five new fortunes will be happened for inhabitants and community, after that, most of the problems of development can be solved. These five fortunes are as follows:
1- Forming brotherhood relationship in the community
As people come to the mosque and meet each other, they will work with each other and also help to each other. It promotes brotherhood relationship among all community inhabitants and offer benefits to them. In a community with brotherhood relationship, all inhabitants will be provided opportunity to explore their ideas and identity. It helps them to develop a clear understanding of the community and to become individuals who can take responsibility for their actions. They recognize and respect the essential connection they have to each other so; they can work collectively to create development.

2Fig .Forming brotherhood relationship in the Mosque

2- Learning new things
There are many things that people need to learn for being in the right direction and in a healthy way. All participants learn many things throughout their being in the mosque that will provide
them for development. Participants can learn with and from each other as well as from those with greater experience. Most young people as well as older one will learn what they need to know through participation in the mosque activities. They will learn about canonical questions and also how to recite Quran. They will learn that the religion is a collective matter that Allah has made people responsible for the community of which they are members. They will learn that, themselves should manage the community, and none of them should be less responsible than the others.

3- Creation of knowledge
There is relationship between knowing and acting and knowledge can be produced through different activities [8]. Knowledge is a commodity that is stored in individual minds. Like other commodities, it can be transmitted from one person to another. Knowledge is created and recreated between people, as they bring their personal experience and information derived from other sources in the mosque.

4- Leaving sin
The participant will change their behavior and leave sin because of three reasons, first, as part of their faith. When they repent to Allah, they will feel bound to do well and abstain from evil and they will close the door of sin. Secondly, they will try to act outside of mosque and inside be proportional and similar. Third, they will shame to sin in front of the friends that they find in the mosque.
5- Expected Divine Mercy
Divine mercy will be the result of the good actions of human. When we act according to the laws prescribed by God, Divine mercy comes into operation and makes our activities fruitful. When the Moslems go to the mosque and are in the right way, they will receive the divine mercy that they expected it.
Each community has its own vitality such like cultural values, community beliefs and moral structures. When the Community leads to these realities of brotherhood, learning, knowledge, leaving sin and Divine Mercy, it will enable people to manage their interactions with other people and other communities. Then, the individuals and community vitality will be ready to be used for development.
So we can say that, mosque can bring up the individuals of the community and guide them to be in the real happiness.

IV. Conclusion
In this paper, I have tried to develop a theory for community development by analyzing the mosques in terms of community perspective. I have shown, how the benefits of the mosque, can transfer to the Moslem community and how it can be used as a religious building for Moslem community development. I have proposed that, by using the mosque as a center for Community development, we can see, five new fortunes will be happened in community that will draw on development.
Some conclusion and recommendation can be written as Follows:
Mosque theory can be used as a software for development of Moslem community and applying it can enhance Moslem community development rate.
Mosque theory can provide a conceptual framework for community development process in different fields of activity. It would also provide a framework for understanding the relationships between the religion building and development.
Community development can be happened by conducting and utilization of community’s vitality through reinforcing morality, brotherhood relationship, devotion and knowledge.
The government has too much influence on the development process. Different communities may develop at different rates, due to differences in government policy.
Mosque must be designed to meet the modern needs of the Muslim people in order to popularize its use and providing effective lateral support is important in the process.
Imams of mosque should be trained in effective methods of management and in modern communication technology
In the course of construction, mosque must be made to appeal to the interest and needs of the modern Muslim lifestyle.

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