

PROMOTION OF HALAL INDUSTRY IN SULU: THE KEY TO ECONOMIC GROWTH

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BACKGROUND :

Sulu economy is not stable as it cannot meet the growing demands of the local people. The mode of production is backward and the means of production are further crippled by *riba*, and lack of infrastructure facilities. The objectives of this study are as follows: 1). To know the present state of the Sulu economy, 2). To assess the halal industry as an approach to stimulate economic growth and 3). To identify the role of the ulama and the local governments.

METHOD :

A descriptive narrative method was used in this research. It is a fact-finding study with an adequate and accurate interpretation of the findings. It describes with emphasis what actually exists, such as current conditions, practices, situations, or phenomena. The principal research instruments in this study are FGD, or focus group discussion, interviews with the key informants, and guide questions. Library work was also undertaken. This study was conducted in Sulu. The respondents to this study were selected ulama, professionals, and businessmen. The steps being followed in data gathering are: Preparation of focus questions; identification of the participants in the focus group discussion; identification of key informants; preparation of a letter of invitation; delivery of the letters; the conduct of the FGD; the conduct of interview with key informants; and the writing of the report.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION:

Factors Affecting Sulu Economy (Based on FGD)

1. Lack of Support Mechanism

FGD Participant 3, emphasized that one factor affects the economy is infrastructure development. There is a need to improve the roads, electricity and the internet access which lead to increase productivity in various sectors, attracts investment both domestic and foreign as well as improve market connection.

2. Lack of Quality Control

According to FGD Participants, lack of quality control affects the Sulu economy in terms of damage of consumer's trusts and product failures.

3. Behavioral aspect

This aspect also affected the economics of Sulu. Tausug are the sole solution to their economic problem. They should identify the cause and effect of this dilemma. According to FGD Participant 1, the effect was rooted in these causes: peace and order, family feuds, little trust of the Tausug in the security sectors, laziness, and too much dependency on the government.

4. Lack of Access to Internet Connectivity

The economy is negatively impacted in regions lacking technology, as productivity, competitiveness, and economic growth are all reduced. Inefficiency is caused by outdated methods and manual labor, and decision-making is hampered by missing information. Businesses lag behind in the international market, overlook chances for creativity and expansion, and investors steer clear of regions lacking technological support. Insufficient education and technology access result in skill disparities and contribute to an uncompetitive workforce. Unequal technology access contributes to social and economic inequality by restricting opportunities and service availability. Closing the gap in digital access is essential for economic growth and ending the cycle of poverty.

Potential Halal Industry in Sulu

In introducing halal, it should be guided and start with seeking knowledge about it because it is very clear that consuming halal in any form and avoiding haram in any form is an obligation to every Muslim. In addition, the preparation process should not be contrary to Shari'ah. The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) commanded all Muslims to avoid and keep away from the *shubhat*; this is to guard oneself from committing haram.

"إِنَّ الْحَلَالَ بَيِّنٌ وَإِنَّ الْحَرَامَ بَيِّنٌ وَبَيْنَهُمَا أُمُورٌ مُشْتَبِهَاتٌ لَا يَعْلَمُهُنَّ كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ فَمَنْ اتَّقَى الشُّبُهَاتِ اسْتَبْرَأَ لِدِينِهِ وَعِرْضِهِ ، وَمَنْ وَقَعَ فِي الشُّبُهَاتِ وَقَعَ فِي الْحَرَامِ ، كَالرَّاعِي يَرَعَى حَوْلَ الْجَمِيِّ يَوْشِكُ أَنْ يَرْتَعَ فِيهِ ، أَلَا وَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ مَلِكٍ حِمًى ، أَلَا وَإِنَّ حِمَى اللَّهِ مَحَارِمُهُ" رواه البخاري (52)

“Halal is clear and haram is clear. Midway between them are things which many people do not know whether they are halal or haram. He who keeps away from them will protect his religion and will be saved. He who approaches them will be near to haram, like a herdsman wandering near the place set by the king to be used by his cattle only, who could soon fall into this protected area. Surely, for every king there is such a protected area, and Allah’s is what He declared haram (forbidden)” (Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 52)

1. Halal Food

قوله تعالى: {يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا..} [البقرة: 168]

“O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good” (Qur’an 2:168)

"إِنَّ اللَّهَ طَيِّبٌ لَا يَقْبَلُ إِلَّا طَيِّبًا" أخرجه مسلم (1015)

"Allah is good and only accepts the good" (Muslim, hadith no. 1015)

FGD Participants urged that to introduce the halal industry in Sulu, it should begin with the foremost needs of the people: foods and beverages. The food industry in Sulu covers restaurants, food catering, coffee shops, street foods, and the sale of delicacies. There must be a halal certifying body, and the establishments shall comply with all the requirements set by halal certifiers. In addition, a halal slaughterhouse should also be built in our area to ensure the legality of slaughtered animals.

Furthermore, According to Badrudin et al. (2012) halal certification in the food industry context refers to the examination of food processes, including transportation and distribution. He explained that halal certification can only be obtained when the food has been verified as nutritious and prepared from permissible ingredients in a clean and hygienic manner.

On the other hand, a halal logo must be observed on a packaging, but it should be a verified logo; in other words, trusting a logo alone is insufficient. Simply having the halal emblem on a product’s package or hanging it on a wall is insufficient. Labeling contributes to giving consumers the knowledge they need to make informed decisions. The evidence for this claim is found in some products labelled with the halal logo, yet there are “e- ingredient” fall under the haram category or under musbuh, which should also be avoided due to their shubhat. Below are the lists of e-ingredients that contain pork or pork-like products: e-numbers represent specific food additives, universally adopted by the food industry. They are the reference numbers used by the European Union. (Adopted from the halal awareness seminar attended by the researcher.) E 100, E 110, E 120, E 140, E 1, E 153, E 210, E 213, E 214, E 216, E 234, E 252, E 270, E 280, E 325, E 326, E 327, E 334, E 335, E 336, E 337, E 442, E 430, E 431, E 432, E 433, E 434, E 435, E 436, E 440, E 470, E 471, E 472, E 473, E 474, E 475, E 476, E 477, E 478, E 481, E 482, E 483, E 491, E 492, E 493, E 494, E 495, E 542, E 570, E 572, E 631, E 635, E 904.

2. Halal Clothes

Textiles are one aspect of the halal business. Islam comes to the conclusion that the origin of clothes is allowed as a result of the general ruling made by the ulama based on teachings from the Prophet. The well-known Imam Sadiy said:

الأصل في مياهنا الطهارة والأرض والثياب والحجارة

Water was originally ruled to be clean (i.e., not haram), just like land, clothing, and rocks. In accordance with Islamic law, both men and women may wear clothing, with the exception of items that are in violation of the law. For men, it is haram to wear “harir” (silk) of any kind. The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) said:

"إِنَّ هَذَيْنِ حَرَامٌ عَلَى ذُكُورِ أُمَّتِي" أخرجه أبو داود 4057

“These two (gold and silk) are haram to men in the Muslim ummah.” (Abu Dawud, hadith no. 4057)

In addition, it is forbidden for both men and women to expose their “awrat” (the area between the navel and the knees in the case of the former, and the entire body in the case of the latter), with the exception of the areas that are permitted. The Muslimah is a priceless jewel that needs to be shielded from the eyes of evildoers who are driven by heart sickness. Muslimah should cover their heads with a hijab and wear the required attire to protect themselves from nonMahrams. Except for areas of the body that have been exempted by Allah (s.w.t.), clothing should cover the entire body. It shouldn’t serve as its own form of decoration. Allah (swt) declared:

{وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا} [النور: 31]

“And not to show off their adornment.” (Qur’an 24:31)

3. Halal Tourism

Today, halal tourism, or Islamic tourism, is a well-established concept in the field of tourism. The aim is to provide travel and tourism services in accordance with Islamic teachings and practices. In Muslim countries, religious commitment should always manifest in tourism, specifically with regard to facilities that do not allow the sale or serving of the alcoholic drink “khamar”, as well as those that allocate swimming pools for families and other things. It spreads in a number of Arab countries, but tourists can find a part of it in Western countries as well.

4. Halal Finance

(Akyol, 2014) cited (Zulkifli et al., 2011: 300) states that Islamic finance requires participation in sharing the profit and loss among all parties involved in this financial enterprise. Islamic finance also prohibits interest (riba).

Role of Sulu Ulama

The ulama, the leaders (umara), and the masses, are the pillars of the Sulu economy. The ulama provide guidance, and the umara implement programs and projects for the welfare of the masses. The masses will in turn work hard to contribute to the growth of the economy. With the support of the Umara, the masses will organize industries and carry forward development. The important role of the ulama in stimulating economic growth is to explain and clarify the issue of riba. They must ensure that riba has no place in business or industrial development. It is known to every Muslim that Islam came to urge them to participate in work related to what strengthens the economy. Among the roles of ulama in developing the economy is to have a place in the government for empowerment. In order for them to promote a riba-free economic system. Based on this argument raised by participants during the FGD, the ulama must have active participation in government because Islam is the only key to development and no one knows Islamic teaching better than the ulama.

CONCLUSION :

This study is very relevant to addressing the many economic and social problems in Sulu. The promotion of the halal industry shall enable the Tausug to conduct business in accordance with the laws of Islam. Observance of the Islamic rites in slaughtering halal animals, proper hygiene, and the elimination of riba will make the people closer to Allah (s.w.t.). It was highlighted during the FGD the importance of organizing academe and ulama to provide mass orientation on halal and every establishments should create halal lane as it is the duty and responsibility of every single Muslim to have an in-depth understanding of halal.

KEYWORDS : Halal industry, Halal Certifying Body, Economic Growth, Sulu, Ulama, Riba