

SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE INTELLECTUAL HERITAGE OF EASTERN THINKERS

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Abstract

This article examines the issue of support for persons with disabilities in the intellectual heritage of Eastern thinkers, jurists, and statesmen. Drawing on sources in Islamic jurisprudence, moral education, and public administration, the study demonstrates that the treatment of vulnerable social groups was regarded as an important criterion of justice. In particular, the article analyzes how compassion, material support, labor inclusion, tax relief, and social protection were reflected in the works of al-Marghinani, Abu Nasr al-Farabi, Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, Nizam al-Mulk, Amir Temur, and later authors. The study argues that within Eastern intellectual thought, persons with disabilities were not viewed as people who should remain outside society, but rather as individuals who must stand at the center of social attention, dignity, and protection.

Keywords

Hidaya, fiqh, justice, poor, social protection, Eastern thinkers, public administration, Temur Tuzuklari, mercy, charity.

Introduction

Attitudes toward persons with disabilities are among the most important indicators of a society's moral level and its understanding of social justice. The attitude of the state and society toward human dignity is revealed first and foremost in the attention given to those groups that are most in need of protection. In this regard, the broad discussion in the works of Eastern scholars of support for persons with disabilities, the poor, the needy, debtors, and other vulnerable groups has special scholarly significance.

Throughout historical development, the place of persons with disabilities in society was interpreted differently in different periods. However, in Eastern thought, especially within the framework of Islamic civilization, such people were approached not merely with pity, but with a sense of legal, moral, and social responsibility. This approach was closely connected with the protection of human

dignity, the refusal to exclude such individuals from social life, and the effort to involve them in labor and public activity to the extent possible.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the views of Eastern scholars and thinkers on supporting persons with disabilities and, through them, to illuminate historical ideas about social justice, care, and state responsibility.

Main Part

In Islamic jurisprudence, the legal status of persons with disabilities and the evaluation of their actions and transactions occupy an important place. In this respect, Burhan al-Din al-Marghinani's work *Hidaya* is of particular significance, as it shows that an individual's physical or mental condition should be taken into account when determining legal responsibility. In particular, when defining liability for certain crimes and violations, a person's mental state or physical capacity is considered an important factor [1]. This demonstrates that Islamic law gave priority not only to punishment, but also to the correct assessment of circumstances.

Hidaya also explains that the legal transactions of mute persons, including marriage, divorce, and buying and selling, may be expressed through writing or gestures [2]. This rule does not deny the legal capacity of persons with disabilities; on the contrary, it recognizes their specific forms of communication. Thus, in Eastern juristic thought, a person's status as a subject of law was not nullified because of physical limitations.

In Islamic teaching, social protection is interpreted not only as a duty of the state or ruler, but also as a moral obligation for every member of society. Through institutions such as *zakat*, *fitr*, *ushr*, and *sadaqah*, regular assistance to vulnerable groups is prescribed. The sources emphasize the necessity of supporting the poor, the needy, debtors, travelers in distress, and other groups in need [3]. This indicates that religious foundations existed for the economic protection of persons with disabilities.

The idea of assistance and compassion is also strongly reflected in hadith literature. In a hadith narrated by Imam al-Tirmidhi, guiding a blind person on the road is described as an act of charity [4]. This approach expresses the principles of mercy, mutual assistance, and social solidarity that are characteristic of Eastern spirituality. Persons with disabilities are therefore viewed not merely as passive recipients of kindness, but as human beings entitled to attention and support.

Abu Nasr al-Farabi occupies a special place in Eastern political and philosophical thought because of his views on social justice and the virtuous society. In his doctrine of the *Virtuous City*, justice is interpreted as the proper distribution of social goods, giving each person his or her due share, and

preserving that share [5]. In al-Farabi's understanding, maintaining balance in the distribution of wealth, health, rank, honor, and other benefits is one of the main manifestations of justice.

In al-Farabi's views, persons with disabilities and the sick should not be isolated from society; rather, they should be provided for and, where possible, involved in useful labor [6]. For its time, this was an extremely progressive idea, since social protection was linked not only to material assistance, but also to preserving human dignity and strengthening a person's place in society.

According to al-Farabi, when every person engages in work appropriate to his or her abilities, order and prosperity emerge in society [7]. Applied to persons with disabilities, this principle means not exclusion, but guidance toward activities corresponding to their capabilities. Thus, in Eastern philosophy, social justice was also understood as helping each individual find a beneficial role in society.

The works of Nasir al-Din al-Tusi also devote broad attention to humanity, mercy, forgiveness, and compassion toward the weak [8]. He stresses that the moral maturity of society becomes visible precisely in the way it treats those who are powerless and in need of protection. In this respect, al-Tusi continues the tradition in Eastern ethical thought of viewing the issue of persons with disabilities within the framework of moral responsibility.

In Nizam al-Mulk's *Siyasatnama*, the justice of the ruler is measured first and foremost by the protection of the rights of the weak, the supervision of officials, and the prevention of oppression against the subjects [9]. The work emphasizes that a wise ruler should regularly examine conditions in the country, learn the needs of the population, and especially safeguard the interests of defenseless groups. These ideas show that social protection was regarded as an important component of state policy in the Eastern tradition of governance.

The issue of social protection also received particular attention during the period of Amir Temur and the Timurids, as can be seen in the *Temur Tuzuklari*. The sources describe the protection of the population's property, security, and standard of living as an important direction of state policy [10]. Special emphasis is placed on moderation in tax collection, on preventing oppression that would drive the people into poverty, and on supporting those in need of protection.

Amir Temur emphasized the need to provide material support to the blind, the poor, and those whose opportunities for labor were limited; to allocate food for them; and to create conditions in which they could engage in suitable work [11]. In addition, the instructions to establish mosques, madrasas, guest houses, hospitals, and soup kitchens for the poor indicate that rather systematic forms of social protection existed at that time.

During the Timurid period, supporting the poor and those who struggled to earn a livelihood appeared as one of the principal foundations of state policy. The *Temur Tuzuklari* records the need to assist the poor and needy and to create conditions for life without reducing them to helpless dependence [12]. This approach may be understood as a conception of social protection that goes beyond simple charity and seeks to ensure decent living conditions.

Although the political instability, wars, and economic hardships that affected Central Asia in later centuries negatively influenced the social situation of the population, the idea of helping vulnerable groups was preserved in the works of thinkers and statesmen. In *Dastur ul-Muluk*, Samandar Termizi notes that the social situation of the population should be taken into account when determining taxes [13]. This shows that the idea of social equality and justice was directly connected with practical questions of governance.

The historical and prose works of Ahmad Donish, Mahmud ibn Vali, Mir Muhammad Amin Bukhari, Muhammad Yusuf Munshi, Abulgazi Bahadurkhan, and other authors also portray the just ruler as one who cares for the poor, the distressed, and the needy [14]. For this reason, an analysis of Eastern written heritage demonstrates that the issue of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups occupied an important place in historical memory.

Conclusion

An analysis of the heritage of Eastern thinkers shows that support for persons with disabilities was not an accidental or secondary subject. On the contrary, it was treated as an important social issue closely connected with justice, mercy, legal capacity, material provision, and state responsibility.

In Islamic jurisprudence, the legal status of persons with disabilities was recognized, and it was shown that their transactions could be carried out through methods appropriate to their condition. In Eastern philosophy and political thought, the main idea was not to isolate such persons from society, but to support them, provide them with material assistance, and involve them in useful labor to the extent possible.

Therefore, the heritage of Eastern scholars remains an important historical and moral source for building an inclusive society, improving systems of social protection, and strengthening a humane attitude toward persons with disabilities today.

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