

## THE DYNAMICS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ISLAMIC LAW IN ACEH: Historical Challenges and Issues

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**Abstrak:** Aceh dikenal sebagai daerah yang memiliki ciri khas berupa penerapan syariat Islam dalam sistem kehidupannya. Namun dalam penerapannya tentu tidak selalu berjalan dengan baik, ada tantangan dan permasalahan yang dihadapi. Berkenaan dengan itu penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pemberlakuan syari'at Islam di Aceh pada zaman kesultanan dan bagaimana pula penerapan syari'at Islam pada masa Aceh sebagai provinsi Republik Indonesia. Kajiannya dengan menggunakan pendekatan dan metode historis deskriptif, sehingga verifikasi data penerapan syariat Islam secara periodik dapat dikumpulkan, dianalisis dan dijelaskan dengan mudah secara periodik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Syari'at Islam di Aceh telah diberlakukan sejak zaman kesultanan. Misalnya pada masa Sultan Alauddin Ri'ayat Syah II al-Qahhar yang menerapkan hukum qishash terhadap putranya. Begitu pula Sultan Iskandar Muda yang menjatuhkan hukuman rajam kepada putranya, Meurah Pupok, setelah terbukti berzina. Pada masa Aceh sebagai salah satu provinsi RI, pelaksanaan syariat Islam merujuk kepada undang-undang keistimewaan dan otonomi daerah Aceh, yaitu undang-undang No. 1/ 1957, undang-undang No. 44 tahun 1999; Qanun No. 5 tahun 2000, undang-undang No. 11 tahun 2006; Qanun No. 2 tahun 2009; Fatwa MPU No. 11 tahun 2013, dan Qanun No. 8 tahun 2014.

**Kata Kunci:** Syariat Islam, Kesultanan Aceh, Qonun, Sejarah Aceh

**Abstract:** Aceh is known as a region that is characterized by the application of Islamic law in its life system. However, the implementation does not always go well, there are challenges and problems faced. In this regard, this research aims to analyze the implementation of Islamic sharia in Aceh during the sultanate era and how the implementation of Islamic sharia during Aceh's time as a province of the Republic of Indonesia. The study uses a descriptive historical approach and method, so that data verification of the application of Islamic sharia periodically can be collected, analyzed and explained easily periodically. The results show that Islamic Shari'a in Aceh has been enforced since the sultanate era. For example, during the time of Sultan Alauddin Ri'ayat Syah II al-Qahhar who applied qishash law against his son. Similarly, Sultan Iskandar Muda sentenced his son, Meurah Pupok, to stoning after he was found guilty of adultery. During Aceh's time as one of the provinces of Indonesia, the implementation of Islamic sharia refers to the laws of Aceh's specialty and regional autonomy, namely Law No. 1/1957, Law No. 44/1999; Qanun No. 5/2000, Law No. 11/2006; Qanun No. 2/2009; MPU Fatwa No. 11/2013, and Qanun No. 8/2014.

**Keywords:** Islamic Sharia, Sultanate of Aceh, Qonun, Aceh History

## INTRUDUCTION

A handful of people believe that the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh was normal, without turmoil, upheaval, and casualties on the part of the people and the government. There are also those who are more extreme, who think that the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh is a gift from the central government in Jakarta, as a convention to resolve the conflict between Darul Islam/Indonesian Islamic Army with the Indonesian national army and the Indonesian police since 1953-1960, which then gave birth to the Free Aceh Movement founded by Muhammad Hasan di Tiro, whose history lasted from 1976 to 2005 (Al-Chaidar, no year; Edward, 2009).

The initiator of Darul Islam/Indonesian Islamic Army in Aceh was Teungku Muhammad Daud Beureueh. What the movement wanted to achieve was the implementation of Allah's law in Aceh, and this was highly idealized. Political lobbying to enforce Allah's law in Aceh was repeatedly carried out by Acehnese figures, especially Tgk Muhammad Daud Beureueh, who at that time served as Military Governor of Aceh, Langkat, and Tanah Karo, and previously as Military Governor of Aceh. He repeatedly openly conveyed to President Soekarno his ideal plan and the people of Aceh to enforce Allah's law or Islamic Sharia in Aceh, known as Serambi Mekkah. However, the first President of the Republic of Indonesia only gave sweet promises, with his words: "They don't believe what you say." He proclaimed Aceh as part of the Indonesian Islamic State proclaimed by Kartosuwiryo in West Java (Ibrahimi, 1986).

Meanwhile, the Free Aceh Movement was proclaimed by Hasan Di Tiro in 1976, not only because he did not have Jakarta's blessing to implement Sharia Islam, but also because he considered Aceh to be very worrying. Aceh was rich in natural resources, but its people were poor. Furthermore, the development gap between Aceh and the regions on the island of Java was very real. These are the things that Aceh must resolve according to Aceh Merdeka or the Jakarta-inspired Free Aceh Movement and return its leadership to the Sultanate (Al-Chaidar, 2012).

Throughout the history of these two so-called rebel movements, there have been many victims from all parties, especially the people of Aceh. In such unusual conditions, community voices, voices, and the issue of implementing Islamic law became increasingly important and seemed to be an effective solution to overcome various problems in Aceh. For this reason, the central government responded by establishing the establishment of the Aceh Special Region Province on May 26, 1959. Hardi (1993) explains that the Special Region designation in question was the result of the Central Government's Mission to Aceh, also known as the Hardi Mission, which was based on Law No. 1/1957. What makes Aceh special is in the fields of religion, education, culture and customs. This specialty in religion is also the formal legal basis for Aceh to implement Islamic Sharia in Aceh within the corridors of the Republic of Indonesia, which is not based on religion but Pancasila.

At the grassroots level, the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Acehnese

society has been going on for a long time and has become part of daily life. This tradition has been passed down from generation to generation and has developed in various social, cultural and legal aspects. Nevertheless, the implementation of Islamic Sharia faces challenges, including diverse understandings among the community, external cultural influences, and changing social dynamics. In practice, many Sharia provisions are applied voluntarily without strict sanctions (*uqubat*) for violators, relying more on individual awareness and social norms. Acehese people uphold Islamic values in their lives, from the way they worship, to their customs and social interactions. This collective consciousness is the main force in maintaining the existence of Islamic Sharia in Aceh, making it more than just a rule of law, but also a living cultural value.

Apart from the debate about the understanding of Ulama and Umara in the continuity of their leadership, have an understanding and enthusiasm for the application of Islamic teachings or Sharia (Muchsin, 2008). What they say is that applying Islamic law puts their leadership reputation in jeopardy. Quite a number of Sultan officials in the history of the Sultanate of Aceh have been accused of not complying with Sharia. How the implementation of Sharia took place in the Sultanate and during the independence of the Republic of Indonesia, of which Aceh has been a part since the independence of the Republic of Indonesia in 1945, is the focus of this study, which seeks a connection with the implementation and application of Islamic

Sharia in Aceh today. In addition, through this paper, we try to explore the global challenges and responses. In the last section, we would like to show how the implementation of Sharia in Aceh has progressed through history and what is ideal for the future.

This research has a significant distinction compared to previous studies that are relevant in studying the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh, such as Zada's research (2015) examining the dynamics of the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh and its relationship with local political movements. The focus is on how the implementation of Islamic Sharia is understood as a consequence of the conflict between the central government and Islamic movement groups in Aceh. However, this research does not highlight the social dynamics of the implementation of Islamic Sharia at the grassroots level. Meri Andani's research (2022) examines the implementation of Islamic Sharia as the result of a long political process between Aceh and Jakarta. Andani focuses on the legal aspects and political negotiations that underlie the implementation of Islamic Sharia. However, this research has not deeply discussed how Acehese people have historically internalized Islamic values in their daily lives. Research conducted by Ilham (2016) , highlights the role of Teungku Muhammad Daud Beureueh in fighting for the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh. This study emphasizes a lot on the historical aspect of political struggle in enforcing Islamic law, but does not sufficiently examine how the implementation of Islamic Sharia developed after being integrated into the

Indonesian national legal system. Another study conducted by Mukhlis (2014) discusses the special status of Aceh in the context of the Indonesian government and how this provides space for the implementation of Islamic Sharia. However, this research is still normative and has not explored further the challenges of implementing Islamic Sharia in the social and cultural practices of Acehnese society. Another relevant research was conducted by Wahid (2013), analyzing the role of ulama and umara in the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh. He argues that there is a tension between political interests and the desire to enforce Islamic Sharia purely. However, this study has not linked the phenomenon with the social changes that occurred in Aceh after the peace agreement and the special autonomy policy.

The main distinction of this research lies in its more comprehensive approach in looking at the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh from historical, social, legal, and political perspectives. This research not only discusses the political background and the struggle for the implementation of Islamic Sharia but also explores how Acehnese people internalize Islamic values and how Islamic law is applied in daily life. In addition, this research highlights the global challenges and responses to the implementation of Sharia Islam in Aceh as well as its future prospects, something that has not been widely explored in previous research. Thus, this research makes an important contribution to understanding the dynamics of the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh in a broader and deeper way.

This research makes a theoretical contribution by analyzing the dynamics of the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh in the historical trajectory, as well as examining the social, political, and legal factors that influence it. Based on the five previous studies mentioned above, this research fills the gap by highlighting the debate between Ulama and Umara and the challenges of implementing Sharia in various periods. Practically, this research provides insights for local governments, academics and communities in managing Sharia policies that are more inclusive and adaptive to social change. In addition, this research can also serve as a reference for the study of Islamic Sharia policies in other regions that have different historical and political backgrounds.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a descriptive historical approach to analyze the dynamics of the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh in various periods. This method aims to reconstruct past events systematically based on data collected and critically analyzed. This research refers to the theory of historical research methods proposed by Louis Gottschalk (2002), which emphasizes the validity of sources, critical analysis of sources, and careful interpretation of data in order to obtain a historical reconstruction that can be accounted for.

The data sources in this research consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data is obtained from official government documents, such as laws, *Qanuns*, and historical archives related to the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh. In

addition, interviews with historians, scholars and Islamic law experts in Aceh are also part of the primary sources. Meanwhile, secondary data includes historical books, scientific journals, previous research, and articles that discuss the historical and legal aspects of the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh.

Data collection was conducted using document study and interview techniques. Document studies were used to examine relevant archives, legal regulations and historical literature. In-depth interviews were conducted with resource persons who have authority and competence in the field of Islamic history and the application of Islamic law in Aceh in order to obtain a richer and more in-depth perspective.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this research applies source criticism techniques developed by Gottschalk, namely external criticism and internal criticism. External criticism is carried out to ensure the authenticity of the documents and sources used, while internal criticism aims to test the credibility and consistency of the source content. Data triangulation was also applied by comparing various sources of information to ensure the suitability and accuracy of the data obtained.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **Sociohistorical rulers of Aceh in implementing Sharia**

From a historical perspective, the application of Sharia in Aceh's society and government is not new, but since the sultanate era, it has been seriously implemented. They applied Hudud law as a consistent application of Islamic law because it was supported and

directly involved by the ruler at that time. Sociohistorically, there are several practices of sharia application carried out by the rulers, such as the application of Islamic sharia against murderers and adulterers carried out by Sultan Alauddin Ri'ayat Syah II al-Qahhar who accepted, supported, and encouraged the implementation of the law of killing (*qishash*) against his son, Abangta, who was caught red-handed committing a mistake, namely killing, violating the applicable laws and customs (Adan, 2005; Hasjmy, 1983). Likewise, at the end of his life and reign, Sultan Iskandar Muda Meukuta Alam (r. 1606-1636 AD) sentenced his son to death (stoning) by a woman who was not an empress, namely the crown prince named Meurah Pupok. This law was imposed on the crown prince for allegedly committing adultery with a woman whose husband was an officer. In a story, the officer in question went to war and when he returned home, he found his wife committing adultery with a man who was none other than the crown prince of the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam, namely Meurah Pupok.

When Meurah Pupok saw the husband of the woman he had committed adultery with returning from the battlefield, he fled and the officer killed his wife with the sword in his hand. The officer's anger was not yet quenched, and he and his father-in-law hunted for Meurah Pupok but could not find him, so they reported this shameful incident to the Sultan. Based on the report, Sultan Iskandar Muda then ordered Qadhi or Minister of Justice Seri Raja Panglima Wazir Mizan to investigate the validity of the incident report given by the officer and his in-laws. The results of the investigation revealed that

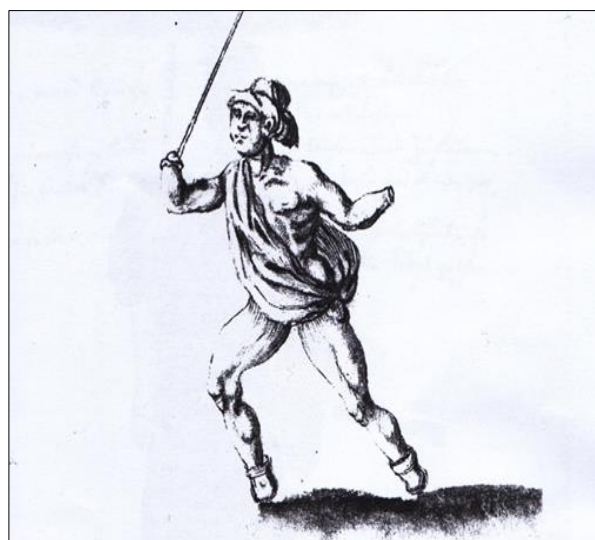
Meurah Pupok admitted to having committed adultery with the wife of a young official. Therefore, the Sultan ordered the stoning of his son. According to one account, when the public was busy questioning the Sultan's determination to stone his son and crown prince, Iskandar Muda uttered a hadith maja: *Mate aneuk meupat jirat, gadoh hukum dan adat pat tamita* (When a child dies, there is a grave, a law, and a place to look for lost adat) (Idris, 1977; Muchsin, 1998).

Sultan Iskandar Muda's determination to carry out God's law regarding his son's adultery was apparently not based on belief in the provisions of God's sharia in Al-Qur'an Surah an-Nur verse 2, but rather by shame and sincerity to carry out God's law, because it was impossible to apply sharia law to his son, considering he was the highest leader in the Sultanate of Aceh. Here he also proved that he was a great leader who obeyed and complied with the law of Allah.

In addition to adultery, the sociohistorical basis of Islamic law in Aceh

shows the application of the law of hand-cutting in Aceh for theft. From the testimony of a traveler who was at the same time a German mercenary and mercenary soldier on a trade mission led by Joachim Rudolfs of Deutecom for a Dutch company, Caspar Schmalkalden reported with the phrase "What is remarkable is that a thief who has lost both hands and feet due to repeated offenses, but can walk, stand, dance, and even throw his stick in the air and catch it". (Heidhues, 2005)

Caspar Schmalkalden also revealed the testimony of a resident of Aceh who had stolen four times and had his hands and feet cut off four times. He wrote: Four thefts brought me great misfortune, For that, my hands and feet were cut off, Now I go out into the street and ask people great and small, To help me in my needs (Heidhues, 2005). The traveler's expression of amazement and admiration for the people of Aceh that he witnessed during the time of Sultanah Tajul Alam (r. 1641-1675 AD) is illustrated in the following image:



**Figure 1:** Illustration of the condition of the perpetrators who were sentenced to cut off their hands and feet. Image source: Issac commelin, ed. (1646)

The two pictures above show people from Aceh who do not have both ends of their hands and both ends of their feet but are only wrapped with a tool made of rattan, so that the tool functions as a protector and at the same time as a cover for the ends of the cut bones, so that people who have their hands cut off for theft can generally walk like normal people with this tool.

The illustration of the first picture also shows the amazement of a traveler who sees a person who has had his hands and feet cut off, but can perform the extraordinary act of throwing his stick into the air and spinning it around, but can then recapture it in his hand, albeit a blunt, fingerless hand. However, this German traveler who worked as a mercenary on behalf of a Dutch company as part of a trade mission led by Joachim Rudolfs of Deutecom explained that there was a lot of unemployment in Aceh due to the impact of and with the provision of hand cutting, because it was no longer possible to work, many people begged on the streets (Heidhues, 2005).

This is of course because they do not know that the command to carry out the law of cutting hands for theft is a command from Allah as stated in the Qur'an surah al-Maidah verse 38 and they also do not know what the positive impact of the punishment of cutting hands for those who steal, for example, can prevent (preventive) and the principle of deterrence and fear for others to steal (Khaldun, 2004).

### **Sharia Implementation in the Provincial Period**

The legal framework for the comprehensive implementation of Islamic

law in Aceh is the Aceh Specialty and Regional Autonomy Law, namely law No. 1 of 1957; in addition, it is stated in law No. 44 of 1999 on the Implementation of Aceh's Specialty; Qanun No. 5 of 2000 on the Implementation of Islamic Shari'a; law No. 11 of 2006 on the Governing of Aceh; Qanun No. 2 of 2009 on the Ulema Consultative Assembly; Fatwa of the Ulema Consultative Assembly No. 11 of 2013 on Islamic Shari'a Economic Wisdom and Qanun No. 8 of 2014 on the Principles of Islamic Shari'a. Then, in 2018, there was a special umbrella body for the implementation of sharia economy in Aceh, as regulated in Qanun No. 11 of 2018 concerning Sharia Financial Institutions. (Alidar, 2021; Irham, 2014; Rani et al., 2020)

In contrast to the sultanate era, the population of Aceh today consists of around 4.5 million people, the majority of whom are Muslims, as part of the society and state of the Republic of Indonesia. The Republic of Indonesia is not a religious state, but its citizens are required to follow a religion. Aceh is a province of the Republic of Indonesia and therefore the applicable laws are governed by the laws or regulations issued by the Indonesian government, as indicated in the above law. (Mafazi, 2022) However, it must be recognized that Aceh is a bit different from other regions in that it has been plagued by conflict for 32 years and also the disaster caused by the tsunami earthquake on December 26, 2004, which claimed more than three hundred thousand lives, has received special attention from the Indonesian government in Jakarta. The

reality of the conflict is believed to be the main pretext and motivation for the freedom to implement Islamic sharia in Aceh.

One fact that cannot be denied is that the central government showed seriousness and good faith towards the people of Aceh, especially with the promulgation of the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 44 of 1999. The law in question concerns the implementation of the privileges of the Special Province of Aceh, which grants special autonomy rights to the community at the outermost tip of the island of Sumatra in the administration of religion, education, and customs or culture. (Ghalib & Minin, 2017; Hamdani, 2019)

The law granting autonomy in the practice of religion became the basis and forerunner for the then Governor of Aceh, Abdullah Puteh, to declare the implementation of Islamic sharia in Aceh fully effective on March 23, 2002. This declaration became a new history for Muslims in Aceh in particular and Indonesia in general in their efforts to implement Islamic law. Therefore, it is only natural that there are tones and acts of jealousy among fellow citizens of the same religion (Islam) in other regions. Why is Aceh the only region to be granted special autonomy in the implementation of Islamic sharia, when the 1945 constitution and Pancasila already exist? Not only that, there are also a handful of citizens of this nation who are concerned about the formal legalization of the application of Islamic sharia in Aceh as a step towards Indonesia's process towards an Islamic state.

Such concerns should not be necessary because in Aceh, the application of Indonesian law, enacted with full consideration of the law and its future, is in effect. The central government believes that by granting special autonomy, the people of Aceh can live in peace and avoid another political turmoil.

In connection with and to support the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh, laws No. 10 of 2002 on Sharia Courts were promulgated; No. 11 of 2002, on the implementation of Islamic Sharia in the fields of *Aqidah*, *Ibadah* and *Syi'ar* Islam; No. 12 of 2003, on the Prohibition of Drinking Arak and the like; No. 13 of 2003 on Maisir (gambling); No. 14 of 2003 on Khalwat (mesum); and No. 7 of 2004, on Zakat management.

Based on the results of the application of all the laws above, the community has certainly felt and enjoyed some of the benefits. The people of Aceh certainly feel more comfortable and have legal certainty when violating Allah's Sharia. In addition, the Acehnese Muslim community in particular feels protected from all crimes because sanctions or *Uqubat* are definitely applicable to those who violate them. (Hakim et al., 2022; Husin, 2015)

The punishment or *Uqubat* applied when implementing Islamic law in Aceh is in the form of flogging with rattan and varies from case to case. Sanki does not refer to all provisions in the Qur'an and Hadith, as was the case during the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam. So, a thief would have his hand cut off and an adulterer would be stoned. Why not apply it like this so as not to shock



the community, if applied directly of course with the current reality of social life, many people have to be punished. However, it is predicted that this will gradually lead to the application of the intended law in a kaffah manner, as intended by Allah in His word.

Looking at the sanctions in the form of flogging, both for thieves, adulterers, and fornicators, it is recognized that this has not yet reached the maximum realization of the meaning of Allah's verse mentioned above. However, it is gradually being improved and it is possible to change the content of the qanun to implement Islamic Sharia. Herein lies the uniqueness of the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh, which is certainly not found elsewhere and in other countries.

### **Challenges and Problems of Sharia Implementation in Aceh**

Undoubtedly, the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh has entered its 22nd year (2002-2024). The coming years will be more difficult in terms of implementation in accordance with the phenomenon of the development of Acehnese society. For 22 years, institutions and qanuns or laws that are the means and vehicles for implementing Islamic law have been successfully created. These institutions include the Islamic Sharia Office, the Ulema Consultative Assembly, the Dayah Board Office, and several qanuns as regulations that form the basis for the implementation of Islamic Sharia in Aceh. (Shadiqin, 2010) All of the latter are certainly not found in other provinces in Indonesia.

The presence of the Islamic Sharia Office, which is equal to other offices, is a

separate record in the history of the Republic of Indonesia, because Aceh is the only province that has a special institution to implement Islamic Sharia as a religion. Therefore, it is natural for our fellow countrymen and women in other regions to feel surprised and sometimes envious because they also have a majority of Muslims in their regions but do not have a special institution to take care of Muslims in the process and implementation of their religious teachings.

The Ulama Consultative Assembly is not new in Aceh's history. The name of this institution is a repetition of history from the 1960s, which was on the stage of the history of Ulama in Aceh and its first chairman was Tgk. Haji Abdullah Ujong Rimba (1920-1983). It is said that the era of the Consultative Assembly of Ulema founded by Tgk. Abdullah Ujong Rimba was also the pioneer of the establishment of the Indonesian Ulema Council in 1972. However, when the Indonesian Ulema Council was encouraged to have branches almost all over Indonesia, Aceh also opened a branch at that time with the transfer of the Ulema Consultative Council to the Indonesian Ulema Council of Aceh Province and its first chairman was Tgk. H. Abdullah Ujong Rimba until 1982. Of course, it should be noted that the return of the majelis permusyawaratan ulama to the spread of Aceh's history meant making a serious attempt to revive the spirit of Islamic sharia, which had to be lived and developed by the ulama as in the first decade of its formation. (Muchsini, 2012)

Returning to the implementation of Islamic sharia in Aceh, according to the general impression of the community, the direction of its application so far has focused more on physical matters and is limited to matters relating to clothing, especially the headscarf for Muslim women (Birchok, 2016; Fakhriati et al., 2023) with its enforcement (Wilayahul Hisbah); and writing the names of government institutions both public and private using Arabic Malay (Arab Jawi ) (Ernalis, 2017). From this it can be seen that the substance of sharia implementation is still at the skin level, (Mustakim & Zarzani, 2024), not the substance. Although through Law No. 11 December 2006, the implementation of Sharia in Aceh has been completed to apply it evenly in various aspects of people's lives (Hasni, 2021).

In reality, the phenomenon that occurs in Acehnese society itself does not seem to be only pro-Shariah Islam oriented in its actions. The Langsa case, for example, has attracted considerable public attention. (Bahri, 2018; Hasni, 2021)(Bahri, 2018; Hasni, 2021)(Bahri, 2018; Hasni, 2021)If it is true that the Head of the Islamic Sharia Office of Langsa City together with eight *wilayahul hisbah* officers and the Civil Service Police Unit gathered a crowd while on duty to disperse a keyboard event, then this is ironic and proves that the people of Aceh are not all pro-Islamic Sharia. (Bahri, 2018; Hasni, 2021) Therefore, it requires public understanding and awareness to understand the importance of implementing Islamic law in society to achieve the

perfection of the lives of the people of Aceh in this world and the hereafter.

Interestingly, the West's accusations against Aceh's implementation of Islamic Shari'a, especially the flogging punishment which is considered to violate international human rights norms, has been a challenge. The West's efforts to discredit Aceh, which implements Islamic Sharia by imposing sanctions or flogging, have created a negative image of the government and people of Aceh itself. (Muchsini & Armi, 2024) This accusation is of course caused by a different perspective, namely those who only see from the human side, whereas Islam implements sharia inseparable from humanitarian interests to realize the teachings and laws of God on this earth as intended in the word of God in surah An-Nur verse 2 and surah Al-Maidah verse 28 as mentioned above, although in its implementation it is carried out in stages. For Muslims, practicing Allah's laws is an act of worship and an order that cannot be ignored. Therefore, among other things, the implementation of flogging in Aceh seems easier compared to the demands of the verse and implementation in other countries such as Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and others.

This research reveals that the implementation of Sharia in Aceh is not a new phenomenon, but has been ongoing since the Sultanate era. The main findings show that the rulers of Aceh played a crucial role in enforcing Islamic law, as was the case during the time of Sultan Alaidin Ri'ayat Syah II and Sultan Iskandar Muda Meukuta Alam. Their courage in enforcing Islamic law, including sentencing members of their

own royal family to qishash and stoning, confirmed that Sharia was not only applied to the people, but also to the ruler and his own family.

From the perspective of Islamic legal theory, the steps taken by Sultan Iskandar Muda in imposing a stoning sentence on his son, Meurah Pupok, are in line with the principle of *al-'adl* (justice) in Islam. According to Ibn Khaldun (2004), the sustainability of a government is highly dependent on the justice upheld by the leader. If the law is only applied to ordinary people but does not touch the ruling family, then public trust will collapse. This is also reinforced by a statement that was once issued by the prophet Muhammad, namely if Fatimah bint Muhammad stole, I would have cut off her hand.

The application of Islamic law is also evident in the implementation of hand-cutting for thieves, as witnessed by Caspar Schmalkalden (Heidhues, 2005). His testimony shows the social effects of Islamic law, namely the deterrence of crime, although he also highlighted the social impacts such as the increase in the number of beggars due to the implementation of the law. In the perspective of Durkheim's social theory, strict application of the law can establish mechanical solidarity in society, where shared values strengthen social attachment.

In the modern context, the implementation of Sharia in Aceh still takes place within the framework of Indonesian law through *Qanun* Sharia. However, unlike the Sultanate era, its implementation is now more administrative and legalistic. This

suggests that while Sharia is still being implemented, the role of the ruler in ensuring its fairness is not as strong as in the Sultanate era.

## CONCLUSION

The history of the implementation of Islam in Aceh shows that Islamic values, especially in the dimensions of Sufism and Sharia, have been an integral part of community life since the early period. The continuation of the discourse of Sufi Islam to this day confirms that the people of Aceh continue to maintain their religious identity in various aspects of life. On the other hand, the desire to live according to Islamic teachings consistently appears in various historical episodes, both during the Sultanate period and in the modern era, reflecting the strong determination of the people and rulers to uphold God's law. However, the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh has never been free from challenges. Throughout history, various obstacles have come from within the community itself and from external influences, including foreign intervention. The challenges faced by Aceh in the 17th century AD, as noted by Caspar Schmalkalden, have a similar pattern to the criticisms and issues that are developing in the human rights discourse at the global level today. This shows that the debate on the application of Islamic law is not only local, but also has a global dimension that keeps recurring in different contexts. The future of the implementation of Islamic sharia in Aceh is highly dependent on how the community responds to the dynamics that develop, both on a local, national and international scale.

The success of sharia implementation is not only determined by formal regulations such as *Qanun* Sharia, but also by the readiness of the community to face social, political and economic challenges. Therefore, the synergy between historical understanding, commitment to Islamic values, and adaptive strategies in facing contemporary challenges is a key factor in maintaining the sustainability of Islamic sharia in Aceh.

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