



ROLE OF ZAKAT IN REDUCING POVERTY  
IN SARAWAK

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## Abstract

Zakat caters for Muslim welfare, especially the poor and the needy. Zakat contributions are the obligations of Muslims. Zakat institutions are given the responsibilities to collect and distribute zakat. In Sarawak, Tabung Baitulmal Sarawak (TBS) acts as a representative of the State Islamic Council, which is responsible for charity to collect, distribute and manage zakat funds and other assets in addition to creating awareness in the Muslim community about zakat obligations. Zakat distributions by TBS have been the lowest by Malaysian states. However, this study finds that TBS's zakat distributions have been increasing, at least from the period, 2001-2012. This distribution represented 60 per cent of zakat collections for the period of review. Of this distribution, about 20 per cent was distributed to poor beneficiaries (asnaf fakir and miskin), while asnaf fisabillah got about 40 per cent. The case study of TBS Sri Aman Branch indicated that zakat was provided for the adequacy of the needy beneficiaries in line with Had Al-Kifayah. The amil were only active in distributing zakat to poor beneficiaries during the month of Ramadhan. Besides mobilising the amil to be active during non-Ramadhan months to improve services to the poor, TBS can also be linked to the District Office to identify the poor. It is recommended that there should be further studies on the potentials of TBS's Pembangunan Modal Insan programme to assist the poor get income from businesses based on their expertise as an alternative income source to zakat. It is also recommended that there should be household surveys on the poor to get feedback on the zakat distributions.

**Keywords:** Zakat, Poverty, Tabung Baitulmal Sarawak, Had Al-Kifayah (determinants of asnaf)