



An Analytical Study of Pakistan's Ḥalāl Structure in the Light of Islamic Teachings and the Related Problems faced by the Industry and Consumer

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Abstract:

Ḥalāl foods are those foods which are lawful and are allowed under Islamic dietary rules and regulation. Every Muslim country has few standards and specific structures to ensure Ḥalāl foods for its inhabitants. This study encompasses the Ḥalāl structure of Pakistan in the light of few Quranic verses and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The opinions of few renowned jurists have also been taken into the consideration while elaborating the issue. This study mainly focuses on Ḥalāl related issues of the food industry in terms of the applications of Pakistan's Ḥalāl structure. The study with the help of a latest survey specifically conducted for this research highlights the issues faced by the consumer which mainly includes the rights of consumer, the labeling and packaging, Ḥalāl certifications etc. the research also highlights the role of food authorities and religious scholars in connection with the issues related to Ḥalāl foods and Pakistan's Ḥalāl Structure.

Keywords:

Ḥalāl, Ḥalāl Structure,
Ḥalāl Certification,
Industry. Consumer.

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Introduction

The significance of consuming Ḥalāl food for Muslims cannot be denied as it is one of the basic teachings of Islam. Being a Muslim country Ḥalāl and Haram were always taken into consideration while making any policies in this regard even before introducing proper Ḥalāl certification and Ḥalāl structure. Alcohol and pork were not allowed to be imported and only Muslims are allowed to slaughter the animals. The question that Pakistan has a complete Ḥalāl structure, needs to be answered. There are five pillars on which the structure of Pakistan's Ḥalāl structure is standing.

Federal Ḥalāl Structure:

The federal Ḥalāl structure in Pakistan is currently under the Ministry of Science and Technology, which includes:

1. Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA)
2. Pakistan National Accreditation Council (PNAC)
3. Pakistan Ḥalāl Authority (PHA)
4. Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR)
5. Ḥalāl certification Bodies (HCB's)

1.1. Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA):

The Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority is an authorized body for standardization in Pakistan under the 1996 Act and is an important member of most of the world standardization bodies, as well as of the OIC/SMIIC, which is a Ḥalāl standardization forum under the auspices of OIC.

1.2. Pakistan National Accreditation Council (PNAC):

Ḥalāl standards are applied by the Ḥalāl industry, and their conformance is evaluated by the Ḥalāl certification bodies through audit process, hence, there was a need to assess and evaluate the Ḥalāl certification activities done by the Ḥalāl certification bodies. For this purpose, Pakistan National Accreditation Council (PNAC) has been established that operates under the act of 2017. PNAC assesses and evaluates the Ḥalāl certification bodies

1.3. Pakistan Ḥalāl Authority (PHA):

PHA is the regulator for Ḥalāl, its rules have been recently approved. It will monitor Ḥalāl imports and exports under the 2016 Act. For export, all local certification bodies shall be registered with it and all items that are aimed to be exported from Pakistan with a Ḥalāl certificate shall also be registered with this authority (PHA)

1.4. Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR):

PCSIR operates under the 1973 Act. As a result of many years of hard work, it has gained the ability to conduct all the basic tests related to Ḥalāl and Ḥarām. Ḥalāl certification bodies seek its assistance according to their requirements.

1.5. Ḥalāl certification Bodies:

Currently there are 8 Ḥalāl Certification Bodies accredited by PNAC in Pakistan. More than 500 companies and more than 10,000 products have been Ḥalāl certified covering almost all sectors of the industry including Ḥalāl food, beverages, personal care, medicines, colors, flavors, and packaging products.

2. Ḥalāl provincial structure:

At present, there are about four food authorities at the provincial level in Pakistan. Sindh Food Authority, Balochistan Food Authority, Punjab Food Authority, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Ḥalāl Food Authority. All these authorities monitor food safety in their respective provinces as well as Ḥalāl and Ḥarām items which is reflected in their acts, guidelines, and notifications.¹

Teachings of Quran on Ḥalāl Food

For man, the whole world is a playground, from which he can acquire the means of life according to his understanding, courage and strength. On some occasions a strong man can eat by snatching and weak stealing but this habit of snatching is not a trait of human beings but of beasts which get their livelihood by snatching their livelihood from weak animals or tearing them apart.

The crown of noble creatures is placed on the head of man so that he may use his understanding and perception in the acquisition of sustenance in a correct and lawful manner, not misuse his power and authority and not allow the sublime emotions to prevail over the requirements of truth and justice. But sometimes man does not use the attributes that distinguish him from animals and beasts. Then he becomes worse than the beasts that get their sustenance by tearing other animals apart because he does so despite having intellect and consciousness.

The meaning of Ḥalāl is to open the ropes and set it free. Therefore, the meaning of Ḥarām has been reversed. In Islamic terms, Ḥarām has been determined by Allah and His Messenger. However, it can be interpreted by scholars in the light of Islamic teachings.

Allah Almighty wants man to fight for his livelihood in earning a living and to divide his day and night in such a way that he stays in thought during the day and rests at night. Almighty Allah says:

“And we He made the day a time of earning.”²

Elsewhere he said,

"And We have created for you in this (earth) the means of subsistence. You are less than thankful."³

Allah Almighty addressed every Prophet and Messenger (peace be upon him) in his time and gave him this call and advice and here it is mentioned in the plural form so that the listener may know that This is the command that has been given to all the Prophets and Messengers (peace be upon them) and this command has been bequeathed to all of them.

Allah addressed the holy group of Prophets and Messengers (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon them) in the Qur'an: "O My Messenger!"⁴

Then Allah Almighty addressed humanity in the same way:

"O people! Eat only that which is lawful and pure from the earth and do not follow in the footsteps of Satan, for he is your open enemy."⁵

Then he addressed the believers in particular:

"O you who believe! If you are the worshipers of Allah, then eat of the good things which We have given you, and keep on giving thanks to Allah."⁶

Elsewhere he said:

"And eat of the lawful and good things which Allah has given you, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, in Whom you believe."⁷

From the above verses, it can be concluded that eating Ḥalāl and good food helps one to do good deeds and good deeds. Ḥalāl sustenance is the great wealth that whoever gets it does not care if he gets nothing else, that is, man is protected from harm with the blessing of Ḥalāl sustenance.

Teachings of Hadith on Ḥalāl Food

Islam commands to scrutinize the sources of livelihood so that there is no trace of illegitimacy in it. No other religion and code of conduct can be so scrutinized. According to Islam, no individual or class can gain by inflicting financial and material harm on other individuals and classes of society. He cannot even use his legitimate income in illegal ways.

The instructions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in condemning haraam business are guiding principles for us. Read the following Ḥadīth:

If a person eats haraam wealth and then gives charity in the way of God, then this charity will not be accepted. And if he spends on himself and his family, he will be deprived of blessings."⁸

A poor Companion asked the Holy Prophet for help. He bought an ax and gave it to him as an aid. He also instructed him to cut wood from the forest and sell it. He acted on it which solved the problem of food and drink of the Companions in a dignified manner.

It is narrated that Hazrat Umm Abdullah, the sister of Hazrat Shaddad bin Aws sent a cup of milk in the service of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) during Iftar. You gave the milk to the messenger and sent it back, to ask where this milk came from. Hazrat Umm Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) said that this milk was obtained from my goat. Hazrat Umm Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with her) said that I bought that goat ... then she drank that milk ... the next day Hazrat Umm Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with her) came to his service and said: ﷺ! I sent milk to your service due to extreme heat and long day, but you returned it ...? The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: This is the command of the Messengers (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) that you should not eat anything except that which is pure and do not do anything but that which is good.⁹

Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: If you have these four things in you, even if the world dies, you will not be harmed. The third is good morals and the fourth is purity in food (ie Ḥalāl sustenance)."¹⁰

In another narration, Hazrat Abu Saeed Al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) states that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Anyone who earned wealth from Ḥalāl (source) and fed himself or wears clothes (out of this wealth), it will be a source of purity for him." ¹¹

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "There is no food for anyone better than the food earned by his hands and that the Prophet of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to eat what he earned with his own hands."¹²

It is narrated on the authority of Hazrat Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Give it to him or he will refuse. "¹³

Problems Faced by Industry

Various industries dealing with food were specifically contacted for this research. These food industries are located in Hattar, district Haripur of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. A summary of the opinions of the concerned authorities are mentioned here without highlighting their names and their food products. According to the officials working in various industries Ḥalāl Certification has serious problems in their industries. The first and foremost problem is the absence of proper and valid Ḥalāl Certification. And the lack of awareness on this issue is the main hurdle in this regard. There is no appropriate method to verify the track record of the ingredients and there is no traceability as well. We as industry want to have proper Ḥalāl Certification and we want to have this claim of Ḥalāl.

For instance we use the pulp of apple in our juices and there is no chance of Haram in it but still we want proper Ḥalāl Certification for it. But unfortunately we are unable to get that. Likewise we want Ḥalāl Certificate for the shopping bags we are using but there is no mechanism for this as well. The real issue is that all the concerned are not on one page. There is no proper chain and if you want to verify any chain, you will not succeed. There is a dire need to look into the matter in detail and in a comprehensive manner. The industry needs proper training sessions at all levels. The international standards for Ḥalāl are very different but we can meet them by adopting proper and valid mechanism for Ḥalāl Certification.

Survey:

A survey was conducted specifically for this research in the University of Haripur. The participants of this survey were asked a few questions in connection with Halāl, Halāl Structure, Halāl Certification, Industry and Consumer etc.

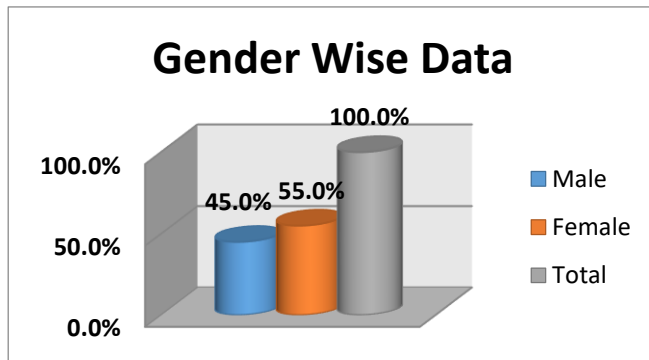


Figure 1 Gender Wise Data

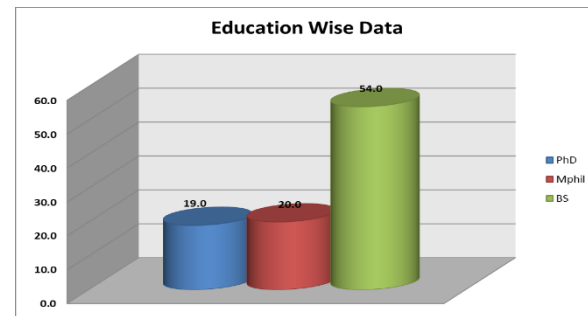


Figure 2 Education Wise Data

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About 100 people were questioned regard with these issues which included 19 people having doctorate,

20 were M.Phil, 7 had master’s degree, 54 had bachelor’s degree. (See Figure 2) 45 of the participants were male and 55 were female. (See Figure 1)

Questions Asked in Survey:

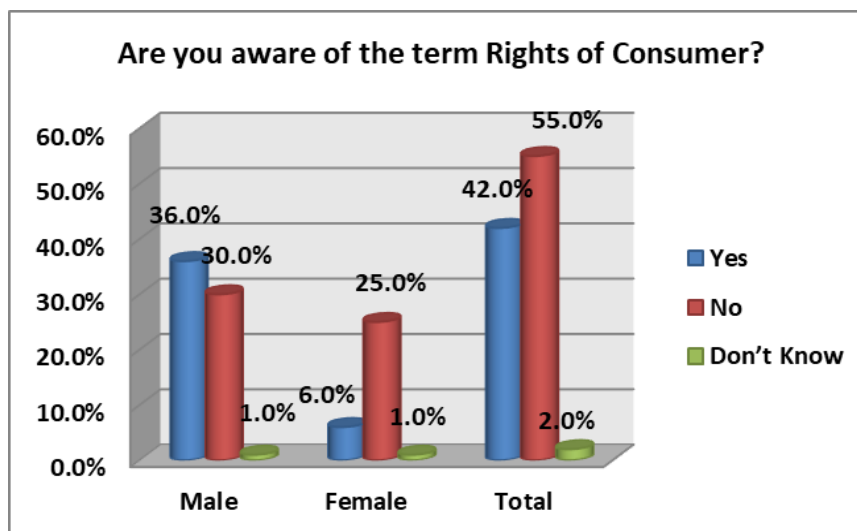
The following Seven questions were asked from every person.

1. Are you aware of the term Rights of Consumer?
2. Does a country like Pakistan need Halāl Certification or everything is Halāl?
3. Do you check the Halāl label when buying food products?
4. Are you satisfied with the role of Food Authority in terms of Cleanliness and Purification of Food?
5. Have you ever heard of Halāl Certification before this?
6. Are only edibles included in Halāl Food?
7. Are you happy with the role of government and religious scholar in this regard?

Survey Results for Each Question

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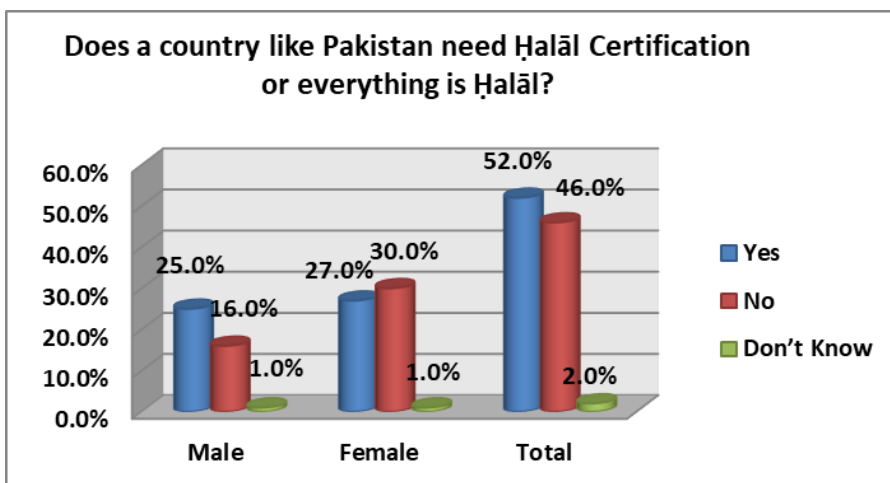
Question 01: Are you aware of the term Rights of Consumer?

was amazing to find that Majority of the people answered were found unaware of this term as 55% people answered “No”,

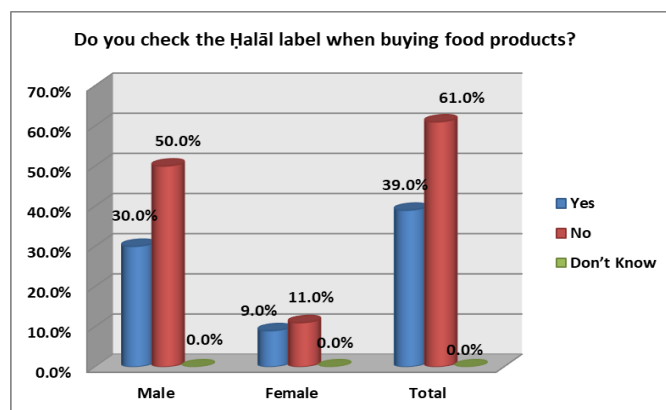
while 42% people answered that they are aware of the term Rights of Consumer and the rest of the people 2% have no idea about it. So, if we add this 2% in the majority then it becomes 57% which means that 57% are unaware of the term "Rights of Consumer".

Question 02: Does a country like Pakistan need Halal Certification or everything is Halal?

Majority of the people (52%) answered that though Pakistan is an Islamic Republic but it needs Halal Certification while 46% of the people answered that there is no need of Halal Certification in Pakistan as everything provided in the market is Halal. The rest of the people 2% said that they don't know anything about this matter.



Question 03: Do you check the Halal label when buying food products?

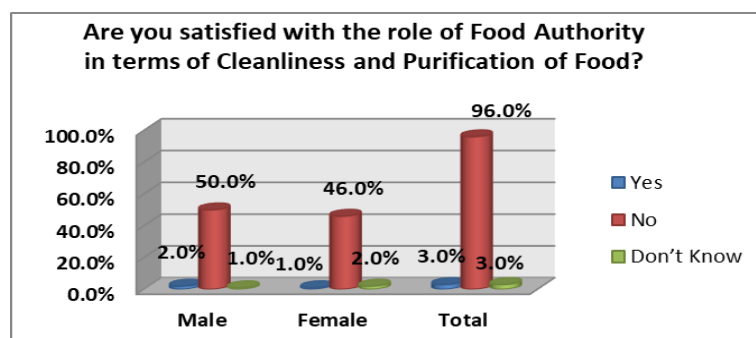


Majority of the people (61%) answered that they don't check Halal label on the products when they buy food products, while 39% of the people answered that they check Halal label on the products while buying them. There was no one who answered "don't know" which means that people are aware about Halal label on the products but the

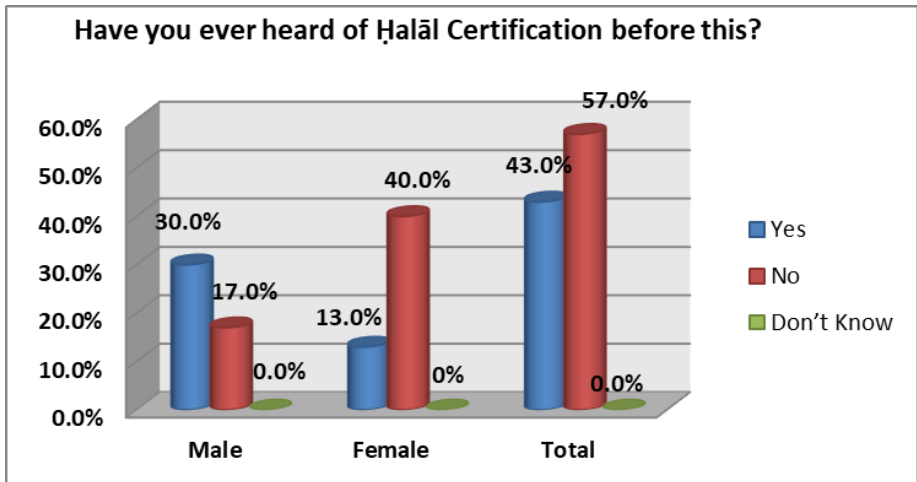
majority don't check this label that might have several reasons which can be explored further.

Question 04: Are you satisfied with the role of Food Authority in terms of Cleanliness and Purification of Food?

96% of the people were found unsatisfied with the role of food authority in terms of cleanliness and purification of food while Only 3% said that they are satisfied with the role of food authority. 3% of them said that they Don't Know about it. The answer to this question means that majority of the people are not satisfied with the role of food authority.



Question 05: Have you ever heard of Halal Certification before this?

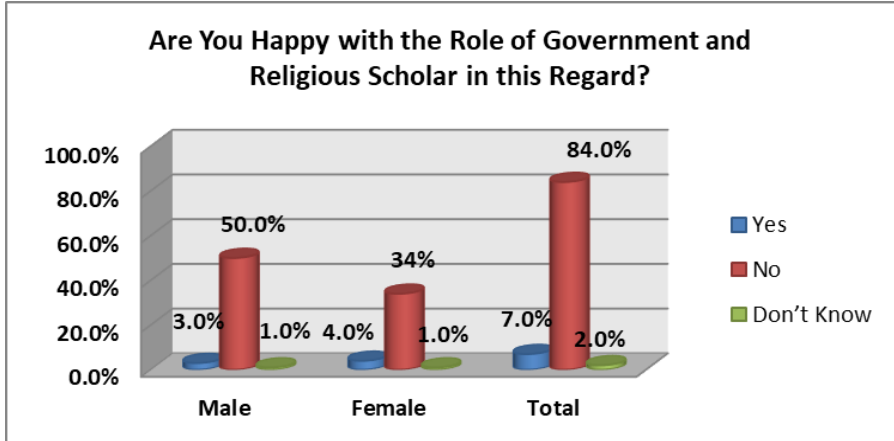
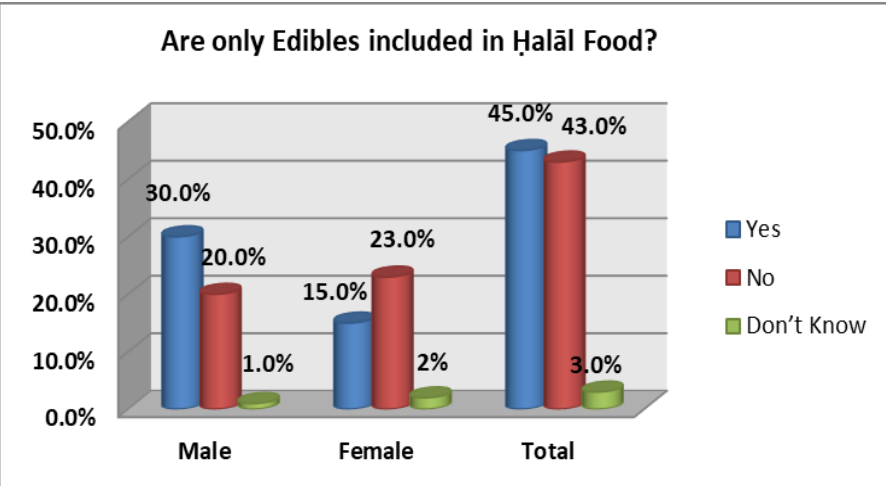


Majority of the people (57%) said that they have not heard about Halal certification before this survey and 43% said they have heard about it before as well, while there was no one found who

did not know about halal certification. The answer of majority means that there is need of awareness about halal certification among people so that they can save themselves from buying products having haram ingredients in them.

Question 06: Are only edibles included in Ḥalāl Food?

Majority of the people (45%) said that only edibles are included in Halal food, while 43% said that only edibles are not included in Halal foods which means there some other things are also included in Halal foods. 2% of the people said that they don't Know whether only edibles are included in Halal food or not.



Question 07: Are you happy with the role of government and religious scholar in this regard?

84% of the people said that they are not happy with the role of

government and religious scholars in this regard, Only 7% of them said that they are happy with their role and 2% said we don't know about it.

Conclusion:

Though Pakistan's Ḥalāl structure is very sound the on ground realities and related facts and figures are eye opening and need to be advanced on priority. Then were seven questions

asked in the Survey specifically conducted for this study. This is very significant that majority of the educated people are not aware of the term consumer and its right. Almost half of the participant said that there is no need for Ḥalāl certificate on Pakistan is an Islamic country and everything is Ḥalāl in Pakistan. 61% of the people said that they just purchase and never bother about having a look on the label for Ḥalāl food. This is very alarming that almost everyone said that they were not satisfied with the role of food authorities. 43% of the educated participants are unaware of the term Ḥalāl certification. The participants are equally divided on whether the term Ḥalāl applicable on only food items. Ḥalāl is basically an Islamic term and purely is a matter related to Islamic teaching and Islamic scholars. This is very unfortunate that almost all the participants were not happy and satisfied with the role of religious scholars and government in this very important matter.

Recommendations:

On the basis of the above mentioned findings and conclusions the following recommendations are made;

1. The Pakistan Ḥalāl structure is sound structure but there is a dire need to make it easier and more accessible for the industry and the consumer.
2. The opinions of the jurists may be taken into the consideration in the light of the day to day changes.
3. While making or changing any policies regarding Ḥalāl structure, the ground realities and the problems faced by the industry and consumer may be taken into account.
4. The basic principles of Ḥalāl structure should be very apparent with clear aims, vision and mission statements and this should be conveyed clearly to the industry and consumer.
5. Various associations and institutions which are working for the improvement Ḥalāl structure may come up with an exemplary mechanism for Ḥalāl structure and Ḥalāl certification.
6. The religious scholars must play an active and positive role in eliminating any kind of doubts and ambiguity for the industry and consumer.
7. There should be an lively and practical role of various food authorities in terms of eradicating any doubts in the mind of consumer and in providing them Ḥalāl, pure and healthy food products.
8. There should be time to time professional trainings on Ḥalāl structure and Ḥalāl certification for industry and consumer.

¹ <https://Ḥalālfocus.net/pakistans-Ḥalāl-structure/>

² Sūrah al Naba', 11

³ Sūrah al A'rāf, 10

⁴ Sūrah Mominūn, 51

⁵ Sūrah al Baqarah, 168

⁶ Sūrah al Baqarah, 172

⁷ Sūrah al Mā'idah, 88

⁸ Al Tirmidhi, Muhammad bin 'Esa, Sunan al Tirmidhi, Egypt: Maktabah Mustafa Babi al Al Ḥalabī, 1975, Ḥadīth # 661

⁹ Al Hakim, Muhammad bin Abdullah, Al Mustadrak, Beirūt: Dār Al Kutub Al 'Ilmiyyah, 1990, Ḥadīth # 7159. Al Tabarani, Sulayman bin Ahmad, Al Mu'jam al Kabir, Cairo: Maktabah Ibn Taymiyyah, 1994, Ḥadīth # 428.

¹⁰ Ibn Hambal, Ahmad bin Hambal, Al Musnad, Beirūt: Mu'ssasah Al Risālah, Ḥadīth # 6652. Al Hakim, Al Mustadrak, Ḥadīth # 7876

¹¹ Ibn Hibban, Muhammad bin Hibban, Sahih Ibn Habban, Beirūt: Mu'ssasah Al Risālah, 1993, Ḥadīth # 4236. Al Hakim, Al Mustadrak, Ḥadīth # 7175

¹² Al Bukhārī, Muhammad bin Ismail, Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī, Dar Tawq al Najah, Ḥadīth # 2072

¹³ Al Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī, Ḥadīth # 1470. Muslim bin Al Ḥajjāj, Al Jāmi' Al Ṣaḥīḥ, Ḥadīth # 1042