

# The Role of Endowments in Supporting Students of Knowledge

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v15-i6/25742> DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v15-i6/25742

**Published Date:** 16 June 2025

## Abstract

One of the most prominent forms of Muslims' care for knowledge is the endowment of knowledge. This concept, known as 'waqf' in Islamic jurisprudence, involves the dedication of assets, such as land or money, to a specific purpose, in this case, education. It is represented in building schools, Qur'anic recitation centers, and Quranic schools, endowing them with spending on teachers and students and educational needs such as tablets, inkwells, clothing, lighting oil, etc. Our research objectives are to encourage researchers and students of knowledge and help them to continue their studies, to invest endowment money in sponsoring students of knowledge, and to clarify the forms of Muslims' care for knowledge (endowment for knowledge), which is represented in building schools, reading rooms, and Quranic schools and endowing them for spending on teachers and students and educational needs such as tablets, inkwells, clothing, lighting oil, and the like. We also address the research problem of some researchers struggling to continue their academic careers due to low expenses. Our research results highlight the significance of endowments for education, their profound impact, and their pivotal role in disseminating knowledge. We stress the importance of collaboration between the charitable and government sectors in establishing schools, meeting their needs, providing libraries, and ensuring educational opportunities for students of knowledge.

**Keywords:** Role of Endowment, Support, Students

## Introduction

God Almighty created humanity for a great purpose: to worship Him alone. One of the characteristics of worship in the religion of Islam is that it is comprehensive. It includes physical worship, such as prayer and fasting; verbal worship, such as remembrance and reading the Qur'an; and financial worship. This financial worship includes spending money seeking the pleasure of God Almighty. For the sake of these financial worships, money is dedicated in the way of God, the Almighty, because of the significant interests and great benefits that result from it for the nation, society, and individuals in this world and the hereafter.

Therefore, Muslims hastened to allocate funds for various areas of life, such as building mosques, schools, utilities, digging wells, paving roads, orphanages, hospitals, printing books, and everything related to jihad in the way of God Almighty. Waqf in jurisprudence has received significant attention from Muslim scholars, who have given it great attention. This attention is represented by spreading its rulings to the people and teaching them, urging it and explaining its virtues and interests, defending it, and writing books on its rulings. Muslim scholars of different backgrounds have written about it, including commentators, hadith scholars, and jurists.

The importance of this topic is undeniable, as it addresses the following crucial aspects:

1. Many issues in this topic require clarification and scrutiny, which people need.
2. Explain some aspects of good Sharia law, such as these contracts, which greatly benefit the individual, the community, and the nation.
3. Elucidating the substantial benefits and noble objectives stemming from the individual and the community endowments.

*Waqf, A Term That Means 'Confinement And Prevention,' Is A Concept That Requires Clear Explanation*

There are two ways to use it: awqaf yawquf waqfan and Waqf yawquf waqf. God Almighty said, "Stop them, for they will be questioned" (Al-Quran, 37:24). In Islamic law, it means preventing others from owning property (Al-Sarakhsi, n.d.).

The evidence for the Waqf is the statement of the Prophet: May God bless him and grant him peace, to Umar, may God be pleased with him. Sakhr ibn Juwayriyah narrated on the authority of Nafi' that Umar ibn al-Khattab, may God be happy with him, had a piece of land called Thamgha, which had valuable palm trees. Umar said: O Messenger of God, I have acquired wealth, which benefits me. Should I give it to charity? He said: Give it to charity. It may not be sold, given away as a gift, or inherited, but its fruit should be spent. So Umar, may God be pleased with him, gave it in charity for the sake of God, for freeing enslaved people, for guests, the poor, travelers, and his relatives (Al-Ayni, 2000). Those jurists who permit endowment have cited general and specific evidence. The first is the Almighty's statement: {You will never attain righteousness until you spend from that which you love (Al-Quran, 3:92)}

The ruling on endowment: Endowment is governed by the five obligatory rulings. It is recommended

*Explains the Achievement of the Endowment of Islamic Law*

The endowment included great benefits and many rulings. As for the necessary, it returns to preserving the five necessities in Islamic law: religion, life, money, offspring, and reason. Preserving the mind, such as endowing schools, Islamic institutes, books, and other things that develop the mind, is a key aspect of this principle.

The wisdom behind the legitimacy of endowment:

- 1- The reward continues for the Muslim during his life and after his death, as he withholds part of his wealth from disposal and gives its benefits to charity, as the endowment is distinguished by the characteristic of permanence and continuity among voluntary charity. This is shown by the Hadith of Abu Hurayrah [p. 100], may God be pleased with him, in which the Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: "When a

- person dies, his deeds come to an end, except for three: except for an ongoing charity, or knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."
- 2- Preserving the scientific aspect in Islamic society. Science and Islamic schools' role in various arts was based on Islamic endowments. These endowments, which often supported the establishment and maintenance of educational institutions, had a significant role in the progress and spread of Islamic civilization, particularly in astronomy, medicine, and mathematics.
  - 3- Helping the weak and needy relieve them from poverty and destitution. Most endowments take care of the weak and the poor, and the continuity of this benefit is unlike that of other charities, which are often not permanent.
  - 4- The cohesion of society, its solidarity, the spread of the spirit of compassion, affection, and cohesion, and making the Muslim feel his responsibilities towards his society, connecting him to it, and encouraging him to extend a generous hand to this society so that his memory will last in it. Hence, Muslims competed to endow properties and direct their fruits to benefit society, such as building hospitals, shelters, orphanages, digging wells, and establishing water fountains.

Islamic endowments have contributed to the economic development of the Islamic community through the capital they represent in cash and kind and through their inherent permanence and continuous benefit. They cannot be sold or destroyed by a fleeting desire or mismanagement. They have ensured the transfer of these funds to generations who inherit the benefits. Thus, Islamic endowments remain a wealth and capital that always serve the public interest. I will explain some of this when discussing the family endowment.

#### *The History of Waqf Among Muslims*

The first endowment in Islam was the Quba Mosque, which the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) established when he migrated to Medina before entering it.

Then followed the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, which the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) built in the first year of the Hijra (migration) at the place where his camel knelt upon arriving in Medina. As for the first charitable endowment in Islam, Muslims differed about it: It was said that the first charity in Islam was the charity of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, when he donated the seven walls of Medina, which belonged to a Jewish man named Mukhairiq, the Prophetic and Endowments of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs (may God be pleased with them).

It was said that Omar bin Al-Khattab's charity was the first charity in Islam. May God be pleased with him in the seventh year of the Hijra, when the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, returned from Khaybar. The noble Companions continued to endow their wealth to please God Almighty and draw closer to Him. People continued to endow their money after them to draw closer to God Almighty.

#### *Reasons and Motives for the Suspension*

Several ways exist to allocate funds for charitable purposes, including those in advocacy, politics and government, and economics.

**First:** In the Field of Dawah

To achieve this in the field of Dawah, the following methods are required:

The first method is spreading religious awareness among the people of the nation:

In our time, means of communication and advocacy are available that were not available in the past. The nation's scholars must fulfill this aspect to arouse enthusiasm and fulfill the duty with which they have been charged.

**Second:** Awakening the religious feeling of the necessity of solidarity, support, and mutual support among the members of the Muslim community, which the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, likened to a single body in their mutual love, compassion, and sympathy. The nation's scholars and leaders must awaken the country and educate it first on the Islamic teachings that instill in Muslims a sense of community as individuals and groups. This will fulfill some of society's rights, including removing ignorance among its individuals regarding endowments and kindling the spirit of competition to seek God's pleasure.

**Third:** The renaissance of the jurisprudential assemblies about endowments

**Fourth:** Broadcast the biographies of good people who hasten to do good, to raise their mention and motivate us to join them. In the Field of Politics and Governance. The First Way: The Obligation to Implement Islamic Sharia Law and Open the Door of Role Model. Rulers, scholars, and community leaders should hasten to do this good and endow endowments.

#### *Endowments for Schools*

One of the most prominent examples of Muslims' care for knowledge is the endowment of expertise. The endowment is for spending on teachers and educational needs such as clothing, construction, electricity and water. It was established after the Islamic conquests had become relatively stable and after the number of knowledgeable people in mosque circles had doubled.

The construction of these schools increased until they filled the cities of the Islamic world from one end to the other. History mentions several Muslim princes who had a significant role in establishing schools in various countries, including Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, who established schools in all the cities under his rule in Egypt, Damascus, Mosul, and Jerusalem.

Alongside these great men, princes, the wealthy, and merchants were competing to build and endow schools to ensure the continuity and interest of students in studying there. Many of them turned their homes into schools and made books and real estate an endowment for the students of knowledge studying there.

Even the Andalusian traveler Ibn Jubayr was amazed by the many schools he saw in the East and the abundant yields generated by their endowments, so he called on Moroccans to travel to the East to gain knowledge. The owners of the endowment were keen to build a school next to the endowment to teach Muslims religious rulings, etiquette, history, and related subjects such as the Arabic language and literature. They also sought to support their livelihoods, such as arithmetic, trade, agriculture, and other beneficial sciences and arts. Spending endowment income on education, Sheikh Muhammad Rashid Rida)

It is sufficient proof of the abundance of endowments of schools and mosques in Damascus that al-Nawawi did not eat any of the fruits of Damascus throughout his life because most of its valleys and orchards were endowments. [p. 163] While Damascus was famous for the abundance of its schools and endowments, other Islamic cities such as Baghdad, Cordoba, Kufa, Basra, Kairouan, and Cairo had many schools. All of this resulted from the endowed funds allocated for scientific study.

Education in the Waqf schools was open to all nation members, without class discrimination. Two types of students studied there.

#### *The First Type*

Foreigners from distant lands, including those whose financial circumstances did not allow them to live off their parents' expenses. This type of student had private bedrooms, a library, a kitchen, and a bathroom; it was a dormitory.

The second type:

Students: These represent students who wish to return to their families and relatives in the evening. They are in an external section. [p. 164] Both types of students receive free education. In addition to providing education to their students, some schools also offer medical care. Some schools even have hospitals next to them to treat sick students free of charge.

Waqf schools were known for their scientific specialization, as schools were established for one type of branch of knowledge. Thus, there were schools for teaching the Qur'an, its interpretation, memorization, and recitation, schools specifically for Hadith, and schools - and they were the majority - for jurisprudence, with each school of jurisprudence having its school, and medicine schools, and others in every field of scientific specialization.

Study in these schools was open to all who desired knowledge without restrictions or conditions. The students of these schools enjoyed all care, including food, drink, treatment, and accommodation for strangers and people experiencing poverty. The professors who taught in them were elected from those whose scientific competence was attested to by the sheiks. Graduates of these schools were granted a scientific license in the name of the school's sheik. Doctors were not permitted to practice medicine until they had obtained this certificate or license from the head physician of the school. (The Compendium of the Rulings on Endowments, Gifts, and Wills-1-162).

#### *UNISHAMS Endowments*

The endowment's support for effective educational institutions, including universities, has been essential and effective in graduating scholars and thinkers who advance the Islamic nation. The endowment rationalizes public spending so that the resources of the general state budget are directed in their natural course. It also ensures the economic stability of educational institutions and protects them from economic fluctuations.

#### *Endowments for Libraries*

All those who established schools, corners of knowledge, and study circles in mosques realized the importance of books for spreading knowledge, and that limiting oneself to

constructing buildings and providing a teaching apparatus is not sufficient, so they took care to endow books on them to be an easy means for acquisition and review, providing scientific material that the teacher and the learner can rely on at the same time [p. 168]. So it became customary to have a library in a school, mosque, or ribat endowed for students of knowledge and others.

These libraries, with their endowed books, in addition to private libraries such as those of caliphs, princes, ministers, and scholars, were behind the scientific boom witnessed by the Islamic world over many centuries. Scholars and students of knowledge relied on them for their studies, reviews, and writings. The Compendium of the Rulings on Endowments, Gifts, and Wills-1-163)

The library, which Ibn Qulays, the Fatimid minister, endowed, contained several rooms for reading, special halls for lectures, a large hall for lectures, and halls rented at 1,000 dinars per month. Monthly salaries were given from the proceeds of this endowment to students of knowledge, scholars, and those working there, whether they were administrators, technicians, or servants. These libraries facilitated knowledge for those who wanted it without expenses and at various levels, as endowments contributed to strengthening and reinforcing the foundations of education by endowing these libraries and books. Caliphs and princes also had the merit of establishing libraries and spending on them from their own money. "They said: Muhammad bin Abdul Malik Al-Zayyat's gift to the copyists and scribes in his library was two thousand dinars every month, and Al-Ma'mun used to give Hunayn bin Ishaq in gold the weight of the books he translated into Arabic, like for like."

Among the new endowments for knowledge in our time are:

1. Endowments for Islamic tapes and the printing and distribution of Islamic books as a contribution to the dissemination of knowledge and learning.  
Beneficial books should also be translated into various languages to benefit Muslims worldwide.
2. Establish an educational television station by offering shares to capable Muslims, working to spread religious, cognitive, and cultural awareness objectively.
3. Establish an internet website containing scientific and cultural lessons and helpful lectures by experts in various sciences and disciplines.
4. Establish an endowment to provide scholarships for the study of Islamic law for citizens of both Islamic and non-Islamic countries.

#### *Search Results*

- 1- Waqf is an essential element in developing society and building its civilization. It is the focus of Muslims' scientific and intellectual renaissance.
- 2- The reader of Islamic history will notice the role of the endowment in advancing the wheel of development and Islamic civilization.
- 3- The endowment ensures the funding of scientific research programs that benefit humanity.
- 4- Endowment funds help develop faculty members, thus raising their academic efficiency.

**Discussion**

This article highlights various methods of allocating funds for charitable purposes, specifically focusing on the importance of endowments (Waqf) in religious, educational, and societal development. Several approaches for advancing charitable work have been identified, emphasizing Dawah (Islamic missionary work) and its integration into politics and governance. A central theme is the role of religious scholars, community leaders, and rulers in promoting Islamic values, community solidarity, and awareness of the benefits of endowments. The concept of Waqf has historically contributed significantly to the development of Islamic societies, particularly in establishing educational institutions such as schools and libraries.

In the field of Dawah, several methods are emphasized, such as spreading religious awareness and fostering solidarity among the Muslim community. Scholars and leaders are urged to awaken the religious sentiments necessary for mutual support and cooperation. Additionally, the revival of jurisprudential assemblies regarding endowments plays a crucial role in educating the public about the importance of these charitable funds. Highlighting the lives of pious individuals who contribute to charitable works motivates others to follow their example.

The obligation to implement Islamic Sharia Law and promote societal role models is central in the political and governance sphere. Leaders and scholars are encouraged to lead by example, ensuring that the establishment of endowments is a priority. The historical evidence of significant Muslim rulers and princes, such as Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, who established schools and made endowments to sustain them, showcases the long-standing commitment to education and intellectual growth within the Islamic world. The enduring legacy of waqf schools, which provided free education and accommodations to students from all walks of life, is a testament to the success of these philanthropic initiatives. These schools offered essential education in religious subjects and specialized in medicine, trade, and agriculture, reflecting the comprehensive approach to societal development.

The impact of endowments on education is further exemplified by modern institutions like UNISHAMS, which continues to benefit from endowments to ensure educational programs' sustainability and economic stability. Similarly, the importance of libraries and the preservation of knowledge through endowment is highlighted, as these institutions played a critical role in the intellectual growth of the Muslim world. The libraries funded by endowments were central to the dissemination of knowledge, and the tradition of establishing such institutions continues in modern times through projects like educational television stations and online platforms for learning.

**Conclusion**

Endowments (Waqf) have been pivotal in developing Islamic civilization, particularly in education, religious awareness, and societal welfare. The historical and contemporary examples of endowments for schools, libraries, and other educational institutions demonstrate the lasting impact of these charitable funds on the intellectual and social fabric of Muslim societies. Promoting Waqf in religious and secular contexts continues to be an effective means of supporting educational and social development. As this article has shown, allocating funds through endowments directly benefits individuals. It contributes to the broader goal of societal advancement, making Waqf an indispensable tool for spiritual and

material progress. The legacy of these charitable practices continues to inspire modern initiatives, ensuring that the values of knowledge, solidarity, and mutual support remain central to the Muslim community's ongoing development.

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