

## CHALLENGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF *HALAL* CERTIFICATION SYSTEM IN BANGLADESH: A DESCRIPTIVE AND ANALYTICAL STUDY BASED ON MALAYSIAN EXPERIENCE

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**ABSTRACT:** In the contemporary world, the *halal* industry is seen as a fast-growing global business, and it has become one of the most discussed matters around the world, particularly in Muslim countries like Bangladesh. *Halal* certification has proven to be an essential element in identifying the *halal* status of specific products or services and capturing global market shares and consumers in the *halal* industry. As the third-largest Muslim country (with 90% of Muslims) globally, Bangladesh has enormous potential in the *halal* food industry. However, Bangladesh is far behind in utilising this potential due to several barriers, and an inferior *halal* certification system is one of them. On the other hand, Malaysia has made considerable use of its potential in the *halal* food industry through its well-known certification system worldwide due to its standardised procedures, requirements, and guidelines. This research paper aims to identify the challenges that cause a poor *halal* certification system and hinder its development in Bangladesh. A descriptive analysis shows how Malaysia has already overcome most of the challenges regarding *halal* certification, and there are very few challenges that are on the way to being overcome. Finally, the authors have proposed some suggestions to overcome the identified challenges in developing the *halal* certification system in Bangladesh and provide future research opportunities in the *halal* industry in Bangladesh.

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**KEYWORDS:** *Halal certification; Challenges; Development; Bangladesh; Malaysia*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Islamic *Syari'ah*, Muslims are obliged to consume *halal* foods and beverages, wear *halal* clothing, and live in *halal* ways. Indeed, fulfilling this particular obligation has massive significance to ensure peace and reward here and hereafter. One of the core objectives of Islamic *Syari'ah* is to assure the well-being of all humankind and simultaneously protect them

from any harm or disadvantage. This *Syari'ah* has prescribed people to consume *halal* products to get benefits (*maslahah*) and has prescribed them to avoid *haram* products to get rid of harm (*mafsadah*). Therefore, people should consume foods and drinks, wear clothing, and use cosmetics identified as *halal* while avoiding the products identified as *haram*. Rahman (2018) has pointed out that as the number of Muslims is increasing around the world day by day, *halal* food products are expected to become one of the priorities to focus on, especially, to the Muslim majority nation (Rahman, 2018), and the same expectation for *halal* clothing and cosmetics. However, concerning the development of technology in the food industry and the ease of mobility worldwide, food has undergone various processes, leading people to difficulties distinguishing between *halal* and *haram* food. Also, due to the greater authority of non-Muslims in the food industry, the status of *halal* food has come into question, (Arif & Sidek, 2015). Moreover, many factories do not comply with food laws and regulations, which has always been a concern among Muslim consumers.

There is a certification system called the *halal* certification in the current world, which facilitates the use of goods for Muslims. Undeniably, this particular system can ease these difficulties distinguishing between *halal* and *haram*. Haleem (2016) has described that the *halal* certification system certifies products or services as pronounced in Islamic *Syari'ah*. It assures Muslim consumers about the quality of *halal*. This particular system has been considered a key element to differentiate *halal* products from *haram* products, (Khan & Haleem, 2016). Globally, the *halal* trade market and certification of *halal* products are increasing rapidly. Malaysia has been recognised as a global *halal* hub for the manufacturing and trading *halal* products and services. Besides, the Malaysian government has played a leading role in global *halal* certification, including audit, protecting the integrity, directing and coordinating the *halal* industry development, (Kader, 2016).

According to WPR, Bangladesh occupies a tiny portion of the land mass in the South East Asian region with a vast population (166.37m) and has ranked as the third-largest Muslim country (with 90% of Muslims) in the world, (WPR, 2018). Bangladesh has bright growth potential for consumer products as a densely populated country. The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) revealed that Bangladesh appears with a great perspective to the world's subsequent economic development for consumer products. It also reported that "Bangladesh is one of the greatest untapped growth markets in Asia, yet it has been off the radar of most major consumer-product companies", (BCG, 2015).

Currently, the *halal* certification system is considered an essential potential sector in the economy and the business of *halal* products are extending throughout the world every year. Many countries (Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and so on) are moving forward in national growth by issuing *halal* certificates, (Uddin, 2020). By considering this significance, the Islamic Foundation (IF) had started issuing *halal* certificates in Bangladesh in 2007, (Uddin, 2020). However, despite the popularity and potential of the *halal* food business and consumption in Bangladesh, *halal* certification authorities face several difficulties in implementing their rules on *halal* issues, particularly regarding the development of the *halal* certification system due to the lack of proper guidelines standard procedures. Thus, it is essential to strengthening its local and international *halal* market position by identifying significant challenges, finding efficient solutions to overcome them, and strengthening the existing *halal* certification system. Therefore, this study provides an overview of Bangladesh's existing *halal* certification system. Notably, it identifies six significant challenges that hinder the development of the *halal* certification system in Bangladesh, and all are discussed descriptively and analytically in terms of gaining experience from the Malaysian *halal* certification scenario.

## 2. OBJECTIVES, PURPOSE AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study objects to demonstrate a clear understanding of the *halal* certification process in Bangladesh and highlight the importance of *halal* certification implementation to ensure the efficiency of *halal* products. Besides, it aims to identify the significant challenges in developing *halal* certification in Bangladesh based on the Malaysian perspective.

This study aims to discuss the current position of the *halal* certification system in Bangladesh. Mainly, it aims to address the challenges that hinder the development of *halal* certification in Bangladesh. Therefore, this study focuses more on the external and internal issues related to *halal* certification operational bodies in Bangladesh. Moreover, the study attempts to generate significant findings to overcome the identified challenges faced in the area and contribute to further studies on the *halal* industry.

The case of *halal* food products is still at high risk and is one of the essential concerns for consumers in Bangladesh, (Khan, 2015). Manufacturers are directly or indirectly involved in unethical practices in food industries. They use non-halal ingredients in foods products and often mix harmful chemicals such as formalin, textile colours, pesticides, herbicides etc., in agricultural products, fresh vegetables, dairy products, and animal products. Consequently, the consumers, particularly *halal* food consumers, are suffering from a lack of *halal* food safety, and consuming such foods has become a significant threat to public health, resulting in organ failure and ultimately loss of human life, (Rahman et al., 2015). *Halal* certification is a system that identifies the *halal* status of specific products or services and ensures the excellent quality of the products. Unfortunately, Bangladesh lacks a high-standard *halal* certification system due to several constraints, although it has vast potential in the *halal* food industry, (Ali, 2021). The *halal* authorities desperately need to prosper the *halal* certification system in Bangladesh by identifying and overcoming the challenges. Therefore, there are ample realistic reasons to conduct a study in this field to examine the current situation of the *halal* certification system in Bangladesh and identify the significant challenges that hinder the development of the *halal* certification system.

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1 Concept of *Halal* Certification

According to Haleem A. (2016), *halal* certification is a process that certifies products or services by the guidelines of Islamic *Syari'ah*. The *halal* certification system or verification has been considered a key element to ensure the *halal* quality to Muslim consumers, (Haleem, 2016). Asa et al. (2018) noted that the *halal* certificate symbolises quality, health and ecosystem. It serves as an assurance to verify the product's compatibility with Islamic dietary law and ascertains that it contains all approved ingredients, (Asa et al., 2018). Ireland and Rajabzadeh (2016) have noted a point to address the reasons behind the *halal* certification system. They have found that Muslim consumers in the UAE place a high weight on *halal* certificates because they are concerned about the product's *halal* status, (Ireland and Rajabzadeh, 2016). Rios et al. (2016) have examined that consumers' perceptions about the fidelity of *halal* certification from different Muslim and non-Muslim countries explain the maximum proportion of the preferred variant for a product by following the interaction of the country of origin and the country of origin of the brand name, (Rios et al., 2016). According to Muhammad Ayyub (2016), most non-Muslims positively perceive *halal* products and services because they are concerned about product quality, (Muhammad Ayyub, 2016). Tieman et al. (2013) have found that the application of *halal* certificates to purchases builds a strong

partnership with suppliers, adopts various strategies to protect the continuity of supply, and influences the procurement process, (Tieman et al., 2016). Rajagopal et al. (2011) have identified that *halal* certification is a new marketing premise that marketers use to differentiate their products and services in their competitive environment, (Rajagopal et al., 2011).

### 3.1.1 Halal Certification in Malaysia

Malaysia is the first country where the *halal* certification system was started in the 1980s, (Khan & Haleem, 2016). According to Asa (2017), Malaysia has been recognised as the first Muslim country where the government is working progressively towards developing its *halal* industry as it has a high potential sector that has a positive impact on the economy. While in some countries, *halal* certification is supervised by a legal or voluntary body, (Baharudin et al., 2016). Through the Trade Description Act of 2011, the Malaysian government has appointed the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) and State Islamic Religious Council (MAIN) to administer the *halal* certification system. Hence, these two governing bodies play vital roles as the 'component authority, (Othman et al., 2019). JAKIM is the core supervisory body that administers the Malaysian *halal* Certification for food products and sets the policies that the Cabinet settles. JAKIM issues the *halal* certification logo and approves products that fully meet *halal* requirements following Islamic *Syari'ah* laws. JAKIM and JAIN trigger these policies and standards to obtain *halal* certification, (Asa, 2017). According to the Secretariat Malaysia *Halal* Council (2019), there are 78 foreign *halal* certification bodies and authorities worldwide recognised by JAKIM as of February 13, 2019. Asa (2017) has pointed out that the Malaysian government has restructured the issuance of *halal* certificates. JAKIM issues certificates for food production procedures in Malaysia and exports. While JAIN only issues certificates with the same *halal* logos for specific states. Generally, JAKIM works for two purposes; firstly, synchronisation and coordination, in which JAKIM works closely with SIRIM (Malaysian Standards and Industrial Research Institute) and DOSM (Division of Standards Malaysia) to improve the *halal* food standard in Malaysia. In this case, the *halal* certificate of Malaysia is issued by the government only. Secondly, JAKIM acts as an implementing authority that enforces legal provisions, operational principles, and Strategies for adhering to *halal* business, (Asa, 2017).

According to Riaz & Chaudry (2004), Malaysia is the first to establish *halal*-related laws. Moreover, it has been reported that Malaysia has a documented and systematic *halal* assurance system too, (Ahmad et al., 2018). Apart from the conventional legal system such as; laws, regulations, and standards, Malaysia has added the Fatwa as an element in the *halal* food control system. At the federal level, the National Fatwa Committee (NFC) issues a fatwa by conducting national fatwa discussion meetings, (Sulaiman et al., 2017). JAKIM plays the secretariat role to NFC, (Ahmad et al., 2018). According to Nasohah (2005), besides the NFC, each state in Malaysia has its fatwa committee that has the authority to issue a fatwa. A reference fatwa centre called the World Fatwa Management, and Research Institute (INFAD) was established in University Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) to ensure continuity in developing, researching, and managing fatwas. It maintains the collection of fatwas related to *halal*-industry around the world. This centre also endorses the perspectives of the *halal* industry to be analysed outside the local perspective, (HDC, 2017). The Department of Veterinary Services under the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry Malaysia (MOA) has formulated regulations for the importation of edible bovine gelatine (hides and bones) in peninsular Malaysia (MOA, 2013). Cassimjee (2004) has pointed out that Halagel™, a newly formed Malaysian company, recently produced 100% *halal* gelatine to meet the global demand. The Halagel™ Company produces gelatine derived from the bones of *halal* animals slaughtered in

the Islamic way. Besides, the Islamic Development Department of Malaysia (JAKIM) carefully assesses and verifies the produced gelatine by Halagel™ Company, (Cassimjee, 2004).

Under the Trade Descriptions Act (TDA) of 1972, Malaysia had regulated its first *halal*-related law, (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). On the other hand, there are many countries where there is still no regulatory body to regulate product labelling and marketing authenticity as *halal*, (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008). Riaz & Chaudry (2004) have stated that this law is governed by the Ministry of Domestic Trades and Consumers Affairs (MDTCA), and it directs companies or individuals who apply fake commercial details (symbols, stickers, or other marks) to their products. After that, to introduce new features for more legal protection and stricter enforcement against false *halal* business descriptions, the TDA 1972 was replaced by TDA 2011 in 2011, (Ahmad et al., 2018). TDA 2011 has appointed JAKIM and the competent religious authorities from every respective state who can certify any food, product, or service as *halal*, and it is one of the salient features of this new law, (Zakaria & Ismail, 2014).

Malaysia has founded its *halal* standards. The standards are set by sensible committees of producers, policymakers, consumers, and others interested in *halal* standards, (Ahmad et al., 2018). Malaysia has a high standard of *halal* certificates which is recognised as the best *halal* standard process to the local and international market, (Fischer, 2011). Yumi, Zuhani et al. (2013) have described that Malaysia *Halal* Standard (MS 1500: 2009) *Halal* Food Production, Preparation, Handling and Storage-General Guidelines is one of the primary standards used by JAKIM for issuance of *halal* certificates. According to the Department of Standards Malaysia (2017), Malaysia has developed 14 *halal* standards.

The following *halal* standards are available in various fields in Malaysia:

1. MS 1500:2019 Halal Food Production, Preparation, Handling, and Storage (3rd Revision).
2. MS 2200: Part-1: 2008 Islamic Consumer Goods- Part 1: Cosmetics and Personal Care.
3. MS 2200: Part-2: 2008 Islamic Consumer Goods- Part 2: Usage of Animal Bone, Skin and Hair.
4. MS 2424: 2012 Halal Pharmaceuticals- General Guidelines.
5. MS 2400: 2010 Halalan-Toyyiban Assurance Pipeline- Part1: Management System Requirements for Transportations of Goods and/or Cargo Chain Services.
6. MS 2400: 2010 Halalan-Toyyiban Assurance Pipeline- Part2: Management System Requirements for warehousing and Related Activities.
7. MS 2400: 2010 Halalan-Toyyiban Assurance Pipeline- Part3: Management System Requirements for Retailing.
8. MS 1900:2014 Syari'ah-based Quality Management System- Requirements with Guidance (1st Revision).
9. MS 2300: 2009 Value-Based Management Systems- Requirements from an Islamic Perspective.

The development of *halal* standards of Malaysia adopts several country laws as well which are as follows:

1. Malaysia Food Act of 1983.
2. Food Regulation 1985.
3. Animal Act 1953 (Reviewed 2006).
4. Standards of Malaysia Act 1996 (Act 549).
5. Trade Description Act (Revision 2011).

Source: (Azam, M. S. E., & Abdullah, M. A., 2021).

Borhan (2016) has described several government agencies directly or indirectly working in *halal* food control. The Department of Standards Malaysia is one of them. It develops the standard for *halal* food and authorises the conformity assessment bodies, e.g., laboratories, inspection bodies, and certification bodies, (Borhan, 2016).

In Malaysia, JAKIM, the state religious authorities, and other relevant ministries make roles for food inspection, monitoring, and enforcement of *halal* food laws, regulations, and standards, (Ahmad et al., 2018). Hafiz, Mohamed, & Ab (2014) have marked that using unauthorised or fraudulent certifications and self-made *halal* logos has become a significant challenge in *halal* enforcement and inspection. It is considered an attempt to misguide consumers and a threat that may compromise the *halal* food products' integrity in the market. The Ministry of Domestic Trade, Co-operatives and Consumers MDTCC, in collaboration with JAKIM and the state religious authorities, consistently conducts inspections to ensure the authenticity of *halal* expression used. Under TDA 2011, the responsibility and authority for monitoring and enforcing *halal*-related matters has been given to the Monitoring and Enforcement Section of JAKIM, (Manan et al., 2016). Also, JAKIM and state religious authorities inspect and monitor the applicants and holders of *halal* certification, (JAKIM, 2014).

Van der Spiegel et al. (2012) points out that *halal* laboratories observe certain haram ingredients in raw materials, making final food products comply with specific *halal* requirements. According to Jaswir et al. (2014), it also disseminates information to consumers and establishes trust and confidence in *halal* authority. However, the laboratory's analysis is not widely used worldwide to prove the absence of *haram* ingredients in raw materials except in some countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand, (van der Spiegel et al., 2012). According to Ahmad et al. (2018), In Malaysia, the official laboratory for *halal* certification is under the Department of Chemistry (DOC). This is a well-established research institution with 11 labs equipped with the latest technology and strong human capital skills and expertise. Also, this department is supported by 350 scientific staff with about 10 years of experience and 530 technical support staff (Department of Chemistry, 2017). MOH's laboratories also work for Malaysia's *halal* food control systems, (Ahmad et al., 2018). 15 MOH laboratories in Malaysia provide analysis for food additives, food standards, and labelling, (Food Safety and Quality Department, 2017). Suggestions are being sought to establish a dedicated *halal* laboratory for *halal* analysis known as the Malaysia *Halal* Analysis Centre (MyHAC). Consequently, it is expected that MyHAC will become a one-stop centre for industrial research and *halal* certification, (Ahmad et al., 2018).

### 3.1.2 Halal Certification in Bangladesh

According to Uddin (2020), the Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh has been issuing *halal* certificates for various products since 2007. He also points out that Bangladesh has started issuing *halal* certificates because it has become vital for exporting goods in the world market, and its demand has increased a lot, (Uddin, 2020). So far, about 36 Bangladeshi product manufacturing companies have become *halal*-certified and exported their products to the Middle East, Nepal, Malaysia, and member states of SAARC. In addition, 95 foreign companies are doing business in Bangladesh after being *halal*-certified, (Our Islam, 2019).

Ashraf (2019) has found that Bangladesh has bright growth potential for consumer products, as it is a densely populated country. According to the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), the Bangladeshi market has emerged as one of the world's largest growth markets for consumer products, (BCG, 2015). On the other hand, Rahman (2017); Rahman et al. (2015) have found that the issue of *halal* products, especially *halal* food items, has become one of the essential concerns for consumers in Bangladesh due to the prevalence of corruption, profound

dishonesty, and malpractice of the producers and distributors. There is several journals and newspapers have shown that having pure food items free from toxic chemicals has become very difficult in Bangladesh, (Mohiuddin, 2019; Labu et al., 2013; Sobhani, 2016; Huq, 2021; Mahmud, 2021). There is adulteration in almost all food items such as; raw vegetables, fruits, dairy products, fish, meat, processed food, and so on, (Rahman, 2017; Rahman et al., 2015). This current situation raises doubts among consumers about the integrity of food producers and suppliers who tag the *halal* logo on products. At the same time, it makes the credibility of the availability of *halal* foods in Bangladesh questionable, (Ashraf, 2019).

Mohiuddin has classified the environmental factors in six study areas that have affected the *halal* movement in Bangladesh. He has shown the percentage of absenteeism of each field in the *halal* movement. His description of the environmental factors that affect the *halal* movement in the study areas is as follows; Non-conversance with *Qur'anic* knowledge and traditions of the Prophet (100%), Absence of exercise of Islamic Values and Norms by law-enforcing Agencies (100%), Lack of Practice of Shariah and the precepts of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH) in marketing (90%), Illiteracy of the Marketers and customer/consumers (77%), Absence of Islamic Marketing System (75%), and Absence of Islamic Government (100%). Furthermore, the author has described the incorrect concept of the *halal* and *haram* brand or certification in Bangladeshi people. He has found that the majority of the Bangladeshi people are familiar with *halal* and *haram*, but in practice, they are not aware of logos or certifications. Although the *halal* and *haram* issues are a topic of discussion for the people of Bangladesh, at the personal, organisational and family levels, until now, no organisation has taken any initiative on *halal* logos and certificates, except Islamic Foundation. Besides, he has pointed out that no practical steps have been taken to implement the *halal* logo in Bangladesh except to spread this issue verbally from mosques, religious schools, and Islam preaching programs. The issue of *halal* and *haram*, particularly the issue of *halal* certification, is not included in the education system except the syllabus of Madrasah (Islamic schools), and that is why people of Bangladesh are not aware of this issue widely. Moreover, the author has recommended an urgent need to increase the *halal* and *haram* issue in newspapers, journals, and other media to make the general people more aware of this particular matter. In addition, he has suggested establishing *halal* scientific laboratories in Bangladesh, (Mohiuddin, n.d.).

Uddin (2020) has identified several challenges in developing *halal* certification in Bangladesh and suggested possible solutions to overcome them. He suggested that the Islamic Foundation's *halal* certification policies could be reformed by adding new topics, sections, and sub-sections. This will create a complete policy and eliminate ambiguity and complexity in any issue. Supportive policies and laws can be formulated to develop the *halal* certification system in Bangladesh. This requires different laws, manuals, and supporting laws. Establishing Bangladesh laboratories to test raw materials and various components is necessary. This is because a variety of lab tests and even DNA tests are required to issue *halal* certificates. It is also essential to provide proper training to the concerned workforce of Bangladesh for the implementation of appropriate *halal* policies in factories and business institutions. Moreover, the workforce and employment in the *halal* sector of Bangladesh should be increased. For example, Islamic Foundation can increase the workforce in relevant departments, and *halal* certified companies can create posts like *halal* executive, *halal* supervisor, etc., (Uddin, 2020).

### 3.2 Challenges in the Development of *Halal* Certification in Bangladesh

Islam is the state religion of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. According to the World Population Review, 89.1% of Muslims live in Bangladesh, making Bangladesh the third largest Muslim-majority country after Indonesia and Pakistan, (WPR, 2021). Indeed, as a Muslim country, Bangladesh can be a significant player in the global *halal* market. Malaysian High

Commissioner in Bangladesh Norlin Othman said: "There has been a huge demand for *halal* food products in this country of 160 million people, 95% of whom are Muslims", (bd report 24, 2013). Abul Kasem Khan, president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) has stated that: "Bangladesh is the fifth largest market for Islamic consumer foodstuffs in the world. It is worth \$71 billion, and the sixth-largest Islamic cosmetics market in the world; It is worth \$2.7 billion", (The Daily Star, 2018). According to Jafar Uddin, the secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, it is expected that Bangladesh can increase its revenue ten times by exporting *halal* products. Besides, Bangladesh can move forward in *halal* products using the experience of countries working in the formation of *halal* certification authority as Bangladesh has sufficient *halal* products and a skilled workforce, (TBS, 2020), and we can increase the efficiency of this workforce through training, (Daily Asian Age, 2020).

Leading countries in food production and export, such as New Zealand, have planned to invest heavily in developing Bangladesh's *halal* food sector. Bangladesh has a huge potential for exporting several food items such as vegetables, fruits, spices, beef, fish, frozen foods, frozen chicken, and various poultry products, (Bangladesh Post, 2020). Experts believe there is much potential for exporting poultry and eggs as *halal* products from Bangladesh, (Mahmud, 2020). It is to be noted that in 2017, Muslim countries around the world spent \$1.3 trillion on *halal* food and beverages, while Bangladesh earned \$1 billion from this sector. In terms of *halal* products, Bengal Meat, Paragon Frozen Food, Kazi Farms and CP Bangladesh Co. Ltd are the top exporters of *halal* products in Bangladesh. These four companies earn \$1 billion, (TK 8,500 crore) by exporting their products worldwide, (Bangladesh Post, 2020). Likewise, experts have noticed that Bangladesh is in the top position in the world market in readymade garments. Therefore, it is easy to increase Bangladesh's *halal* fashion or clothing market, (Abdullah S., 2018). However, despite the vast potential, Bangladesh is lagging in the development of *halal* certification due to some of the following challenges:

### 3.2.1 Lack of Engagement with Syari'ah Management

The lack of involvement with *Syari'ah* management can be considered an obstacle to developing *halal* certification in Bangladesh. Some common reasons are considered as the constraints of involvement with *Syari'ah* management in Bangladesh, as follows:

#### 3.2.1.1 Lack of Islamic Knowledge and Practice

Most people in Bangladesh have inadequate knowledge about *Syari'ah* management. With the exception of students who have been studying in madrasa since childhood and Islamic religion students in universities, most of the students remain unaware of the basic knowledge of Islamic issues like *Syari'ah* management. According to Ather et al. (2007), the British ruled Bangladesh for almost 200 years, (Ather et al., 2007). Thus, the British system has a significant impact on every public sector, from education to individual life in Bangladesh. Indeed, the influence of the British and Western systems on education forces the people of Bangladesh to remain ignorant of Islam and Islamic management from childhood to adulthood, (Ather et al., 2007). Not-to-mention, there is a massive lack of investment and research in *Syari'ah* management in Bangladesh. Although people from Islamic religious backgrounds know *Syari'ah* management, their contribution to research is minimal. Furthermore, the lack of knowledge and understanding of *Syari'ah* management, an inappropriate education system, and higher research in *Syari'ah* management have created a high deficit of actual practising Muslims in Bangladesh. So, most Muslims in Bangladesh today are Muslims only by their name, not by their actions. As a result, such shortcomings hamper



the proper practice of *Syari'ah* management in every public sector in Bangladesh, particularly in the development of *Halal* Certification, (Rahman, 2015).

### 3.2.1.2 *Absence of Islamic Environmental movement and Cultural Crisis*

Despite being one of the largest Muslim countries in the world, Islamic norms, values, and culture are hardly seen in the public sector in Bangladesh. Due to globalisation and liberalisation, Western and Indian satellite channels have spread across the country, and these channels are streaming foreign cultures instead of Islamic culture in Bangladesh. Thus, due to the influence of foreign culture, the people of Bangladesh are set to lose Islamic zeal. There are many secular NGOs in Bangladesh, most of which are working with anti-Islamic motto and philosophy and are introducing a secular way of life and culture in the country without any restrictions. In addition, social and political barriers negatively affect Bangladesh's Islamic spirit and culture. Thus, the Islamic environmental and cultural crisis is one of the obstacles to implementing Islamic management in Bangladesh, (Ather, et al., 2007).

### 3.2.1.3 *Lack of Islamic Media Coverage*

Secular management has a significant impact on the media in Bangladesh. Satellite channels, radio, magazines, newspapers, and other media are primarily involved in promoting secular agendas rather than promoting Islamic management. In addition, most media outlets do not promote the benefits of Islamic management to the general public in Bangladesh. However, some magazines, newspapers, and private TV channels promote issues related to *Syari'ah* management but do not make a satisfactory impact, (Ather, et al., 2007).

### 3.2.1.4 *Lack of Involvement with Islamic Marketing*

Islamic marketing is a part of human activity, entirely based on Islamic teachings. It includes fair treatment and honesty, forbidding interest at the expense of others, treating customers with respect and honesty, and promoting generosity and the good interest of all humanity, (Ahmad, 2018). Based on two primary sources of Islamic *Syari'ah* such as the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah*, Islamic marketing can be defined as the wisdom that satisfies the needs of consumers through good behaviour in providing *halal* and pure products and services with the mutual consent of both sellers and buyers, (Abuznaid, 2012). Hussnain has opined that the principle of value maximisation based on equity and justice is the heart of Islamic marketing, (Hussnain, 2011). According to Jonathan Wilson, Islamic marketing is a school of thought with a moral compass that guides people towards Islam's moral values and norms. It is a school of thought that Muslims and non-Muslims can follow because it contains sustainable benefits and relevance for non-Muslim customers, (Wilson, 2012). However, the involvement of Bangladeshi marketers with the Islamic marketing system is highly unsatisfactory. Marketers are failing to achieve consumers' satisfaction and trustworthiness due to the prevalence of profound dishonesty and corruption. They adulterate food items by mixing toxic chemicals, overcharging the products, taking advantage of people's desperate needs, and so on. According to the survey report made by Mohiuddin, there is a 75% absence of the Islamic marketing system in Bangladesh which is affecting the *halal* movement adversely (Mohiuddin, n.d.). Hence, the lack of involvement with the Islamic marketing system can be considered an obstacle to improving Islamic management in Bangladesh.

### 3.2.2 Lack of Understanding of *Halal* Certification

The *halal* certification system is crucial in ensuring the *halal* quality of products for Muslim consumers. In fact, due to the reliability and quality of the product, the demand of non-Muslim consumers for *halal* goods is also increasing day by day. The *halal* certification is a system that can increase a country's revenue in terms of sales, market share, profit, productivity, export opportunity, and effective promotion of products. According to Khan & Haleem (2016), the *halal* certification system can enhance the marketability of the product internationally, especially in Muslim countries, as Muslim consumers around the world have a growing awareness of their obligations of consuming properly prepared *halal* food, (Khan & Haleem, 2016).

Bangladesh is a country with massive potential for developing a *halal* certification system. However, most Bangladesh people have good concepts about *halal* and *haram*, but they lack understanding of *halal* certification, logo, and brand. Lack of awareness and proper understanding leads people to misunderstand the *halal* certification system. People do not understand the real purpose of the *halal* certification system; that it ensures that every single part of every product must be *halal* at every stage of processing, such as; manufacturing stage, packaging stage, marketing stage, and all other aspects of the product making. This system includes consumable products without differentiating between foods and cosmetics. Iqtadul Haque, general secretary of the Bangladesh Agro-processors Association, has opined that the *halal* certification is only necessary for fish, meat, and some frozen foods, not so urgent to other products, (Samakal, 2021). However, it cannot be a tenable opinion because some items such as vegetables and fruits are not processed or produced foods, but they still must fall within the *halal* guidelines set by the teachings of Islam to consider them as *halal*, (Al hazmi, 2013). Despite being naturally *halal*, sometimes *halal* certification is required for eating vegetables and fruits. Thus, it is evident that the *halal* certification is also required desperately for products other than fish, meat, and frozen foods.

Another misconception about *halal* certification that Bangladesh has is that *halal* certification and logos on all products can hamper imports and exports. According to the Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Safiquzzaman: The draft policy on the obligation of *halal* certificates in the production, import, and export of all products does not make any sense; somewhat, it will impede trade, (Samakal, 2021). Whereas, plenty of research has been conducted on the *halal* certification's demand that shows that the demand for *halal*-certified products is increasing rapidly worldwide, including non-Muslim countries. The *halal* food market is considered to be the fastest-growing market in the world, (Ben-berry, 2011) for two main reasons; firstly, *halal*-certified foods are cleaner, healthier, and healthier, (Alam and Sayuti, 2011) than non-*halal* food; secondly, because of the significant acceptance of *halal* products among the world population (Ayyub, 2015). Ayyub has examined that the importance of *halal* is rapidly increasing, and initial protests against *halal* service in the West are slowly disappearing (Ayyub, 2015). Shoemaker (2006) has reported that many *halal* products were sold in the UK alone, and their value is around \$4 billion, (Shoemaker, 2006). All the above reports show that *halal* products are becoming an essential issue for Muslims and non-Muslims as it has a positive impact on economic growth and development besides fulfilling hygiene, (Alina et al., 2013). Thus, it is not a valid reason for not using *halal* certificates that the obligation of using *halal* certification on all types of products will have a detrimental effect on the trade of Bangladesh. Finally, it could be concluded that the people of Bangladesh, particularly the traders, industrialists, and trade policymakers, lack a better understanding of the actual purpose of *halal* certification, its benefits and positives. Therefore, this lack can be considered a hindrance to the development of *halal* certification in Bangladesh.

### 3.2.3 Lack of Proper Implementation of the Law

The Bangladesh government passed the Food Safety Act in 2013, (Ministry of Food, 2016), including 36 laws, 10 rules, and 12 policies, (Rajib, 2017). Finally, it was officially enacted in 2015, (Prothom, 2015). However, unfortunately, many reports show a widespread lack of proper implementation and negligence of these laws, (ekushejournal.com, 2021; Toma, 2021; Badal, 2020; Ali, 2019; Rajib, 2017; Islam, 2015). According to Siddiqui, Bangladesh is a country with the highest food safety laws in the world. However, he argued that the administrative system of law enforcement is not well-organised in Bangladesh. It has not developed inspection techniques, and there is no straightforward procedure for identifying non-compliance with the rules. Also, Bangladesh is under the pressure of law for food safety, but the food is the most unsafe in Bangladesh, (Siddiqui, 2014).

Additionally, it is undeniable that in terms of prosecution and jurisdiction, there is no special law in Bangladesh that can be a supreme law of *halal*-related matters. From this point of view, it is essential to enact so-called *halal* laws in Bangladesh. On the other hand, the Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh has been issuing *halal* certificates for various products since 2007, and so far, it has issued *halal* certificates and logos for 300 products produced by 115 companies, (Islamic Foundation, 2020). In 2015, the Islamic Foundation formulated a policy on *halal* certification, (IFA, 2017), and there are 16 sections in this policy, (Uddin, 2020). However, these policies related to *Halal* certification are also not being appropriately applied, (Uddin, 2020; Samakal, 2021; OUR ISLAM, 2019). Thus, in terms of the above discussion, it could be considered that the lack of proper implementation of the law is one of the challenges in the development of *halal* certification in Bangladesh.

### 3.2.4 Absence of Accredited *Halal* Lab

A *halal* testing lab is an imperative medium that technically supports the *halal* status and verifies that every ingredient and raw material used is *halal*. According to Van der Spiegel et al., *halal* analysis of products is based on specific biomarkers, such as oil/fat-based, DNA-based, protein-based, alcohol-based, and metabolites-based, (van der Spiegel et al., 2012). *Halal* laboratory ensures procedures and processing lines with high-quality standards and specific precautions. At the same time, it helps spread information to consumers and instils confidence in the *Halal* Authority, (Jaswir et al., 2014).

Uddin (2020) recommended that Bangladesh set up its *halal* laboratory to test raw materials and various ingredients to develop a *halal* certification system. Because to issue a *halal* certificate following the proper procedure, different types of tests and even DNA tests are required, (Uddin, 2020). The Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh took the first to launch its *halal* testing laboratory in 2017, (Uddin, 2017; IF, 2017). However, there is still a considerable lack of standard product testing laboratories, particularly *halal* testing laboratories in Bangladesh. According to Abul Kashem, there is no accredited lab in Bangladesh to issue certificates by ensuring international standards. Due to the export of products without adequately determining the quality, importing countries got harmful bacteria, viruses, and heavy metals in products. Consequently, the European Union has stopped importing betel leaf, Russia has stopped importing potatoes, China has stopped importing crab and Kuchia, and Saudi Arabia has stopped importing freshwater fish due to pork bones and chicken droppings in the diet. Therefore, although Bangladesh is one of the top countries in the production of various agricultural products, including vegetables and fish, it is at the bottom in terms of the export of these products, as it has been reported that Bangladesh's share is only 0.06% in the annual export market of about 1600, (Kashem, 2021).

Kashem, A. has reported that in Bangladesh, the Department of Agricultural Extension for the export of agricultural products, the Department of Fisheries for the export of fish, and the Department of Livestock for the export of meat and animal products give certificates, respectively. The Islamic Foundation issues *halal* certificates with exporting goods to the Middle East, and the BSTI certifies 181 products according to the Bangladeshi standard at the production level. However, unfortunately, none of these organisations can issue 'Fit for Human Consumption' certificates as per the parameters set by the buyer states, (Kashem, 2021). One of the primary reasons behind this disability is that even though a few product testing laboratories in Bangladesh are not well-structured and do not follow international standards properly. However, unfortunately, Bangladesh is still away from following most of these particular *halal*-related standards in the case of laboratories.

### 3.2.5 Lack of Skilled Manpower and Proper Training

The rapidly growing development of the *halal* industry requires a wide range of workforce in various *halal*-related aspects to support the demand in this industry. It is in dire need of a workforce to carry out public relations and marketing activities, enhance and develop the capacity of *halal* consultants and advisors, supervise *halal* administration, implement *halal* regulation, and so on, (Shahwahid, et al., 2017).

Bangladesh lags in developing the *Halal* certification system due to a lack of skilled workforce and proper training related to this industry. Islamic Foundation, despite being the only institution that issues *halal* certificates in Bangladesh, (Kaler, 2015), does not include any clause or subclause on training for the development of professional skills of the workforce concerned with *halal* certification, (Uddin, 2020). According to the report of 24 live newspapers, only three people are working in the *halal* certificate division of the Islamic Foundation to certify a product as *halal*. The three are a director, a commentator (*Qur'anic* interpreter) cum deputy director and an assistant director cum desk officer. However, unfortunately, none of them is qualified to test the quality of the product. Even so, the Islamic Foundation has certified more than 100 products from 65 companies as *halal*, (24 live newspapers, 2018). At the seminar titled '*Halal* Certification Standards and Challenges: Opportunities for the Bangladesh Market', several speakers emphasised the need for *Halal* Certification Authority and trained inspectors in the *halal* industry. Also, DCCI President Abul Kashem Khan said: The government should build a skilled workforce and develop institutional skills, simplify the process of issuing *halal* certificates and develop infrastructure by providing low-interest financial incentives, (Kaler, 2018).

However, the above discussion clearly shows a dearth of skilled workforce with suitable qualifications in the *halal* industry in Bangladesh. There is a lack of *halal* auditors, *halal* executives, *halal* panel, who conduct the *halal* audit, handle the *halal* certification application, approve the *halal* certification, etc. As a result, we can see that the shortage of skilled workforce leads to a lack of proper testing of a product for *halal* certification and puts a heavy workload on *halal* certification issuers, which prevents providing certificates quickly, particularly when so many *halal* certification applications are received at any one time. Similarly, the discussion shows that there is a massive lack of proper training in the *halal* industry in Bangladesh which leads to a lack of new skills in *halal* management, lack of *Syari'ah* knowledge in managing *halal* products and services, and a lack of basic skills related to *halal* industry such as the skill of customer service, sales, negotiation, ensuring a safe working environment, etc. Thus, it is evident that the lack of skilled manpower and proper training hinders the development of the *halal* certification system in Bangladesh.

### 3.2.6 Failure to Maintain *Halal* Integrity

The consumers of *halal* food are becoming more and more aware of the integrity of the *halal* status of the products day by day. Also, they are becoming more curious about all the activities involved in the product supply chain to see if the purchased products were *halal* with quality. According to Manning and Soon (2014), the term food integrity should describe foods that are accurately represented and processed. Therefore, *halal* integrity will again obviously present the details of the *halal* status of the food and assure that all *halal* requirements have been met. Indeed, food safety is a crucial part of *halal* integrity because wellness is a parallel requirement for *halal*, for which food should be pure, lawful, and suitable for human consumption, (Manning & Soon, 2014). Tieman (2011) has opined that ensuring *halal* integrity is vital in developing a reliable *halal* food supply chain in today's complex and competitive environment. Moreover, to maintain *halal* integrity, a complete understanding of the entire *halal* food supply chain is required, (Tieman, 2011).

A reliable traceability system in the *halal* food supply chain can strengthen *halal* integrity. According to Gamberi et al. (2007), traceability is a way to provide safer food supplies and connect producers and consumers, (Gamberi, et al., 2007). From the perspective of the *halal* food industry, traceability can be used to determine the *halal* status of a specific food product at each stage of the supply chain. It includes information on the activities that the *halal* products have gone through, including the activities involved before producing that specific food product the origin of the ingredients or animals. Correspondingly, this traceability system can fully monitor critical *halal* control points. Subsequently, if a product is suspected to be cross-contaminated with non-halal ingredients, detailed information can be retrieved through this traceability system to identify cross-contamination points and take further action, (Zulfakar, et al., 2014). Overall, it is undeniable that building trust between all parties involved in the management of *halal* food products and abstaining from unethical practices in the *halal* industry can also enhance *halal* integrity.

Food adulteration has been considered a national problem in Bangladesh. It is ignoring the human right to safe food and seriously endangering public health. Khan reports that food adulteration with toxic chemicals harmful to health in Bangladesh has reached an epidemic level, (Khan, 2013). Rasul has noted that adulteration of food with toxic chemicals has reached an alarming situation in Bangladesh, and because of that, people are suffering from food phobia, (Rasul, 2013). Studies have shown that the use of formalin as a preservative in fruits, vegetables, fish, meat, and some other foods is harming the health of the people of Bangladesh, (Fattah & Ali, 2010), which will lead to a sick nation very soon, (Kamruzzaman, 2016). According to several published news, features, and articles, most of the foods produced or processed in Bangladesh are either adulterated in different doses or unsafe for human consumption, (Sujan, 2020; Mahmud, 2020; New Age, 2021; Badol, 2020; Toma, 2021).

The lack of integrity, the lack of traceability system, and unethical practices in the food industry are the leading causes of this deadly problem of food adulteration in Bangladesh. Unfortunately, these inadequate and unethical practices also exist in the *halal* industry of Bangladesh. As a result, the *halal*-certified companies and industries are also continuously losing consumers' trust in their *halal*-certified products due to the poor food quality. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the concept of *halal* emphasises that food should be *halal* and ensures food safety, hygiene, and well-being. In order to properly implement this particular concept of *halal*, *halal* integrity must be maintained in the *halal* industry. However, the *halal* industry in Bangladesh suffers from a deficiency of *halal* integrity, which is adversely affecting the development of *halal* certification.

## 4. METHODS

This is an analytical and descriptive study. The selected issue will be analysed based on the Malaysian experience. The authors will use the qualitative method, relying on primary sources, including government documents related to *halal* certification in Bangladesh and secondary sources, including library research, online websites, published articles and journals, thesis dissertations, and editorial reports and newspapers. In addition, the authors will analyse the collected data to identify the challenges in the development of the *halal* certification system in Bangladesh. The reference list of this paper has been arranged in alphabetical order of authors' surnames according to APA (7th edition).

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The focus of this study was to identify critical challenges that could be considered hindrances to the development of the *halal* certification system in Bangladesh, based on Malaysian experience. By contrast, the above discussion presents that Bangladesh is lagging in developing the certification system due to several challenges. It also shows that the prospects of Bangladesh regarding *halal* certification development are still far behind reality.

However, the emergence of the *halal* industry is considered one of the fast-growing sectors of the last two decades. Due to the growing Muslim population in the world, the demand for *halal* products has increased notably over the past few years, and simultaneously the *halal* industry has developed and continues to grow rapidly. Research shows that the fast-growing global *halal* in the business sector has provided a remarkable opportunity that enables Malaysia to become a world-renowned *halal* centre known as *halal*-Hub. Malaysia's leading contribution to *halal* activity has been considered a benchmark of the global *halal* framework, (Abd Kadir et al., 2016). Moreover, Malaysia has been recognised as the first advanced Muslim country where the government is working progressively to develop its *halal* industry. As a result, its *halal* certification is making a considerable contribution to the economy and playing an essential role in maintaining a responsible position in the world market. Studies have shown that Malaysian *halal* certification is widely recognised worldwide, which could set an example for other nations, (Asa, 2017). Despite being a Muslim majority country, the issue of *halal* has to be dealt with very carefully in Malaysia. Malaysian Muslims are cautious about their food consumption, as they live in a pluralistic society. So, assuring the status of *halal* and *haram* food is a big concern.

Undoubtedly, the Muslim managers, experts, and employees involved in Malaysian *halal* organisations are well educated in this particular area. Also, they understand Islamic management practices well and implement these practices in their organisations, (Sulaiman et al., 2014). The Malaysian government has made *halal* food and products mandatory to have a *halal* certificate approved by JAKIM. Therefore, manufacturers and food operators provide confidence to consumers in the *halal* food that they consume by using the *halal* logos in their products, (Khalek, 2014). A survey found that Malaysian consumers are concerned about the *halal* logo and are also concerned about the ingredients used. It also found that the average perceptions of consumers towards the *halal* logo and ingredients were significant at a 99 per cent confidence level, (Abdul et al., 2009). Young consumers in Malaysia are also very concerned about *halal* food and logos and know the concept of *halal* and *halal* certification. A survey conducted on Malaysian young consumers' knowledge of the concept of *halal* showed that 45.9%, 28.7%, and 5.2% of the respondents have acquired knowledge of the concept of *halal* formally from *Fardhu Ain* classes, schools, and higher learning Institutions, respectively. On the other hand, 22.7%, 28.5%, 15.1%, 10.1%, 4.8%, 3.9%, and 2.4% of the respondents

have gained knowledge on the concept of the *halal* informally from the internet, family, books, magazines, television, friends, and radio, respectively. According to this survey, 95.1% of respondents of the young consumers have agreed that it is essential for them to eat *halal* food, and 79.2% of respondents have agreed that they should not eat food that is not *halal*. In light of the findings of this survey, it is clear that respondents agree that *halal* foods must have certified *halal* logos. Furthermore, this study revealed Malaysian young consumers' positive attitudes towards *halal* foods and *halal* certification approved by JAKIM, and the author examined that these positive attitudes might be influenced by religious belief, mass media, and people around them, (Khalek, 2014).

In terms of *halal* law, Malaysia's *halal* law has evolved to keep pace with the rapid growth of the country's *halal* industry. Research has shown that laws related to food and *halal* products in Malaysia are subject to different Acts, but that provision is seen as sufficient, (Shahwahid & Miskam, 2018). Malaysia has comprehensive laws and clear guidelines on *halal* products. However, there are some issues regarding the enforcement of these laws that need to be addressed, (Soraji et al., 2017). For instance, a report shows that MDTCC and JAKIM's enforcement division filed 120 cases of misuse of the *halal* logos between September 2011 and September 2015. Of these 120 cases, 64 are almost settled, and the remaining 56 are under jurisdiction. To date, there are 33 different laws under the preview of MDTCC, but the number of enforcement officers is minimal, and they do not have enough time to enforce every law, (Asa, 2017). Therefore, the *halal* governing authorities of Malaysia need to be more proactive in exercising their powers for the effective implementation of *halal* laws.

Malaysia has established well-equipped *halal* laboratories to monitor certain haram ingredients of raw materials, monitor half fabricates, identify contaminants, analyse food samples, etc. The *halal* food control system in Malaysia is supported by three notable organisations, namely the Department of Chemistry (DOC), the Ministry of Health (MOH), and the Malaysia *Halal* Analysis Centre (MyHAC), (Ahmad, et al., 2018). Furthermore, Malaysia has set up quality standards, including *halal* food processing, (Van der Spiegel et al., 2012). Its *halal* standards are internationally recognised as well as these standards have gained trust from the countries under the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) as the top *halal* standard among Muslim countries, (Man and Pauzi, 2017). If we look at *halal* laboratories in Malaysia, we see that they have 15 exceptional standards related to *halal*, (Jais, 2019), such as; *Halal* Food – General Requirements, *Halal* Pharmaceuticals - General Guidelines, *Halal* Cosmetic - General Guidelines (First Revision), Islamic Consumer Goods - Part 2: Usage of Animal Bone, Skin and Hair–General Guidelines, *Halal* Supply Chain Management System - Part 1: Transportation - General Requirements (First Revision), and so on, (Yuswan, et al., 2020).

Indeed, *halal* training and a skilled workforce play an essential role in developing the *halal* industry. In Malaysia, the *halal* certification body and the application process for the *halal* certification system are well-organised, (Noordin, 2009). There are two types of *halal* inspection in the Malaysian *halal* industry: off-site inspection and On-site inspection, and both are related to *halal* auditors. This *halal* inspection process plays a vital role in ensuring that all requirements comply with *Syari'ah* law and technical law before the industry is awarded *halal* certification in Malaysia, (Sulaiman, 2017). However, the inability of *halal* auditors to meet the challenges in the *halal* review process shows a lack of skills among them. In addition, *halal* auditors face severe difficulties identifying new raw materials due to a lack of competence, (Lockley and Bardsley, 2000). The study found that Malaysian *halal* organisations must take the initiative to improve the qualifications of their *halal* auditors by providing clear guidelines for reviewing application documents, (Muhammad, 2020). Regarding *halal* training, the Institute of *Halal* Research and Management (IHRAM) of Malaysia develops *halal* modules, training programs, and services so that workers become knowledgeable across the entire *halal*

supply chain. Even in order to create a skilled and professional workforce, IHRAM has collaborated with several professional and experienced organisations that conduct *halal* training programs such as; *Halal* Industry Development Corporation (HDC), Global Integrity Products and Services Sdn Bhd (GIPS), Department of Religious Affairs and Malaysia Berhad Chemical Company (CCM), (Hashim & Shariff, 2016). Moreover, besides *halal* training institutes, Malaysian universities such as HPRI, UPM; INHART, IIUM, IHRAM, USIM, etc. are also actively involved in training courses of food quality, certification programs, and quality assurance schemes for food industry associations, (Ahmad, et al., 2018).

Undeniably, *halal* integrity is considered an essential foundation of the *halal* food industry, (Zulfakar, et al., 2014), which helps bring success in the *halal* market, (Soon, et al., 2017). *Halal* integrity includes following *halal* slaughtering methods, staying away from malicious motives, refraining from cross-contamination with haram products, (Soon, et al., 2017) as well as not using fake *halal* logos. Malaysia is a country recognised for its high level of sensitivity towards the issues related to *halal* and *haram*. Indeed, its status as an international *halal* hub reflects the country's sustainable *halal* ecosystem, which is supported by the sensitivities of government, industry, and consumers. The rapid development of the *halal* industry in Malaysia is led by strict laws on food safety, hygiene, and fair economic play, (Md Ariffin et al., 2021). However, several reports show that some illegal groups make *halal* food a crime in Malaysia. As a result, various food crime issues such as; Food fraud, food adulteration and food terrorism are on the rise, (Md Ariffin et al., 2021). Furthermore, many companies found in Malaysia use fake *halal* logos or logos that do not comply with the prescriptions provided by the competent authorities, (Asa, 2017).

A study has also found mislabelling concerning species substitution and cross-contamination in commercial meat products in Malaysia, (Chuah et al., 2016). Additionally, it is reported that 1,500 tons of illegal meat cartel smuggling syndicates from four foreign countries, namely China, Ukraine, Brazil, and Argentina, have been arrested in Malaysia by the end of 2020. It is believed that this syndicate has been established in Malaysia for many years, (Md Ariffin et al., 2021; SCMP, 2020). However, several laws are in place to control *halal* issues in Malaysia, particularly the law that imposes criminal liability for violating the *halal* logo. Malaysian law is the strictest in the world regarding rules on *halal* issues. However, some policy steps regarding *halal* governance need to be taken by the Malaysian government, (Asa, 2017).

In the end, this study succeeded in developing evidence to achieve the objectives set for this research. The present findings have demonstrated and identified the challenges faced by the existing *halal* certification authorities in developing the *halal* certification system in Bangladesh. Also, this study found that the Malaysian *halal* certification authority is moving ahead of Bangladesh in overcoming the identified challenges. However, there are still some shortcomings, such as; lack of proper enforcement of the law, misuse of the *halal* logo, shortage of workforce in *halal* auditors, need to be improved by Malaysian *halal* authorities for further development of the *halal* certification system.

## 6. SUGGESTION AND RECOMMENDATION

These are some recommendations and suggestions for the readiness of Bangladesh to develop the *Halal* certification system in Bangladesh:

- (a) The Bangladesh government should take necessary steps to develop the Islamic management system such as Islamization of knowledge, building institutions based on Islamic management, increasing research activities in Islamic management, and exploring Islamic management through the media.



- (b) Since the Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh (IFB) is the only main body that could issue *halal* food and products certificates, it must improve its existing *halal* certification systems such as administration, policy, and coordination between employees and officials etc. Alternatively, it should follow Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM), particularly its *halal* certification systems, as Malaysia has been recognised as a *halal* hub worldwide.
- (c) Government agencies should improve the knowledge and understanding of manufacturers and consumers on the concept and importance of *halal* certification. In addition, they should raise awareness about the *halal* certification system through educational programs in schools, *halal* exhibitions, mass media campaigns and social activities.
- (d) The government should be stricter in implementing the laws related to the *halal* certification system by taking some necessary actions such as suspending or revoking approved certificates for non-compliance with conditions, imprisoning those who misuse the *halal* logo, penalising or fining those who break the *halal* law, and so on. Alongside maintaining *halal* integrity and controlling food quality, monitoring by inspection is required.
- (e) The government should establish well-equipped scientific laboratories to analyse the quality assurance of *halal* products and provide accurate results in food control systems which must be carried out by qualified personnel in a reliable manner.
- (f) To fill up the workforce shortage, the government should provide job opportunities for new graduates that can help them explore various fields related to *halal* industry and provide training on *halal* technical, scientific, and Sharia knowledge through theoretical and practical activities.

## 7. CONCLUSION

As a Muslim majority country, Bangladesh has enormous potential in the *halal* food industry. Indeed, the development of the *halal* certification system is a crucial element to developing a *halal* industry. However, due to several challenges, Bangladesh is lagging in developing the *halal* certification system. The lack of *Syari'ah* practices and unethical practices in the *halal* food industry are the main barriers to overcoming most of the challenges in developing the *halal* certification system and building a world top-class *halal* food industry in Bangladesh. Therefore, to develop a *halal* certification system and enrich the *halal* industry in Bangladesh, industrial practices should be based on *Syari'ah* compliance, ethics, and credibility. Marketers, manufacturers, companies, and vendors should intend to gain ethics and credibility besides making a profit. Moreover, an effective monitoring system should be adopted in the *halal* industry to increase the stability of the *halal* certification system in Bangladesh. Nevertheless, further research is much needed to find more possible solutions to overcome the identified challenges in developing the *halal* certification system in Bangladesh.

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