

Application of Islamic Teachings on Brotherhood to Ease Fuel Subsidy Removal Challenges Among Vulnerable Nigerians

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Abstract

This paper examines the application of Islamic teachings on brotherhood to ease fuel subsidy removal challenges among Nigerians. Drawing on Islamic texts and the existing literature on the role of brotherhood in alleviating socio-economic tensions, this research opens a new perspective for understanding how Islamic principles can be used to create a more just and equitable society. A qualitative research methodology was employed, and the data were gathered through a review of the related literature and a semi-structured interview with pertinent bodies, as well as content analysis for analyzing the data. The paper finds that, based on Islamic teachings, brotherhood is an essential element in cultivating a sense of solidarity and belonging amongst Nigerians. These feelings assist in lessening the effects of fuel subsidy removal and allow for a more comprehensive approach to tackling the resulting economic and socio-cultural challenges. Finally, the paper proposes a number of policy recommendations to utilize Islamic teachings of brotherhood to create a more equitable society in Nigeria.

Key Words: *Brotherhood, Challenges, Islamic Teachings, Removal, Subsidy.*

Abstrak

Tulisan ini mengkaji penerapan ajaran Islam tentang persaudaraan untuk meringankan tantangan penghapusan subsidi bahan bakar di kalangan masyarakat Nigeria. Berdasarkan teks-teks Islam dan literatur yang ada mengenai peran persaudaraan dalam meredakan ketegangan sosial-ekonomi, penelitian ini membuka perspektif baru untuk memahami bagaimana prinsip-prinsip Islam dapat digunakan untuk menciptakan masyarakat yang lebih adil dan setara. Metodologi penelitian kualitatif digunakan, dan data dikumpulkan melalui tinjauan literatur terkait dan wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan badan terkait, serta analisis isi untuk menganalisis data. Makalah ini menemukan bahwa, berdasarkan ajaran Islam, persaudaraan merupakan elemen penting dalam menumbuhkan rasa solidaritas dan rasa memiliki di antara masyarakat Nigeria. Perasaan ini membantu mengurangi dampak penghapusan subsidi bahan bakar dan memungkinkan dilakukannya pendekatan yang lebih komprehensif untuk mengatasi tantangan ekonomi dan sosial budaya yang diakibatkannya. Terakhir, makalah ini mengusulkan sejumlah rekomendasi

kebijakan untuk memanfaatkan ajaran Islam tentang persaudaraan untuk menciptakan masyarakat yang lebih adil di Nigeria.

Kata Kunci: Persaudaraan, Tantangan, Ajaran Islam, Penghapusan, Subsidi.

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian economy has suffered for a long time in a lot of areas, including foreign exchange, educational trips, health trips, fuel, and electricity subsidies. Fuel subsidies began in the 1970s and were formally established in 1977 following the passage of the Price Control Act, which prohibited the sale of certain items, including gasoline, for more than the agreed-upon price. Subsidies are a terrific idea and a blessing for the poor, but in Nigeria, there have been many serious allegations of bad management and corruption practices related to their administration (Akhakpe, 2014).

The oil business has not been doing well, and despite the enormous amounts of money the Nigerian government spends on fuel subsidies, Nigerians still struggle with a lack of high-quality motor spirit. The infrastructure in the oil industry has not improved much as a result of the enormous quantities of money allocated to fuel subsidies, and the government has not yet fixed its refineries (Daily News, 2013). As a result, 54% of Nigerians live below the national poverty line, and the bulk of the country's population has seen little to no improvement in their quality of life.

Thirteen years after diesel was deregulated, the kerosene subsidy was removed in 2016. The biggest challenge confronting Nigerian economic management, however, appears to be the Petroleum Motor Spirit (PMS) subsidy. A sizeable portion of the annual national intake is earmarked for the subsidy scheme. The sharp increase in subsidies can be explained by a number of factors, including the fluctuating value of the naira, the amount of PMS consumed (which is still debatable), and the price of crude oil on the international market. However, considering the size of the sum allotted to finance the subsidy regime, a close examination of this plan is necessary. Nigerians are currently facing formidable economic issues, as the cost of most products and services has tripled while the income of many residents has remained constant. In actuality, the inflation rate of 22.41% has caused the value of what people own to decrease (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2012).

Many countries, including Nigeria, fuel subsidies are regarded as part of an implicit social contract between citizens and the state (Beblawi and Luciani, 1987; Hertog, 2017; Luciani, 1990; Fattouh et al., 2016; Moerenhout et al., 2017). It is believed that reducing subsidies without improving social welfare protection

may be considered a unilateral change in the social contract, which can give rise to protest and political instability (Moerenhout, 2018a, b; Luciani, 1990).

Conversely, if people believe that the state is fulfilling its obligations by providing better services and transparently investing the savings from fuel subsidy reform into sectors of direct relevance to households (e.g., health, education, and infrastructure), then they may be willing to accept subsidy reform, in the same way as improved services can increase support for tax compliance (Bodea and LeBas, 2016; McCulloch et al., 2019).

Fuel subsidies in Nigeria are large; at the last estimate, the country subsidizes petrol for up to USD 3.9 billion, almost double the government's spending on health budgets yearly since 2018 (Munshi, 2018). Subsidies exist because the government fixes the price of gasoline for consumers below the international price and uses government resources to pay for the difference in order to ease the effect of poverty on low-income citizens. Despite numerous attempts in this reform, Nigeria has never successfully removed petrol subsidies in large part and long term because of strong popular opposition to the reform and resistance from the nationalists. Nwachukwu et al. (2013) as well as Akov (2015) have highlighted the large level of petrol subsidies and the coalition of interest groups that have cooperated to protect the continuation of subsidization. Even though the current removal of fuel subsidies comes at great cost: the opportunity of more spending on other development objectives at large; the increased distribution of resources to the state governments; the majority of the poor Nigerians are expected to receive palliatives; and the non-scarcity of petrol leads to cheaper petrol and encourages greater expectations of business development. Despite this, many Nigerians oppose the end of fuel subsidies, claiming that mass corruption practices never allow the vulnerable to benefit from the designed development (Daily Independence, 2023).

Since subsidy reform generally entails an increase in fuel prices, we would expect those with high consumption to be more opposed to reform. On the other hand, those experiencing high prices when paying for fuel (suggesting they do not receive the subsidy) may be more in favor of reform. Availability may also influence support for reform, and its scarcity will lead to its opposition (Sharma et al., 2018). According to Garg et al. (2016), fuel availability and price control have a positive impact on accepting reform. Similarly, consumers may support reform if it improves the availability of fuel (Alkon et al., 2016).

Trust in government, in general, appears to influence people's openness to subsidy reforms (Moerenhout et al., 2017; Inchauste and Victor, 2017). Government credibility is linked to a perception of the government's ability to

implement reforms and redistribute or reinvest savings from reforms (Beaton et al., 2013; Bridel and Lontoh, 2014; Baig et al., 2007; Indriyanto et al., 2013; Scobie, 2018). In the Nigerian context, some authors have suggested that there is a trust deficit (Ogbu, 2012), with many reform opponents such as labor unions and civil rights groups highlighting the inability of governments to protect the poor (Bashir, 2013; Nwachukwu et al., 2013; Africa Research Bulletin, 2011; Akov, 2015).

Indeed, corruption reduces support for reform more than any other factor. While general trust in government does not appear to be associated with support for reform, the delivery of reasonable national and local services supports the idea that building the social contract is key to reform (Oyedele, 2012). Personal norms, such as active participation in religious groups, also appear to be correlated with support for reform. Intriguingly, people do not appear to form their opinions on the issue regardless of their understanding of it.

Islam, as a divine way of life that teaches bounds and togetherness in all aspects of human life, emphasized that people should jointly treat each other with fairness, equality, justice, and sympathy. It is recorded in human history that brotherhood served as a powerful tool that reshaped the lives of vulnerable people during times of difficulty. Because of it, members of the community feel the pain of each other, irrespective of their class, background, or diversity. Therefore, the application of Islamic teachings on brotherhood can have a significant impact on easing the challenges of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria. Islam places a strong emphasis on the concept of brotherhood and mutual support among its followers, which can be utilized to address the concerns and difficulties faced by Nigerians due to fuel subsidy removal.

Numerous studies have addressed and recommended a number of solutions, including direct cash transfers, the distribution of palliatives, and soft loans to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), among others. Millions of Nigerians were sensitive to the current economic suffering brought on by the elimination of fuel subsidies, and they responded in a variety of ways. According to the extent of our research, nearly all of the suggested remedies have been tested in various contexts and in response to a number of national incidents that have occurred to mitigate the effects of various policies that have an impact on citizens' lives or as a result of disasters; however, for a variety of reasons, including injustice, corruption, selfishness, and resource mismanagement, no workable or long-lasting solution has been found. Because of its importance as a potent tool for humanitarian assistance, this research suggests that if the spirit of

brotherhood according to the Islamic teachings that leads to justice, fairness and kindness are fully adopted and well practiced among Nigerian citizens, the lives of the vulnerable would change in due time, regardless of their location, religion, or race.

RESEARCH METHOD

To test our hypothesis of maintaining the Islamic teachings of brotherhood to cushion the effects of fuel subsidy removal among the vulnerable Nigerians, a qualitative research methodology was employed, and the data were gathered through a review of the related literature across library materials that include books, peer-reviewed journals, conference papers, reports, and records. The semi-structured interview with pertinent bodies was used for its simplicity and reliability on the research matter based on the attitudes and perceptions of Nigerians as well as their compliance with fuel subsidy reform, as well as content analysis for analyzing the data. The participants in the interview across both urban and rural areas involved married couples, student unions, teacher associations, community leaders, government officials, and religious scholars. The participants were coded as MC, SU, TA, CL, GO, and RS.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Islamic Concept of Brotherhood

1. The closest relationship and bond that can take place between two people during the course of their lifetime is called brotherhood (Jamil et al., 2023).
2. Brotherhood (Ukhuwwah) means love, friendship, bonding, and doing things together. It is a brotherhood established for the sake of Allah without expecting anything in return (Ghazali, 2006).
3. Any relationship that completes the manifestation of strong unity, love, and affection between two souls is called brotherhood (Belbin, 2010).
4. Therefore, brotherhood in Islam means the tie that exists between two people who are living on an equal plane of faith in life and feel the real feelings of their partner, referring to the true relationship of brotherhood and sisterhood.

This unbreakable relationship has constantly been found in all environments and societies and is the secret behind the love, affection, and closeness that exist between individuals. It is because of this fact that the Qur'an invites humanity to unite and come together under the principles of love and affection, thus referring to the faithful believers of a society as being brothers (and sisters) of one another.

The bond of brotherhood among fellow Muslims is far more precious than the bond of brotherhood in a family. Those who form this sort of brotherhood

and love and care for each other without expecting anything in return are considered true brothers in Islam. They consult each other about their affairs and seek solutions for their difficulties and problems together. If they do not see each other for a few days, they contact each other, and if anyone of them is in need, they help and support one another. If any one of them dies, they pray for the deceased by gifting the rewards of some righteous deeds to their souls. They console the hearts of the orphans survived by them by giving them those gifts and treating them kindly.

The concept of brotherhood in Islamic perspective is categorically mentioned in the holy book of Allah Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat" (Q49:10); this verse is popularly known as Verse of Brotherhood (Arabic: آية الأُخُوَّة, *Āyat al-Ukhuwwah*). The verse is about the brotherhood of believers with each other, which says:

"The believers are nothing else than brothers. Therefore, make peace between your brethren and observe your duty to Allah that haply ye may obtain mercy." (49:10).

The fundamental Islamic teachings identify a good society as a society of believers who are always bound together, and their societal motto is nothing else but a good sign of brotherhood. The above verse refers to equality between individuals and a lack of difference in terms of ethnic group, tribe, and race. It is suggested that the verse refers to the necessity of reforming between religious brothers.

In the ninth verse of Surah Hashr, which describes some of the refined akhlaq (characters) of the Ansar (people of Madinah), Allah said:

"And they entertain no desire in their hearts for what they are given, but rather prefer them (the Muhajirin) above themselves, though poverty becomes their lot. And whoever is saved from his own avarice will surely prosper" (Q.Hashr, V.9).

They were saved from avarice and stinginess and blessed with the protection of Allāh Ta'ālā, and thus attained salvation in this world and the hereafter.

As a universal and eternal religion, Islam has not reduced its lines of work and calls to specific people and nations, but it has put the unity of the Islamic community at the top of its sociopolitical agendas and has further created the bonds of religious brotherhood among its members. Considering that all Muslims share the fundamental principles of religion, irrespective of their sects, particularly having faith in Allah, one sacred scripture (the Holy Qur'an), and the Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, it is no longer necessary to reflect on the details and aspects that give rise to disunion and conflicts.

All Muslims are brothers and equals, and the blood of all of them is on the same level. This is true, even if one of the Muslims is at a lower level in terms of social or financial status.

Islam considers all Muslims as people who belong to one family and calls them brothers, sisters, or siblings. Moreover, Muslims of every race and tribe, plus every language and age, have a deep sense of brotherhood with each other, even if some live in the eastern parts of the world and the other in the west (RS).

In the rituals of Hajj, wherein the world's Muslims congregate in the holy Ka'ba, as the symbolic House of God and the focal point of monotheism, this appeal and close bond are remarkable, and there is a scene of the objective realization of this important Islamic law, namely brotherhood (Makarem Shirazi, 1974).

Religious brotherhood is exploited when people have common bonds. The Holy Qur'an has further utilized this concept in many cases. For example, in situations in which the brothers have come from the same parents, in the story of the Prophet Musa (pbuh) and his brother, Aaron:

And we appointed for Musa thirty nights and added ten, and he completed the term, appointed by his Allah, of forty nights. And Musa said to his brother Aaron: Replace me among my people, act in the right way, and follow not the way of the mischief-makers... (Surah Al-A'raf, Ayat 142).

Or in the cases where the brothers have been from the father's side, like Joseph and his brothers:

'And the brothers of Joseph came to Egypt seeking food, and they entered upon him; and he recognized them, but he was to them unknown. (Surah Yusuf, Ayat 58)

According to the Holy Qur'an, when a baby is breastfed by another woman under certain conditions, a kind of brotherhood is formed between this baby and the nursing woman's baby, as illustrated in Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 23. By the way, kinship relationships are sometimes mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as brotherhood; for example,

'... and to A'ad, we sent forth their brother Hud...' (Surah Al-A'raf, Ayat 65; Surah Hud, Ayat 50),

'... when their brother Lut said to them, Will you not guard against evil??'(Surah Ash-Shu'ara, Ayat 161)

'... and indeed, we sent to Thamud their brother Salih, saying, Worship Allah. Then look! They became two parties quarreling with each other. (Surah An-Naml, Ayat 45)

The Islamic prophet Muhammad instituted brotherhood between the emigrants and helpers, and this happened and continues to happen between the

great companions of the prophet after his demise, as they have rooted the concept of brotherhood in the hearts of their fellow believers.

Among the good behaviors of Muslims in their communities is being true brothers, and they are urged to teach good morality and manners to their fellows. One of the great messages of the Holy Qur'an is that brotherhood is an essential tool to build a moral and ethical Islamic society. In the Islamic community, all Muslims are brothers, and this served as a great message and sign of true believers regardless of their location, era, and ethnicity.

Religious brotherhood has been accordingly introduced by the Holy Qur'an as one of the most efficient tactics to avoid the harm of disunion and preserve the integrity of a religious society. As a result of religious brotherhood, unity, love, and cooperation in good deeds can further come to light, and the society is protected from many spiritual, social, and religious deviations, so social balance is shaped among the members (CL).

The truth of religious friendship and brotherhood also transcends the normal limits of the mortal world and occurs on the Day of Resurrection, when all non-divine friendships and brotherhoods are broken up and the entire life of purity and spirituality of believers is connected forever. As said in the Holy Qur'an,

And we shall remove from their breasts any sense of injury that they may have, so they will be like brothers facing each other on thrones in heaven" (Surah Al Hejr, Ayat 47).

Imam Ghazali (Rahmatullâhi Alayhi), in his book "Ihya Ulumud-Din," classifies the level of brotherhood into three groups:

- The lowest level is when a person treats his fellow Muslim brother as he treats anybody in any matter.
- The middle level is when he regards his fellow Muslim brother as equal to himself in every matter.
- The highest level is when he prefers his fellow Muslim brother above himself.

Nowadays, words like friend, companion, fellow citizen, and fellow countryman, among others, are often exploited to express interest, but Islam uses the word brother, which is the deepest one (Komolafe, 2011). In this respect, socioeconomic, political, racial, geographic, and historical issues fail to create a true and actual spirit of brotherhood among the vulnerable Nigerians, leave them suffering at the hands of their fellow brothers and sisters who are in the upper class, and leave the actual teachings of Islam regard to brotherhood, which is not influenced by time, place, age, or occupation, when no one considers oneself superior to the other except by level of faith.

Concept of Subsidy in Nigerian Context

Any policy that maintains the price of a thing or product below what consumers or producers would pay on the open market is considered a subsidy. Different sorts of subsidies, including grants, tax exemptions or reductions, price controls, etc., share the same term (Alozie, 2009).

A subsidy is money paid by a government or an organization to lower the cost of manufacturing goods or providing services so that their prices can be maintained low, according to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2001).

Bakare (2012) notes that selling a product for less than its cost of manufacture is known as subsidizing. Therefore, in the Nigerian context, "fuel subsidy" refers to selling premium motor spirit for less than the cost of imports. Oil subsidies could be defined as the money the government pays as the differential between the international price of petroleum products and the local price in Nigeria.

Fuel Subsidy Removal and its Challenges in Nigeria

Nigerians have been aware of the nature of fuel subsidies in their country since the regime of military administrations. According to Eyiuche (2012), the federal government decided to pay a portion of the total cost of fuel during the military era because it believed that the cost of production and transportation would be too high for the impoverished Nigerian masses to bear on their own due to the rise in fuel prices. This allowed the product to be made available and affordable. From March 31, 1973, to March 31, 1986, when Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, the previous Head of State of Nigeria, raised the price of petroleum at the fuel pump from \$20,000 to \$39.5k, or a 97.5% rise, the military's objective to subsidize gasoline goods was really implemented (Taiwo, 2023).

According to sources, the situation got worse after democracy was established when Chief Olusegun Obasanjo raised fuel prices again on June 1st, 2000, from 20 to 30 naira (a 50% increase). Over time, the military government's goal of introducing fuel subsidies was progressively undermined.

With the removal of fuel subsidies, more businesses, including internal and external ones, face a direct impact on transportation costs. Higher fuel prices result in increased expenses for transporting goods and materials, directly affecting profit margins and pricing strategies (CL).

Nigeria operates a subsidy regime for gasoline (i.e., Premium Motor Spirit, or PMS) and household kerosene (HHK). The subsidy on gasoline represents the difference between the market price (called the expected open market price [EOMP]) and the government-approved retail price for PMS, which

is paid to marketers (CPPA, 2012). The EOMP is normally calculated as the sum of landing costs (all costs incurred up until product purchase, including production in foreign refineries, shipping, and port charges), the cost of distribution in Nigeria, and the various actors' profit margins, plus taxes. However, since taxes on imported refined petroleum products are not charged by the government, the current EOMPs do not capture any tax component (Coady et al., 2017).

The removal of fuel subsidies in Nigeria presents a challenging environment for businesses. The impact on operating costs, supply chains, and consumer demand poses significant hurdles for businesses to overcome. However, with strategic government interventions, investment in alternative energy, and improved infrastructure, business owners can adapt and thrive in the evolving economic landscape (Okechukwu, 2023).

In spite of the enormous resources gotten from oil over the years, oil-producing areas in particular and Nigerians in general have nothing concrete to show for them. Rather, the goose that lays the golden eggs is allowed to die slowly. These developments throw up very germane questions. Who and what are the forces behind the removal of fuel subsidies? Who benefits from such exercise? How can the government sustain its authority and legitimacy to regulate the industry without recourse to force? We shall, at this juncture, address these questions.

Fuel subsidies have historically been implemented to stabilize fuel prices, control inflation, and ease the financial burden on the populace. For SMEs, fuel subsidies have helped reduce operating costs, making transportation more affordable and ensuring the availability of energy at a reasonable price for production and distribution activities (PA).

The federal government claims that the fuel subsidy policy has prevented them from addressing issues with our nation's infrastructure, including roads, electricity, agriculture, repairing refineries, and other issues. However, this policy has resulted in a number of unintended consequences and malpractices, including the smuggling of petroleum products out of the country.

The Nigerian government has periodically grappled with the issue of fuel subsidy removal due to the immense strain it places on the country's finances. In recent years, economic challenges have necessitated discussions on subsidy reduction or elimination. While the removal of subsidies can lead to fiscal relief, it also triggers a series of economic repercussions, especially for SMEs (GO).

Fuel subsidy costs have been increasing at an exponential rate. This is partially because of rising gasoline prices, which forced the government to pay more to maintain low domestic prices, and Nigeria's growing population, which led to higher fuel use. Taken together, these factors render the expense of the fuel subsidy unaffordable. As of 2011, the subsidy constituted thirty percent of the government expenditures in Nigeria, equivalent to almost 4 percent of the country's GDP and 118 percent of its capital budget (Oyedele, 2012).

“President Bola Tinubu’s decision to remove the fuel subsidy has left millions of Nigerians terrified about the knock-on effects that it will have on their daily lives. Many are concerned that they will be unable to meet the costs of education, food, and healthcare. The government is yet to suggest any ways to mitigate the impact of this decision for people on low incomes (PA).

According to Balouga's (2012) analysis of the political economy of the gasoline subsidy reduction, the typical Nigerian for whom the subsidy was intended has not felt a substantial impact from the fuel subsidies.

Nigeria spent about 10 trillion Naira on petroleum subsidies between 2006 and 2018. It spent N5.82 trillion in 2021–2022, with N3.36 trillion being proposed for the first six months of 2023. These figures indicate a significant drain on the government’s finances, impeding its ability to invest in crucial sectors that could bolster economic growth and people’s well-being (EE).

Nigeria spent over N11 trillion on rehabilitating the refineries from 2010 to date. The three moribund refineries have become burdensome for the government, prompting the need for their privatization. Selling them will save the country from wasting its lean resources on the ‘bottomless pit’ of unproductive maintenance (EE).

Many people looked at Nigeria's fuel subsidy elimination as a political and economic imperative. Based on his research, he came to the conclusion that the country could see significant development advantages if the subsidy money were used properly. Additionally, it will provide Nigeria with the room it needs to eventually expand the capacity of its refineries, which will raise its potential income from the oil industry and lead to the creation of jobs (Adagunodo, 2013).

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A major effect of the subsidy removal is the increased transportation costs due to the high fuel prices, which directly impact agricultural production. Agricultural

inputs and production require energy to be transported to farmers and to power the machinery for food production (MC).

The underutilization of Nigeria's refineries not only impedes the country's economic potential but also hinders job opportunities and local value creation. Privatization creates an avenue for Nigeria to finally build refinery capacity and thereby increase its potential revenue from the oil sector. Moreover, some refineries already possess licenses. None of them is willing to commence operations under the subsidy-regulated fuel pricing. They feel secure when they can sell at the market rate, recover their investments, and make reasonable profits. Subsidy removal presents an attractive opportunity for investors in the oil and gas sector (EE).

But the goal of these funds was to improve maternal and child health care, provide mass transit, offer zero-interest loans to start transportation businesses, provide vocational training centers across the nation's states and the federal capital territory, build road infrastructure, accelerate economic transformation by funding vital infrastructure projects, offer internships to the hordes of Nigerian graduates who haven't found jobs yet, and lessen the effects of petroleum withdrawal on the populace, but no amount of positive results was recorded.

Fuel subsidies were riddled with corruption, manipulation, and mismanagement. The N3.92 trillion allocated for petrol subsidies between January 2020 and June 2022 surpasses the combined federal budgets for healthcare, education, and defense throughout the 30-month period.

Role of Brotherhood in alleviating the Challenges of Fuel Subsidy among Nigerians

Brotherhood is identical with Islamic teachings; it is a force for good, a source of peace and justice for everyone, and it provides stability in a quarrelsome world. Because of the spirit of brotherhood, Muslims are not allowed to kill themselves, to kill others with no cause, or to kill women and children of their enemies, even in war. A Muslim is not really a believer if he eats his fill while ignoring the plight of a hungry neighbor.

Following the Islamic teachings of unity and brotherhood always brings many benefits and eases numerous challenges and difficulties for the vulnerable, especially in this critical situation of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria. Among the benefits are:

1. **Solidarity and Cooperation:** When true brotherhood is established among Ummah, it leads to the actualization of solidarity and cooperation. Islamic teachings promote solidarity and cooperation among individuals as true brothers and encourage them to work together as brothers for the greater good.

In the context of subsidy removal, Muslims can come together as a community to support each other during the transition period. This can include providing financial assistance to those who are most affected by the removal of subsidies, sharing resources, and providing help to those in need (GO).

2. **Revival of Islamic charity practices:** Islamic charity practice refers to giving a portion of one's wealth to those in need for the strengthening and actualization of the spirit of Islamic brotherhood. This Islamic charity fund can be utilized to help alleviate the financial burden on Nigerians affected by subsidy removal.

Wealthier Muslims can contribute from their wealth to establish a collective pool that can be utilized to provide monetary assistance, food, and other basic necessities to those impacted by the removal of subsidies (RS).

Islamic charity institutions can play a significant role in lessening the hardships faced by vulnerable individuals and communities during the era of subsidy removal in Nigeria.

3. **Volunteerism and Community Service:** The spirit of brotherhood in Islam teaches and promotes the concept of giving back to the community and engaging in selfless acts of service.

Through volunteerism and community service activities, Muslims can provide support to affected individuals and communities. This can include providing free healthcare services, organizing awareness campaigns, and offering vocational training programs to empower those affected by subsidy removal (CL).

4. **Education and Awareness:** Brotherhood in Islam teaches and emphasizes the importance of seeking knowledge and promoting education and awareness among members of society. By applying these teachings, Muslim scholars and leaders can join hands and play a crucial role in educating Nigerians about the reasons behind subsidy removal and the long-term benefits it can bring.

This education can help dispel misconceptions and create an environment of understanding and support where it is right (PA).

5. **Strengthening Mutuality:** Unity and brotherhood can strengthen the mutuality of the citizens by bringing together different groups and individuals to work towards common goals. This can create a powerful force for positive change and progress.

Actualizing mutuality, unity, and respect may help Nigerians in this critical condition to help each other, donate more of what they have to their fellows, and create synergy between rich and poor people for the betterment of society members (SU).

6. Raising Zakat, Waqf, and Sadaqah Funds: Islamic charity refers to giving a portion of one's wealth to those in need for the strengthening and actualization of the spirit of Islamic brotherhood. This Islamic practice can be utilized to help alleviate the financial burden on Nigerians affected by subsidy removal. Wealthier Muslims can contribute from their wealth to establish a collective pool that can be utilized to provide monetary assistance, food, and other basic necessities to those impacted by the removal of subsidies.

Islamic charity institutions can play a significant role in lessening the hardships faced by vulnerable individuals and communities during the era of subsidy removal in Nigeria (RS).

7. Dialogue and Consultation: Islamic teachings encourage citizens to be good and pious and to engage in dialogue and consultation when making decisions that affect the community.

In the case of fuel subsidy removal, this principle can be applied by facilitating open discussions and consultations between the government, religious leaders, and the affected population (GO).

This approach can help ensure that the concerns and suggestions of Nigerians are taken into consideration during the implementation of subsidy removal policies.

8. Social Safety Nets: Fuel subsidy removal often leads to increased prices of basic goods and services, which can have a disproportionate impact on the poor and marginalized.

The spirit of brotherhood can be utilized to create and strengthen social safety nets that provide financial support to those struggling to meet their basic needs (PA).

These safety nets can include cash transfer programs, healthcare support, and scholarships for education, enabling vulnerable individuals to cope with the financial burden caused by fuel subsidy removal.

Economic Empowerment: Islamic brotherhood can be utilized to promote economic empowerment among the vulnerable groups affected by fuel subsidy removal through the provision of interest-free loans, training programs, and access to resources.

All these kinds of empowerments can support entrepreneurs and small business initiators in the affected communities to start their businesses and would enable individuals to generate income, become self-reliant, and improve their financial well-being (EE).

9. Skills Development: Islamic brotherhood can play a vital role in improving access to education and skills development for those affected by fuel subsidy removal through appeal funds to establish schools, vocational training centers, and scholarships to enhance the capacity of individuals to secure better and more quality education and employment opportunities.
10. Agricultural Development: Nigeria's economy relies heavily on agriculture, and fuel subsidy removal can significantly affect farmers and rural communities and drastically paralyze their economic wellbeing.

The practice of Islamic brotherhood can help in supporting agricultural development, mostly in rural areas, by investing in farming equipment, irrigation systems, agricultural research, and innovations (CL).

This would enhance the productivity and sustainability of the agricultural sector, benefiting farmers and rural communities who are susceptible to the adverse effects of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria.

1. Strengthening Governance: The effective practice of Islamic brotherhood is crucial to promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance in society. This can be achieved by involving reputable scholars, experts, and community representatives in decision-making processes to ensure the credibility and effectiveness of compliance with Islamic teachings on brotherhood.
2. Fighting Corruption: In Islam, corruption is evil and often considered a major impediment to economic and social development. It is a particularly important problem in Nigeria, where it prevents the efficient provision of public services, leading to higher levels of socio-economic inequality (Ogbonna and Kalu, 2012; Dreher et al., 2007; Okonjo-Iweala and Osafo-Kwaako, 2007; Bashir, 2013; Akov, 2015).

Perceptions of corruption may therefore have an important influence over support for subsidy reform since people may be willing to accept subsidy reforms if they believe that the funds saved will be used for the public good but opposed to reform if they believe that the funds will be subject to corruption. By applying the teachings of Islam toward brotherhood and believing that Nigerians are brothers of each other, born together, living together, and working together

as patriots' citizens, this can help in eliminating the vices of corruption in the country.

Nigeria, as a developing country, has long grappled with the complexities of fuel subsidy policies. Fuel subsidies have been implemented to alleviate the burden of rising fuel prices on citizens and businesses in order to transform the Nigerian economy. However, the removal of fuel subsidies has been a contentious issue, often accompanied by socio-economic consequences. Corruption has served as one of the key issues in the entire reform process (SU).

By applying Islamic teachings on brotherhood, Nigerians can come together as a united community to address the challenges posed by fuel subsidy removal. This approach will not only ease the immediate hardships but also foster a sense of unity and understanding among different sections of Nigerian society.

The bond of brotherhood in Islam is much stronger than the bonds of blood relationships and worldly interests and, therefore, comes before them in preference. Whoever loves someone for the sake of Allah will love him in a manner that suits His Majesty.

CONCLUSION

The importance of brotherhood in Islam cannot be overemphasized; many Islamic sources confirm that Muslims are a single, united body, each part responsible for the other. Accordingly, if one of the parts is injured or hurt, then the rest of the body immediately feels that pain and is certainly uncomfortable with the situation until it is rectified without delay. The brotherhood of Muslims is a very deep and wide concept that guarantees the safety and well-being of society at large. Islam being a complete way of life is primarily for society; it promotes a healthy and well-disciplined lifestyle in every sense of the word. There is a large literature on the effect of social and personal norms as well as the influence of societal norms, directly or indirectly, on a clear understanding of this reform of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria. There is also an impact of religion and religiosity on the issue. Any societal or personal challenge can be dealt with with Islamic teachings, and the application of true brotherhood between citizens would help them to settle disputes, individual and collective challenges. There is some evidence that citizens from resource-rich countries believe that resource wealth should be distributed among the population by lowering the prices of the resources and commodities on the basis of sympathy and brotherhood, and the same argument has been made in the Nigerian context, especially in this critical

situation of fuel subsidy removal. Finally, it is possible that attitudes towards subsidy reform are influenced by the experience of previous subsidy reforms. Therefore, as a matter of necessity, the Islamic teachings of brotherhood will be considered an appropriate tool to be used to lessen the hardship Nigerians are experiencing as a result of the current regime of fuel subsidy removal and economic reforms.

The perceptions of Nigerians regarding fuel subsidies are quietly different; this makes the rise of different ideas and factors that make people more or less likely to support the reform. The economic variables (related to the price and availability of fuel), along with better service delivery by the government, are associated with greater support for reform, while negative views of corruption and a lack of capacity in the government are associated with opposition to reform.

Our results provide some pointers for policymakers designing reforms with regard to economic, political, and social status in Nigeria. Policy should strengthen the voice of those who have a reason to support reform, such as those experiencing high prices or shortages, as well as the role of Islamic teachings of brotherhood, justice, and trust as reliable tools for combating the challenges faced by vulnerable Nigerians. At the same time, wider measures to build trust in government and strengthen the social contract, such as actions to tackle corruption and improve the delivery of services, are also likely to help make subsidy reforms more feasible. In summary, perhaps it is not surprising that people are more likely to support the reform of fuel subsidies when the government shows that it can be trusted to deliver fuel and other services in a clean and competent way, as citizens and leaders in the country are all brothers.

Future Research

As noted above, there is still little rigorous research on the drivers of public opinion about fuel subsidy reform in Nigeria. Future research could develop in two ways. First, to our knowledge, this is the first rigorous assessment of Islamic teachings on brotherhood as the determinant of supporting vulnerable to ease their hardships due to fuel subsidy reform in Nigeria; it would be useful to replicate this work in other countries facing significant subsidies in sub-Saharan Africa and dozens of countries in other regions. Second, it would be interesting to delve into the reasons behind some of our results. For example, why and how do religious norms influence support for fuel subsidy reform in other countries?

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