

**Religious Voluntarily Activities Pre-Renaissance Era
An Applied Research in Oman**

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الملخص.

يعد التطوع مفهوماً أساسياً في الإسلام. وتتنظر الشريعة الإسلامية إلى التطوع كمفهوم محوري في حياة الإنسان المسلم. وبمعنى آخر، فإن القرآن الكريم وسنة رسول الله محمد (صلي الله عليه وسلم) تأمر المسلمين بأداء الأعمال التطوعية في حياتهم اليومية سواء كانوا أفراداً أو جماعات أو مجتمعات. ويسعى البحث الراهن إلى وصف الأنشطة التطوعية الدينية ودورها في حياة المجتمع العماني في فترة ما قبل عصر النهضة (وذلك قبل عام ١٩٧٠)، حيث من المعروف أن المجتمع العماني في هذه الفترة كان في مرحلة ما قبل النمو والانطلاق. واعتماداً على المنهج الوصفي، وباستخدام عينة تم اختيارها بأسلوب التراكم التدريجي (كرة الجليد)، تم إجراء مقابلات متعمقة لخمسين من كبار السن ممن شاركوا في الأعمال التطوعية. وقد ركزت أداة جمع البيانات على جمع بيانات ذات طبيعة كيفية عن الأعمال التطوعية التي كانت تمارس قبل ١٩٧٠. وقد نجح البحث في تقديم نتائج تاريخية قيمة عن الأعمال التطوعية في هذه الفترة.

ومن بين أهم النتائج التي توصل إليها البحث:

- ١- مكنت نتائج البحث الراهن من توصيف الكثير من الأنشطة التطوعية الدينية التي كانت تمارس قبل عام ١٩٧٠ (ما قبل عصر النهضة)، والتي يتعرض بعض منها للاندثار الآن.
 - ٢- مكنت النتائج من توصيف الأعمال التطوعية الفردية والأسرية والجماعية والقبلية والتي كانت تعد جزءاً مهماً من التراث الثقافي للمجتمع العماني قبل عام ١٩٧٠.
 - ٣- أمكن توضيح دور الأنشطة التطوعية الدينية في إشباع بعض الاحتياجات الإنسانية للمجتمع العماني فيما قبل عام ١٩٧٠.
 - ٤- كما مكنت النتائج من تقديم قاعدة بيانات عن الأنشطة التطوعية الدينية التي كانت تمارس قبل عصر النهضة المباركة في عمان، والتي يمكن استخدامها في عقد المقارنات بالأعمال التطوعية التي تمارس في الوقت الراهن.
- وأخيراً، توصل البحث إلى عدة توصيات أهمها: تشجيع الوعي الديني عن التطوع في الإسلام والذي يعد أقوى الدوافع لإشباع الاحتياجات الوجدانية والمادية والروحية للمجتمع.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

التطوع، الأنشطة التطوعية الدينية، عصر النهضة في عمان

Abstract

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Volunteerism is an essential concept in Islam for the Islamic law (Sharia) considers it as a core concept in Muslims' life. In other words, the Holy Quran, and the heritage (Sunnah) of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) have been ordering Muslims to perform voluntary works as individuals, groups, and communities in their daily life. The current research aimed to describe the religiously-based voluntary activities and their role in the life of Omani people before Pre-Renaissance era (before 1970); it is well known that the Omani Society was in a pre-development stage at that time.

Based on a descriptive methodology, a snowball sample consisted of 50 elderly people (who participated in voluntary work) were interviewed. The data collection tool focused on collecting qualitative data about voluntary activities before 1970. The research introduced a valuable historical data about the voluntary works at that time.

Among the important findings of the current research:

- 1- Results of the current research described many religiously-based voluntary activities before 1970 (which we call it Pre-Renaissance era in Oman). Unfortunately, some of these activities are going to disappear.
- 2- The results documented a part of religiously-based voluntary activities of individual, family, group, and tribes which are a part of the Omani culture before 1970.
- 3- Also, the results clarified the role of religiously-based voluntary activities to meet some of human needs in the Omani Society before 1970.
- 4- The results also represent a database of religiously-based voluntary activities before the Renaissance in Oman, which can be compared to voluntary activities at the present time.

Finally, one of the most important recommendations of the current research is to encourage religious awareness about volunteerism in Islam as it is considered the strongest motivation to meet emotional, physical, and spiritual needs.

Key Words:

Volunteerism, religious-based voluntary activities, Pre-Renaissance era.

First: Research problem:

Volunteerism and social work profession have common historical roots, a shared philosophical and ethical background and sphere of activity. They are also heavily influenced by the political and cultural context in which they are developing. Contemporary values of social work and volunteerism are based on principles of democracy and human rights and their aim is to promote a socially cohesive and just society (Gregorova; Stachon, 2015).

Historically, volunteers have been very important resources to delivery of social services. Before the development of the social work profession, most social services were delivered by volunteers. In fact, the early social workers were volunteers. Moreover, voluntary efforts should be enhanced to fill service gaps (Johnson; Yanka, 2007: 377). In the new millennium, the relation between volunteerism and social work became more strong and social workers often seek out, organize, and oversee volunteers performing such functions in many fields of social work practice (Kirst–Ashman, 2010: 369). Therefore, the history of volunteerism is an important issue for the social work profession.

On the other hand, volunteering is an essential concept in Islam for the Islamic law (Sharia) considers volunteering as a core concept in Muslims' life. In other words, the Holy Quran, and the heritage (Sunnah) of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) have been ordering Muslims to perform voluntary works as individuals, groups, and communities in their daily life.

Arab societies, including the Omani community, practiced various forms of volunteering: with money, thought, and effort, for several centuries based on Islamic concepts and directives. So, Muslims, as individuals, groups, and community institutions distributed handout, provided treatment services to patients, built schools, hospitals, charitable and humanitarian projects, paved roads, and dug wells.

Muslims have documented these activities for years. Social work as a profession is related to voluntary work in many ways. The profession arose and developed in the context of a social welfare system that has transformed from a system largely based on volunteering and charity to a developed system largely based on the intervention of the state and governments in satisfying the needs of citizens and facing the problems of society. The profession of social work had a great role in training volunteers and developing voluntary work. Social workers are still working in voluntary institutions in various areas of social welfare.

After His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed assumed power in 1970 and the beginning of the Renaissance in Oman, voluntary work in the Sultanate received systematic and growing support. This led to a paradigm shift and a significant development in the volume and quality of voluntary work during the past fifty years. This support included encouraging the establishment of voluntary teams and institutions, supporting these institutions technically, financially and morally, promoting voluntary work in various fields, issuing legislations regulating these activities, establishing prizes for the best voluntary work in the Sultanate, providing material and in-kind support to volunteers, and documenting voluntary efforts for individuals, institutions and societies.

There are dozens of publications, research and studies that documented .voluntary projects in the Omani Renaissance . On the other hand, volunteering prior to 1970 has not received adequate attention yet. A review of the literature revealed that there was only one study that dealt with volunteering in Omani society during this period. The present study indicates that volunteering, before 1970, covered a wide range of activities and human needs, and was carried out under an underdeveloped administrative and pastoral system that relies mainly on voluntary community efforts and motivated by religious commitment. Given that, the main issue of the current research is to explore religious voluntary work in Omani society in this important period in the history of Omani society, documenting it in a manner that preserves it from loss and extinction, to clarify the relationship between voluntary activities that were based on religious motives and to satisfy the needs of members of the Omani society before 1970.

Second: Justifications and Significance:

- 1- Volunteerism in general and religiously-based volunteering in particular in the literary heritage in Oman did not receive adequate attention in the Pre-Renaissance era (before 1970), so there is no documentation of these voluntary activities and actions.
- 2- The current research contributes to identifying and describing religious voluntary activities, and providing the Omani and Arab Libraries with a scientific material on those activities that were prevalent in an important stage in the history of Omani society. It is a stage that has not been documented by any research before.
- 3- The religious motive is considered one of the most important motives for volunteering, especially if there is no organized administrative body in the society. The current research seeks to

identify the most important voluntary activities based on religious motives before the 1970s, a period in which Omani society was characterized as a traditional society, while the administrative system of the state had not yet developed as it currently exists.

- 4- The current research provides empirical data on the features of volunteerism in Omani society in the pre-1970 era.

Third: Questions of the Rsearch :

The current research aims to answer the following main question: "What is the role of religiously-based voluntary activities in the life of Omani people before 1970?" Moreover, it seeks to answer the following sub-questions:

- 1- What are the forms of religiously-based voluntary activities related to Pillars of Islam before 1970 in Oman?
- 2- What are the forms of religiously-based voluntary activities related to local communities before 1970 in Oman?
- 3- What are the forms of religiously-based voluntary activities related to social solidarity among neighbors before 1970 in Oman?
- 4- What is the role of religious voluntary activities in satisfying the needs of community members before 1970 in the Sultanate of Oman?

:Fourth: Concepts

1- Volunteerism:

Reviewing the literature revealed that there is no common definition of volunteerism. However, Webster Dictionary defines it as follows: "the act or practice of doing voluntary work in community service" (Webster, 2020). Cambridge dictionary defines volunteerism as "the practice of doing work for

good causes, without being paid for it" (Cambridge Dictionary: In addition, Oxford Dictionary defines the concept as "the 2020). practice of working as a volunteer, especially in community service or the practice of using or relying on volunteers rather than paid workers" (Oxford, 2020). So, volunteerism denotes the mobilization and use of unpaid individuals and groups to provide human services outside the auspices of government agencies. The term also pertains to the ideologies of self-help groups, mutual aids groups, self-help organizations and philanthropy (Barker, 2003).

On the other hand, volunteerism in the Arabic literature refers to the social movement aimed to affirm the values of cooperation among human beings. It reflects the positive side of social relationships and the dedication of giving attitudes for the sake of the happiness of others (Abbas, 2013: 16-17). Moreover, Al-Khateeb stated that volunteerism is the work that individual undertakes to achieve specific social goals without targeting wage, making financial profit, or achieving personal benefit (Al-Nabolsi, 2010: 86).

2- Pre-Renaissance Era in Oman

The term "Renaissance" in Oman is a local term, also known in Gulf societies. This era dates back to 1970 (50 years so far), when His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed took power in Oman. This period has been called the Renaissance due to the great positive social, economic and political transformations. The Omani society during this period shifted from a traditional socially and

economically backward society to a developing and developed society (Al-Mosalami, et al., 2011: 66-68).

3- Religiously-based voluntarily activities:

Volunteering is a global phenomenon that human societies have known both during ancient and modern times, as volunteerism arose with the emergence of human societies. The religious motivation is one of the strongest of the multiple motives volunteering has, as illustrated by the literature on volunteering (Al-Nabolsi, 2010: 41-42; Abbas, 2012: 23; Cnaan, et al., 2016: 473). The Divine messages during various eras have called for volunteering and considered it a virtue. Volunteering simply indicates the optional assistance shown by an individual or a group to those in need or who are unable to satisfy one need or reach a specific goal without material or moral support. Then, what are the religiously-based voluntary activities that are linked to Islam as the religion of the majority of more than 86% of the population of Omani society (Middle East: Oman, 2018). Volunteering in Islam has a special meaning that differs from the concept of volunteering in contemporary heritage. Namely, obligation or compulsion does not apply to volunteering in the contemporary heritage, while volunteering in Islam is a duty of every Muslim, both men and women. In some cases, it may be considered as an obligatory collective duty. A collective duty is the work that a society as a whole must volunteer for. There are dozens of Qur'anic verses that organize voluntary work from an Islamic perspective. There are also dozens of the Prophetic that encourage voluntary work (Al-Nabolsi, 2010: 87). Hadiths

In the light of the texts included in the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, Muslim scholars have classified voluntary work into multiple categories. While some classifications did not put a precise frame of the voluntary work to include all the charitable works that the individual can offer to his/her community (Abbas, 2013: 27), some of them are restricted to specific fields or levels. One of these classifications categorizes volunteering from the Islamic perspective into six areas: the fields of worship, the scientific fields such as the establishment of libraries, schools, universities and other scientific institutions that are not intended for financial profit, financial fields, craft fields through volunteering in what the volunteer masters of useful crafts, the administrative fields of charitable foundations and the like, and intellectual fields through providing pertinent opinions, valuable advice, and pioneering plans (Islam web, 2005).

In light of the mentioned classifications, the procedural definition of religious voluntary work can be established as follows:

- 1- Voluntary work is part of every Muslim's faith
- 2- Voluntary work is obligatory for every Muslim, both men and woman without distinction.
- 3- Voluntary work is performed in the sake of God
- 4- Voluntary work includes:
 - A) Voluntary acts related to worship, such as Prayer, Zakah, Fasting, and Hajj,
 - B) They also include voluntary work related to dealings with others, especially relatives and neighbors,

- C) As well as dealings with members of society, including social solidarity.

Fifth: Methodology:

The current research is an exploratory study that seeks to explore the reality of religious voluntary activities before 1970; it adopts the type of qualitative method. Hammarberg, et al., stated that qualitative methodology is used to answer questions about experience, meaning and perspective, most often from the standpoint of the participant. These data are usually not amenable to counting or measuring. Qualitative research techniques include ‘small–group discussions’, ‘semi–structured interviews’ with key informants, ‘in–depth interviews’ to understand a condition, experience, or event from a personal perspective, and ‘analysis of texts and documents’ (Hammarberg, Kirkman, de Lacey, 2016: 498).

The research was applied on a snowball sample consisted of 50 key respondents of elderly people (more than 65 years old) who participated in voluntary work before 1970. The sample was selected from six districts (*Welaias*), belongs to: urban, rural, and coast areas. The selected districts represent 10% of the total districts of Sultanate of Oman. Based on semi–structured interviews, data were collected from the sample. In addition to personal information, key respondents were asked to answer 19 questions focused on religious voluntary work, and then the collected data were qualitatively analyzed.

Sixth: Review of the literature:

Voluntary work is typically defined as any work undertaken without coercion for an organization, either in an unpaid capacity or for a token payment. Volunteering is important in developing as well as industrial

societies. In most countries, volunteer workers contribute to private non-profit organizations which supply various social services to their community, such as child and elderly welfare, education and medical related services. Sometimes emergency services, such as sea rescue and fire services are also organized on a volunteer basis. Furthermore, in many developing countries, particularly in rural areas, household members often provide work on a volunteer basis for community development, such as filling ditches, cleaning tanks and flood prevention (Hakim, 2004: 42).

Voluntary work is a global phenomenon practiced by individuals, groups, and institutions in contemporary societies. Societies seek, through voluntary work, to develop the values of cooperation, citizenship and participation, enhance the loyalty of citizens, increase the workforce in society, and satisfy some of the community's needs (Al-Nabolsi, 2010: 89). On the other hand, volunteering develops the capabilities of community members and their sense of responsibility at the individual, collective and societal levels, and allows the community to discover its potential energies, and employ these energies to serve the community, as well as enabling civil organizations alongside government institutions to contribute to the society's building and development (Hamza, 2011: 32-33). Hakim indicates that volunteering is a productive activity and represents an economic force added to government resources, but it is usually not considered when conducting economic studies and research (Hakim, 2016: 43).

On the other hand, the literature shows that ancient civilizations such as the Pharaonic, Greek and Roman civilizations were familiar to various types of voluntary work. Even more, volunteering was one of the pillars of Divine messages: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Hamza,

0151: 17–18). Hakim states that volunteering has been associated with religion throughout history, and that Divine messages have been encouraging voluntary activities such as donations, gifts, volunteer work, and the establishment of various charitable organizations (Hakim, 2004: 44).

In Europe, the private voluntary sector began to grow in the 1700s, in response to the public disgrace surrounding the living conditions in the alms–houses, where children lived with adults in the same quarters. Unfortunately, the voluntary sector continues to develop till the new millennium to be an important source to deliver social services activities in local, state, and national level (Ambrosino; Ambrosino; and Heffernan, 2008: 153–154).

However, Volunteerism in Islam seems to have a long history and a deeper meaning in many ways. From an Islamic perspective, volunteering is every physical, intellectual, mental, or heart work that a person can voluntarily undertake without obligation, neither from the legislator nor from anyone else. For example, volunteering to write contracts for those who cannot, remove the harm from the road, help the neighbor, and participate in various social events such as weddings and others (Al–Qadi, 2020). Contrary to the common notion of volunteering, a volunteer in Islam wishes to get rewarded for his/her voluntary work, but by Allah the Almighty not by humans, and it includes many unusual works within the common concept of volunteering in social literatures (Al–Nabolsi, 2010).

From an Islamic perspective, volunteering is one of the aims and purposes of Sharia. Namely, Islam urges all the society members to convert into volunteers. Islam considers volunteerism an individual

commitment that helps the well-being of society and an approach to Muslim life (Abbasm, 2013: 25).

Islamic law (Sharia) considers volunteerism as a life style and central part of Muslims' life. The Holy Qur'an and the heritage (Sunnah) of Prophet Mohammad order Muslims to perform voluntarily works as individuals, groups, and communities in their daily life. The Holy Quran includes dozens of verses that consider voluntary work as obligation, preferred activities, and good deeds that deserve retribution in earthly life and the hereafter. For example, the Holy Quran encourages Muslims to practice voluntary works as the following verse requests:

"وتعاونوا على البر والتقوى ولا تعاونوا على الإثم والعدوان" (المائدة: ٢).

Translation of the verse: **“Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression. And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Severe in punishment” (Verse 2, Surah 5. Al-Ma’ida).** Ibn Katheer, a pre-eminent interpreter of the Holy Qur'an, clarifies that the verse orders Muslims to co-operate with each other to perform all kinds of good deeds including voluntary activities (Ibn-Katheer, 2006, Vol. 2, p 10).

"يا أيها الذين آمنوا اركعوا واسجدوا واعبدوا ربكم وافعلوا الخير لعلكم تفلحون" (الحج: ٧٧).

Translation of the verse: **“O you who have believed! Bow down, and prostrate yourselves, and worship your Lord and do good that you may be successful (Verse 77, Surah 22, Al-Hajj).** Ibn Katheer demonstrates that the verse orders the believers to worship Allah and perform all kinds of good deeds (Ibn-Katheer, 2006, Vol. 3, p 346).

On the other hand, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) encourages every Muslim to consider volunteerism to be a part of his/her daily behavior. Al-Bukhari and Muslim, two of the pre-eminent Hadiths' narrators, report that the Prophet says:

"Iman has seventy odd or sixty odd branches. The uppermost of all these is the Testimony of Faith: 'La ilaha illallah' (there is no true god except Allah) while the least of them is the removal of harmful object from the road. And shyness is a branch of Iman" (Al-Bukhari, 2002: 13). This hadith makes volunteering a part of the Muslim's faith.

"Every day, the Muslim has to do a charity work as much as the number of the joints of the body; he may intervene between two struggled persons, help a man to ride his horse or to carry his luggage, advise a person, walk to the mosque for pray, or to carry rubbish away of the road; all of those works are charity" (Al-Islam web, 2006). These Hadiths are crystal clear encouraging Muslims to involve in voluntary works on a daily basis.

Also Prophet Muhammad says "The most beloved people to Allah are those who are most beneficial to people. The most beloved deed to Allah is to make a Muslim happy, or to remove one of his troubles, or to forgive his debt, or to feed his hunger. That I walk with a brother regarding a need is more beloved to me than that I seclude myself in this mosque in Medina for a month. Whoever swallows his anger, then Allah will conceal his faults. Whoever suppresses his rage, even though he could fulfill his anger if he wished, then Allah will secure his heart on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever walks with his brother regarding a need until he secures it for him, then Allah Almighty will make his footing firm across the bridge on the day when the footings are shaken."

The above Hadith indicates that voluntary work may sometimes be the most beloved of works to Allah. Al-Qadi confirms that Islamic law considers some voluntary works to be better than other additional duties such as supererogatory prayers (*Nawafil*) for example, because volunteering provides a transitive benefit to others while supererogatory prayers only benefit the one who does it. He affirms that there is a basic rule in Islamic law: "Transitive benefit is of priority than intransitive benefit" (Al-Qadi, 2020).

As per the foregoing brief presentation, volunteering can be regarded as follows:

1. It is a part of the Muslim's belief in Allah and the Day of Resurrection.
2. It is a way of life for every Muslim to be practiced it in his/her daily life.
3. In Islam, volunteering is based on a unique philosophy which is based on the dissemination of charitable works
4. It includes activities related to acts of worship, interactions with others and personal behavior.
5. It graduates from being a recommended act to the level of the obligation duties to be performed sometimes.
6. All Muslims seek reward for their voluntary work, but from the Creator not from the people.

From an Islamic perspective, forms of voluntary work can be summarized as follows:

1. Volunteering with money: Examples include donating to the needy and lending.
2. Volunteering with physical work;

3. Volunteering with work that depends on the power of the volunteer; as using his/her personal relationships to help those in need.
4. Volunteering with time: as if the volunteer provides an hour every day, or one day per week ... and so on.
5. Volunteering with thought: such as providing opinion and advice.

What are the fruits of volunteering? (Islamweb, 2005):

1. Earning reward and retribution in the earthly life and the hereafter.
2. Solving problems, especially in times of crises.
3. Achieving familiarization and companionship between people, and treating hostile or pessimistic outlook towards others and life.
4. Achieving social solidarity and cooperation among members of society.
5. Increasing the human ability to interact and communicate with others.
6. Refining the personality, eliminating the mentality of scarcity and converting it into a mentality of abundance and greater profit, in accordance with the noble Qur'anic verse (And whosoever is saved from his own greed, then they are the successful ones).
7. Volunteering allows people to learn new skills or improve their skills.

Seventh: The social context of voluntary works in Oman before 1970:

Omanis name the last 50 years of Oman's history (1970 – 2020) as the "Renaissance". That is because Omani society, prior to 1970, was a traditional society as the majority of Arab societies. The presentation of some social and economic indicators may be useful in visualizing the socio-economic context of Omani society before 1970. According to statistical indicators, the population in 1970 was about 624,000, and the GDP reached USD 110 million, as agriculture constitutes about 34% of the GDP, while other traditional activities as raising livestock, fishing and trade represent the rest of the production (Al-Rahbi, 2012: 44). Al-Hajry indicates that the production of the non-oil sectors amounted to 33 million Omani riyals (about 85 million dollars) in 1970, and reached to 11,732 million riyals in 2008, indicating that production has doubled about 355 times in less than a Two quarters of .)a year (Al-Hajri, 2012: 539

Health services in their modern form were not available in the community, as there were only two hospitals in Muscat, the capital, one public and the other private, in addition to 10 units of outpatient clinics, each managed by one doctor. The members of society relied mainly on folk remedies that were practiced in some areas. In terms of educational services, there were only three government primary schools gathering 909 students and only 30 teachers. Also, education was based on the teaching of the Holy Qur'an, reading and writing in schools of the Qur'an, where education was carried out using wood panels. After mastering reading, the student used to engage in the field of work and mix with adults as to acquire practical experiences in various crafts and .industries (Al-Khadori, 2004: 305–307)

There is unanimity among those working in social sciences that the Omani society was living in extreme poverty and isolation from the world before 1970, as the standards of living were socially and economically low compared to what society achieved in the last fifty years. Al- Khadori asserts that there is no comparison between Omani society before 1970 and the society in the Renaissance era (Al-Khadori 2004: 301; Ah-Hajri 2020: 539). Consequently, volunteerism is important due to the weak role of the state in providing social services. Hence, voluntary work is expected to be of great value to society before .1970

Research Results

Voluntary works related to Sharia's compulsory duties

This part of the research deals with the most important results reached by interviewing the sample of the elderly. These results included five axes as follows:

The first axis: Voluntary work related to the Islamic Five Pillars

First: Voluntary work related to the Duty of Prayer (*Salah*):

1- Building, construction and maintenance of mosques:

The construction of mosques is one of the common voluntary activities carried out by members of society, families, and tribes in all districts from which data were collected. This shows the keenness of tribesmen, villages, and districts to build in Allah's houses on earth and to perform prayer as well as to be connected to religion.

Voluntary work to build mosques included: volunteering with money, donating the land on which the mosque is sometimes built, transporting building materials, and excavation, design, and construction works. Respondent No. 5 states that the construction work was usually divided among the volunteers; some of them used to dig and lay the foundations, others used to provide building materials, and others used to provide the necessary water for the building, and so on. The mosques were built from materials from the local environment such as palms' leaf stalks and branches, clay,

stones, etc. Mosques were mostly free of ornaments and decorations that are found in mosques now. There were also volunteers used to clean and provide the mats needed to cover the mosques' grounds, lamps for lighting, and water for ablution. Respondent No. 2 indicates that some mosques, which were established before 1970, are still present where rituals and prayers are still held today.

2- Volunteering to perform rituals and prayers in mosques:

Many respondents in all the districts in which the research was applied indicated that some volunteers were interested in conducting rituals in mosques, such as leading prayers, offering religious lessons and organizing celebrations of religious occasions. One of the most important voluntary activities in this field is that one of the religious scholars usually delivers Friday sermons and lessons at the mosque on a regular basis, as Respondent No. 47 shows that these preachers had an important role in guiding people on religious and secular matters, as well as encouraging members of society to carry out various voluntary activities that Islam encouraged. Voluntary activities in this area also included the maintenance of mosques, as some of them needed maintenance and repair after flash floods and heavy rains.

3- Organizing educational sessions in mosques:

Seminars to teach the Holy Qur'an, jurisprudence, and legal rulings, as well as periodically holding seminars related to the religious matters are among the voluntary activities that were launched from the mosques, as many respondents indicated (for example, Respondents Nos.: 1, 2, 6, 19, 34, 45). Respondent No. 2 points out: "The mosques were and still are one of the main pillars in building society before 1970, as they spread social cohesion among

citizens and worked to spread love, brotherhood, solidarity, and cohesion between the community members in alleys, neighborhoods, or villages during this period. Respondent No. 3 confirms the role of the mosque during this period as follows: "The people used to gather in mosques to discuss and solve issues of concern to the state and to collect zakat, aid and financial assistance for the poor and the needy, where every member of the state used to help as best he/she can".

4- Delivery of water to the mosques:

Many respondents indicated that there was no network for drinking water. Rather, community members depended on wells and Aflaj system to provide water for daily use. Some of the community members, both men and women, volunteered to deliver water to the mosques themselves, so that the worshipers could perform ablution.

Second: Collecting Zakat and distributing it to the beneficiaries

Zakat is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, which embodies the solidarity and cohesion of society, as it is a means of redistributing wealth and income between the rich and the poor. The researchers affirmed in all the districts in which the research was applied that it was one of the most important voluntary activities in society. Collecting Zakat was one of the tasks of the tribal sheikh, as he used to take zakat from the tribe and distribute it to the poor within and outside the tribe. Some respondents indicated that there were some volunteers who were helping the tribal sheikh to collect Zakat from the community and distribute it to those who deserve it. One of the respondents (No. 32) indicated that the collected Zakat was distributed among the categories due, according to what was decided by the Sharia in the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah. Many of the

respondents indicated that Zakat was collected from money, crops, sheep, camels, and other forms of merchandise to be traded on.

Third: Volunteering for the month of fasting

Some of the respondents indicated that the neighborhoods were organizing breakfast tables for the fasting people throughout the holy month of Ramadan. He also pointed to the large number of voluntary donations that were distributed to the poor and needy during the month. Respondent No. 9 states that the projects of breakfasts of fasting people that we know today started before 1970, and they still exist until now, and the families volunteered to send food to the mosques, and the worshipers and the needy broke their fast in the mosques from what some families volunteered before performing the Maghrib Prayer. It is linked to voluntary work during the month of Ramadan. Some volunteered to collect fast-breaking Zakat (*Zakat al-Fitr*), especially the imams of mosques, and distributed it to the poor and needy.

Fourth: Volunteering to help perform the Hajj

1- Volunteering to organize Hajj caravans:

A number of respondents (Nos. 1, 3, 17, 19, 29, 41) indicated that some volunteers who had experience in performing the Hajj pilgrimage, were organizing one or more of pilgrim caravans each year, and assisting those wishing to perform Hajj in preparing to perform this obligatory duty, explaining the rituals, and providing any kind of assistance that might be required by the person wishing to perform the Hajj.

2- Volunteering to celebrate the return of the pilgrims:

Some of the respondents mentioned, for example (Respondent No. 2) that some of the pilgrims' relatives from the tribe used to

volunteered to hold a celebration for the return of the pilgrims from the sanctified house of Allah, and slaughter the sacrifices and distribute them to relatives, neighbors, the poor and the needy.

The second axis: Community voluntary work

1- Establishing independent schools for memorizing the Qur'an:

Voluntary independent schools were established in some villages and districts (for example in the case of Al-Suwaiq, Al-Seeb, Mutrah, and Masirah) to teach the Holy Qur'an. The teachers were mostly volunteers. Respondent No. 4 states: "The Qur'anic pre-school "*Al-Kuttab*", some of which still exist today, mainly focus on religious education, the memorization of the Noble Qur'an, the Prophet's biography, and learning to read, write and count by teachers known as "*Al-Mutawa*". These schools were not limited to boys only; they were mixed (boys and girls). After a boy or girl completes the completion of the Holy Qur'an (i.e. memorizing it fully), his/her relatives hold a popular celebration on this occasion known as "*Al-Khatmah*." Respondent No. 5 indicates that the task of teaching the Holy Qur'an and memorizing it for children and those wishing to be assigned to the elderly with their experience in this field.

Respondent No. 5 mentions that the schools of teaching and memorizing the Holy Qur'an were sometimes held under the shade of a tree, while some were held in mosques. After the blessed renaissance, the process was held in a small humble building until the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs sponsored these schools and became affiliated with the government, and now are teaching the Noble Qur'an to young and women.

2- Volunteering to celebrate religious feasts

The results indicated that religious holidays were witnessing some voluntary work. Some members of the sample (for example: Respondents Nos. 1 and 34) indicated that voluntary work during the days of Eid al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha included the following:

- A. Some volunteers used to gather to prepare some meals for to the poor and needy, and this included gathering firewood and bringing in water and meat, preparing spices, and distributing those meals to relatives, neighbors and the poor.
- B. Distributing meat to the poor and needy. This was done after the Eid's prayer. Respondent No. 4 states that: "The sacrifices of the feasts were distributed in three sections, the poor receive a third of them, relatives and compassions receive a third and a third remains for the owner."
- C. Hosting the poor in the homes of the wealth. Respondent No. 2 showed that some of the tribesmen were opening their doors to the poor on religious holidays to provide food for them, as well as giving gifts and sweets, especially for children.
- D. Distribution of Eid's gifts (*Eidiyat*). Respondent No. 2 refers to one of the forms of festive celebrations as follows: "Everyone on the days of Eid is keen to help each other, whether in cash gifts or other gifts such as clothes and sweets, as well as distributing meat to each other."
- E. Distributing fast-breaking Zakat (*Zakat al-Fitr*) and slaughtering sacrifices. Respondent No. 2 confirms the aforementioned voluntary work and added that some volunteers were distributing fast-breaking Zakat (*Zakat al-Fitr*) to the poor and needy. Also after slaughtering their sacrifices on Eid al-Adha, some volunteers used to help those who are not able to slaughter their sacrifices.

They also volunteered to distribute the surplus meat to other families. Respondent No. 47 asserts that he volunteered to slaughter the sacrifices of the neighbors during the holidays, to cut them and prepare them for cooking so that the neighbor did not make any effort. He also used to do this on non-holidays.

F. Grooming the girls: One of the voluntary works mentioned by one of the respondents was that she used to hairdress the girls' hair, put henna for them, and decorate their hair with flowers and basil on holidays and occasions without being paid for it, as the village girls used to visit her for this purpose. She also indicated that she knew a woman who used to pierce the ears of young girls in order to be able to wear earrings (*Halaq*).

G. In the context of celebrating religious feasts, Respondent No. 46 clarified that the people of some regions were celebrating the Prophet's birth on a regular basis, where the people used to gather to recite the Holy Qur'an and distribute the chapters of the Qur'an between them before celebrators are welcomed with generous hospitality.

H. The rich volunteered to provide the Eid's clothes needed for poor children and orphans.

3- Giving alms to the poor and the needy:

These voluntary activities (distributing alms to the poor and needy) are a key aspect in all the districts in which the current research has been applied. This voluntary activity is related to another important activity discussed before, which is collecting zakat and distributing it to the poor and needy. The respondents in the various districts in which the research was applied indicated the spread of this aspect of religious voluntary activities in Omani society.

Respondent No. 1 asserts this fact as follows: "The affluent people of the tribe were not only satisfied with giving their zakat money to the poor, but were also giving out financial and non-financial charitable donations in the form of food, food stuff, clothes and animals to transport people and items for those who are not able. Also, some people used to donate part of their fish harvest of sardines for some poor and non-poor families without being paid, while others used to provide surplus milk from cows, sheep, and camels to some families, as well as owners of frankincense (people who extract frankincense) grant some for families where the number of who worked in the frankincense collection in the past was more than now. As results show that volunteering to give alms and financial aid was affected by the nature of the economic activity of the community or the state. Respondent No. 40 indicates that she was making many products from cow's milk (for example, "*Kami*" and "*Al-Khulasah*"), and distributes them to the poor and needy of her neighbors whenever she makes a quantity of them as well as the meat of sheep and goats once she had a number of them. The types of voluntary charity that were given by the people of society: ripe dates, dates and lemon. It seems that volunteering money to poor and needy families (through voluntary alms) have been widely practiced, as 86% of the 50 respondents asserted this fact. Respondent No. 25 explains the nature of providing this aid as follows: "Voluntary work in the past was a natural process, creating all the meanings of friendliness, cooperation, harmony and brotherhood, so the society was joining together to help the poor and the needy, and communication between people was simple, spontaneous, and direct based on direct relations between individuals, their families and their neighbors.

One of the respondents (Respondent No. 18) narrates one situation worth mentioning regarding volunteering with financial and kind alms to the poor and needy as follows: "There are many noble and voluntary positions for people in that time and there is an unforgettable position for a decent man despite his difficult condition, and the story of this man is the same On the day he bought a carry of his camel from rice, dates and sugar by bargaining from the state center, wherever the food was sold there, and he was with a whole convoy loaded with food and everyone was heading to his family, and on the way the convoy passed a poor woman with her son and no man passing by it was able to give her anything because of the difficulty The camel was arrested and the tightly bound food was removed That man is at the end of the caravan, and when he learned from that woman after all the caravan passed by her that she did not get anything from all the men who passed through her, he got angry and swore to God to give her all that he carried with his camel for fear that it would be said that the generosity of Arab men has become extinct.

4- Volunteering to perform blood money (*Diya*):

The results of the respondents in all governorates and districts indicate that the blood money was a common voluntary work in all local communities (villages and districts) in Omani society. *Diya* is one of the religious legislations in cases of manslaughter, and it means that money to be paid in cases of deprivation of lives. The results show that the tribe or community members were cooperating and participating in the payment of blood money. Respondent No. 37 indicates that *Diya* has a known system in all tribes; as it is obligatory and all members of the tribe contribute to paying it. Respondent No.

5 asserts this fact as follows: "In the case of blood money, all members of the tribe are obligated to pay *Diya*, as it is a collective responsibility, and every member of the tribe participates in its payment. The sheikh of the tribe and some notables organize the process of collection, as they carry them (hand them over), sometimes along with elders from other tribes, to the family's victim or deceased person". Respondent No.5 notes that not only was the money involved in the payment of blood money, but also cattle were donated to help pay the blood money. This means that the money was collected from various types of money. Respondent No. 9 adds: "*Diya* was sometimes paid in form of camels, sheep, and cows, as well as private properties, such as swords, rifles, or some gifts made from animal leathers (which are called in a Jibbali Language ("mountain" language): *Qurbat*, *Shesub*, *Maḥfeef*, and *A'neet*), and clothes.

5- Volunteering for the maintenance of Aflaj and the construction of arches to facilitate their flow:

Aflaj at this time were one of the important sources of drinking water, and sometimes they were the only source. Respondent No. 3 indicates that he experienced the disruption and collapse of Al-Mudaibi Falaj and some of its tributaries (*Al-Thaqab*), so the flow of Al-Falaj stopped, which greatly affected the lives of the people of the region. The researcher showed that Aflaj system still plays a vital role in the state, as Omani citizens rely upon it in agriculture and in domestic use.

6- Volunteering to dig wells and transport water:

Respondent No. 3 points out that this task was performed by a group of tribesmen in the desert and countryside to get water for

drinking or irrigation, as everyone was benefiting from these wells. Also, members of the tribe who own horses and camels used to transport water to their families, relatives and neighbors. Voluntarily, some member used to transfer water especially to families who do not have a means of transportation contrary to the city owners who earn money on that task.

7- Volunteering to establish public councils and *Sablah* (auditorium) in which condolences and weddings are held:

People used to donating land, money, excavation, construction, foundation, cleaning and maintenance establish public councils and *Sablah*. These councils are places of gathering of tribe people and one community. Respondents Nos. 2 and 17 emphasize that these councils and auditoriums express the interconnectedness and solidarity shown by members of society and tribesmen with each other through thick and thin. People used to gather in those places where their issues are addressed and discussed; everyone interacts as a member of one family in friendliness and cooperation. Respondents No. 46 states that some of the people used to furnish a place by palm fronds so that it would be a unified place to receive guests, such as the public council, so that men could gather to perform condolences in cases of death or say congratulations in weddings, where (*Wahsha*) is served, a term used for slaughtered sheep prepared to feed condolers.

8- Making *Al-Da'n* (an Omani type of rugs):

Al-Da'n is a type of rug made from palm fronds dried, then stacked and assembled with ropes, and stretched on the ground to be used in building houses and drying dates in it so that all people

benefit from it. In the past, some of the people volunteered to manufacture *Al-Da'n*.

9- Volunteering to help the tribe people who are exposed to force majeure circumstances:

Examples included volunteering in case one member of the tribe was exposed to dangers in the desert, to search for boats and ships lost in the open sea, and to get water to extinguish fires when they break out in a neighbor's house. Respondent No. 18 asserts that all the people of the village or neighborhood were rushing to extinguish fires; some people bring water from wells, others use sand to extinguish the fire, and others prevent people from approaching the places of the fire. Respondent No. 43 reveals that accidents of house fires were largely because some houses were built from local materials susceptible to fire such as palm fronds and mud.

10- Charitable *Waqf* (Endowment):

Some of rich tribesmen tended to endow some of their possessions for charity to the poor and the needy. Respondent No. 9 provides an example as follows: "There was a man in our tribe, may God have mercy on him, who has good manners and attributes. He planted a group of palms for the benefit of the people of the region in his life and after his death." Others also pave roads and built houses for livestock in the mountains which remain to this day.

11- Participation in building houses for the disabled, widows and orphans:

A number of respondents indicated that some of the people in the villages were volunteering to build simple houses for the poor. Respondent No. 4 states that she participated with her family and neighbors in carrying building materials such as stones on donkeys

that are brought from a specific area in the state. Respondent No. 9 also states that the houses were built with simple local components, such as palm fronds, clay, and stones. He also states that his father (who used to own large areas of land) volunteered to offer small plots of land for those who cannot afford to build a simple house on them. This type of volunteering also involved repairing houses damaged by rain.

12- Volunteering to treat patients:

Tribesmen relied in many cases on folk medicine therapists, who volunteered to diagnose the disease, prescribe the treatment, and even offer it for free if it was not expensive, but in the case of a high cost of the medicine, the patient had to pay for the medicine. Respondents Nos. 32, 43, and 47 indicate that folk remedies were predominant at that time, for people rare to rely on modern medical treatment known nowadays. Folk medicine used some of the methods still in use so far even if less used. Among these therapeutic methods are as follows:

- a) Treatment using the Holy Qur'an, whereby Respondent No. 47 who memorizes the entire Qur'an, indicated that he "volunteered to treat the sick by Ruqya (prayers and verses to treat the sick), in water or frankincense, and used to read it to the patient and would be cured with Allah's help in many cases.
- b) Cauterization, used to treat certain diseases.
- c) Making remedies from natural plants that are used as a drink or topical application.
- d) Massage for the affected places was one of the well-known methods of folk remedies. Respondent No. 17 states that she

was doing massage as well as cauterization for women as a treatment.

- e) Some respondents indicate that some families celebrated the recovery of their patient from an incurable disease, where a large feast attended by families, relatives and neighbors to give thanks to Allah.
- f) Bonesetting.

13- Volunteer to help those affected by rain and floods:

Some respondents in several districts (Masirah, for example) mention that rain and floods caused homes to collapse or to partially damage. One of the voluntary works carried out by members of the tribe or society was to help build the damaged houses, as well as to support relatives and neighbors during the rains and offer help to those affected. Respondent No. 4 clarifies that she participated with her family and neighbors in helping some cases affected by the heavy rains. There are some other cases of volunteering in cases of floods. Some volunteers who live in homes far from the flood stream used to invite or house families to their homes until the floods disappear, as there were no places for shelter at that time (Respondent No. 9). Also, Respondent No. 48 adds that he used to perform rescue operations in cases of floods and drowning inside the wells, and indicates that he saved a child who fell into a well in one of the neighbors' homes and was at the age of four, as the latter was saving the cattle that were stuck in the valleys.

14- Volunteering in agricultural work:

One of the respondents pointed out that the people of the village were used to help each other in the agricultural work, he said: "At that time someone from the village might come to us who needs help in

some work, especially on farms, so everyone was rushing to help him and work for him without any financial compensation so that we help each other.

15- Volunteering to provide public services in the village or state:

Respondent No. 9 mentions that the people of the state used to cooperate and work together to provide all the services needed in the state. Among these services Respondent No. 50 reveals, are digging wells for the public benefit, as some young people from the village used to dig wells in places where underground water was proliferated for the benefit of the people in the village for the sake of Allah. Moreover, people of the village used to save money for emergency cases as deaths, condolences, illnesses, transportation of patients to remote places for treatment and purchasing medicine.

16- Volunteering in the field of education and *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence):

No respondents report on the existence of such voluntary activity except Respondents No. 46. This voluntary work took place in his area (in Al-Suwaiq) where a gathering in one of the neighborhood's homes to listen to the reading of one of the books of Fiqh happened. Some nights, one crier used to shout "we hold a session for reading a book", so the people gather in one of the houses, as one of those who know how to read the book referred to, which may be a book of Fiqh or a cultural book, used to read aloud while the audiences are listening to benefit from what is said. Generous hospitality is extended to the audiences.

The Third axis: Volunteering to perform social solidarity duties:**Volunteering to help neighbors**

The results showed that the sample of the volunteers used to conduct various forms of volunteer activities within the framework of "Mutual Help" between neighbors of the same neighborhood, alley, tribe, or village. This means that everyone in the neighborhood, for example, was providing and receiving volunteer services at the same time. If helping the neighbors could be considered an activity of a social nature, the respondents' replies indicated that those tasks were intended to seek retribution in the hereafter. In this regard, I quote examples of what the respondents mentioned as follows:

1 – Voluntary charity:

A large number of respondents showed that the affluent neighbors volunteered to give alms of various kinds to the neighbors. They used to visit their neighbors on a daily basis and tried to provide the assistance they needed when necessary. This included financial and in-kind assistance. Respondent No. 39 mentions that she was distributing milk and butter to neighbors and relatives, as well as she once loaned her cash goat to one of her neighbors who had a baby in order to help her feed the newborn until he grew and then she could bring the goat back or keep it and then it is called (*Maneeḥa*) (Gift). Respondent No. 17 points out that she was giving her alms of poultry to her needy neighbors who had small poultry farms.

2– Participating in weddings:

Most of the respondents in the sample showed that women were participating in different forms of marriage with their neighbors. Respondent No. 41 indicated that women of one alley provide the

bride with all her needs before moving to the matrimonial home. She was one of those who master sewing the clothes who usually prepare the bride's needs of clothes within a whole week. Also, she mastered mixing incense and perfumes to provide the bride with a group of perfumes and incense, and she was experienced in grooming the brides. As Respondent No. 41 shows, the neighbors used to help each other on various occasions such as: volunteering to participate in wedding parties by preparing banquets, desserts and coffee.

3- Volunteering to help neighbors in childbirth:

A number of respondents indicate that women were helping their neighbors at delivery. Respondent No. 49 points out some aspect of this aid: as follows "I was specialized in laboring women (*Daya*) (midwife) and I was doing this task voluntarily; I do not want any retribution. In our time there were no hospitals and doctors, and I was personally providing this humanitarian service for my neighbors and relatives, as I used to care for the women who give birth. Respondent No. 34 states that she was helping the midwife (*Daya*) in the delivery of women. Respondent No. 41 mentions that she used to help her neighbors who deliver their children; she went to her neighbor in the morning to arrange her house and cook lunch and dinner for her family and so on until the neighbor completes the childbed period.

4- Celebrating "childbirth":

This type is linked to the previous voluntary activity. It is another voluntary activity related to the celebration of childbirth, where camels and goats are slaughtered to give thanks to Allah for the safety of the mother and the baby, and are distributed to relatives, neighbors, the poor and the needy, while gifts are also provided to the family of the new baby. Respondent No. 5 mentions that she volunteered with her

family and neighbors when having a new baby preparing food and cleaning the puerpera's house, where women alternately serve the mother in cleaning the house, cooking and performing various household chores so that the house.

5- Celebrating birthdays:

Only Respondent No. 42 indicates that participated in birthdays (*Al-Hawl Hawl*), where the newborn's family distributes the slaughtered chicken to the neighbors in the village. For the families who are unable to do so, affluent families may volunteer to provide the poultry distribute them instead of those families.

6- Volunteering to pollinate palm trees:

Palm trees are known to be an important source of life in ancient and modern Arab societies. Voluntary works included helping the neighbors fertilize palm trees. Respondent No. 11 mentions that he once volunteered to help the neighbors who are not able to pollinate the palms.

7- Volunteering to help the neighbor in case of sickness:

Helping neighbors when in case of sickness is one of the forms of volunteering common in the Omani communities in the various districts in which the research was applied. Neighbors used to help the sick neighbor by performing their household chores and hosting the guests and visitors until recovery (Respondents Nos. 41 and 42). Respondent No. 44 clarifies that she once served her neighbor when she was sick, by performing various household duties as caring for children, cooking and cleaning until recovery. She also indicates that female neighbors were taking turns to do so in cases of sickness.

8- Volunteering to buy and sew clothes:

One of the respondents reveals that volunteering with sewing clothes for the neighbors' children, and sometimes buying them for them, was one of the forms of volunteering in her village, where Respondent No. 41 asserts that she used to buy clothes not only for her children, but also for the children of her neighbor who did not have enough money. Likewise, Respondent No. 34 states: "I used to sew women's clothes such as ((*bisht*) a big dress worn over the Omani *dishdasha*, the *dishdasha*, and *sheyla* (headscarf)) for free, and that is to help my neighbors or those who ask me to sew her clothes."

9- Volunteering to sew water bags (*Al-Suqi*):

Water bags, which are container made of sheep skin, are carefully stitched to store cows' milk and to make milk products and when it is damaged from one side, water bags patched and repaired without any compensation.

10- Volunteering to Search for lost livestock:

Another form of volunteering for neighbors is to help them research when their cattle are not in the remote pastures.

11- Volunteering to help in cases of death:

Deaths are cases in which neighbors as well as members of the tribe help each other, as they provide different forms of aid to the family of the deceased, whether with money, effort, or sympathy, depending on the capabilities of each volunteer. In this regard, volunteering includes performing several duties starting from preparing the deceased, and volunteers, either by men or women. Respondent No. 41 indicates that he used to undertake this work at any time of the morning or evening without financial compensation despite the attempt of some families of the deceased to offer money to the

volunteer. Digging graves was also related to the voluntary work, where some of the people volunteered to undertake this task, in contrary to what is happening now that there are specialized workers for that in return for a fee. Manufacture what is known as: “*Taref*” (coffin), was one form of volunteering, whereby seasoned persons gave these coffins for free for those who do not afford to pay. One of the customs accepted in the Omani local communities, as the respondents pointed out, is that the family of the deceased shall not go out to meet their needs, as relatives shall remain in the mourning house for three days to accept condolences. The participation of volunteers took many forms, including: participation in preparing food for the duration of the condolence and serving it in the deceased's house, as well as slaughtering sacrifices (camels) and distributing meat to the poor and needy, giving charity to the deceased. Respondent No. 43 indicates that the consolation of the family of the deceased was carried out by men for men, and by women for women. Respondent No. 44 also points out that the female neighbors used to accompany the bereaved woman for a week, provide dates, coffee, and water, host the condolers for the entire period of mourning, and carry out various household tasks, then to take turns in visiting them until the end of the waiting period (*I'dda*) to carry out household chores. Respondent No. 45 reveals that she once took care of the infant of her neighbor who died a few days after giving birth to her baby and breastfed the baby. She adds that there was no infant formula at this time. In this regard, Respondent No. 4 states: “I lived by raising a neighbor to a child of her neighbor who died after his birth. This neighbor from the tribe to which the child belongs nurtured and looked after him, until he was able to depend on himself,

then returned him to his family". Respondent No. 45 adds: "Women often took care of orphan children who lost their mothers or who were suffering from a disease that prevented them from caring for their child".

As there were no cars in certain places, some volunteers used to offer his/her camel or one of his camels so that the family of the deceased or condolers could use it to reach the place he/she was going to. Respondent No. 4 refers to this type of volunteering as follows: "There was a death for the relatives of the neighbors in a far area and they did not have a means of transportation to go to that area, so I provided three camels to help them reach them."

One of the manifestations of voluntary works related to deaths is celebrating the end of waiting period of the woman whose husband has died. Respondent No. 4 mentions that family, relatives and neighbors prepare a celebration on the occasion of the end of the waiting period, for the bereaved woman where her family invites relatives and neighbors to attend this celebration.

The fourth axis: The role of religious voluntary activities in satisfying the needs of community members:

It is clear from the respondents' replies that religious voluntary work was the primary means to satisfy the needs of society members, families and groups, due to social and economic difficulties in Omani society before 1970, and the absence of an effective government social welfare system. Voluntary works were the main means to satisfy the material needs of low-income people and the poor who represented the vast majority of the society. On the other hand, voluntary activities also fulfilled the spiritual needs of the rich and poor

members of the community and emphasized the commitment of the members of society to the religious belief and values that encourage brotherhood, cooperation and social solidarity. Therefore, about more than half of the respondents described that a state of contentment, social peace, and mutual sympathy prevailed in society. Despite the consensus of the respondents that the voluntary activities increased significantly after 1970 in terms of quantity and quality, most of them unanimously agreed on that feelings of brotherhood, compassion, good neighborliness, and social cohesion between the people of the same neighborhood and the same village were deeper than the .present time

Conclusion:

It is clear from the results that the manifestations of religious voluntary services in Omani society prior to the 1970's were varied. That is to say, they included compulsory duties such as Prayer, Zakat, Fasting and Pilgrimage. Also, they gathered a number of forms of social life and social solidarity; areas encouraged by Islamic law, and in particular included volunteering to help neighbors. The results also showed that voluntary efforts were provided by individual, group, tribe, and society as a whole, and reflected a high degree of individual sense of social responsibility, and a high level of cooperation and interdependence between the people.

Out of the results, it is found out that religion has been mixed with the social life of members of society, as well as volunteer work. Many of the respondents indicated that their participation was for the purpose of obtaining reward from Allah Almighty. This was assisted by (1) the religious upbringing of the children of the Omani

community where the mosque had a major role in the life of the community and its members, and (2) many relatives in villages and districts relied on Qur'anic pre-schools (*Kuttab*), Quran memorization schools, and mosques to learn the Qur'an as well as reading and writing, (3) the severe shortage of formal educational institutions (schools) where the number of schools before 1970 reached was three schools in the whole society (Jouda, 2009: 45), (4) and also the absence of voluntary institutions upon which all the respondents agree, Respondent No. 17 states: ", There were no modern voluntary institutions before 1970, but cooperation and solidarity between the people was prevalent in society, namely, voluntary work ensured for the people to meet many of their basic needs."

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