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Green Economy: Issues and Challenges in Arab Countries

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Abstract

Developing countries, like most Islamic countries, need economies that foster growth and development, protect natural capital, create jobs, improve human well-being, and reduce poverty and inequality. Such an economy is called a green economy. The main problems complicating the implementation of a green economy in most Arab Countries are weak management, increasing poverty, numerous regional and border conflicts, and a growing economic dependence on natural resources. height, food insecurity. Governments as policy makers can introduce policies, regulations and incentives to promote a green economy. Therefore, this paper seeks to discuss how a green economy can improve livelihood security and poverty reduction in Islamic countries. We are also trying to understand what are the key actions needed to achieve a green economy in Arab Countries.

Keywords

Green Economy, Sustainable Development, Arab Countries



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1. Introduction

Based on the concept of sustainable development, the economy is not separate from the environment in which we live. How the economy is run affects the environment, but the quality of the environment affects the performance of the economy. Economic growth is usually accompanied by environmental deterioration. Environmental degradation creates a poverty trap, creating a compound loop of further degradation and worsening poverty. Environmental issues therefore amplify important concerns about the well-being of current and future generations ⁽¹⁾.

Concerns about the global economy, ecological development, and social justice are growing in many countries. It has also been strengthened by the recent global financial, energy and food crises. Therefore, to address these concerns, the green economy has been proposed as an important tool for achieving sustainable development. Many countries are promoting a green economy, a clean and energy efficient economy. The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) defined a green economy as "an economy that leads to greater human well-being and social justice while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcity." It can also be seen as low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive ⁽²⁾.

Islamic awareness of natural resources has its roots in the Holy Quran. The Qur'an contains some important principles of environmental protection, showing that damage to the environment and improper management of natural resources are undesirable. According to the Holy Quran, "Eat and drink, But don't exaggerate. Indeed, God does not like those who go too far." ⁽³⁾.

The Qur'an also emphasizes that "the prodigal brother is the devil and Satan has always been ungrateful to the Lord" ⁽⁴⁾.

Based on these statements, it is an essential obligation to protect all natural resources from misuse. Indeed, the Holy Quran and Islamic law can play an important role in promoting sustainable development in Islamic countries. With Islamic justice laws, there is an urgent need for Islamic countries to become more environmentally friendly in their administration and economy, and the correlation between ecology and justice laws is very close. Khaliq ⁽⁵⁾ and Mohd Yusof et al. ⁽⁶⁾ emphasized the need for leadership in Islamic countries to successfully implement green management. Good ideas about the green economy cannot be realized without proper management. They believe that a Muslim country will be more

developed if its citizens live according to Islamic principles. Islam and Islam (7) studied Muslim institutions and their contribution to the development of a healthy society. They found that strong family institutions and good practices of Islam can lead to cleaner and greener governments.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is her second largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations. Includes 57 Muslim countries across four continents. One of the goals of this organization is to Acting as a carbon sink, deforestation creates pressure on the environment. It also threatens the well-being of people whose livelihoods depend primarily on forest resources. Some Muslim countries in South Asia, Southeast Asia, North Africa and the Middle East are affected by extreme weather events such as droughts and floods. Most of them suffer from poor ability to mitigate the adverse effects of extreme conditions. These regions are highly exposed to natural disasters such as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami in Indonesia and the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan.

Such impacts pose additional risks to communities seeking to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development. Furthermore, unsustainable exploitation of natural resources such as coral reefs and mangrove forests is causing floods in Pakistan. In southeastern Bangladesh, mangrove destruction is leading to habitat degradation and species loss (8) . Rapid urbanization in countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Malaysia and Turkey has increased energy use, waste and greenhouse gas emissions that can contribute to climate change. Overfishing, urbanization, climate change, and other environmental factors are eroding ecosystems and biodiversity, destroying the benefits associated with natural resources. Islamic countries therefore need to protect their natural capital and put their policies on the path of sustainable development.

2. Socio-economic problems in Islamic countries

The social dimension of Islamic countries deserves immediate attention. Some of her OIC member countries such as Indonesia, Bangladesh and Pakistan are the most populous countries. High population growth is putting pressure on all aspects of sustainable development. The economies of Islamic countries range from low to medium to high income. Based on the World Bank classification, 18 OIC countries are classified as low income, 34 as middle income (18 lower middle income and 16 upper middle income), and 7 as high income. increase. Figure 2 shows the GDP per

capita of the OIC countries. 2011 shows a large disparity between rich and poor countries.

The economic crisis and global financial crisis of 2008-2009 also affected the socio-economic development of Islamic countries. GDP growth slowed in some countries, while others were hit by higher fuel and food prices. In fact, these countries are affected by declining economic growth and development, increasing unemployment and poverty. A green economy, however, focuses primarily on the efficient use and conservation of natural capital to expand the economy, providing compensation for potential pressures from the global economy.

3. Poverty in Arab countries

There is a correlation between a country's average income and poverty. The richer the country, the less poverty. Poverty rates in Islamic countries are mostly high. Table 1 shows the proportion of the poor whose income is below the poverty line as a percentage of the total population. This table provides information on some of his OIC lower middle- and low-income countries that may receive data. Among these countries, Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso and Bangladesh have relatively high percentages of the population living on less than US\$1.25 a day. The poverty gap in a country's poverty line is the average deviation from the poverty line. This indicator shows the extent and frequency of poverty in these countries. Only 7 out of 57 OIC member countries are classified as high income countries, mainly due to their high oil income. About 17 oil-producing countries (OPEC) have crude oil and refining industries, but most of them lack a major industrial base. About 22 of the world's 50 poorest countries are members of the OIC (the 'general framework')(9).

Lack of access to water, lack of irrigation infrastructure, high illiteracy and living in remote areas lead to very high poverty rates in rural areas. Moreover, poverty in some Islamic countries corresponds to growing conflicts and tensions in these countries that require the attention of the international community. Poverty reduction and income equality are the most important economic goals of Islam. Achieving these goals requires that socioeconomic processes and environmental priorities work together to support the concept of sustainable development.

The transition to a green economy could create huge opportunities for green jobs in various sectors of the economy. A greener economy also makes economic sense, supporting rural communities that depend on natural resources for their livelihoods

through conservation and appropriate investment in their natural capital. It could bring a solution to the problem of unemployment, a key socio-economic problem in Arab countries, especially Arab countries with large youth populations. With the population of Muslim countries making up one-fifth of the world's population, it is imperative for governments to boost economic growth, raise incomes, reduce poverty and ultimately achieve sustainable development. You can invest through job creation.

4. Green Economy in Arab Countries

Many Arab countries are implementing green economies to achieve sustainable development. For example, the United Arab Emirates has created sustainable public transport in Dubai by establishing a metro network that reduces private car use by about 30%. As a result, the use of renewable energy reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, natural gas is increasingly being used in taxi vehicles in countries such as Egypt, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia is constructing many eco-friendly buildings inspired by traditional architectural concepts, paving the way for future architectural achievements. For example, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) is reducing the need for electric lighting and cooling through innovative designs such as natural solar lighting, solar cooling, and solar energy, saving annual energy costs. In June 2014, Qatar launched its Green Economy Roadmap. This is a comprehensive effort to support the development and implementation of green economy policies. Additionally, Qatar is a significant adopter of sustainable building practices and ranks 6th in the world for green buildings. Bahrain and Kuwait have also achieved sustainable buildings. Some of these buildings are integrated with wind turbines, such as the Bahrain World Trade Centre, while others are integrated with solar power, such as the Euro University in Bahrain and the English School in Kuwait (10).

The solar power plant was built in Morocco in 2010 and aims to cover about 13% of the country's electricity demand. Among the Arab countries, Egypt has had excellent experience in the application of wind energy. The Egyptian government has provided approximately 7,647 km² of land for the wind farm, and investors have had access to the land almost free of charge. They plan to increase the share of renewable energy in total power generation to 20% (versus 12% for wind energy) by 2020 ("A green economy in the Arab region" (11)).

Tunisia has promoted the development and use of renewable energy to reduce the country's dependence on oil and gas. In 2009, the first national solar energy plan was presented with the aim of increasing the share of renewable energy sources from just under 1% to 4.3% in 2014. The plan includes the use of photovoltaic panels, a solar hot water system and a solar thermal power plant for power generation. Projected energy savings from solar energy plans will reach 22% in 2016, saving 1.3 million tons of CO₂ annually. Tunisia's experience shows the potential benefits from investing in renewable energy as one of the pillars of the green economy, creating new jobs and reducing dependence on fuel imports (12).

5. Conclusion

Some Muslim countries are rich in oil and gas. It has contributed to the development of their countries, making most of them high-income countries such as Qatar, Kuwait, Brunei, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman. These countries have successfully implemented their own green economy strategies. A significant problem for OIC countries is their inadequate capacity for effective risk management and their vulnerability to different risk classes. Arab countries have an urgent need to increase research and development capacity to implement green economy strategies in these countries.

A transition to a green economy can reduce environmental degradation and protect society from the negative effects of economic growth. A careful move towards a green economy can find new ways to improve resource efficiency and open up new opportunities for socioeconomic development. A green growth strategy could lead to better living conditions in Islamic countries. Full implementation of the green economy is not possible without technological change and innovation. Indeed, no government has all the technology, money and resources needed to transition to a green economy. Islamic countries therefore need international support from developed countries and greater cooperation among OIC member states. The transition to a green economy should aim to strengthen regional partnerships and promote joint projects among Islamic countries. It can empower OIC member states to address existing limitations of the lack of a comprehensive green economy framework in Arab countries.

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