

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM IN SUMATRA (LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE 3 ISLAMIC KINGDOMS IN SUMATRA)

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Abstract

This research aims to understand the early introduction of Islam to Sumatra and the Islamic kingdoms in the region by examining the history of religious and governmental development in the area. The research utilizes a combination of literature review and historical analysis approaches. The findings indicate that 1) Islam has been present in this region since an early period. Muslim traders, preachers, and religious teachers from various regions such as Arabia, India, Persia, and China played a crucial role in spreading Islam in Sumatra. The Islamic kingdoms of Samudera Pasai, Aceh, and Minangkabau serve as evidence of the significant development of Islam in the region. 2) The history of Islamic development during the Islamic kingdoms in Sumatra is as follows: a) During the reign of Samudera Pasai, the kingdom became a center for Islamic studies and a gathering place for scholars from various Islamic countries to discuss religious and worldly matters. b) The Aceh Darussalam Kingdom became a center for the development of Islam in Indonesia during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda. In Aceh, the Baiturrahman Mosque, places of worship, and Islamic study institutions were built. c) During the era of the Minangkabau Islamic Kingdom, many aspects of customary practices that contradicted Islamic teachings were gradually eliminated, and the fundamental rules of customs were replaced with Islamic principles. The famous Minangkabau adage, "Adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah," means that Minangkabau customs are based on Islam, which in turn is based on the Quran and Hadith.

Keywords: Samudera Pasai, Aceh Darussalam Kingdom, Minangkabau Kingdom.

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of Islam brought by Prophet Muhammad (*Peace Be Upon Him*) in the 7th century AD has played a significant role in the growth and development of the global Islamic movement. The entry and development of Islam in Indonesia, particularly in North Sumatra, is a complex process from historical and sociological perspectives.¹ There are differing opinions between the old view and the new view regarding the early history of Islam's development in Indonesia. The old view states that Islam entered Indonesia in the 13th century AD, while the new view argues that Islam was already present in Indonesia since the 7th century AD.²

¹ Edi Kurniawan Farid, "Wacana Perkembangan Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia: Pendekatan Historis dan Sosiologis," *Dirosat: Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (December 31, 2017): 183–208, <https://doi.org/10.28944/dirosat.v2i2.62>.

² Dahrun Sajadi, "Sistem Pendidikan Islam," *Tahdzib Al-Akhlaq: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 1 (June 17, 2021): 47–66, <https://doi.org/10.34005/tahdzib.v4i1.1421>.

Before the significant spread of Islam in North Sumatra, the Indonesian society, in general, was influenced by Hindu-Buddhist religions and lived in harmony. When Islam began to enter North Sumatra, the process was naturally accepted well by the local population. The approach used in the spread of Islam in this region began through economic relationships facilitated by maritime navigation and trade. The positive reception by the people of North Sumatra towards the visiting traders and scholars brought about a new dimension to the social and cultural life of the local community.

One strong indication of the introduction of Islam in the East Sumatra region, now known as North Sumatra, was the emergence of Islamic kingdoms in various areas such as the Sultanate of Asahan, the Sultanate of Serdang, the Sultanate of Deli, the Sultanate of Bilah, the Sultanate of Langkat, and the Sultanate of Kualuh.³ The process of Islam entering North Sumatra was marked by various approaches, one of which was through trade routes connecting Arab, Indian, and Persian communities. Additionally, intermarriage between local residents and traders from different countries also played a significant role in the spread of Islam in this region. The arrival of Arab, Persian, Gujarati, Chinese, and Turkish traders in North Sumatra was facilitated by the presence of international ports in Barus and Samudera Pasai.

Islam, as one of the world's largest religions today, originated and developed in the Arab region. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the founder of this religion. Islam emerged as a response to the low moral standards prevailing at that time. During that era, humanity lived in a state of ignorance (jahiliyah) characterized by idol worship, violence, adultery, and other widespread negative behaviors. Islam began to be propagated around the year 612 in Makkah. However, the spread of this religion faced challenges from its surrounding environment, leading Muhammad to migrate to Madinah in 622. It was from this point that Islam started to spread worldwide.

This study aims to understand the early introduction of Islam to Sumatra and the kingdoms that existed in this region. To do so, we need to examine the history of religious and governmental development in the area.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research utilizes a combination of literature review and historical analysis approaches. The literature review involves an in-depth examination of historical sources, biographies, written works, and scholarly literature related to the growth and development of Islam in Sumatra.⁴

³ Meila Ningsih, M. Hum Drs. Ridwan Melay, and M. Si ' Drs. Kamaruddin, "Sejarah Kesultanan Bilah Kabupaten Labuhanbatu Provinsi Sumatera Utara Tahun 1630-1945," *Jurnal Online Mahasiswa (JOM) Bidang Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan* 4, no. 1 (November 15, 2016): 1–15.

⁴ Cintantya Budi Casita, Data Iranata, and Budi Suswanto, *Studi Literatur: Concrete Filled Double Skin Tubes* (Penerbit Lakeisha, 2022), h. 56.

On the other hand, the historical analysis examines various historical sources covering the periods of Islamic kingdoms in Sumatra, such as the history and records of the Samudera Pasai Islamic Kingdom, Aceh Islamic Kingdom, and Minangkabau Islamic Kingdom. The research carefully examines relevant documents to gather evidence regarding the educational policies implemented, actions taken, and their impact on society at that time.⁵

The sources used are high-quality primary and secondary sources to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Interpretation and conclusions are derived from the analysis and interpretation of the findings from the literature review and historical analysis conducted.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Islam's Entry into Sumatra

In the history of Islam's entry into West Sumatra and its surrounding regions, there are various theories and opinions among historians. Despite differences in opinion regarding the time and place of Islam's initial entry into Indonesia, researchers present their views based on their respective research findings. Some of the figures and sources mentioned include Marco Polo,⁶ Muhammad Ghor, Ibn Batuta,⁷ Deigo Lopez de Sequeira, and Sir Richard Wainsted.⁸

Several theories supporting the entry of Islam into Indonesia are as follows:

1. Arab Theory: This theory states that Islam entered Indonesia in the 7th century AD. Some figures supporting this theory include Crawford, Keyzer, Nieman, de Hollander, Syeh Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, Hamka, and Abdullah bin Nuh. Thomas W. Arnold in his book "The Preaching of Islam" also states that in the 7th century AD, there were already Arab communities on the west coast of Sumatra engaged in trade while spreading the teachings of Islam based on the Quran and Hadith.⁹
2. European Theory: This theory comes from the travel accounts of Marco Polo in 1292 AD. He visited the northern part of Sumatra and discovered the presence of an Islamic kingdom, the Samudera Kingdom, with its capital in Pasai.
3. Indian Theory: This theory highlights the significant role of Indian traders from Gujarat in spreading Islam's religion and culture in Indonesia. Besides engaging in trade, they were actively

⁵ Peter Burke, *Sejarah dan Teori Sosial* (Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2016), h. 67.

⁶ P. A. Hoesain Djajadiningrat, "Tinjauan Kritis Tentang Sejarah Banten," (Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 1983), h.119.

⁷ Husayn Ahmad Amin, "Seratus Tokoh dalam Islam", (Bdng: Remaja Rosdakarya, 1999), h.232.

⁸ Tjandrasmita (Ed.) Uka, "Sejarah Nasional Indonesia III," (Jakarta: PN Balai Pustaka, 1984), h.122.

⁹ Rama Bahaking, "Sejarah Pendidikan dan Peradaban Islam dari Masa Umayyah Hingga Kemerdekaan Indonesia," (Yogyakarta: Cakrawala Publishing, 2011), h.130.

involved in teaching the religion and culture of Islam to the communities in the coastal areas. Some supporters of this theory include C. Snouck Hurgronje, Dr. Gonda, Van Ronkel, Marrison, R.A. Kern, and C.A.O. Van Nieuwenhuize.

4. Chinese Theory: This theory suggests that during the Tang Dynasty (9th to 10th century), Arab and Persian Muslims were already present in Katon (Kan-fu) and Sumatra. However, there is no evidence that the native population in those places had embraced Islam at the time. It was only in the 13th century that Muslim communities emerged in Samudera Pasai, Perlak, and Palembang in Sumatra.¹⁰
5. Persian Theory: This theory states that the first to arrive were muballig (preachers) from Persia, around the mid-12th century. P.A.¹¹ Hoesein Djajadiningrat is one of the proponents of this theory, basing his analysis on the influence of Persian Sufism on the mystical teachings of Islam in Indonesia.

Based on the various theories of Islam's entry into Sumatra, it can be concluded that Islam has been present in this region since early times. Muslim traders, muballig, and religious teachers from various regions such as Arabia, India, Persia, and China played a significant role in the spread of Islam in Sumatra. Islamic kingdoms such as Samudera Pasai, Aceh, and Minangkabau are evidence of the significant development of Islam in this region.

The entry of Islam into Sumatra was influenced by economic, trade, and political factors. Muslim traders conducting trade in the coastal areas of Sumatra brought the teachings of Islam and gradually influenced the local population. In the political context, the weakness and decline of Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms in Sumatra provided opportunities for Muslim traders to gain political and trade advantages. The establishment of Islamic kingdoms such as Samudera Pasai, Aceh, and Minangkabau indicates the spread and acceptance of Islam in Sumatra.

In its development, Islam had a profound influence on the customs and culture of the Sumatran society. Islamic kingdoms in Sumatra, such as Aceh and Minangkabau, integrated Islamic principles into their customary structures and eliminated aspects of customs that contradicted Islamic teachings. This demonstrates the synergy between Islam and local customs in the lives of the Sumatran society.

Overall, the entry and development of Islam in Sumatra were complex processes involving political, economic, trade, and socio-cultural factors. The various theories and opinions of historians provide insights into the diverse aspects related to the entry and development of Islam in Sumatra.

¹⁰ Taufik Abdullah (Ed.), "*Sejarah Umat Islam Indonesia*," (Jakarta: Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 1991), h.35.

¹¹ Zuhairini dkk, "*Sejarah Pendidikan Islam*," (Cet.10, Jakarta; PT. Bumi Aksara, 2010), h.132.

Islamic Kingdoms in Sumatra

There were several Islamic kingdoms that flourished and developed in Sumatra. Some of these Islamic kingdoms include:

1. Samudera Pasai Kingdom

The Samudera Pasai Kingdom was the first Islamic kingdom in Indonesia, located on the northeast coast of Aceh. Although the exact date of its establishment is still debated, the emergence of this kingdom is estimated to have occurred in the early or mid-13th century. The process of Islamization in the coastal areas, which had been visited by Muslim traders since the 7th century, played a role in the emergence of this kingdom.

The first ruler of the Samudera Pasai Kingdom was Malik Al-Saleh. The tombstone of Sultan Malik Al-Saleh, dating back to 1297, serves as evidence of his existence. Before becoming a king, Malik Al-Saleh was known by the name Merah Sile or Merah Selu. He embraced Islam after receiving the call to Islamic preaching from Sheikh Ismail and his entourage who came from Mecca.¹²

During the reign of Samudera Pasai, the kingdom became a center for Islamic studies and a gathering place for scholars from various Islamic countries to discuss religious and worldly matters. Sultan Malikul Zhahir also sent scholars to spread the Islamic faith to various regions in the Nusantara.

2. Aceh Kingdom

The exact founding date of the Aceh Kingdom is uncertain. Anas Machmud argues that the kingdom was established in the 15th century on the remnants of the Lamuri Kingdom. Muzaffar Syah (1465-1497) was the founder of this kingdom and built the city of Aceh Darussalam. Initially, the territory of the Aceh Kingdom only covered Banda Aceh and Aceh Besar, led by Ali Mughayat Syah's father. However, when Ali Mughayat Syah ascended the throne to succeed his father, he successfully strengthened his power and unified the Aceh region under his rule, including the conquest of the Pasai Kingdom.

In 1511, small kingdoms in Aceh and the eastern coast of Sumatra such as Peurelak, Pedir, Daya, and Aru came under the influence of Portuguese colonialism. Ali Mughayat Syah was strongly opposed to the Portuguese, so he conquered and incorporated these small kingdoms into his own territory to counter Portuguese influence. Since then, the kingdom became known as Aceh Darussalam, with a vast territory resulting from the conquest of surrounding small kingdoms.¹³

¹² Badri Yatim, *"Sejarah Peradaban Islam Indonesia"*, (Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, 2010), h.205.

¹³ A Hasmy, *Sejarah Masuk dan Berkembangnya Islam di Indonesia: Kumpulan Prasaran pada Seminar di Aceh*, (Aceh: PT Al Ma'arif, 1993), h.231-232.

The peak of Aceh Kingdom's power occurred during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda (1608-1637). During this period, Aceh reached its glory, expanding its influence and spreading Islam almost throughout Sumatra.¹⁴ Aceh Darussalam became a center for the development of Islam in Indonesia during Sultan Iskandar Muda's reign. In Aceh, the Baiturrahman Mosque, places of worship, and Islamic educational institutions were built. Renowned Sufi scholars such as Hamzah Fansuri, Syamsuddin, Syaikh Nuruddin Ar-Raniri, and Abdul Rauf As-Sinkili resided in Aceh and had a significant influence.

3. Minangkabau Kingdom

The Pagaruyung Kingdom, also known as the Minangkabau Kingdom, was one of the Malay Kingdoms located in what is now the province of West Sumatra and its surrounding areas. This kingdom was led by Adityawarman since 1347. Around the 17th century, the kingdom transitioned into an Islamic Sultanate.

The exact origin of the name Pagaruyung as a Malay kingdom is uncertain. However, based on inscriptions left by Adityawarman, it is known that he once ruled over the region. The influence of Islam in Pagaruyung began to develop around the 16th century through travelers and religious teachers who came from Aceh and Malacca. One famous disciple of the Acehnese scholar, Syaikh Abdurrauf Singkil (Tengku Syiah Kuala), named Syaikh Burhanuddin Ulakan, is considered the figure who first spread the religion of Islam in Pagaruyung. In the 17th century, the Pagaruyung Kingdom transformed into an Islamic Sultanate. The first Islamic king in the Minangkabau customary history is called Sultan Alif.

With the advent of Islam, many customary practices that contradicted Islamic teachings began to be eliminated, and the fundamental rules of customs were replaced with Islamic principles. There is a famous Minangkabau adage, "Adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah," which means that Minangkabau customs are based on Islam, while Islam is based on the Quran. The influence of Islam brought about fundamental changes to Minangkabau customs. However, it is still difficult to accurately determine the extent to which Islamic influence penetrated the structure of Minangkabau customs.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ahmad Al-Usairy, "*Sejarah Islam: Sejak Zaman Nabi Adam Hingga Abad XX, Judul Asli: At-Tarikh Al-Islami*", (Jakarta: Akbar Media, 2010), h.449.

¹⁵ Asrinaldi Asrinaldi and Yoserizal Yoserizal, "Problems with the Implementation of Adat Basandi Syarak Syarak Basandi Kitabullah Philosophy," *Masyarakat, Kebudayaan Dan Politik* 33, no. 2 (June 24, 2020): 162–73, <https://doi.org/10.20473/mkp.V33I22020.162-173>.

CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that 1) Islam has been present in this region since an early period. Muslim traders, preachers, and religious teachers from various regions such as Arabia, India, Persia, and China played a crucial role in spreading Islam in Sumatra. The Islamic kingdoms of Samudera Pasai, Aceh, and Minangkabau serve as evidence of the significant development of Islam in this region. 2) The history of the development of Islam during the Islamic kingdoms in Sumatra are as follows: a) During the reign of Samudera Pasai, the kingdom became a center for Islamic studies and a gathering place for scholars from various Islamic countries to discuss religious and worldly matters. Sultan Malikul Zahir also sent scholars to preach in various regions of the Nusantara. b) The Aceh Darussalam Kingdom became a center for the development of Islam in Indonesia during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda. In Aceh, the Baiturrahman Mosque, houses of worship, and Islamic study institutions were built. Prominent Sufi scholars such as Hamzah Fansuri, Syamsuddin, Syaikh Nuruddin Ar-Raniri, and Abdul Rauf As-Sinkili resided in Aceh and had a significant influence. c) During the era of the Minangkabau Islamic Kingdom, many aspects of customary practices that contradicted Islamic teachings were gradually eliminated, and the fundamental rules of customs were replaced with Islamic principles. The famous Minangkabau adage, "Adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah," means that Minangkabau customs are based on Islam, which in turn is based on the Quran and Hadith.

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