

CHAPTER IV

RESULT OF OBSERVATIONS AND THE FIELD SURVEY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the result of the survey and main elements of the findings regarding halal slaughter industry and issues observed in the slaughterhouses and abattoirs are presented as an answer to the research questions. Also Sharia imperfections observed and current trends in the Halal slaughtering procedures are discussed. It further list the factors that crippled the rulings applications in the industry. While the final part of the study which is the next chapter would attempt a propose solution and recommendations that may resolve the issues and problems in the slaughterhouses and abattoirs. This study is aimed to map Halal slaughtering in Malaysia, in the face of growing facilities and demand for Halal meat, and the forthcoming changes of the innovative technology in slaughtering procedures for the protection of genuine Islamic method and the Muslim generations. All of the statements are based on the responses given by those interviewed and it represents their views and perceptions rather than what may in fact be the case. The population of Malaysia is estimated to be about 30million with over 60% Muslims (World Population review, 2014 & HDC, 2011). Hence it is accounted that halal meat and poultry demand and its consumption is very high.

Provision and consumption of halal meat is an essential distinctive aspect of a Muslim life. It is estimated in the survey that many Muslim indicate they consume beef or poultry regularly, with almost 8 out of 10 who describe they consume meat most of the time especially chicken meat. Moreover, more Malaysian responded that they are satisfied with the availability of halal meat supplier in Malaysia, though many lack the knowledge of how the animal are slaughtered and processed e.g. like the use of electric water bath during the slaughter of poultry and head stunning for the sheep and

cow, however suggesting that their halal requirements are adequately been fulfilled as proved by HDC and JAKIM (Maryam, 2000). On these behalf efforts are being made by HDC, JAKIM, universities and other government and non-government firms in promoting the understanding and awareness about the meat production procedures and the enhancement of the halal standard and certification.

4.2 HALAL MEAT STANDARD AND CERTIFICATION

Halal products, especially the meat and poultry are fast gaining global recognition as a new benchmark for economic growth especially for Muslims. Safety and quality assurance, genuine certification and slaughtering according to Islamic rituals undoubtedly need the involvement of the sharia experts. Meats that are slaughtered with genuine halal certification are readily available and acceptable by Muslim consumers everywhere. The acceptance is due to the concept of halal, which covers not just the sharia requirements but also the hygiene, sanitation and safety aspects. Besides, genuine halal certification is a powerful marketing tool for the Muslims and non-Muslim producers, as there is increasing awareness of Muslim consumers in Malaysia and around the world on their obligation to consume halal meat. In these regards the listed problems and contentious issues observed during the survey need to be resolved, improved or perhaps a complete amendment in order to upgrade the standard and quality of the halal meat industry:

1. Recitation of *Tasmiyyah* by the slaughterers.
2. Less or no involvement of Sharia experts.
3. Minimum amount of required veins are not cut.
4. Unmonitored stunning prior slaughter (for those who stun before slaughter).
5. Contamination issue.
6. Illegal slaughterers and unfit meat sale, non-Muslim slaughtering at various Halal slaughter-houses and majority of poultry slaughter facilities owners are non-Muslims.
7. Lack of strict auditing standard.

8. Lack of training for Muslim slaughter-men and certifiers.
9. Islamic rules interpretation unclear.
10. Halal certifiers; Authenticity, lack of standards, insufficient checks, imperfections in the documentation.
11. Transparency and Traceability.
12. Doubts about imported meat.
13. Hygiene standards questionable.

4.3 HALAL SLAUGHTERING AND THE SLAUGHTERHOUSES

Out of the 28 abattoirs and slaughter-houses in the research sample that was contacted for the field work, only 16 responded inclusive the wet-market facilities. Probably others were reluctant because of the research topic which deals more on sharia related problems in halal slaughterhouse. Most of the slaughter facilities and abattoirs that took part employed between 350 to over 500 workers, with a minimum of 3 to 5 for a small scale abattoir or slaughter-shops. The companies that took part have been established for between five and fifteen years. Moreover apart from the Halal in-charge or Halal executives, some of the owners and senior representatives interviewed were non-Muslim. However the slaughterer at the slaughterhouses and abattoirs reveals to be Muslim.

Most of the slaughter-houses in the survey slaughter chicken and duck, and all the abattoirs slaughter sheep and cattle, while many companies depend on imported beef and poultry from Australia, New Zealand and India etc. Although all the slaughter plants in Malaysia do stunning prior the slaughter using water-bath stunning system except for the local wet-market and slaughter-shops which uses the traditional Islamic method of slaughtering for their live poultry. However, *Ayamas* cooperation located in the Klang valley and Johor uses the (coning) system in place of stunning to subdue the birds before slaughter; whereby the chickens are inserted in a solid or hollow object that tapers from a circular base to a point. Most of the abattoirs, slaughterhouses and processing facilities interviewed supply mainly super-stores, independent butchers and

small shops. Some of the companies as well have self-owned stores where its products are sold in wholesale or retail as Malaysia poultry targets mainly the local markets and Superstores.

Conning system: It is a process to subdue the animals in place of stunning used in Ayamas slaughterhouses in the Klang valley and Johor Baru. The chickens or poultry are inserted in a solid or hollow shape object that tapers from circular base to a point where the head comes out.





Figure 1.10 Conning systems (Used in place of stunning)

4.3.1 THE SLAUGHTER PROCESS

Almost all the slaughter-houses and abattoirs that took part in the survey use stunning technology before the actual slaughter of the animals. Thus most owners did not approve the non-stunning method due to animal welfare procedures and a gesture of harmonizing the meat industry side by side with the west for their huge contribution in the industry. Although large numbers of Muslim consumers, who are aware of the stunning method, insisted that the animals should not be stunned. Moreover the permissibility for stunning is approved by *Jakim* as part of the Malaysia standard MS 1500:2009.

It was argued that, stunning is simply making the animal immobile or unconscious before the animal is slaughtered for the purpose of reducing or removing the pain the animal feels at the time of slaughter. Hence to claim generally that animals die from stunning is false and displays ignorance of what stunning is. A significant number of

governments of various countries recommend stunning for the sake of lessening the pain of the animal at the time of slaughter.

The arguments for animal stunning and against stunning were explored during the research. And there were practical advantages cited by those not in favor of stunning. Although, the issue is centered on the interpretation of sharia method of slaughtering as described in the Quran and *Sunnah*. It was realized that the sharia method weighed more against the merits of animal welfare, and also prove more humane than the application of stunning technology as previously described in the Schulze and Hazem experiment.

From the researcher's observations and interview, it was noted that the abattoirs and slaughterhouses who agreed to take part in the research never denies using the traditional halal method in their slaughter process. However after further probing some common themes emerged:

- I. Cows are stunned using Electric shock in other word called (restraining box) in the Shah-Alam plant before the actual slaughter.
- II. Chickens are stunned using Electrified water-bath method prior the slaughter in all the poultry slaughter-houses, except the local wet-market slaughter shops and *ayamas* that uses the conning system to subdue the animal in place of stunning, afterwards the blood vessels is slit with a sharp knife to drain out the blood.

4.3.2 METHOD FOR CATTLE AND SHEEP SLAUGHTER

Cattle was taken to a special built-up box termed "Restraints box", in other words called "stunning box", where an electric shock is applied on the animal's head only as seen in (figure 1.6). This renders the animal insensitive to pain as claimed, causes it to lose its senses and fall to the ground, thereafter the slaughterer recites *tasmiyyah* and slaughter the cattle letting out it blood, this method was observed in Shah Alam abattoir, unlike *Seremban* abattoir and others which are without stunning. There is also another method which many slaughterhouses regularly use though it was not

observed in the survey here in Malaysia, and it is to hit the animal on the head with a metal hammer or using a captive bolt gun, which fires a blank cartridge and it propels a small bolt of a small metal rod from the barrel. The bolt penetrates the skull bone and causes concussion as seen in (figure 1.2 & 1.3), causing it to fall to the ground unconscious. Then, the animal is hung upside-down using a hoist and taken to the slaughterer where the throat is cut. The blood is drained from the animal and it is taken to the next phase of slaughtering process in which it is skinned and cut.

As for sheep or goat slaughtering in Malaysia abattoirs, traditional method of slaughtering is widely used. Animals are sent through the lairage to the slaughterer where throats are slit without the use of stunner then followed by other procedures of bleeding and skinning. However in most of the western countries in the trade sheep or goat was taken to a special place where there is a person assigned to give the animal an electric shock using a special instrument similar to a pair of scissors as seen in (figure 1.4). The instrument is placed on the forehead of the animal and causes it to lose its senses and then the slaughterer does the cutting of the throat and other required veins.

4.3.3 METHOD FOR POULTRY SLAUGHTER

Chickens are transported to the place of slaughter through a conveyor belt on which the chickens are hanged upside down with its legs tied to the hooks on the conveyor. Then the chickens were made to pass through electrified water bath for poultry stunning before its actual slaughter. After the stunner a qualified halal checker is placed to check the animal condition before slaughtering. Birds whose conditions are bad were removed; afterwards the slaughterer cut the required veins to drain the blood. Another checker then verifies if the slaughtering were done correctly. After the chicken is slaughtered, the same machine takes the hanging chickens to the scalding machine where is hot water. The chicken are immersed in the water in order to pluck out the feathers, clean and check the external quality condition of the birds termed QC-inspection. Then the birds are finally washed followed by the post-mortem inspection that checks the internal organ quality condition and then the evisceration where the intestine are withdrawn. The final stage of washing of birds is then carried

out with cool and hot water chiller to disinfectant bacteria, and then the birds are vacuumed packed ready to be stored and transported.

Moreover there are many methods of slaughtering chickens mechanically or using stunning methods. In some major plants abroad, after the recitation of Allah's name, a machine takes care of all the stages of slaughter and production, where the chickens enter the machine from one side alive and exit from the other with all the stages of slaughtering, removing of feathers, cleaning, cutting into pieces, packaging etc. have being taken care of by this colossal electric appliance (system not applicable in Malaysia). In some plants, a Muslim pronounces the name of Allah (*tasmiyyah*) before switching the machine on which caters for the slaughtering of thousands of chickens. In other places two Muslims stand at each of the two production lines. One pronounces the *tasmiyyah* during the slaughter process, while the other makes sure that the machines has missed no chickens. As observed in the Thailand plant, sometimes each lines slaughters nearly 140 chickens per minutes or more than 8000 chickens per hour. This continues until the remaining phases of the slaughter are complete, including the plucking of the feathers and cleaning of the insides and finally the chicken is ready for sale or export.

4.3.4 OUTCOME OF THESE METHODS

The intent of the welfare group and majority of the abattoirs and slaughterhouses for implementing this method of slaughtering (stunning) is claimed to display their compassion for animals. Besides, it exhibits the demands of animal right activist or animal welfare. However, it was learned that the actual motive of these technologies is to produce more meat in a shorter period of time, in other words, to earn huge profits. A group of dedicated Muslim doctors have taken a comprehensive study regarding this type of meat, as can be seen in the publication of Ghulam Mustafa Khan, 1982 the head of the organization of Muslim doctors in Britain, and activist like Abdel Majid Katme (A medical practitioner and Halal services activist UK). The followings are some of their observations:

1. Stunning the animal before slaughter causes slackness in the animal and contraction in its heart, causing the amount of blood which comes out of the

animal to be less than normal. It is an experienced fact that the taste of the meat of an animal whose blood was completely drained out is different from the taste of the meat of an animal which still has some blood remaining in the carcass.

2. The electric shock does not fulfill its purpose in all cases. For instance, if the intensity of the shock is too low for the large size animal, then the animal is left semi-paralyzed without losing its senses. It then experiences two pains; one from the electric shock or the captive bolt and the other from the slaughterer. On the other hand, when the electric shock is too strong for the animal, the heart of the animal stops and it dies. Such animal will be considered to be slaughtered in an un-Islamic manner and will be unlawful to consume under all circumstances by the sharia.
3. The method of slaughter used by Muslims is far more humane and merciful to the animals because a sharp knife is used and the slaughter takes place very quickly. It is an established fact that an animal feels pain through the nerve veins beneath its skin, and it experiences less pain in the Islamic method. Also it is a well-known fact that the heart of an animal which does not lose its senses during the slaughter plays a greater role in pumping the blood out of the body.

4.4 OTHER CONCERNED REGULATORY ISSUES

According to Parahoo (2006), the design selected should be suited, in order to achieve an answer to the research question. Hence a comprehensive attempt was adopted during the survey and observations to quantify the halal slaughtering and slaughterhouses structures and practices. Highlighting areas of concern that may be in need of assessment, improvement or complete development which may improve the quality of the meat industry, certification and especially the slaughtering procedures. An inventory of above named slaughterhouses and abattoirs was made for the purpose of evaluating, and background information on each plant was gathered by the researcher with direct communications with operators. Thus some of the main problems that lead to the violation of sharia rulings were identified.

It is obvious that animals are kept for various reasons and in return their needs should be provided for in order to fulfill the obligations of deriving benefits from them. There are various moral obligations to each individual animal that we use, this obligations includes not causing unnecessary harms to the animals. Therefore achievement of high standard of halal meat slaughtering requires awareness and knowledge of animal needs and both caring and careful efforts on the part of all who are involved in the slaughtering procedures. A responsible and responsive management, well skilled and conscientious stockman-ship, considerate handling and transport, and on top of all is the humane slaughter with the supervision of sharia personnel.

There are grounded ethical issues in Islam when an animal is slaughtered for consumption. The sharia legislation and the Malaysia standard requires that the method of slaughter must not cause any pain or suffering to any animal. For slaughter of an animal to be humane with minimal distress these concerned regulatory issues was observed during the survey which may need an improvement or complete development;

1. Invocation of Allah's name.
2. Legislation and enforcement.
3. Pre-slaughter stunning procedures.
4. Incomplete bleeding procedures.
5. Incomplete cut of the required veins.
6. Owners being a non-Muslim.

4.4.1 Invocation of Allah's name (*Tasmiyyah*)

Though it may not be obligatory according to Imam Shafii as Malaysia Muslim are mainly followers of Shafii school of thought (*mazhab-shafii*) yet the importance have been stressed upon by the great scholar in *Kitab Al-umm*. However it was notice that this condition is not well observed by the slaughterer especially in the poultry slaughter-houses during the survey. Three out of the four major schools of thought require that the name of Allah should be recited at the time of slaughter. Since

Malaysia procedures does not allow the use of mechanical slaughterer whereby the machine do the direct cutting of throat (JAKIM, 2001). Usually two or three slaughter-men stand to do the slaughter in most of the plant visited, but rarely one hears them reciting the *tasmiyyah*. Imam Shafii said it is *sunnah* (action practiced by the Prophet) and its commendable as observed if the slaughterer does not recite the name of Allah forgetfully. He also said in *kitab Al-Umm*; “An animal is lawful if a Muslim forgets to read the name of Allah at the time of slaughter. The animal is unlawful if he does not read the name of Allah considering it not important”.

4.4.2 Legislation and enforcement

There should be a review of legislation and enforcement of the sharia rulings and regulations in slaughter-houses and abattoirs, and its compliance should be encourage and enforced otherwise it may fail to achieve its aims of genuine slaughtering and certification. In the survey a non-standard auditing, weak monitoring and supervising were noticed. The halal in charge in plants must implement the standard Malaysia directives, which provides the basics framework for the legislation. Besides Jakim should not feel constrained from legal proceedings where there is any sort of inhumane handling that goes beyond the sharia rulings and national standard regarding animal slaughter. Informal verbal advice should be giving when visiting the law breakers and a written warning should follow wherever there is clear breach of legislation and penalty should be imposed. Hence Jakim should introduce a system of formal improvement notice for the composition, equipment or practices in the slaughter-houses that do not comply with the law and have the potential to cause harm to the animal. Animal processed in both small slaughterhouses and the large facilities should benefit from the same principles of humane slaughter and there should be assurance through adequate surveillance of what has been done. In conclusion, involvement of the sharia personnel in the procedures should be upheld and encouraged to attain best standard.

4.4.3 Pre-slaughter stunning procedures

Though mechanical slaughtering in other words automatic neck cutter machines are not allowed in Malaysia, yet the pre-stunning of animal before the actual cut manage to slip through into the law. The Malaysia standard MS 1500 requires animals are stunned before slaughter, using the methods of stunning prescribed by the regulations, subjected to specific exemptions. From amongst the exemptions refers to slaughter without the infliction of unnecessary suffering by the slaughterer. It was noticed during my survey that unmonitored stunning has been practiced despite its controversial state among the Malaysia Muslims. In Shah Alam abattoir cattle are restrained in the restraint box for an electric shock afterwards the animal fall on its side while the slaughterer cut the throat then drained the blood. And just as the poultry pass through the electrified water for stunning then undergo the throat cut. It was notice that the stunning process is not well watched upon most of the time, considering the animal situation. Sometimes the animal slips off one of its body part which causes injuries to the leg or shoulder. Therefore stunning and the restraining facility need to be re-evaluated, particularly in terms of the efficiency of restraint of animals of varying sizes.

4.4.4 Incomplete cut of required veins

Since the industrialization of halal meat and poultry, producers were compelled to find ways to speed up the slaughtering procedures of meats and poultry. Though mechanical slaughtering to the throat is not permitted in Malaysia, manual slaughtering according to Islamic ritual were maintained in Malaysia slaughterhouses, but as observed during the survey quick cut to the throat of the poultry is needed as most of the plant produces thousands of chickens' carcasses daily. These resulted in an incomplete cut of the required veins or blood vessels. Imam Shafii requires that the esophagus and the windpipe of the animal need to be cut. Thus, the slaughter will be valid when these two are cut, even if the two jugular veins are not cut.

4.4.5 Incomplete bleeding procedures

In some of the slaughterhouse visited for the survey it was noticed that some animals mainly the poultry do not drain off its blood completely before the scalding and

further processing. Muslims are not allowed to consume blood, thus animal meat need to be purified by draining away the impure blood. It was mentioned in the Quran and proven by the scientist, among many reasons for its prohibition; Blood contains microorganisms which may be danger for human's health. Bleeding is part of the slaughter process where the main blood vessels of the neck are severed in order to allow maximum blood loss from the carcass, resulting in the death of the animal. Amongst the factor for less bleeding is using a blunt knife at the time of slaughtering, as using that would prolong the incision and the cut ends of the blood vessels will be damaged. Incision should be swift and precise and all vessels severed, if all vessels are not cut, bleeding may be incomplete, causing excessive retention of blood in the tissue which can result in its putrefaction.

4.4.6 Owners being a non-Muslim

Another important factor that calls for attention in the halal slaughter-houses in Malaysia is the ownership of the poultry slaughtering plants. Amongst the poultry slaughter-houses surveyed none is owned by a Muslim except the wet market slaughter facility. As a result the transparency of what is happening in some plants due to non-Muslim ownership raises questions with the type of respond observed. Almost all the plants that refused the researcher entry or survey were also owned by non-Muslim. No doubt there is need for collaboration, regulation and development in the farming, production, logistics and retailing in the industry. Yet more encouragement should be given to the Muslims for a well balance operation and sharia compliant halal industry.

4.5 SUMMARY

The Islamic method of slaughter (*Al-Dhabh*) is one of the unique features of Islam which distinguishes a Muslim slaughter procedure from that of non-Muslim. There are currently hundreds of slaughterhouses and abattoirs in Malaysia whereby poultry and beef are being processed for the purpose of consumption. JAKIM and each states Islamic affairs body are no doubt given their best in the monitoring and supervision of the industry. Regulations or oversight from the Jakim to ensure that halal integrity is maintained, and effort is been pushed to eliminate halal fraud and misuse of the term

halal. However, while conducting the survey of halal slaughterhouses and abattoirs in Malaysia, the above mentioned concerned issues were noticed. The researcher arrived at the conclusion that the practices could be fixed by strengthening these sectors below, which are the main reasons for those contentious issues. The first four issues as mentioned above were due to either of the followings;

- a. Less involvement of sharia experts.
- b. Unmonitored stunning before slaughter (for those who stunned)
- c. Lack of strict auditing standard.
- d. Lack of training for Muslim slaughter men and certifiers
- e. Islamic rules interpretations unclear.
- f. Halal certifiers or authenticity, lack of standards, insufficient checks, imperfections in the documentation.
- g. Transparency and traceability.

Regarding the last concerned issue of the “owners being a non-Muslim”; there is no harm if the owner is a non-Muslim since the slaughter process would be done according to Islamic rituals. However, the halal industry will continue to exist and integrate if Muslims or Muslims countries owns or have share in the slaughter facilities or abattoirs. Muslims should increase their animal stock in order to reduce import from a non-Muslim country. Likewise they should support and purchase halal meat, build own communities and economies to strengthen halal industry. Financial incapability of the Muslims may not be ruled out, but achievable through consultation and support for one another.