



The Implementation of *Meunasah*-Based Sharia in Aceh: A Social Capital and Islamic Law Perspective*

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Abstract: This research examined *meunasah* as the social capital in implementing Islamic law in Aceh. It aimed to explain the social capital of *meunasah* concerning its role and functions in supporting the Islamic law implementation in Aceh. This research has its root in studying the sociology of law, emphasizing the empirical legal analysis within the society. The researchers used social capital, which consisted of cognitive and structural aspects as a theoretical framework, and interviews, literature study, and observation, as the data collection methods. This study found that *meunasah* had a central position in Acehnese society as a center for religious activities, a place to learn the Qur'an, social activities, and as a customary institution. Since time immemorial, *meunasah* has played a central role as a center for community activities at the *gampong* level. Even though *meunasah* had transformed itself into a mosque in urban areas, its function and role remained as a place for internalizing the Islamic law principles, as a medium for socializing Islamic law, and as a center for religious, social activities. This study argues that *meunasah* can still be the 'glue' of social networks with its religious, social, and customary values as a cognitive, social capital. On another side, *imuem meunasah* can be considered a structural social capital. *Meunasah*, as part of social institutions, can support social order and order, which is a social function of law. Without the support of *meunasah* as a cognitive social capital, the researchers argue that Islamic law will be difficult to be internalized in society.

Keywords: Sharia, *meunasah*, social capital, and Islamic law.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji mengenai *meunasah* sebagai modal sosial dalam penerapan syari'at Islam di Aceh. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan tentang *meunasah* sebagai modal sosial dalam penerapan syariat Islam, juga menjelaskan peran dan fungsi *meunasah* sebagai modal sosial dalam mendukung penerapan syari'at Islam di Aceh. Penelitian ini termasuk dalam kajian sosiologi hukum yaitu analisis hukum secara empirik atau kenyataan dalam masyarakat. Sedangkan teori yang digunakan adalah modal sosial yang terdiri dari kognitif dan struktural. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah wawancara, studi literatur dan observasi. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa *meunasah* memiliki kedudukan yang sentral dalam masyarakat Aceh yaitu sebagai pusat kegiatan agama, tempat belajar al-Qur'an, kegiatan sosial dan sebagai lembaga adat. Sejak dahulu *meunasah* memainkan peran sentral sebagai pusat kegiatan masyarakat di level gampong. Meskipun terjadi perubahan nama menjadi masjid khususnya di wilayah perkotaan tetapi fungsi dan perannya tidak berubah. Sedangkan fungsi *meunasah* dalam penerapan syariat Islam yaitu sebagai tempat internalisasi dasar-dasar syari'at Islam, media sosialisasi syari'at Islam dan sebagai pusat kegiatan sosial keagamaan. Kajian ini sekaligus menguatkan argumen bahwa *meunasah* tetap mampu menjadi perekat jaringan sosial yang di dalamnya terdapat nilai agama, sosial dan adat yang dapat disebut sebagai modal sosial kognitif, sedangkan *Imuem Meunasah* sebagai modal sosial struktural. Demikian juga *meunasah* sebagai bagian dari pranata sosial sehingga dapat mendukung ketertiban dan keteraturan sosial yang merupakan fungsi hukum secara sosial. Tanpa dukungan *meunasah* sebagai modal sosial kognitif maka nampaknya syari'at Islam sulit untuk diinternalisasikan dalam masyarakat. **Kata Kunci:** Syari'at Islam, *meunasah*, modal sosial dan hukum Islam.

Introduction

According to the history of Islam, there are several institutions considered as centers of study and socialization of Islamic law. In the Middle East, centers for the study of Islamic law are known as; mosque, *kuttab*, madrasa, *suffah*, *zawiyah*, *khanqah*, and *ribath*.¹ In Southeast Asia, which has certain distinctions

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¹Philip K. Hitti, *History of The Arab*, Jakarta: Serambi, 2006. Dedi Ismatullah, *Sejarah Sosial Hukum Islam*, Jakarta: Pustaka Setia, 2011. Adam Saman Syeikh, *Islamic Education in Kenya: A Case study of Islamic Integrated Schools in Garissa Country*, Nairobi: Thesis in Departemen of Philosophy and Religios Studies, University of Nairobi, 2013. Asri Karolina, "Perbandingan Institusi Pendidikan yang Berkembang di Abad Klasik dengan Institusi Pendidikan Islam yang Berkembang di Indonesia," *Jurnal Tadrib* 1, No. 1 (2015), p. 1-14. Fauzi Ahmad Syawaluddin, "Lembaga Pendidikan Sufistik Masa Klasik Islam (Ribath, Zawiyah dan Khanqa)," *Jurnal Kapital* 1, No. 1 (2018), p. 1.

to other regions, the centers have several denominations. In Malaysia, it will be called *pondok*; in Thailand, it is known as *poh no*; and in Indonesia, there are various names, including *surau*, *dayah*, *pesantren* and later *meunasah*.²

Since the era of the Prophet Muhammad, Rashidun Caliphate, until the imam madhhab, Centers for the development of Islamic law has experienced development and transformation. At the time of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and the Rashidun Caliphate, several educational institutions, including mosques, madrasas and *kuttabs*. The mosques like the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, the Quba Mosque and the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca were the centers for learning the Islamic law principles, education, and social activities. On another side, several madrasas were also found in Medina, Mecca, Basrah, Sham, and Egypt as religious education centers. Meanwhile, *kuttab* or *maktab* (library) was not only used as an educational institution to study the Qur'an for children, fiqh science, but also to learn the writing and the memorization of the Qur'an.³

On the other hand, Medina, Baghdad, Nisabur, and Egypt became the center of the development of Islamic law, which later became the stepping stones of the establishment of the schools of Islamic jurisprudence (madhhabs). The four madhhabs, Maliki, Hanafi, Shafi'i and Hanbali, developed from madrasas that intensively studied Islamic law and Islamic sciences.⁴ Their development was supported by the House of Wisdom (*Bayt al-Hikmah*) construction, a large library during the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad a transformation from the previous *maktab* or *kuttab*.

When Islam entered the Indonesian Archipelago (*Nusantara*), the traditions and practices of Islamic law in the form of madhhabs also developed. In consequence, the majority of the Muslim community in the Malay peninsula, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Southern Thailand, and even

²Azyumardi Azra, *Reneissance Islam Asia Tenggara*, Bandung: Rosda Karya, 2000. M. Haviz, "Designing and Developing a New Model of Education Surau and Madrasah Minangkabau Indonesia," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 6, No. 1 (2017), p. 79-100. Ali Mas'ud, Ah. Zakki Fuad and Achmad Zaini, "Evolution and Orientation of Islamic Education Indonesia and Malaysia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 13, No. 1 (2019), p. 21-49. Ridhwan, Abidin Nurdin and Sri Astuti A. Samad, Dynamics of Islamic Education in The Land of Bugis: Growth, Development and Typology Pesantren in Bone, *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 175 (2018) 012158. Although *suffah*, *zawiyah*, *khanqah* and *ribath* are more widely used in Sufism and tarekat traditions, prior to Sufism, fiqh or Islamic law is also taught.

³Iskandar Usman, "Revitalizing the Role and Function of the Mosque as a Center for Da'wah Activities and Community Development," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 4, No. 1, 2020, p. 1-2. Mursyid Djawas, *Diskursus Zakat Era Khulafa al-Rasyidin*, Aceh Besar: Sahifah, 2018, p. 27-43.

⁴Azhari Akmal Tarigan, *Sejarah Sosial Hukum Islam*, Medan: Citapustaka Media, 2013. Fabian Fadhly, "Pemahaman Keagamaan Islam di Asia Tenggara Abad XIII-XX," *Millah: Jurnal Studi Agama* 18, No. 1 (2018), p. 51.

the Southern Philippines, were becoming the adherents of the Shafi'i madhhab.⁵ Later, Islamic teachings were transformed into living law that was practiced daily.

Since the time of the sultanate, which sociologically and historically has strong social capital in implementing Islamic law, Aceh had long practiced Islamic teachings until they were sociologically rooted in its society. In addition, in the formal juridical context, Sharia began on March 15, 2002/1423 H, in the era of Governor Abdullah Puteh. It was reinforced by the enactment of the Aceh Government Law, which stated that Islamic law included religious activities, family law, civil law, criminal law, judiciary, and education.⁶

One significant element that underpins the implementation of Islamic law from a sociological perspective is *meunasah*. *Meunasah* is a part of local wisdom within the Acehnese community which currently has a vital role in a socio-religious context. *Meunasah* located at the lowest social and government structure, the *gampong* (village or subdistrict in rural areas), has a strategic role in religious, educational, social activities, and even the preservation of customary values, so that it can be used as the social capital.

The *meunasah* is a religious, social, and cultural institution at the *gampong* level, led by an imam (*imam meunasah*). He has the duties of leading religious activities, including worship and religious education, and organizing all activities related to the prosperity of the *meunasah* and the implementation of Islamic law.⁷

Meunasah is an important part of social capital and local wisdom that can be used as a center for developing civilization and traditional education in Aceh. It can be the main fortress that will guard the rural community against various negative external influences, as well as being a medium in the inheritance of Acehnese culture, which is identical to Islamic tradition.⁸

Following the explanation above, Feener, Srimulyani, and Ismail, admitted that from a historical perspective, the *meunasah* was a classical religious site until the early 20th century, which then underwent some transformations

⁵Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII & XVIII*, Jakarta: Kencana, 2005. MB Hooker, Introduction: Islamic Law in South-East Asia, *Studia Islamika* 10, No. 1 (2003), p. 1-22. Anny Nailatur Rohmah dan Ashif Az Zafi, Jejak Eksistensi Mazhab Syafi'i di Indonesia, *Tamaddun: Jurnal Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Islam* 8, No. 1, (2020), p. 176.

⁶Arskal Salim, *Challenging The Secular State: The Islamization of Law in Modern Indonesia*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008. Muslim Ibrahim, Langkah-Langkah Penerapan Syariat Islam di Aceh, dalam *Syari'at Islam di Indonesia: Antara Peluang dan Tantangan*, Jakarta: Globalmedia, 2004. Muhammad Amin Suma, Ridwan Nurdin and Irfan Khairul Umam, "The Implementation of Shari'a in Aceh: Between the Ideal and Factual," *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 20, No. 1 (2020), p. 19-48. Undang-Undang Nomor 11 Tahun 2006 tentang Pemerintahan Aceh dan Qanun Aceh Nomor 8 Tahun 2014 Tentang Pokok-Pokok Syariat Islam.

⁷Qanun Aceh Nomor 5 tahun 2003 tentang Pemerintahan Gampong.

⁸Sabirin, "Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Pasca Konflik Berbasis Meunasah," *Jurnal al-Bayan: Media Kajian dan Pengembangan Ilmu Dakwah* 25, No. 1, (2019), p. 35-73. Muslim, Meunasah: Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Tradisional Aceh, *Jurnal at-Ta'fikir* 13 No. 2, (2020).

during the Dutch colonial era in Aceh. At the *meunasah*, children were taught to memorize and read verses from the Qur'an. It also acted as a place to learn Islamic sciences and *da'wah*, worship, and dispute settlement. With all of its functions and role, *meunasah* becomes the center of community social activities and, to a certain extent, manifests as the energy for the Acehnese people.⁹

Therefore, the existence of *meunasah* as social capital and religious institutions supporting Islamic law application is essential. *Meunasah*, at the practical level, cannot be separated from the implementation of Islamic law because the responsibility for implementing Islamic law is only at the structural or government level and the socio-cultural level. In this context, *meunasah* can significantly contribute to external cultural integration.

This research has its root in studying sociology of law, emphasizing the empirical legal analysis within the society.¹⁰ The researchers used social capital as the theoretical framework, defined as the basic norms, networks, and trusting relationships that collectively grow among people in a community.¹¹ The researchers used observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation as the data collection methods. The field study was conducted in Banda Aceh, Aceh Besar, Pidie, and Pidie Jaya. This study aims to explain the implementation of *meunasah*-based Islamic law from social capital and Sharia law.

The Position of *Meunasah* in the Acehnese Society

Previous studies on *meunasah* as the social capital associated with applying Islamic law have not been widely conducted by researchers in Indonesia, especially in Aceh. There are several types of research on *meunasah*, but they do not discuss social capital. They mainly studied the issue from traditional educational institutions, customary institutions, and centers of socio-religious practices.

Wahid, Muslim, Djawas and Samad emphasized that the *meunasah* was one of the essential Islamic educational institutions since the time of the Aceh Sultanate. At the *meunasah*, Qur'an recitations were held for children and youth. It also managed to hold religious studies and other social activities. Acehnese people regard *meunasah* as a place for resolving conflicts between individuals and groups and preparing Islamic funerals. With that said, *meunasah* is a socio-

⁹R. Michael Feener, *Shari'a and Social Engineering: The Implementation of Islamic Law in Contemporary Aceh, Indonesia*, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press., 2013. Eka Srimulyani, "Islamic Schooling in Aceh: Change, Reform, and Local Context," *Studia Islamika* 20, No. 3, (2013). Badruzzaman Ismail, *Mesjid dan Meunasah Sebagai Sumber Energi Budaya Aceh*, Banda Aceh: Gua Hira, 2002, p. 3-7.

¹⁰ Salim dan Erlies Septiana Nurbani, *Penerapan Teori Hukum Pada Penelitian Disertasi dan Tesis*, Buku Kedua, Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2017, p. 16. Soerjono Soekanto, *Pokok-Pokok Sosiologi Hukum*, Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2011, p. 25.

¹¹D. Narayan dan M. F. Cassidy, "A Dimensional Approach to Measuring Social Capital: Development and Validation of a Social Capital Inventory," *Current Sociology* 49, No. 2, (2001).

religious institution that contributes to the application of Islamic law, especially at the *gampong* level.¹²

Sabirin, Mansari and Muslim, Nasir and Rachmad emphasized that *meunasah* could be used as a center for community empowerment and even women's empowerment. The function of the *meunasah* was used as a place for deliberation, drafting *reusam* (village regulations) involving community leaders, women and even children, especially related to the violation of the law. Therefore, *meunasah* for the Acehnese people could act as a community filter from various external unhealthy influences.¹³

According to Subakat, *meunasah* has several roles; *firstly*, as a center for learning and teaching religion and Islamic sciences; *secondly*, as a center in resisting the colonialization; *thirdly*, *meunasah* is the oldest Islamic educational institution in the archipelago and has contributed greatly to the context of educating the nation and has great potential for the Islamic revival. The religious attitudes of the Acehnese people are also deeply influenced by Islamic educational institutions like *meunasah*.¹⁴

Therefore, according to Mukhlis, it would be difficult to deny that the *meunasah* in Aceh, besides functioning as the earliest educational institution in the province, also operating as the center of the community socio-religious activities. *Meunasah* acts as a place of worship and as a place of education, meeting, sometimes even as a market, especially for immovable goods like land or property.¹⁵

Therefore, the position of *meunasah* in the Acehnese society can be referred to as a structural social capital that can support applying Islamic law in the province. It is a pearl of local wisdom that contains social, religious, customary, economic values, and even community empowerment.

***Meunasah*: Social Capital in the Development of Islamic Law**

¹²Abd. Wahid, "Kontribusi lembaga Adat dalam Implementasi Syariat Islam di Aceh," *Jurnal Mizani: Wacana Hukum, Ekonomi dan Keagamaan* 6, No. 2, (2019), p. 151. Mursyid Djawas and Sri Astuti A. Samad, "Conflict, Tradisional and Family Resisitance: The Pattern of Dispute Resolution in Achenese Community According to Islamic Law," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 4, No. 1, (2020). Muslim, "Meunasah: Lembaga Pendidkan Islam Tradisional Aceh," *Jurnal at-Tafkir* 13, No. 2. (2020), p. 173.

¹³Sabirin, "Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Pasca Konflik Berbasis Meunasah," *Jurnal al-Bayan: Media Kajian dan Pengembangan Ilmu Dakwah* 25, No. 1 (2019), p. 35-73. Mansari and Muslim Zainuddin, "Partisipasi Perempuan dalam Penyusunan Reusam Perlindungan Anak di Tingkat Gampong di Aceh Besar," *Jurnal al-Muzawah* 10, No. 2, (2018), p. 81. Muhammad Natsir and Andi Rachmad, "Penetapan Asas Kearifan Lokal sebagai Kebijakan Pidana dalam Pengelolaan Lingkungan Hidup di Aceh," *Jurnal Magister Hukum Udayana* 7, No. 4, (2018).

¹⁴Rayahu Subakat, "Peranan Dayah dan Meunasah di Aceh dalam Membentuk Masyarakat Religius," *Jurnal As-Salam* 1, No. 3, (2017), p. 68.

¹⁵Abdul Mukhlis, "Sejarah Lembaga-Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Nusantara (Surau, Meunasah, Pesantren dan Madrasah)," *Jurnal Al-Makrifat* 2, No. 1, (2017), p. 22.

Social capital can be categorized into two types: cognitive and structural social capital. Cognitive social capital consists of values and behaviors that increase the trust among community members in their social relationships. On another side, structural social capital is various activities, organizational structures and democratic principles that support collective action and decision making.¹⁶ Additionally, in the societal level, social capital in the field of religion is known as cognitive awareness that arises from efforts to personalize religious norms.¹⁷ In the religious field, this kind of social capital can become the ‘glue’ that unites people to eliminate and resist activities that are against religious norms.¹⁸

Therefore, social capital can be seen from its result and its process. It undergoes continuous formation and always accumulates and develops if it always functionated. The general factors that influence social capital formation are habits, people’s roles and positions, education, socioeconomic class, and personal values. Social capital rests on trust, norms, and informal networks and relies on social relations as a valuable resource.¹⁹

In the sociology of law context, *meunasah* is a religious, customary, and social institution that has a central position in the dynamics of religious life in Aceh, including the process of implementing Islamic law. As an important part of the social system, *meunasah* undeniably influences the norms or values of the social and customary law of the Acehnese people.

According to Raharjo, basic norms have the highest position from a legal perspective. It has the most prominent and powerful legal power among the members of society. It may not function effectively in socially modified circumstances. Norms and values can either be equalized or differentiated based on the perspectives used. Norms are representations from a social point of view, while values are more individual. However, in strong community dynamics, values may also become social.²⁰

In this context, *meunasah* can support the law implementation to create

¹⁶Robert D. Putman, *Social Capital and Civid Community*, USA: Infed, 2004, p. 6. Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and The Creation of Prosperity*, New York: Free Press, 1995, p. 2-3.

¹⁷Y. Bokek-Cohen and S. Ben-Asher, “How Does It Feel to Be an Anti-Martyr’s Widow? The Interplay of Religious Capital and Negative Symbolic Capital of War Widows,” *Social Compass* 65, No. 3, (2018), p. 395–412.

¹⁸Nirzalin and Yogi Febriandi, “Teungku Dayah Agency and Religious Social Capital on Drug Eradication in Aceh, Indonesia.” *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Ilmu Politik* 23, No. 3 (2020), p. 210-222.

¹⁹R. Fathy, “Modal Sosial: Konsep, Inklusivitas dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat,” *Jurnal Pemikiran Sosiologi* 6, No. 1 (2019), p. 3.

²⁰Satjipto Raharjo, *Hukum dan Masyarakat*, Bandung: Angkasa, 1980, p. 77. Sri Astuti A. Samad, “Kajian Hukum Keluarga Islam dalam Perspektif Sosiologi di Indonesia,” *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 4, No. 1 (2021), p. 138-152.

social control as a part of social institutions.²¹ Thus, *meunasah* as social capital containing norms and values and religious, social and cultural factors will underpin the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh. Consequently, *meunasah* as a community social capital will remain the main pillar in internalizing the norms and values of Islamic law in Aceh.

***Meunasah* as Social Capital in the Application of Sharia**

Meunasah, observed from its physical structure, is a building strategically located in the middle of the village. The building generally resembles traditional Acehese house constructions with its large open prayer hall but are not equipped with rooms or partitions. Its construction needs to be maintained to preserve the characteristics of Acehese architecture. Additionally, looking to the *meunasah* building will make it easier to know the qibla direction.²²

The function of the *meunasah* is not only as a “learning place” but has been used as a community center. It is also a pillar of culture and a command center for controlling community life in Aceh. On the other hand, the attachment between the Acehese people and the *meunasah* is very strong, manifested in a correlation pattern and two-sided integrity: the Acehese community and the *meunasah*. Thus, wherever there is an Acehese community, there will be a *meunasah*.²³

According to the Acehese Canon, *gampong* has several functions: improving the implementation of Sharia law; constructing *meunasah*'s physical development; preserving environmental, mental, and spiritual life in the *gampong*; increasing community development in the fields of education, customs, socio-cultural, and security in *gampong*; speeding up the community-related administrative services; improving the settlement of legal disputes in the *gampong*.²⁴

Therefore, according to the Secretary of the Islamic Law Service of Banda Aceh, *meunasah* was social capital. It could be the foundation for implementing Sharia in Banda Aceh and even in the scope of the province in general. In the past, when someone asked a person, “which *meunasah* did you come from?” *Meunasah* here meant from which *gampong* were they. In this sense, *meunasah* means the origin and place of residence. *Meunasah* would be a community centre where people could interact and synergize in realizing the development of Islamic law.²⁵

However, to lead a *meunasah* requires certain conditions. To become an

²¹Satjipto Raharjo, *Hukum dan Masyarakat...*, p. 112.

²²Sabirin, “Meunasah dan Ketahanan Masyarakat Gampong (Kajian Kritis terhadap Power of Local Wisdom,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuraden* 2, No. 2, (2015), p. 108.

²³Sabirin, *Meunasah dan Ketahanan Masyarakat ...*, p. 110.

²⁴Qanun Aceh Nomor 5 tahun 2003 tentang Pemerintahan Gampong.

²⁵Interview with IM, the Secretary of the Islamic Law Service of Banda Aceh on October 18, 2021.

imum meunasah, a man must have excellence in religious study, a good networking ability, and a mature psychological condition. The requirements to become an imam are as follows: 1) He is 40 years old; 2) He has the understanding of Islamic law; 3) He has the understanding of cultures; 4) He has a good relationship with the *gampong* community; 5) He loves doing good deeds; 6) He dislikes unlawful acts; 7) He is fluent in reading the Qur'an and; 8) He can carry out *fard 'ain* and *fard kifayah*.²⁶ On another side, the functions of the *imum meunasah* in Acehese society as stated by the canon are; 1) Leading all activities related to the prosperity of the *meunasah*; 2) Coordinating the implementation of Islamic law; 3) Managing religious assets in the *gampong*; 4) Organizing zakat, *infaq*, and *sadaqah* in the *gampong*; 5) Designing a work plan in the field of religion and Islamic law; 6) Coordinating Qur'an recitation activities in the *gampong*; 7) Getting involved as a member at the *gampong* level meetings; 8) Resolving conflicts between residents and 9) being an advisor on marriage, divorce, and reconciliation events.²⁷

Meanwhile, in some regulations, *imum meunasah* also has juridical power along with other customary institutions such as *keuchik* (headman), *tuha peut* (an institution consisting of community leaders), and *imum mukim* (a leader who lead several villages). Customary institutions have the authority to support the application of Islamic law, revitalization of customs, public order, community empowerment, and even administering customary courts. These traditional institutions have the authority to resolve legal cases, for example, the violation of civil law, the conduction of minor offences and the violation of customary law. The provision of sanctions through customary judicial process is mostly carried out in *meunasah*.²⁸

Law enforcement led by *keuchik*, *imum meunasah* and *imum mukim* is resolving disputes in the *gampong* and *mukim*. Before being handled by law enforcement officers, the *keuchik* was allowed to resolve the dispute through a regular meeting within two months. After that, if it is not completed at the *gampong* level, the opportunity is given to the *imum mukim* for one month. The decision made by the customary institution will be one of the considerations for law enforcement officials (judges). The *keuchik* and *imum mukim* can be used as expert witnesses in the dispute after being decided by the customary court

²⁶Fauzi Ismail, *Kedudukan Ulama dan Umara dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat Aceh*, Banda Aceh: Ar-Raniry Press, 2007, p. 39.

²⁷Qanun Kabupaten Aceh Besar Nomor 2 tahun 2020 tentang Pemerintahan Gampong. Qanun Kota Banda Aceh Nomor 1 tahun 2019 tentang Pemerintahan Gampong.

²⁸Fajri M. Kasim dan Abidin Nurdin, "Resolusi Konflik berbasis Kearifan Lokal do Aceh: Studi tentang Eksistensi dan Peran Lembaga Adat dalam Membangun Perdamaian di Kota Lhokseumawe," *Ilmu Ushuluddin* 3, No. 1 (2016), p. 101. Al Yasa' Abubakar, *Bunga Rampai Pelaksanaan Syari'at Islam (Pendukung Qanun Pelaksanan Syari'at Islam)*, Banda Aceh: Dinas Syari'at Islam, 2005, p. 102.

conducted in the *meunasah*.²⁹

The following is the number of *meunasah* in Aceh Province:

No	Regency/ City	<i>Meunasah/ Mushalla</i>	Mosque
1	Simeulue	236	163
2	Aceh Singkil	155	146
3	Aceh Selatan	437	273
4	Aceh Tenggara	101	198
5	Aceh Timur	544	368
6	Aceh Tengah	699	281
7	Aceh Barat	173	303
8	Aceh Besar	636	163
9	Pidie	856	196
10	Bireuen	181	650
11	Aceh Utara	396	344
12	Aceh Barat Daya	176	158
13	Gayo Lues	128	137
14	Aceh Tamiang	369	301
15	Nagan raya	293	238
16	Aceh Jaya	146	119
17	Bener Meriah	248	153
18	Pidie Jaya	313	74
19	Banda Aceh	194	104
20	Sabang	74	21
21	Langsa	302	63
22	Lhokseumawe	171	51
23	Subulussalam	177	106
	Jumlah	7.474	4.141

Source: *Aceh Province in Numbers*, 2021.

The table above shows 7,474 *meunasahs* and 4,141 mosques in Aceh Province. It means that the number of *meunasah* is more than the mosque. When compared with the number of *gampong* in Aceh, which is 6,516, it can be emphasized that there are *gampongs* that have more than two *meunasahs*, or there are *gampongs* that have mosques as well as *meunasahs*.³⁰ In the social structure of the Acehnese people, mosques are only found in residential areas that support several *gampongs*. The exceptions are found in urban areas such as Banda Aceh, Lhokseumawe, and Langsa, where mosques are almost found in every *gampong*—even there are some *gampong* that have both mosque and *meunasah*.

²⁹Abd. Wahid, *Kontribusi Lembaga Adat...*, p. 159.

³⁰Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Aceh, *Provinsi Aceh dalam Angka 2021*, Banda Aceh: BPS Aceh, 2021, p. 36.

The Function of *Meunasah* in the Implementation of Islamic Law

1. *Meunasah* as a Place for Internalizing of the Principles of Sharia

Meunasah has a central role in implementing Islamic law by becoming a host of religious learning taught by *teungku* or ulama. Its purpose is to transfer Islamic knowledge such as fiqh, tawhid, sufism and to preserve the legacy of Acehese traditions through studying Arabic-Malay books.³¹ According to NB, a community leader in Gampong Pangwa District, Pidie Jaya, *meunasah* was used to study Islamic sciences such as tawhid, fiqh, and Sufism. The recitation was led by a *teungku* (ulama) who read the kitabs *Siyar al-Salikin* and *Hidayat al-Salikin* written by Abdul Samad al-Palembani. This recitation was conducted twice a week and attended by the *gampong* community.³²

The Siyar al-Salikin fi Ibadah Rabb al-Alamin (the Traces of the Sufis in worshipping the God of the Universe) was written by Sheikh Abdul Shamad ibn Abdulrahman ibn Abdul Jalil al-Falimbani al-Jawi (1704-1789 AD). This book was heavily influenced by the works of Imam al-Ghazali, especially *Ihya Ulumuddin*. Likewise, *Hidayatussalikin fi Suluki Maslalkil Muttaqin* which written in 1778 AD in Malay and it was inspired by the kitab *Bidayah al-Hidayah* by Imam al-Ghazali. The book explains the problems of fiqh and Sufism.³³

The Siyar al-Salikin kitab consists of four parts: firstly, it explains about tawhid and faith following the *aqidah* of *Ahlussunnah wal jama'ah*; secondly, discussing *thaharah* (purification) and various kinds of uncleanness; thirdly, explaining the prayer and its conditions, pillars, Sunnah that invalidates it; fourthly, discussing the ins and outs of zakat.³⁴

The use of the Malay or Jawi alphabet in Aceh and most of Southeast Asia aims to assist the people who are not familiar with Arabic, to understand Islamic teachings easier. Besides *Siyar al-Salikin*, most fiqh kitabs are written in Malay, for example, *Sirath al-Mustaqim* by Sheikh Nuruddin al-Raniry (1068-1658 AD), *Mir'at al-Thullab* by Sheikh Abdurrauf al-Singkili (1615-1693 AD), and *Sabil Muhtadin* by Sheikh Arsyad al-Banjari (1710 -1812 AD).³⁵ It should be noted that

³¹Teuku Zulkhairi, *Pembelajaran Kitab Arab Melayu...*, p. 395.

³²Interview with NB, a Community Leader at Gampong Pangwa, Trenggadeng District, Pidie Jaya Regency on August 18, 2021.

³³Alhamuddin, "Abd Shamad al-Palimbani's Islamic Education Concept: Analysis of *Kitab Hidayah al-Salikin fi Suluk Masalak lil Muttaqin*," *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 6, No. 1 (2018), p. 95. Arafah Pramasto, "Analisis Etika Ilmu Pengetahuan dalam Kitab *Hidayatussalikin* Karangan Al-Palimbani Abad ke 18," *Jurnal Dimensi* 9, No. 1, (2020), p. 125.

³⁴A. Ginanjar Sya'ban, *Sair al-Salikin, Terjemah Melayu Ihya Ulumuddin al-Ghazali Abad ke 18*, <https://www.nu.or.id/post/read/76030>, dikases, pada 3 August 2021.

³⁵Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama...*, p. 197-299. Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren dan Tarekat*, Yogyakarta: Gading Publising, 2012, p. 83-205.

all the writings of these great scholars are representations of the Shafi'i madhhab³⁶ which is the predominant school of thought in Southeast Asia.

Many learning resources, for instance, *Siyaru al-Sālikīn*, fiqh, *tafsir*, and other kitabs, are still used as references in Acehnese society. For example, at a meunasah in Gampong Blang Baroh, Kemukiman Glumpang Payong, Glumpang Baru District, Pidie Regency, people studied fiqh and tawhid. The study of *Siyaru al-Sālikīn* kitab was conducted once or twice a week, usually on Tuesday night for all male and female congregations. On the other hand, the special *taklim* assembly for women was held on Saturday afternoon. It discussed general religious issues and also studied tajweed and the fundamental of the Qur'an's recitation. The activities expenditure was coming from the gampong funds and the donation from the *taklim* congregation.³⁷

In Aceh Besar, Jawi alphabet kitabs are commonly used in Islamic teachings. For instance, in some *gampong* congregations taught by Teungku Hasbi al-Bayuni (Vice Chairperson of the Ulama Consultative Council of Aceh). On Wednesday night, he would teach the Gampong Leuthu Mosque's congregations the *Siyaru al-Sālikīn* kitab. On Friday night, he would teach the *Tala'id* kitab in Gampong Baet. And he would also teach *Siyaru al-Sālikīn* kitab at Gampong Reuhah Tuha.³⁸

According to the explanations of the *keuchik* and *tuha peut* of Gampong Meunasah Tutong, the religious activities in the *meunasah* were quite lively. The Qur'an recitation or *taklim* congregation was held three times: Tuesday night, Wednesday night, and Thursday night. The *teungku* studied kitabs, like *Siyaru al-Sālikīn*, on several topics, including aqidah, fiqh, and morals. The *teungku* was the alumni of Dayah Ulee Titi Aceh Besar, which was not far from the *gampong*. They recited *Dalail al-Khairat* (a kitab containing *salawat* and *zikr*) on Thursday night, specifically for youth and adolescents. Last few months, they had even added recitations in a *bale* near *teungku's* house on Friday night.³⁹

In addition, *meunasah* in Simpang Tiga Pidie District also conducted special Islamic studies for children or the Qur'an Education Park (TPA/TPQ). The number of *santri* or students was around 45-50 people who came from the host

³⁶Mursyid, "Corak Fiqh di Aceh Pada Masa Kerajaan (Kajian atas Naskah al-hadi al-Muhtaj fi Syarah al-Minhaj Karya Imam Abi Qasim Imamuddin Abdul Karim ar-Rifi'i," *Jurnal al-Qalam* 17, No. 1 (2011), p. 102. Lazuardi Muhammad Latif and Faisal bin Ahmad Shah, "The Understanding of Wasl al-Fiqh bi al-Hadith at Traditional Dayah Aceh," *Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum dan Pranata Sosial* 16, No. 1 (2021), p. 87-110.

³⁷Interview with MA, a Community Leaders at Gampong Blang Baro, Glumpang Baru District, Pidie Regency on August 19, 2021.

³⁸Teuku Zulkhairi, "Pembelajaran Kitab Arab Melayu di Aceh Besar Sebagai Proses Transfer Ilmu Agama Islam dan Upaya Menjaga Budaya," *Jurnal Mudarrisuna* 9, No. 2, (2019), p. 394.

³⁹Interview with KM (Keuchik) and SA (Tuha Peut) at Gampong Meunasah Tutong, Aceh Besar Regency on October 18, 2021.

gampong, and several from other *gampongs*. The educational institution had fifteen teachers or ustads. The learning process started at 2 PM to 5 PM, followed by congregational Asr salat. The cost of the study was free because the *gampong* funds covered teachers' salary.⁴⁰

With that said, religious teachings conducted in *meunasah* and *gampongs* are the social capital of the Acehnese people that could support the implementation of Islamic law. When people understood and learned thoroughly about religious teachings, the community indirectly carried out a process of strengthening the legal culture that would support the implementation of Islamic law.

2. *Meunasah* as a Media for Socializing Islamic Law

Imum meunasah has essential functions of leading religious activities for children, adolescents, and adults in relation to the implementation of Sharia law among *gampong* residents.⁴¹ *Keuchik* has duties and authorities to a. Lead the implementation of the *Gampong* Government; b. Fostering religious life and the implementation of Islamic law in the community; c. Maintaining and preserving the customs and traditions; d. Maintaining peace and security and preventing the emergence of immoral acts in community; e. Becoming a peace advocate between residents in *gampong*.⁴² *Tuha peuet gampong* has the following duties and functions: increasing the efforts to implement Islamic law and traditions in the community; and maintaining the preservation of local customs, habits, and culture, which still have the social benefits.

In Aceh Besar, the times between Magrib and Isha salat are considered similar. People have different ways of spending their time. Some people recite Qur'an (*beut*) after performing Isha salat. Some people do it after Asr until Maghrib salat. Other people continue the recitation until the beginning of Isha. The main studying place takes place in the *meunasah*. However, some people study in a private location, such as *balee* or *teungku*'s private property.⁴³

The main activity in a *meunasah* is the teaching of the Qur'an. In addition, there are also other learnings programs, including *tasawuf*, *aqidah*, *morality*, *fiqh*, *tafsir*, and *barzanji*. Materials other than the Qur'an are not available in all places of study. There are also materials taught related to preserving local culture which is considered part of local wisdom. An example is the initiative program led by the Islamic Service of Aceh Besar. It integrated the Acehnese *nadzam* into the

⁴⁰ Interview with MA, a Community Leaders at Gampong Blang Baro, Glumpang Baru District, Pidie Regency on August 19 2021.

⁴¹ Qanun Aceh Nomor 5 tahun 2003 tentang Pemerintahan Gampong.

⁴² Qanun Aceh Nomor 5 tahun 2003 tentang Pemerintahan Gampong.

⁴³ Tim Pusat Kajian Pendidikan dan Masyarakat, *Evaluasi dan Pemetaan Beut Bakdah Magrib di Aceh*, Laporan Penelitian Dinas Syariat Islam dan Pusat Kajian Pendidikan dan Masyarakat, Banda Aceh, 2014, p. 51.

‘after Magrib Qur’an recitation program’ and later became part of the curriculum in the Aceh Besar region.⁴⁴

Therefore, according to Al Yasa ‘Abubakar, *meunasah* has a fairly central role in the process of socializing Islamic law. It is possible since the *meunasah* has provided enough space for children and adolescents to gain knowledge about religious principles, such as learning to read the Qur’an, practicing salat and ablution correctly, as well as implementation of religious values. Through *meunasah*, religious values and traits will also be socialized, such as honesty, helpfulness, generosity, and hard work, which are exemplified by the *teungkus* and *ustads*.⁴⁵

Concerning Al Yasa’ views, Feener added that Islamic law must be implemented, socialized and internalized through Islamic values. Additionally, the Islamic Law Service as a state institution is responsible for implementing it.⁴⁶ Therefore, *meunasah* is at the forefront in terms of socializing the values of Islamic law comprehensively.

3. *Meunasah* as a Center for Religious Social Activities

Meunasah is a center for religious and social activities and commemoration of Islamic holidays such as *qurban*, Mawlid, *Isra* and *Mi’raj*, and *nuzululquran*. Mawlid is performed by carrying out a Mawlid feast during the day by slaughtering a bullock or a goat which will be cooked together in the *meunasah*. People bring *idang* containing rice and meals to have communal dining involving people from the host *gampong* and its surrounded areas. An Islamic *da’wah* event was held by inviting ulama, community leaders, and government officials in the evening. In 2021 *qurban* at the Blang Baro *Meunasah*, Pidie Regency, five bullocks and ten goats were slaughtered. The meat was distributed throughout the entire *gampong* residents.⁴⁷

In *Gampong Rukoh*, Darussalam, Banda Aceh, the *meunasah* became the center of activities for Mawlid festival, *qurban*, and *Isra-Mi’raj*. During the celebration, the community collected donations. Rich people might donate more than one bullock or goat. It was why sometimes the Mawlid celebration slaughtered more than one cattle. During the day, people would participate in a communal meal. In the evening, they would attend religious lecture. On another side, during the celebration of Eid al-Adha, the number of sacrificed animals reached 15-20 bullocks and 15 goats. Later, they would be distributed to the whole

⁴⁴ Tim Pusat Kajian Pendidikan dan Masyarakat, *Evaluasi dan Pemetaan...*, p. 52.

⁴⁵ Al Yasa’ Abubakar, *Syariat Islam di Provinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam*, Banda Aceh: Dinas Syariat Islam Provinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, 2006, p. 183-184.

⁴⁶R. M. Feener, *Shariah and Social Enggenering...*, p. 204-2013.

⁴⁷Interview with MA, a community leader at *Gampong Blang Baro*, *Glumpang Baru* District, Pidie Regency, 19 August 2021.

community based on family cards.⁴⁸ Besides hosting the celebration, *meunasah* is also a place to receive and distribute *zakat al-mal* and *zakat al-fitr*.⁴⁹

In Gampong Meunasah Tutong, Aceh, a large socio-religious activity was also centered in its *meunasah*, situated in the middle of the village. According to the *keuchik* and *tuha peut*, during the Mawlid, the community would be very busy because they invited several *gampongs* to their communal dining. They would eat *bu kulah* (rice wrapped in banana leaves), *kuah beulangong* (Acehnese beef curry), various chicken and eggs dishes, and some side dishes. In addition, during Ramadan, the *meunasah* would hold al-Qur'an recitation (*tadarus*). On the 17th night of Ramadan, it would organize a feast dedicated to celebrating the *Khatam al-Qur'an*, which sometimes would be greater than the Mawlid celebration. They would also invite neighboring *gampongs* to have a communal iftar. They permitted the guests to take home leftovers.⁵⁰

Regarding the *meunasah* as a center for socio-religious activities at the *gampong* level, Sulaiman Tripa explained that the *imum meunasah* assisted *keuchik* in implementing Islamic law as the prevention tools against immoral activities. *Reusam* (village regulations) could settle a case in the *gampong* customary court. It might also support the *gampong* in forming a *bayt al-mal* to take care of religious assets.⁵¹ All these activities are usually organized in the *meunasah*.

The function of the *meunasah* as a center for socio-religious activities is possible because the layout of the *meunasah* is generally located in a complex or at least adjacent to the *keuchik* office. The function can be seen in several *gampongs* throughout Aceh, for example, in Aceh Besar; Meunasah Tutong, Lamnga, Lamduro, Labuih, and Lamtamot. Meanwhile in Banda Aceh, it can also be found in Gampong Pango Deah, Gampong Lampeout, Gampong Kopelma Darussalam, and Gampong Rukoh. On the other hand, In Pidie Regency, it can be found in Gampong Blang Baro, Gampong Manyang, Gampong Meunasah Teungoh, Gampong Dayah Tanoh, Gampong Pulo Keurombok, and Gampong Rapana.⁵² There were some cases where *meunasah* switched its function to mosque, like in Gampong Lhong Raya and Gampong Lamdingin, Banda Aceh. In Jurong Gano, Lamdingin, Banda Aceh, the *meunasah* building was used as an

⁴⁸Interview with ZN, a Community Leader at Gampong Rukoh, Syiah Kuala District, the City of Banda Aceh on August 10, 2021.

⁴⁹Al Yasa' Abubakar, *Syariat Islam di Provinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam*, Banda Aceh: Dinas Syariat Islam Provinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, 2006.

⁵⁰Interview with KM, (Keuchik) and SA (Tuha Peut) at Gampong Meunasah Tutong 18 October 2021.

⁵¹ Sulaiman Tripa, "Otoritas Gampong dalam Implementasi Syariat Islam di Aceh," *Jurnal Media Syariah* XIV, No. 1 (2012), p. 41.

⁵²The data is the result of the researchers' observations from May-August 2021. An additional explanation is needed that most *meunasahs* have changed its function into a mosque, especially in urban areas such as the City of Banda Aceh.

office for the Qur'an Education Park, a place to receive *zakat al-fitrah*, a community center during Islamic celebrations such as Mawlid.⁵³

The construction of the *meunasah* adjacent to the *keuchik*'s office philosophically showed no separation between religious and political affairs. Administratively, it would facilitate the coordination between the *keuchik* as the head of *gampong*'s administration and the *imum meunasah* as the leader of *gampong*'s religious affairs. In this context, it could be emphasized that the main foundation for the successful implementation of Islamic law in Aceh resided in the existence of the *meunasah* role, not just structural regulations and legal rules. *Meunasah* has a central function within the social system of the Acehnese people. It acts as the forefront of socializing and internalizing religious norms and values, referred to as cognitive social capital. Next, the structural social capital is all activities and *gampong*'s structures, especially *imum meunasah* and *keuchik*. The two social capitals unite to support Islamic law in Aceh to create a progressive social order.

Conclusion

This study confirms that *meunasah* is the main foundation for implementing Islamic law in Aceh besides the structural regulations and legal rules. *Meunasah*, with its important position in the social system of the Acehnese people, is the vanguard to socialize and internalize religious norms and values, which are simultaneously an integral part of Islamic law in the province. The function of *meunasah* in applying Islamic law is to internalize Islamic law principles as a medium for socializing Islamic law and as a center for religious, social activities. This study strengthens the argument that *meunasah* can still be the 'glue' of social networks. There are religious, social, and customary values called cognitive social capital. Next, the *imum meunasah* and *gampong* officials would become structural social capital. Without *meunasah* as social capital, Islamic law is difficult to be internalized in society. Therefore, *meunasah* as part of social institutions can maintain the social order, a social function of the law. Although some *meunasahs* have changed their status to mosques, especially in urban areas such as in Banda Aceh, their functions and roles have not changed. They remain the center for the internalization of Islamic law and the center of social, religious, customary, and educational activities that can support the implementation of Sharia law.

⁵³ Interview with NB, a staff at the Lamdingin Keuchik Office and a community leader of Gano, Banda Aceh City on August 9, 2021.

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