



Inclusion of Islamic Values in the Sustainable Development Strategies

إدراج القيم الإسلامية في استراتيجيات التنمية المستدامة

Suheyib Eldersevi

Suhaib3991@gmail.com

Department of Islamic Economics and Finance, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Istanbul, Turkey

Prof. Dr. Monzer Kahf

monzer.kahf@izu.edu.tr

Prof. at Department of Islamic Economics and Finance, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Istanbul, Turkey

Abstract

The idea of this study stems from the conviction that the contemporary environmental and socio-economic crisis, from unprecedented climate changes to the phenomenon of global warming to the poverty and inequality in societies and among societies, in fact, are an outcome came of a deep moral crisis. It appears that most of those issues are not caused by natural phenomena or forces as much as they go back to the morally wrong activities of humans themselves, although all religions are keen on preserving this Earth. This research aims to shed light on the Islamic perception of sustainable development, along with criticizing Western thought and the Western development model, which relies on the principle of "growth for the sake of growth" and encourages consumption with no limits. The study presented its discussion under three central Islamic values: justice, combating corruption, and Reform on Earth. These three values are frequently mentioned in Islamic sources due to their significant impact. The study claims that the situation of sustainable development plans will be far better if these three values are appropriately incorporated into the economic scheme of any society.

Keywords: Islamic Values, Sustainable Development, Justice, Combating corruption.

ملخص

تنطلق فكرة هذه الدراسة من القناعة بأن الأزمة البيئية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية المعاصرة، من تغيرات مناخية غير مسبوقة إلى ظاهرة الاحتباس الحراري إلى الفقر وعدم المساواة في المجتمعات وبين المجتمعات، هي في واقع الأمر نتيجة لأزمة أخلاقية عميقة. ويبدو أن معظم هذه القضايا لا ترجع إلى ظواهر أو قوى طبيعية بقدر ما تعود إلى تصرفات خاطئة أخلاقياً من جانب البشر أنفسهم، على الرغم من حرص الأديان كافة على الحفاظ على هذه الأرض. يهدف هذا البحث إلى تسليط الضوء على التصور

الإسلامي للتنمية المستدامة، إلى جانب انتقاد الفكر الغربي ونموذج التنمية الغربي الذي يعتمد على مبدأ "النمو من أجل النمو" ويشجع الاستهلاك بلا حدود. وقد قدمت الدراسة مناقشتها في إطار ثلاث قيم إسلامية مركزية هي العدل ومكافحة الفساد، والإصلاح في الأرض. وهذه القيم وردت كثيراً في المصادر الإسلامية نظراً لتأثيرها الكبير. وتزعم الدراسة أن وضع خطط التنمية المستدامة سيكون أفضل كثيراً إذا تم دمج هذه القيم بشكل مناسب في الخطط الاقتصادية والتنموية لأي مجتمع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القيم الإسلامية، التنمية المستدامة، العدل، مكافحة الفساد.

1. Introduction

Issues of environment and sustainability, climate change, poverty, global financial crises, and the fight against AIDS, covid and other chronic diseases have become hot topics since the beginning of the present century. Overall, the current reality of environment, economy, societal coherence and health is bitter now at the expense of the depletion of the earth's resources, excessive consumption, monopolistic enrichment and greed, which in turn have led to imbalance in both the universe and human lives (Adams & Jeanrenaud, 2008).

According to Diamond (2005), eight significant factors contribute to the collapse of society's life: deforestation, habitat destruction, soil problems such as erosion, salinization, and loss of soil fertility, inappropriate water management, overhunting and overfishing, introduction of alien species, overpopulation, and increasing individual negative impact on the environment. Diamond added that there are new factors that may contribute to the weakening and destruction of current and future societies: human-induced climate change, the accumulation of toxic chemicals in the environment, and energy shortages.

The third quarter of the year 2000 witnessed a pivotal event: the United Nations Millennium Summit agreed on eight development goals called Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) along with 21 targets and 60 indicators. The United Nations (UN) slogan was "A better world for all". The Member states of the UN recognized the need to do more to help poor people. These goals aim to stimulate development by improving social and economic conditions in the world's poorest countries (UN, 2016).

In September 2015, the Member States of the UN unanimously adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda) with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 169 targets and 231 unique indicators. The Agenda aims to set the direction for global and national development policies and to provide new options and opportunities to bridge the gap between human rights and development. It also provides a general framework that guides global and national development actions. The plan covers four main themes: environment, social, economic, and partnerships (Palmer, 2015).

The SDGs were universal goals, while the Millennium MDGs targeted developing countries only. Moreover, the SDGs are a truly universal framework that applies to all countries. All countries are supposed to make progress towards sustainable development. Also, the SDGs are comprehensively committed to achieving a broad range of social, economic, and environmental goals and more peaceful and inclusive societies free from fear and violence (Sachs, 2012).

However, given the current reality, a Press Release from the United Nations in July 2023 warned the world of significant losses in terms of the Sustainable Development Goals unless urgent actions are taken; otherwise, the promise of "a better world for all" will be in vain. The same press release emphasized that there are just about seven years left to reach the targeted year and the stakes are pretty high. Over thirty per cent of the targets have either no progress at all or, worse, have declined below the baseline set in 2015. According to data gathered in 119 countries in 2022, by 2030, 575 million people will still live in extreme poverty if current trends continue. 56 per cent of countries do not have laws that forbid discrimination against women, both directly and indirectly. The global temperature is 11°C higher than pre-industrial levels (UN Press Release, 2023).

It is worth noting that despite the UN setting sustainable development goals, there is pressure on the planet in all directions and forms, whether from individuals or governments of countries. Today's world faces substantial environmental problems that negatively affect economic and social development. There is a near-general conviction that development goals cannot succeed unless an ethical aspect accompanies them to ensure a fair balance between the requirements of present generations and the rights of future generations. Over the past few years, many countries have realised that there is a gap in development plans, which is the ethical aspect that cannot be separated from the development strategies (al-Jayyousi, 2013).

Considering Islamic rules and principles, a comprehensive framework has been set to regulate the relationship between individual and individual, as well as between individual and nature. Nature in this context includes all types of natural capital, such as forests, plains, rivers, seas, soil, etc. This is due to the belief that any defect or injustice in the natural capital will negatively affect different aspects of life, such as cultivation, offspring and kinship ties in accordance with Allah almighty's saying: "*Now if you 'hypocrites' turn away, perhaps you would then spread corruption throughout the land and sever your 'ties of' kinship!*" (Muhammad: 22). This verse indicates that turning away from the path of revelation and deviating from Allah's law will lead to the spread of corruption on earth.

According to Kahf (2002), development in Islam is a comprehensive concept that considers moral, spiritual, and material aspects. Kahf (2002) also stated that a Human being can achieve development by

expanding efforts and improving moral, spiritual, social, and economic fate; in simple words, the surroundings of the human being are always an aim of development.

The idea of this study stems from the conviction that the contemporary environmental crisis, from unprecedented climate changes to the phenomenon of "Global Warming" to the imbalance in the climate system of the entire planet Earth, began due to a moral crisis. It appears that this imbalance in the climate system of the planet Earth is not natural or normal in most cases and that its causes do not go back to natural phenomena or forces as much as they go back to the activities of humans themselves, although all heavenly religions came to be keen on preserving this Earth. It is noticeable that the contemporary development crisis has been capturing the attention of scientists, politicians, civil society organizations, and various media outlets for years. (Zaidi, 1981).

This study aims to achieve the following objectives: A) Present the background of sustainable development. B) Define the concepts of sustainability from an Islamic point of view. C) Clarify the role of Islamic values, mainly justice and combating corruption, in promoting sustainable development. The study begins by presenting relevant literature. Then, it defines the concept of sustainable development and the contemporary condition of the environment. After that, the study defines the concept of sustainable development in Islamic traditional literature. Following that, the study touches on Islamic values, mainly justice and combating corruption for sustainable development

The study followed the inductive and analytical approaches. The study first applied an inductive approach by reviewing the relevant literature on sustainable development, in general, to understand the topic and its importance better. Moreover, the inductive approach was also applied to comprehend sustainable development from the Islamic point of view through the relevant Islamic traditional literature and also to state the values pertinent to sustainable development. Finally, the paper applied an analytical approach to study the role and the relation of these Islamic values in promoting contemporary sustainable development in order to reach the desired results.

2. Literature Review

It is noted that sustainable development and its strategies and goals were among the topics that received intensive research from Western writers such as Sneddon et al. (2006), Pezzey (1992), and Blewitt (2012). This indicates that it is one of the critical topics that the West has extensively researched due to its close connection to human life and attempts to support the reform of the global status.

Muslim writers have also taken the initiative to discuss the concept of development in an Islamic context. In the early literature, Khurshid Ahmad (1980), Muhammad Shawqi al Fanjari (1977), Muhammad al Mubarak (1977), and Monzer Kahf (2002) took the lead. The discussion of the early literature on sustainable development revolved around some ideas, such as the Islamic teachings, which

are full of orders requesting people to seek a Rizq (sustenance) in all ways as long as it does not harm the environment. Moreover, Individuals and governments alike bear responsibility for developmental efforts. Also, Islamic sources have encouraged the enhancement of human resources, expanding the availability of food and other necessities, raising living standards, and decreasing generational and regional economic and social imbalances (Kahf, 2002).

Considering the contemporary literature, Zizi (2022) conducted a study to prove that Islamic economics takes precedence over all other theories and initiatives in applying the concept of sustainable development. The Islamic Shari'a is full of ideas that shape the concept of sustainable development. The author stated that following the sustainable development goals for Muslims starts from religious motives. Aljayyousi *et al.* (2022) discussed the concept of sustainable development and attempted to explore the viability of adopting Islamic development models to promote inclusive, pro-poor, and human-centred development.

It can be said that the subject of sustainable development in its broad sense, and sustainable development from the perspective of Islamic Shari'ah, has been extensively researched; however, it is noted that there is a research gap in connecting Islamic values to the goals and strategies of sustainable development. This dimension is crucial in this context due to a broad conviction that the contemporary environmental and socio-economic crisis began due to a moral crisis.

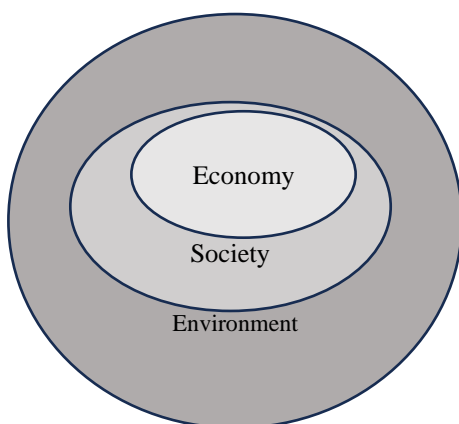
3. Overview of the Concept of Sustainable Development

Since late last century, environmental protection organisations' main concern has been discussing the concept of sustainability and its goals and challenges. In 1980, the “World Conservation Strategy” was prepared and published by three primary institutions, i.e., the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); in 1991 “Caring for the Earth” report has been published by same institutions. The World

Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) also published a report in 1987. Additionally, the idea of sustainability was explored during several UN conferences, firstly in Stockholm in 1972, then in Rio in 1992, and in Johannesburg in 2002 (Adams, 2009).

Sustainability was also used to refer to a balanced economy with vital environmental support systems. The environmental, economic, and social facets comprise the three primary dimensions of

sustainable development. As seen in this figure, several models have depicted “the environment” as a



generic framework comprising life-support systems that serve as the foundation for social and financial capital (al-Jayyousi, 2013).

The Brundtland Commission originally coined the phrase "sustainable development" in 1987, and since then, it has gained widespread usage across various industries, including housing, transportation, water, and tourism. The term was defined as "a development that fulfils the needs of the present generation, without compromising the ability of the future generations to fulfil their needs" (WCED, 1987). This definition manifests a crucial component: the needs of the present generation and those of future generations.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines sustainable development as "improving the quality of life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems" (IUCN *et al.*, 1991). This definition is broader than that given by the Brundtland Commission. It is clear that this definition includes important elements such as improving the quality of life and the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems. The phrase "improving the quality of life" in this definition seems more ambitious than "meeting needs" as in the Brundtland Commission definition.

Mostert (1998) defines sustainability as preserving "natural capital" supplies. He outlines the requirements that sustainable development must fulfil, including A) The use of renewable resources, such as water, must not exceed the replenishment rate. B) The use of non-renewable resources, such as fossil fuels, must be managed so that they are not exhausted before alternative sources are available. C) Essential environmental processes and infrastructure must be maintained.

It can be said that firstly, there must be remarkable success and progress in the field of economic development, especially in combating poverty, followed by protecting nature and achieving social justice, despite the interdependence and harmony between the three elements (economy, environment, and social justice). In fact, many studies have indicated the necessity of a set of factors to achieve sustainable development, such as financial discipline, openness to the market system, investment in education, political freedom, and an anti-corruption system (Saha & Ali, 2017). Moreover, it can be said that the process of reviving sustainable development requires a change in the thinking of decision-makers and members of society so that a new awareness of global challenges is formed to serve the local environment.

4. A Glance on the Present Status of Sustainable Development

The existing Western development model is centred around "consumption". Compounding the issue is the media's promotion of overconsumption as a pathway to happiness. This phenomenon highlights rising trends in water, food, and energy consumption. Reports on the "State of the World," environmental effects, and assessments by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) evaluate the environmental crisis,

with estimates from 2008-2009 (MEA, 2005). Statistics of the latter half of the twentieth century reveal significant growth in global population, urbanization, consumption, international communication, and motor vehicles.

Environmental degradation has significantly hindered progress toward the Millennium Development Goals. Over the past 50 years, only four out of 24 ecosystem services have seen productivity improvements. More than 70% of the 1.1 billion people living on less than \$1 daily reside in rural areas and rely directly on agriculture and fishing (UN, 2024).

Statistics indicate that the sixteen-fold increase in energy consumption during the twentieth century is primarily associated with sulfur dioxide (SO₂) emissions occurring at twice the natural rate. Additionally, emissions of nitrogen monoxide (NO), carbon dioxide (CO₂), and methane (CH₄) are also above natural levels, along with the release of synthetic chemicals like chlorofluorocarbons (Crutzen, 2002). The Fourth Assessment Report (2007) from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that eleven of the last twelve years (1996-2006) rank among the ten warmest years since temperature records started in 1850.

Human activities have severely impacted three-quarters of the Earth's habitable surface and have escalated the natural extinction rate by 100 to 10,000. Around 40 per cent of land suitable for primary production has been directly used by humans, with ammonia-based fertilizers accounting for 40 per cent of this usage. Industrial fishing techniques, such as trawling and pollution affecting shallow seas and coral reefs, have profoundly changed marine ecosystems, a phenomenon that scientists are just beginning to grasp fully. The population of large predatory fish in these oceans has dropped by 10 per cent compared to pre-industrial levels. Furthermore, over two million people worldwide die prematurely each year from indoor and outdoor air pollution, while the global per capita supply of freshwater is decreasing, highlighting water pollution as one of the most critical environmental threats we face (Adams, 2008).

Low-income countries account for less than 10 per cent of the world's gross national product (GNP) (World Bank, 2000). Countries such as Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and the Republic of Yemen have annual per capita incomes below US\$300. Most of these impoverished nations are in Africa, and many are also experiencing the aftermath of civil or international conflicts, as seen in Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The share of global wealth owned by the poorest countries and their populations is low and continues to decline (Nielsen, 2011).

It can be argued that the present emphasis on sustainable development should shift towards a more comprehensive focus on the Moral dimension of " sustainability" alongside the principle of "justice and

combating corruption." This approach should consider justice for current generations (particularly for the impoverished) and justice for future generations (for those yet to be born), in addition to advocating for the rights of all other species.

5. Sustainable Development in Western Thought

The twentieth century witnessed a broad debate about the negative impact of the Western development model. One of the essential criticisms was the issue of linking the pursuit of happiness to excessive consumption and transforming luxuries into necessities. Environmentalists also criticized the Western development model and its negative impact on the deterioration of natural resources and the pollution of water, air and soil (Alden *et al.*, 2020).

This may be consistent with Islamic thought, which believes that the Western development approach has transformed natural resources into commodities and threatened natural resources with excessive depletion, corruption of the land, and the destruction of crops and offspring (al-Jayyousi, 2008) In contrast, Islamic thought, as will be explained, sets standards for justice and social responsibility, as well as the consecration of the principle of benevolence, non-excess, protection of natural resources, and kindness to living beings (Taman, 2011).

The beginning of the twenty-first century witnessed some Asian countries, such as China and India, growing rapidly. The growth in China, for example, requires increased consumption and depletion of the planet's resources, such as grains, meat, iron, wood and energy. This process adopted the Western model regarding excessive consumption and using fossil energy (gas, coal, oil). Such practice will negatively affect human health and harm the planet and its global economy (Al-Jayyousi, 2008).

It has become necessary to critically review the Western development model, which failed to provide successful solutions to the problems of the economy, the environment, and the people due to its neglect of moral aspects. In addition, the financial crisis that the world has witnessed since the beginning of 2008 is the best evidence of the need to find a new model that achieves social justice and food security and protects the Earth's resources.

Perhaps the best evidence of the extent of the failure of the Western model to achieve social justice is that in 2000, the 200 wealthiest people in the world owned wealth equal to what the 2 billion poorest people owned. In addition, about a billion people (i.e. one-sixth of the planet's population) do not have the minimum level of decent living, including food, water, and basic services such as education and health facilities (Sachs, 2012).

The manifestations and consequences of adopting the Western development and thinking system in recent decades have led to the destruction of crops and offspring, corruption of the land, the exacerbation of poverty, disease, financial and economic crises, air and water pollution, and climate change

(Schumacher, 2011). All of this requires global collaboration to think about a new system and a more precise and comprehensive vision for development with innovative concepts that ensure the preservation of the causes of life on this planet (Schumacher, 2011).

The concept of sustainable development has been subjected to a wave of criticism, including the opinion that it is broad and complex. This led to inconsistent use of the concept in different fields. For instance, politicians, decision-makers, businessmen, development and economic experts, and civil society all use this concept (sustainable development). However, each of them has different visions regarding the harmony of the economy with the environment. Therefore, you find that the concept of sustainable development may lead to people gathering around the same idea, but it does not necessarily lead to an understanding of the desired goals.

One of the criticisms directed at the concept of sustainable development is that the matter is not limited to the difficulty of defining the concept but also the difficulty of applying the idea of sustainable development within the Western thinking system. It is known that sustainability includes three dimensions: economic, social, and environmental, and the three dimensions cannot be viewed as equivalent for three reasons: First, The economy is an institution arising from society to facilitate the exchange of goods and services, unlike the environment, which is an entity in itself. Second, The environment is the foundation on which both the economy and society depend, and the available resources (from the Earth and the solar system available to humans have recently become limited. Third, Sustainability is a desired goal, but it lacks the appropriate measuring tools to define what is meant by sustainable development in the fields of transportation, politics, energy, construction and tourism (Al-Jayyousi, 2008).

In general, there are three axes of Western economic criticism: the carrying capacity of the earth, the principle of development and growth, and the market, social justice, and efficiency.

5.1 The Carrying Capacity of the Earth

Undoubtedly, the Western vision and view of the Earth are among the reasons for current environmental issues. It has been dominated by the idea that the Earth is an inexhaustible resource that can provide the natural resources as much as needed. Since the beginning of the era of scientific discoveries at the beginning of the nineteenth century, there has been a belief that the universe operates within physical laws and that humans can control the universe and make all the necessary materials and supplies (Meadows & Randers, 1993).

The depletion of natural capital due to endless growth and growth for the sake of growth is similar to Syriac growth. It has contributed to the depletion of the earth's resources, led to a state of corruption, and destroyed the crops and offspring. The cost of damages resulting from climate change reached 1% of

global income in 2007, equivalent to \$650 billion (World Bank, 2021). The entire world should realise the great danger facing Earth. Moreover, with the increasing pace of development and growth in third-world countries such as China, India and Brazil, which imitate the Western consumption pattern that links excessive consumption and the habits associated with it, the depletion of oil resources and various materials is expected to increase (Hussain, 2007).

5.2 The Principle of Development and Growth

It is essential to clarify the difference between development and growth. Growth aims to make things bigger, while development seeks to make things better. Despite the increase in global production several times over the past hundred years, this has led to a deterioration in the ecosystem that humanity has never witnessed in its history, which is a form of destruction and corruption on the earth due to what people's hands have earned. From an economic point of view, when growth becomes economically ineffective as a result of adverse and side effects, the development model and growth measurement methods that rely on gross national income (GNP) must be reviewed because they do not provide an accurate picture of growth, which includes many harmful industries such as tobacco and armaments, in addition to the waste of these industries that are viewed as positive values. Accordingly, other measures should be adopted, such as the sustainability factor, the human development index, and the national happiness index (Al-Jayyousi, 2008).

It is worth noting that the communist system has failed to achieve the concept of social justice, just as the current capitalist system has also failed to preserve the ecosystem because it relies on the rate of national product to measure growth. The cost of damages resulting from the deterioration of the ecosystem in many countries, such as Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon, has been estimated at (2-5%) of the total national income of these countries. Although the national income of Sudan, for example, increased by 23% in the five years (2002-2007), 600,000 people still suffer from famine and poverty. The same is the case for Japan, where the national product increased five-fold in the period (1958-1987), but the degree of satisfaction and level of happiness did not change (Yunus, 2007).

5.3 Market, Social justice, and Efficiency

The economic theory in the capitalist system is based on the principle that the market is more efficient in distributing resources, based on the theory of supply and demand and the theory of price, but this efficiency of distribution does not necessarily mean justice in distribution; the rich get more than they need, while the poor barely get what they need. In addition, the market ignores the value of natural environmental resources and their great benefits. For example, the United States of America produces \$19 billion worth of honey annually, not to mention the effective contribution of the ecosystem in serving humanity by purifying the air, providing energy, water and food sources from the seas and oceans, and

wind pollination of plants, in addition to the contribution of nature reserves in mitigating the effects of immune change by 15% (Al-Jayyousi, 2013). It was necessary to activate the texts of legislation and laws enacted by countries and governments to achieve justice and avoid the emergence of the market system (the invisible hand). The market system that is based on the principle of Riba (usury) forces everyone, individuals and countries, to be hostages to banks (Al-Jayyousi, 2008).

6. The Foundations of Sustainable Development in Islamic Traditional Literature

According to Korten (1998), the dependence on GNP as a gauge of human development is flawed. Adams (2008) stated that advanced industrial countries are ineffective models for achieving sustainability: "The industrial world is the least sustainable on earth." Their high consumption levels significantly contribute to climate change and biodiversity loss, while their economies have pushed poor communities in developing nations into unsustainable production systems. Even when wealth is created, it often fails to promote equity. Fanelli (2007) points out that high quality of life and favourable human development indicators do not necessarily align with GNP per capita.

The concept of sustainable development needs to be revisited, particularly from the Islamic point of view, since Islamic traditional sources contain plenty of evidence promoting the concept of sustainability in different aspects of life. At the heart of Islamic belief is the concept of the oneness of the Creator, the unity of human origin, and humanity's shared destiny (Kahf, 2006). Given that sustainability is shaped by values and principles, we will explore vital Islamic concepts below that can help broaden our understanding and definition of sustainability.

6.1 Unity of Source of Creation and the Final Destiny

From the Islamic perspective, Allah Almighty created the universe for the benefit of all humanity. He has provided the earth's resources to people tasked with conserving and using these resources wisely. Humans possess the abilities necessary to comprehend the universe, nature, and life. They are regarded as trustees and custodians responsible for upholding natural laws while ensuring justice and sustainability in the use of resources. Every human action is seen as a form of worship, without distinction between spirituality and material existence or between this life and the afterlife. This unity in time and belief encourages individuals to appreciate the diversity of life and to continually seek to explore, understand, experience, and enjoy the world (Umar & Khamidi, 2012)

The Islamic perspective on human origin and unity is very simple. Islam teaches that all humans are descendants of Adam, emphasizing their equality as part of a global family that should connect and share knowledge. Consequently, the current situation where impoverished countries are burdened by debts to wealthier nations is at odds with the Islamic vision. Social, economic, and environmental justice are universal ethical principles that everyone should uphold. The Islamic economic model prioritizes social

justice and promotes individual innovation (Ijtihad), while incorporating checks and balances to define the extent of government intervention needed to prevent excessive concentration of wealth and economic power (Kader, 2021).

Islam emphasizes that creation has a purpose and that human beings are accountable for their actions. They carry a responsibility (Amanah) as vicegerent of Allah and will be held accountable for their deeds on the Day of Judgment. Consequently, Islam establishes a robust system of accountability at all levels, including internationally, as seen in discussions on climate change. The current scenario, where certain powerful nations and global corporations operate without accountability, is incompatible with the Islamic perspective. Islam advocates for a world where those in authority are answerable for their actions. Additionally, it teaches that all beings, including humans and natural resources, must be safeguarded from waste, depletion, and destruction (Al-Jayyousi, 2016).

6.2 Islam and the Concept of Decent Living

The decent-consumption economy seems to be in harmony with the spirit of Islamic principles. It has a significant positive impact on the environment and helps transform societies into low-carbon economies. The Islamic approach requires individuals to use resources as intensively as possible till their last gasp (al-Jayyousi, 2008). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) placed great importance on decent living and discouraged extravagance and waste. The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Eat, drink, give sadaqa and wear clothes so long as neither prodigality nor pride is mixed up with it.". Islam envisions a just society where the relative differences in social and economic conditions will be much less than observed in capitalist societies (Jan & Asutay, 2019).

The Islamic approach is built on the basis that human consumer behaviour shall be moderate so that one is neither stingy nor extravagant. It is allowed to spend in a way that guarantees a decent life in which he enjoys all good things and saves the fruits of his efforts for a time of need. Allah the Almighty says: *"They are those who spend neither wastefully nor stingily, but moderately in between"* (al-Furqan:67). Also, Allah SWT says: *"Eat and drink, but do not waste. Surely He does not like the wasteful"* (al-A'raf:60).

The Islamic vision of life requires those who can afford a high material standard to voluntarily give up some of their comforts and help others improve their economy in order to enjoy a similar lifestyle. Society as a whole should move to a higher social and economic level only after most people have achieved a similar standard of living. It can be said that this can be achieved through the principles of social security established by Islam, such as zakat and Waqf, in order to address the income disparities between the poor and the rich (Al-Jayyousi, 2008).

The values framework in Islam promotes appropriate consumption, with Islamic societies founded on the fear of Allah being viewed as sustainable. This fear encompasses values like justice, kindness, and charitable spending. It encourages individuals to focus on sustainable efforts that promote spiritual growth and awareness of social and environmental issues rather than mere acquisition. Islam promotes an economy that prioritizes resource conservation over depletion. In today's context, the Islamic perspective calls for close collaboration among all countries to manage and protect the earth's renewable resources.

6.3 Islam and Social Responsibility

The local community at the level of neighbourhoods constitutes the core of economic solidarity and social cohesion. Zakah and Sadaqat aim to share resources through spending on others and on the community's social needs to seek the pleasure of Allah Almighty. Before Islam, Arabs were also aware of charitable activities. However, Islam expanded the concept of charity in many ways. It obligated minimum social spending called "Zakah" on all those with a surplus (Kahf, 2004).

The Qur'an states that spending is a condition for achieving success and prosperity. Allah SWT says, *"And whoever is saved from the selfishness of their own souls, it is they who are 'truly' successful"* (al-Hashr:9). Moreover, Islam urges spending as it is a condition for achieving success and prosperity. Fulfilling promises to people and nature leads to success. This means fulfilling and respecting personal obligations to society and nature. Therefore, environmental pollution is against achieving prosperity, and efforts to harness natural resources are essential to achieving prosperity.

In short, the Islamic view holds that Allah created the entire world for the benefit of all human beings, as al-Jayyousi (2001) has argued. Therefore, there is a great need for all peoples of the world to consult and cooperate while adopting economic policies that may negatively affect others. Global, regional and local governments must consider the moral and rational imperatives of achieving global peace and prosperity. The availability of the above concepts in the economic and social system in Islam are the necessary foundations for sustainability and a decent life.

7. Sustainable Development Challenges from an Islamic Perspective

The twenty-first century is marked by various global challenges, such as economic issues (like the 2008 financial crisis), social concerns (including the spread of HIV/AIDS), and environmental crises (notably climate change). These challenges significantly influence the Western discourse and agenda regarding the developing world, particularly the Muslim nations. This section highlight global environmental issues and explore how Islam offers perspectives and solutions for tackling these challenges.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has explored the concept of sustainable development and the future of sustainability to create a new sustainability model (IUCN, 2006). Zaidi (1981) posited that the environmental crisis is fundamentally moral, emphasizing the need for an ethical framework grounded in religious principles. He concluded that belief in Islam manifests in action through what he termed the “decision-action process,” as articulated in the Qur'an, which emphasizes the importance of faith combined with good deeds.

Chishti (2003), wrote for publications published by the Harvard Divinity School that sought to reinterpret Islam in the environmental context. In addition to reviewing how an Islamic worldview might be interpreted, reevaluated, and applied to environmental issues like pollution and water scarcity, Chishti described the Islamic perspective on the cosmic order. Additionally, Chishti talked about the connection between environmental preservation and reducing human poverty, as well as equal access to social and natural resources. This body of writing and publishing centred on the idea of "trusteeship and trust," connecting environmental problems with the Islamic conception of justice.

According to Erdur (1997), the American environmental movement was first a radical criticism of Western modernity, which it later assimilated. After the 2008–2009 financial crisis, it was thought that it was necessary to dissect and reconsider the Western economic model's tenets to create an Islamic understanding of the environment that is in harmony with society, the environment, and culture.

According to Nasr (1992), the moral and intellectual aspects make religion fundamentally different. Additionally, he proposed that human spiritual healing could be the solution to the environmental catastrophe. Additionally, he attacked Darwin's theories of evolution, arguing that any knowledge of the environment that is influenced by Islam must take into account the growth of "existential intelligence," or the awareness of the relationship between humanity and the cosmos. This will necessitate and lead to a revolutionary education that considers the creation myth of the universe and humanity from the perspective of Islamic principles and intellectual doctrine, epistemology, norms, and values. Islam views the role of the individual as a generator of value and knowledge, a guardian, a witness and a reformer who seeks to contribute.

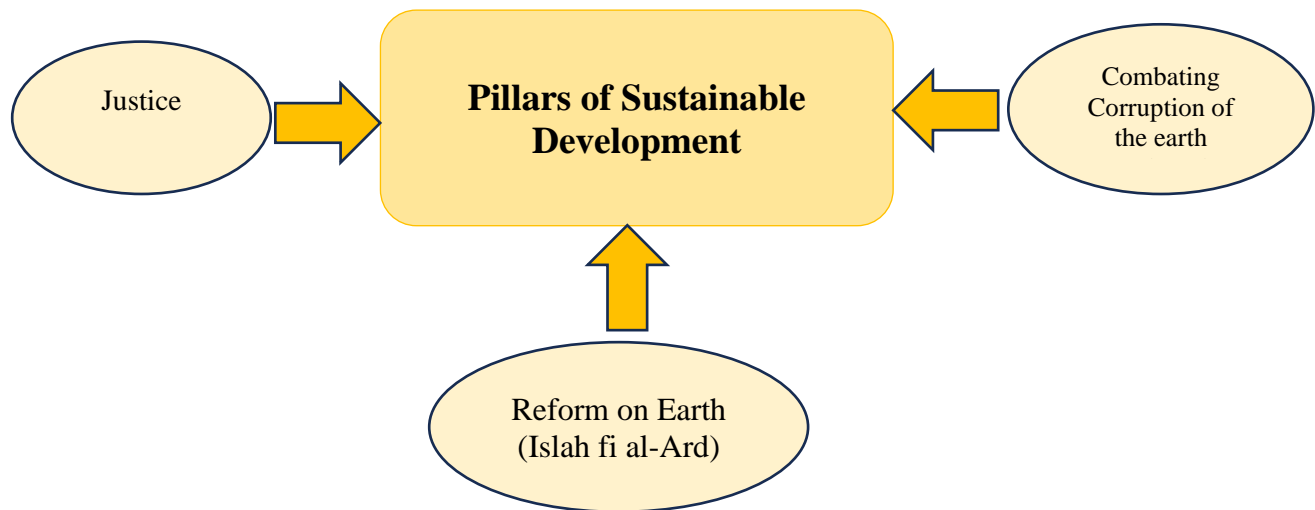
According to the principles of the Islamic faith, Humans are a vicegerent on earth, and the universe is created to serve them (Ebrahimi, 2017). Many Islamic writers also firmly believe that industrial capitalism has led to the destruction of crops and offspring and corruption on earth (al-Jayyousi, 2013). In contrast, the Islamic cultural system emphasizes the concepts of benevolence, asceticism, and unity between parts and the whole. The following is a summary of the most essential elements of the conceptual framework of an Islamic theory related to environmental developmental thought:

- The tasks of man as a vicegerent on earth, include preventing extravagance and injustice, protecting the earth's resources and preserving them for the next generation, harmonizing the creation of the universe and man, and understanding the story of the origin of the universe and man. Allah SWT says *"Do not spread corruption in the land after it has been set in order. This is for your own good, if you are 'truly' believers"* (al-A'raf:85).
- The role of man in building the universe within the cosmic and social framework, and in this confirming the state of civilization and development, appreciating the value of life, and establishing the principle of "plant it" as per the Hadith where the Prophet (PBUH) said, *"If the Final Hour comes while you have a shoot of a plant in your hands and it is possible to plant it before the Hour comes, you should plant it"* (al-Jayyousi, 2013).
- Establishing the principle of reconciliation with nature, and that man is part of it (nations like you), and that this leads to a state of harmony, co-existence and harmony, and appreciating the values of beauty in the external environment with its environmental and social systems (Llewellyn, 2003).
- Paying attention to the social and economic dimensions and confirming the state of social solidarity, justice and global peace, which establishes the value and culture of each of good life, good word, good country, good food, and good development.

Islam makes preserving the environment an essential part of the 'aqidah. The noble prophetic hadith says: "Faith has over seventy branches - or over sixty branches - the uppermost of which is the declaration: 'There is no god but Allah'; and the least of which is the removal of the harmful object from the road" (Ansari, *et al.*, 2012). The harm in this context refers to all and any types of harm that pollute the environment and harm people's interests, health, tastes, and feelings. Combating this harm in all its forms is one of the religious duties that completes the believer's faith.

8. Promoting Sustainable Development through Islamic Values

There are growing calls for rebuilding an integrated system for sustainability from an Islamic value perspective. This requires formulating a new intellectual system derived from Islamic principles. The relevant Islamic values to the concept of the sustainable development model can be derived from the verse where Allah SWT says: *"Indeed, Allah commands justice, grace, as well as generosity to close relatives. He forbids indecency, wickedness, and aggression. He instructs you so perhaps you will be mindful"*. (An-Nahl: 90).



This figure illustrates the main relevant values to the sustainable development, in which a decent life can be guaranteed to every human being. This is in accordance with the Allah saying: *“Whoever does good, whether male or female, and is a believer, We will surely bless them with a good life, and We will certainly reward them according to the best of their deeds”* (An-Nahl: 97). The following sections will discuss those three values in light of sustainable development.

8.1 Justice (al-‘Adl)

Justice and equity are fundamental in Islamic thought; justice is also a central theme in the Qur'an, dictating the traditions of law and how they should be put into practice. Moreover, justice in Islam is a sacred commandment that all believers and the entire society must adhere to despite its consequences. The concept of justice in Islam is far superior to distributive and corrective justice, natural justice, formal justice, or any other man-made law (Hassan, 2017). Allah SWT says: *“O believers! Stand firm for Allah and bear true testimony. Do not let the hatred of a people lead you to injustice. Be just! That is closer to righteousness. And be mindful of Allah. Surely Allah is All-Aware of what you do”*. (al-Maidah:8).

The concept of justice in the theme of sustainable development will be discussed, focusing on three dimensions: environmental, social and economic.

Firstly: Social Justice

Plato discussed social justice regarding the individual's services and functions towards the state. According to this theory, social justice was defined in Greek political theory as "a principle in society that includes a combination of human who have come together out of a need for each other, and hence their union in one community forms a single unit" (Bhandari, 1998).

In contrast, the state, in Islam, is not considered something sacred but rather a social organization subject to divine law. People in Islamic society do not come together out of need for each other; instead,

people in Islam come together as a group in which each individual cares for the other, and the individual is responsible for the care of the group. In short, social justice can be defined as follows (Hasan, 1971):

- Treating the individual (man or woman) fairly and ensuring freedom
- for everyone.
- Providing equal opportunities for the individual to develop his personality so that he becomes competent in society.
- Regulating the individual's relationship with society for the benefit of all members of society.

The Islamic system is described as a middle ground between capitalism and communism. It stands firmly for social justice and ensuring the dignity and freedom of the individual. Human society's task is to continue advancing within moral limits to ensure its revolutionary development within universal justice. Iqbal (1934) said that "life is a gradual process of transformation that requires each generation to solve its issues and challenges.

It is well-agreed among Muslim scholars that "property rights" are one of the main fundamental pillars which Islam preserves. In his pilgrimage, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized the importance of property rights when he declared: "It is not lawful for a person to take his brother's stick except if he is pleased with such". The concept of property rights in Islamic economies has implications that extend beyond the physical realm, emphasizing poverty alleviation and redistribution. Islamic doctrines support access to land rights for a wide range of beneficiaries, including women, children, the landless, and minorities (Al-Jayyousi, 2016).

Moreover, several principles were set by Islamic law in terms of dealing with Property Rights. For instance, it shall not be used excessively or in a way that deprives others of their property rights (Forni, 2005). The Qur'an requires everyone to respect the property rights of all persons regardless of religious belief. All members of society, Muslims and non-Muslims, enjoy the same property rights and shall benefit equally from natural resources. The state has the right to "ownership" of land in the name of Allah, which is conditional on society's benefit. Property rights in Islam include an element of redistribution, manifested in institutions such as waqf and zakat. Those institutions are crucial elements of social responsibility that have contributed to supporting public institutions, infrastructure, social development, public health, water provision, protection, and education (Al-Jayyousi, 2008).

In Islam, individuals are required to work hard and earn through legitimate and just means. Additionally, everyone is required to fulfil his obligations towards society. The individual must refrain from committing sins, including unjustified personal enrichment, unfair dealings, fraud, falsehood and corruption. Wealth and property must not be gained by exploiting of other nations and waging wars to

control resources. Instead, it must be gained through legitimate and just means, such as mutually agreeable trade (Kamali, 1989).

According to Islamic teachings, material possessions should have no value unless they achieve the purpose for which they were created. Such an attitude leads to self-restraint in using scarce resources, which reduces unnecessary consumption and over-exploitation of resources. This ethical system helps to meet the needs of all through decent living, social cohesion and solidarity so that all members of society feel empowered by belonging to the community and not by their material possessions. In the absence of the ethical dimension, material possessions have become an end in themselves; unfortunately, this has become very common in the current world (Al-Jayyousi, 2013).

In brief, the parties responsible for achieving sustainable development goals should not neglect the aspect of social justice due to its great importance. The basic requirements of human dignity, decent living standards, and access to the necessities of life and sanitation services, energy, health care, food security, and biodiversity should be adhered to. At the same time, education, training, and job creation should be provided to all members of society without any discrimination. The rule of law, gender equality within the Islamic framework, women's empowerment, and a general commitment to establishing just democratic societies for development should be ensured.

Secondly: Economic Justice

Economic justice can be explained through the concept of "fair trade". This concept refers to an economic model that emphasizes paying a "fair" price to producers that covers the cost of production and enables social justice and environmentally sound production. Fairtrade is in line with Islamic values that aim to encourage the distribution of wealth between the rich and the poor. Islam supports the concept of public interest, justice, and equality, which all refer to the idea that a person or organization should not engage in an action or incite business transactions that would cause more significant harm than benefit to society or the environment (Uddin & Khan, 2014). Allah SWT says: *"O believers! Do not devour one another's wealth illegally, but rather trade by mutual consent. And do not kill each other or yourselves. Surely Allah is ever Merciful to you."* (al-Nisa:29)

Nevertheless, discussing economic justice will decidedly lead to discussing two essential concepts: Withholding and greed. Several texts in Islamic sources alert about both conducts. In the fight in Mecca, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) criticized their greed and said: *"There are two characteristics which are not combined in a believer: miserliness and a bad disposition"*. Similarly, Islam strongly forbids withholding, as it produces unlawful profit and leads to inequality. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) forbade such withholding, warning: *"If anyone keeps goods till the price rises, he is a sinner"*. Thus, these Islamic principles highlight Islam's compatibility with justice and equality.

Fairtrade is a good example of people-centred development that aligns with Islamic values. This includes promoting clean energy, organic farming, and sound environmental practices that respect people and nature. In this regard, fair trade can be seen as a model that adheres to Islamic values. In addition, Islam calls for moderation in consumption, urges people to avoid waste in using natural resources, and commands humanity to maintain the natural balance. Those are essential principles for producing fair trade products and for the consumers who buy these products (Khan & Thaut, 2008). Allah SWT says: *"Indeed, We have created everything perfectly preordained"*. (al-Qamar: 49)

Moreover, fair trade principles include transparent management and business relationships that promote integrity and respect among trading partners. Islam encourages mutual consent between parties as a necessary condition for sound business transactions. Fairtrade calls for decent wages and working conditions for workers. Several fundamental principles guide workers' treatment, such as clear and sound contracts and employees' awareness of their duties, responsibilities, and rights. Allah says, *"O believers! Honour your obligations"* (al-Ma'idah: 1).

One of the main justifications for fair trade is to promote diversity and long-term sustainability and ensure greater returns by encouraging investment in poorer communities. The basic principle in Islam concerning trade is that the market must be given freedom to respond to the forces of supply, demand and natural competition. This means that price controls, tariffs and other barriers must be removed to make trade free and fair.

In short, economic justice aims to eliminate poverty, create a relative balance between the social classes in society, and create equal opportunities for all. This means that everyone can enter the field of production, and there will be no such thing as a monopoly of production in the hands of a specific class. Therefore, the hope of progress in proportion to a person's work can be considered another effect of economic justice in the lifestyle. The hope of progress and advancement leads to self-confidence and reassurance in a person's life, which is expressed by psychological health in life.

Thirdly: Environmental Justice

One of the significant shortcomings of some Western development models is that they neglect the environmental aspect in their promotion of development and focus only on the economic aspect (Sardar, 1979). Al-Jayyousi (2008) argued that Islamic values support environmental justice in promoting sustainability. Islamic law has set specific rules for formulating public policies and balancing between public and private interests regarding environment-linked matters. The concept of public interest may lead to an understanding of sustainability in its broader sense.

Environmental justice is rooted in Islamic teachings on ecological sustainability. In fact, a Muslim has a special responsibility towards all natural creatures. According to Islam, elements of nature such as

land, water, sunlight and forests belong to all living beings, not just Homo sapiens. Humans have been given the freedom to use natural resources based on guardianship with the promise not to over-exploit, damage or destroy them. Islamic principles on environmental justice highlight the equitable distribution of environmental products (air, water, biodiversity, forests, etc.) among all communities and groups, regardless of religion, race, social group and region (Mohamed, 2012).

In Islam, every human being is a guardian of nature and must live in harmony with other creatures. This means that every Muslim must respect, care for and nurture the environment and refrain from exploiting or wasting environmental products and recklessly destroying elements of nature, including forests, water bodies, soil and air. Moreover, Islam abhors corruption of all kinds, including ecological corruption, such as industrial pollution, environmental damage, and reckless use of natural resources. In Islam, environmental justice is not only a religious duty but also a social obligation (Mohamed, 2012).

Considering one of the institutions which promotes environmental justice during the era of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the protected area (Hima) is a great example. The Hima emerged as an institution out of the need to promote coexistence and reconciliation between humans and nature. This innovation, inspired and derived by the local culture, was developed through human reason and experience. The Hima is an excellent example of a development model centred on the human being as a guardian, witness, and responsible for the universe's development. It can be said that the Hima system is an ecological development model that prohibits environmental degradation and corruption (Abd Al-Kader, 1959).

In short, it can be said that the Hima had an influential role during the era of the Prophet PBUH and after him. It reinforced the principle of environmental justice as it promoted environmental development. Moreover, the Hima concept was adopted in society based on the principle of justice among people.

8.2 Combating Corruption

The term “corruption” broadly refers to the relationship between cause and effect; it is linked to purposeful human actions in all areas of human activity. In our current era, the concept of corruption can include, in addition to economic and political corruption, environmental impacts such as rising sea levels, increased flooding, droughts and hurricanes, all of which are linked to anthropogenic climate change. In addition to the enormous economic cost of corruption.

The term corruption was used as an “obscenity, evil, and transgression” according to the Quranic text (Ahmed, 2018). Allah SWT says, *"Indeed, Allah commands justice, grace, as well as generosity to close relatives. He forbids indecency, wickedness, and aggression. He instructs you so perhaps you will be mindful"* (al-Nahl:90).

Islamic teachings are full of evidence showing concern for combating corruption in all aspects of life. Moreover, Islamic teachings have contributed to shaping a new discourse to explain the root causes and

potential remedies for environmental challenges. There is a need for a total transformation in combating corruption and harnessing local knowledge, innovation, ethics, and new development models to address poverty and care for the environment. Below is a brief overview of the basic Islamic concepts related to combating corruption in different aspects of life.

Administrative and Financial Corruption

It is known that administrative corruption refers to "the misuse of public influence to achieve personal benefits", while financial corruption is "the ability to evade financial oversight agencies to plunder public money". Undoubtedly, corruption harms the entire systems of countries. It is known that Islamic law came to combat administrative and financial corruption. There are pieces of evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah that prohibit corruption. Allah SWT says: *"Do not consume one another's wealth unjustly, nor deliberately bribe authorities to devour a portion of others' property, knowing that it is a sin"*. (al-Baqarah:188). Also, the Prophet (PBUH) says, "Allah cursed the one who bribes and the one who takes bribes". Undoubtedly, combating financial and administrative corruption is among the primary requirements for achieving sustainable development goals (Alazzabi, *et al.*, 2020).

Administrative corruption practices undermine the effectiveness of sustainable development strategies in countries. This is due to that administrative corruption practices place personal interest as a priority without considering the public interest; thus, a certain segment of society benefits without the rest, which contradicts human rights that call for justice in the distribution of wealth and ensuring the provision of a decent life for all individuals at all levels (al-Quhumi, 2022).

Environmental Corruption

Islam considers protecting the environment from pollution an Islamic duty. Deliberately damaging the environment is corruption on earth that deserves punishment, while upgrading the environment through plantation, beautification, and eliminating all sources of pollution are virtuous deeds by which a Muslim draws closer to Allah. The Prophet (PBUH) says: *"Iman has over seventy branches - or over sixty branches - the uppermost of which is the declaration: 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allah'; and the least of which is the removal of harmful object from the road, and modesty is a branch of Iman."* The harm referred to in the noble hadith includes all types of harm that pollute the environment and harm people's interests, health, tastes, and feelings.

Piling up garbage in the streets is a harm that harms people, and a word that offends modesty is a harm that pollutes the moral environment, offends people's modesty, and spoils their tastes. Combating this harm in all its forms is one of the religious duties that completes the believer's faith, and it is not a marginal matter that can be overlooked. In Islam, the matter did not stop at setting the theoretical framework for environmental protection but rather extended to practical application through the Hisbah

apparatus, which represented a method of control, domination and monitoring of pollution by following preventive and therapeutic measures to prevent pollution (Alazzabi, *et al.*, 2020).

8.3 Reforming on Earth (al-Islah fi al-Ard)

Reforming the earth is one of the acts of worshipping Allah. Allah Almighty has requested his servants to perform these tasks on the planet. Allah SWT says, "Remember when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to place a successive human authority on earth." They asked Allah, "Will You place in it someone who will spread corruption there and shed blood while we glorify Your praises and proclaim Your holiness?" Allah responded, "I know what you do not know." (al-Baqarah:30). Hence, this verse shows that Allah decided to populate the earth and give all humans the responsibility of preserving it.

Allah Almighty created this universe with its precise, integrated, and perfect system suitable for construction and warned against corruption in it. General reform from the perspective of Islam is correcting all distortions in the practice of religious and worldly matters and returning them to their original state that has not been affected by corruption. As the Qur'anic verses have shown, the Muslims carried out this task from the prophets and messengers. The Messengers were sent with a comprehensive system for reform; they led the reforming with wisdom and peace and carried out their duty in the best way, clearing the earth of corruption, injustice and crime and transforming it into societies of mercy, brotherhood and peace (Ahmed, 2018).

Islam has provided a comprehensive approach to protecting and saving the environment and preserving the earth's resources. The aim is to keep the planet beautiful and valid for current and future generations. Among the Islamic principles is combating desertification by urging the development of the land, its revival, its reclamation and its planting of trees so that it does not remain barren and arid. In this regard, the Prophet (PBUH) said, "He who cultivates land that does not belong to anybody is more rightful (to own it)" (Bsoul, *et al.*, 2022).

Moreover, Islamic teachings urged the preservation of trees and considered tree cutting an act of injustice to the environment. Cutting trees diminishes the environment's aesthetic value and the resources available to humans and animals. Moreover, by destroying trees, the natural balance is disturbed, and wildlife and people are deprived of the shade, cover, and food trees offer. The significance of protecting trees was highlighted by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who said, "Do not cut down trees, for they are a protection for livestock in times of drought." This guideline emphasizes the moral obligation to protect natural resources for the benefit of all living things, underscoring the connection between environmental preservation and the welfare of both human and animal existence (Kula, 2001).

9. Conclusion

This research aimed to show the ethical frameworks concerning sustainable development from an Islamic perspective through the following axes:

Balance and Equilibrium

Allah Almighty created the universe according to a precise, balanced, and accurate system. Allah SWT says: "As for the sky, He raised it 'high', and set the balance 'of justice', so that you do not defraud the scales" (al-Rahman:7-8). This balance depends on man observing the cosmic laws so that he does not cause corruption on earth.

Balance in living

Islam is keen to emphasize the principle of not being extravagant in living and not increasing luxuries even if the sources and resources are available, as mentioned in the noble prophetic hadith about the prohibition of extravagance in the use of water for ablution, even if the person is performing ablution from a flowing river. This behaviour in living means reducing excessive consumption, thus reducing the consumption of fossil energy, which leads to the extent of the concentration of carbon dioxide emissions and avoiding corruption on Earth.

• The future of future generations

Every human being is responsible for bequeathing the Earth to the next generation and in a position that allows for decent living. Accordingly, it is unreasonable to transfer what is suffered from today regarding harmful waste and pollution to the next generation. Therefore, initiatives and calls have emerged calling for a shift towards a green, low-carbon economy, free of any waste, through clean production, increasing energy efficiency, investing in renewable energy, and protecting natural resources from reserves, coral reefs, vegetation cover, forests, seas, oceans, and rivers, as this helps natural systems increase their resistance to the effects of climate change.

Accordingly, a new way of thinking is urgently needed to understand the nature of the planet, as humans are stewards (Guardians to the preservation of the earth).

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