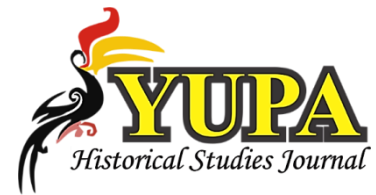


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The Influence of Sheikh Abdul Fattah in the Development of Islam in Natal City (1745-1855)

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Abstract This article explores the pivotal role played by Sheikh Abdul Fattah in shaping the development of Islam in Natal City and its environs from 1745 to 1855. Initially, the populace of the South Tapanuli region was lacking in Islamic knowledge. However, with the advent of Sheikh Abdul Fattah, concerted efforts were made to enhance Islamic religious education. Through the establishment and nurturing of the Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS), he catalyzed profound transformations. STAIS was founded upon his return from studies in Makkah, where he effectively disseminated the knowledge acquired to his community in Natal. By implementing innovative approaches, STAIS Sheikh Abdul Fattah emerged as a beacon, attracting hundreds of students from Natal City and its vicinity, thus revolutionizing Islamic education in the area. The endeavor to cultivate a refined and progressive society became central to Sheikh Abdul Fattah's vision. Inspired by this ethos, he successfully revolutionized the landscape of Islamic education in Kota Natal, leaving an indelible mark on the expansion of religious knowledge and the advancement of Muslim civilization in the region.

Keywords: Islam, Development, Natal City

Abstrak Artikel ini mengkaji peran signifikan Syekh Abdul Fattah dalam perkembangan Islam di Kota Natal dan sekitarnya dari tahun 1745 hingga 1855. Pada awalnya, masyarakat di wilayah Tapanuli Selatan masih minim pengetahuan tentang agama Islam. Namun, dengan kedatangan Syekh Abdul Fattah, upaya pendidikan agama Islam yang lebih memadai dilakukan. Melalui pendirian dan pengembangan Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Swasta (STAIS) Syekh Abdul Fattah, ia berhasil menghadirkan perubahan signifikan. STAIS ini didirikan atas dasar kepulangannya setelah menimba ilmu di Makkah, dimana ia berhasil mentransfer pengetahuan yang diperolehnya ke komunitasnya di Natal. Dengan inovasi-inovasi yang diterapkan, STAIS Syekh Abdul Fattah menjadi magnet bagi ratusan mahasiswa dari Kota Natal dan wilayah sekitarnya, mengubah wajah pendidikan Islam di wilayah tersebut. Upaya mendidik masyarakat untuk menjadi peradaban yang cangguh dan progresif menjadi inti dari konsep yang diusung oleh Syekh Abdul Fattah. Dengan inspirasi tersebut, ia berhasil merubah paradigma pendidikan Islam di Kota Natal dan menciptakan dampak yang signifikan dalam memperluas pengetahuan agama dan meningkatkan peradaban umat Islam di wilayah tersebut.

Kata kunci: Agama Islam, Perkembangan, Kota Natal



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INTRODUCTION

Natal City is a significant urban center located on the west coast of North Sumatra. The district covers an area of 6,621 square kilometers, characterized by plains, mountains, and coastal areas along the western shoreline. Historically, Natal served as a vital trading route to the western coast of Sumatra. Over time, the expansive and level terrain earned it the moniker "ranah nan data," meaning flat land in the local dialect. Consequently, the term was shortened to "Nata" by the locals. With the advent of colonization and foreign trade influences, "Nata" evolved into "Natal," the name by which it is known today. Sheikh Abdul Fattah was born in Natal in the year 1703 AD or 1213 H, with ancestral roots tracing back to the Hampar River area near Padangpanjang-Payakumbuh. He was the first scholar in Natal to propagate Islam in North Sumatra (Nasution et al., 2022).

Islam had already taken root in Natal long before the arrival of Sheikh Abdul Fattah's ancestors. Historical records indicate that Islam entered Natal from Aceh and Pariaman. Both Sheikh Abdul Fattah's grandmother and father were native Muslim residents of West Sumatra. Abdul Fattah, their son, was raised and educated in an environment that upheld Islamic principles. Although he had not yet reached the age of accountability (mukalaf), his parents instructed him to study the Quran in Rao, as it was a responsibility incumbent upon all Muslims. Subsequently, he journeyed to West Sumatra to further his education under Tuanku Imam Bonjol, studying Arabic-language texts. During this period, he was arrested by the Dutch on suspicion of espionage for the Paderi forces and incarcerated. However, during his imprisonment, a torrential rainstorm ensued, causing a massive flood that inundated the city of Padang, alarming the authorities and residents. Coincidentally, a Dutch soldier suggested that the individual arrested earlier may not be guilty after all, prompting Sheikh Abdul Fattah's release from prison. Miraculously, the rain ceased immediately, and the floodwaters receded, leading people to revere Sheikh Abdul Fattah as a saint (Ghuddah, 1996).

Upon his return, many non-Muslims still resided in Natal. Sheikh Abdul Fattah decided to embrace Islam while there and established the "Surau," which still stands today, known as "Surau Tambak Natal." The emergence of Islam in Natal dates back to the establishment of the Rana Rata Kingdom in the eighth century. Rajo Putieh, one of its rulers, was purportedly of Persian descent. The reigns of Rajo Putieh and Rana Rata, along with the Islamic intellectuals who propagated Islam from the eighth century onwards, are not frequently mentioned. Throughout the eighteenth century, renowned religious leaders in Natal laid the groundwork for the growth of Islam, with Sheikh Abdul Fattah at the forefront. Revered by many as the guardian of Allah, Sheikh Abdul Fattah disseminated Islam along the West Coast, particularly in Natal. Natal City was nurtured by Sufi scholars from Medina. After acquiring knowledge from both the East and West Coasts, several

scholars in this region propagated Islamic teachings and Sufi practices in Natal (S. Nasution et al., 2022).

Many non-Muslims still resided in Natal upon his return, prompting him to embrace Islam while there and establish a "Surau," which remains standing to this day, known as the "Surau Tambak Natal." After the establishment of the Rana Rata Kingdom in the eighth century, Islam began to emerge in Natal. Rajo Putieh, one of its rulers, reportedly hailed from Persia. The reigns of Rajo Putieh and Rana Rata, along with the Islamic intellectuals who propagated Islam from the eighth century onwards, are not frequently mentioned. Throughout the eighteenth century, renowned religious leaders in Natal even laid the foundation for the growth of Islam. Among them was Sheikh Abdul Fattah, whom many revered as the protector of Allah. Sheikh Abdul Fattah then spread Islam along the West Coast, particularly in Natal. Natal City was founded by Sufi scholars from Medina. After acquiring knowledge from both the East and West Coasts, several scholars in this region disseminated Islamic teachings and Sufi practices in Natal (Sofiyulloh & Rusli, 2022).

Sheikh Abdul Fattah, also known as Mardia (1765–1855), was a prominent preacher who contributed to the growth of Islam in Natal. He spent his formative years living with Sheikh Zainal Abidin to further his education in Sufism and Islam. At the request of Sutan Kumala, Dipertuan Hutasiantar Panyabungan, Sheikh Zainal Abidin, an Islamic scholar in Barumon, assisted in the development of Islamic teachings in Natal (Sari et al., 2019)

Many believe that Sheikh Abdul Fattah was the one who introduced a melodic method of teaching the Quranic alphabet. This method, known as the Alif Date A, Alif Bawa I, Alif Dopen U: A-I-U, is still renowned in the Natal area to this day. Ba Date Ba, Bab Bawa Bi, Ba Dopen Bu: Ba-Bi-Bu. Ta Date Ta, Ta Bawa Ti, Ta Dopen Tu: Ta-Ti-Tu. Ban Dua Date Ban, Ba Dua Bawa Bin, Ban Dua Dopen Bun: Ban-Bin-Bun. Tan Dua Date Tan, Ta Dua Bawa Tin, Tan Dua Dopen Tun: Tan-Tin-Tun (M. S. A. Nasution, 2016).

In his presentation at the seminar, Batara R. Hutagalung discussed the "Padri War 1803–1838." Natal had been an educational center even before the Padri movement in Minangkabau, according to Social-Cultural, Social Psychology, Religious, and Conflict Management Aspects. Natal's reputation as an Islamic educational center on the West Coast of Natal City has been confirmed by Tuanku Lintau, a legendary Padri figure who studied Islam in Natal before his involvement in the Padri movement, said Batara Hutagalung in the newspaper. It is clear that Natal had developed into an educational center since Tuanku Lintau first learned Islam in the city of Natal, on the West Coast. This even refutes the notion that the Padri War was not an effort to Islamize Natal. Because Sufi scholars had taught Islam to the people of Natal and Kota Natal centuries before the emergence of the Padri Movement (Sari et al., 2019).

The contributions of Muslims and scholars cannot be separated from Indonesian history. Preachers have played a significant role in shaping and coloring Indonesian society through their

preaching. If someone adheres to Islam in all aspects of their life and has a strong understanding of religious doctrine, they are called scholars. Scholars are persistent in their efforts to spread Islam; they can be found in almost every area and location.

Without development indicators, Islamic sharia teachings in an area will not progress. Sheikh Abdul Fattah undoubtedly played a key role in the growth of Islam in Kota Natal. According to Deliar Noer, the majority of scholars in the village may be classified as individuals with dual status, meaning they exhibit inconsistency in attitude between intellectuals and scholars. Sheikh Abdul Fattah was an academic and intellectual who established madrasah schools in Kota Natal to assist in community education (Nasution et al., 2022).

This study will discuss the Contribution of Sheikh Abdul Fattah in the Development of Islam in Kota Natal. In this regard, the author intends to explore the role of Sheikh Abdul Fattah in achieving success in developing Islam in Kota Natal (1745-1855). Based on this background, the author is interested in investigating the influence of Sheikh Abdul Fattah on the development of Islam in Kota Natal (1745-1855).

METHOD

This research method utilizes a descriptive qualitative approach, which involves gathering comprehensive analytical findings about the research problem that can be used by the author as a reference. Data collection techniques involve historical records, which are utilized in this study. According to Sumadi (2018), the historical method involves examining, studying, and evaluating artifacts and records from the past. The historical research technique will be completed in four steps, namely (Sumadi, 2018):

1. Source Collection (Heuristics)

The collection of historical materials or remnants of the past is the heuristic objective. The author gathers references regarding the researched issues. Books, journals, and articles, including written materials, are consulted. Written sources from the past provide information, both primary and secondary.

a. Primary Data

Gathering primary data is achieved through interviews. In Kota Natal, the author spoke with prominent religious figures through interviews, as well as with several local residents knowledgeable about Sheikh Abdul Fattah. Documents related to an event or occurrence, as found in archives, often serve as primary sources in history. Archives can be found in individual collections not stored in approved institutions or gathered from specific institutions.

b. Secondary Data

Secondary data in this research is obtained by searching for data sources through the following means: archives, books, and journals. Oral searches such as interviews can also be used to collect data sources. One way to characterize secondary sources in history is as indirect (produced or originating) sources. Biographies, scholarly studies, book reports, and other materials are examples of such sources.

2. Source Criticism (Verification)

Also known as Verification, Source Criticism is crucial. Christianity can also be found in the historical sources of Sheikh Abdul Fattah. The aim is to gather data that is trustworthy and reliable for this research (Rahmani, 2018). Source criticism involves evaluating historical sources (both internal and external) used in historical research. External criticism examines the physical aspects of the source, including the date of archive creation, the type of paper used, writing style, as well as language and writing style that are easily understood.

3. Data Interpretation

Giving meaning is a process of interpretation, also known as interpretation, based on data and historical evidence. Combining several data from historical sources related to the study topic and organizing them into an interpretation using a conceptual framework is the process of interpretation.

4. Writing (Historiography)

The final stage, known as historiography, involves collecting information and references that have been filtered to provide relevant final results. The introduction, research findings, and conclusions form the text of this research. The study is presented in several sections, each conducted in a methodical manner with qualitative statements about the collected data or information as characteristic features of a historical work that distinguishes it from other publications (Abdurrahman, 2019).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Contribution of Sheikh Abdul Fattah to the Development of Islam in Natal City

Sheikh Abdul Fatah, originally named Abdul Fattah, was born in the Natal Tele region and lived from around 1809 to 1900. The narrative of his family life is relatively straightforward. They used tree bark to build their homes and lived in the Muslim community of that time, where Islamic teachings had already flourished in Natal. When Sheikh Abdul Fatah moved to Kota Siantar as a Kuria or ruler in Panyabungan at the time, the spectacular life story of Panyabungan Sigatal began. Sheikh Abdul Fatah attended school in Hutasianar at a young age and studied under the guidance of several instructors, including Sheikh Abdul Fattah Natal and Sheikh Zainal Abidin. History states that he applied the teachings he learned through solitude and lived a life full of many trials.

Sheikh Abdul Fatah eventually became devout and knowledgeable, with the wealth of blessings and mercy from Allah SWT due to his dedication to practicing Sufism and following the guidance of Allah SWT. His teacher once advised him to embark on a journey to Mecca, the holy land. Considering the expenses required to fulfill the pilgrimage, he could barely afford his basic needs, making it extremely difficult for him to follow his teacher's instructions (Nasir et al., 2021).

The Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS) was established by Sheikh Abdul Fattah. To improve and change the mindset of the community, Sheikh Abdul Fattah was created in Natal, West Coast, Natal City. Previously, the community's knowledge of religious sciences was inadequate. The inhabitants of Natal City lagged behind in their knowledge before the turn of the 20th century; some of them were still uninformed. The people of Purbabaru in the past were not very knowledgeable about religion. Sheikh Abdul Fattah, aspiring to educate the community to become a sophisticated and progressive civilization, inspired this concept. Sheikh Abdul Fattah was then inspired to reform Islamic education in Natal City. Muslims had a disadvantaged status before independence (1945) because almost the entire Islamic world was under the rule of European colonial powers, which were products of European colonization. Because of this situation, Islamic scholarly institutions, including its organizations, were greatly affected (Rachmad, 2023).

Sheikh Abdul Fattah appears to be more involved in instructional religious activities than general sermons and lectures. After moving to Natal City, he began practicing his religion by preaching at homes, mosques, and cities that consciously invited him. Through these religious gatherings, he received a lot of feedback and requests from the community, enabling him to disseminate knowledge and teachings of Islam. The community actively participated and aided with the growth of the madrasah. To meet the aspirations of the community, Sheikh Abdul Fattah was presented with two offers: 1) The community requested that Sheikh Abdul Fattah fulfill his ambition to settle in their village. 2) The community asked Sheikh Abdul Fattah to relocate to their area and donate land for the construction of housing and Islamic boarding schools. Burhanuddin to produce excellent scholars. The goal of Islamic education at Sheikh Abdul Fattah's STAIS is to produce prominent scholars who are honest, hardworking in their piety, knowledgeable about religion, proficient in sciences, and exemplary in society. To change the community's perspective, the Purbabaru community must be well-educated. The aim of Islamic education is to produce morally upright intellectuals based on the Shafi'i school of thought or Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah (M. S. A. Nasution, 2016).

The Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS), established in Natal on the West Coast, has two objectives: general objectives and specific objectives. Its main goal is to shape individuals into Muslims in accordance with Islamic principles, spread knowledge of Islam, preserve Islam in society, and enable them to function independently and effectively in social,

religious, and political fields. Its specific objectives include instilling a wide sense of servitude in the hearts of the community to help develop resilient personalities, educating the younger generation to have noble character in all behaviors and thought processes, helping students acquire a broad knowledge base beneficial in the field of science, imparting deep Islamic teachings as preparation for future life, and training students to apply their critical thinking skills to solve any problems encountered in life. However, during the Japanese occupation, the number of students at the Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS) was lower. Two factors contributed to this difficulty. First, the financial situation of the community at that time was quite dire; besides struggling to finance their children's education, they also had difficulty meeting basic needs. Second, due to the brutality of the Japanese occupation, parents were reluctant to send their children to the Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS) established in Natal, West Coast, Natal City (Santoso, 2018).

Happiness and sorrow are the garments of life's harsh realities. This is the true romance of life, particularly in the struggle for the sake of God. Sheikh Abdul Fattah and the school under his supervision experienced a similar fate. Mishaps occurred after the new structure was operational. In realizing the Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS) located in Natal, West Coast, Natal City, and advancing education, Sheikh Abdul Fattah faced numerous challenges. Despite setbacks, he overcame them with patience and full confidence in the help and protection of God. His leadership, focus, and improvisational skills in establishing educational institutions endured until Indonesia's independence (S. Nasution et al., 2022).

This is significant for the community because, in addition to being intelligent, he was also a kind-hearted figure deeply concerned about the next generation at that time. His aim was to change the perspective of Muslims for the better. Sheikh Musthafa Husein emerged as a leader in the campaign to revive the Muslim community and ensure that society did not lag behind in ignorance. Based on the information above, Natalia persisted and never gave up, despite the challenges Sheikh Abdul Fattah faced in establishing and developing the Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS), an institution based in Natal, West Coast, Natalia. This is further evidenced by the prospective contribution of the Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS) established in Natal, West Coast, Natal City, in producing accomplished thinkers in North Sumatra (Syihab, 2022).

For the Indonesian people, obtaining a decent education during the colonial period was expensive and difficult. However, the winds of change and awareness of the backwardness of these schools prompted scholars and community leaders to open schools that could serve all social classes. The same was true in the Minangkabau region and throughout the archipelago. Madrasas emerged and developed rapidly in a short time. Everyone seemed to be in a hurry to catch up. The subjects taught in classrooms were no longer limited to religion as they were in the

early days of surau. These madrasas also taught various forms of general knowledge. In this region, reform and modernization began to be visibly apparent from the early 20th century (Asyrofi, 2019).

Similarly, in Tanoato, North Padangsidempuan District, North Sumatra, Sheikh Abdul Fattah initiated formal education under the name Maktab, which later evolved into a madrasah and is now known as a pesantren. The Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS), formerly known as Maktab, was established in Natal, West Coast, Natal City. The founding of Natal was recommended by Sheikh Ja'far Abdul Wahab. According to Abbas Pulungan (2020), Sheikh Abdul Fattah also endeavored to initiate and promote Islamic education in his hometown of Tano Bato, North Padangsidempuan District, North Sumatra (Pulungan, 2020). He contributed to the establishment and growth of Madrasah Mustafawiyah. Therefore, the Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS) was established in Natal, West Coast, Natal City.

This initiative stemmed from the dissatisfaction of the community with Islamic education while their children attended mosques. The community viewed those who studied Islam in Mecca and then returned to their hometowns as scholars or religious leaders. In addition to delivering public lectures and religious studies, Sheikh Abdul Fattah also engaged in additional religious activities as part of his educational path. He received input and demands from the community through this research, enabling him to offer Islamic teaching and education in the form of madrasahs (schools). The community played an active role and provided assistance for its development. Pulungan Abbas (2020) This madrasah was previously named Maktab, but Sheikh Abdul Fattah attempted to rename it Madrasah Musthafawiyah and change its name to the Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS) established in Natal, West Coast, Natal City. The romance of Sheikh Abdul Fattah during his education in Mecca. thanks to the establishment of the Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS) in Natal, West Coast. According to Sheikh Abdul Fattah, the community established this madrasah in anticipation of his arrival, where he would apply his new knowledge to advance the community and future generations (Husein, 2023).

Sheikh Musthafa Husein Nasution implemented innovations in 2000 at the Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS) established in Natal, West Coast, Natal City. This progress was implemented gradually. Along with the implementation of these modifications, the madrasah's structure and teaching methods were developed, and the halaqah teaching method was changed to classical. The halaqah technique emerged during that time in Islamic education. Teachers and students sat in circles on the floor using the halaqah method. Subsequently, instructors read the book aloud and explained its contents, while students listened, processed, and retained the knowledge imparted. At Madrasah Musthafawiyah, the halaqah system is still taught as an extracurricular activity by several distinguished and authoritative professors in

specific fields of knowledge. This instruction takes place every Tuesday at the Musthafawiyah Mosque after the dawn prayer until 07.00 and in the evening after the Maghrib prayer until just before the Isha prayer. Haji Mahmudin Pasaribu usually teaches the morning classes, while Haji Hasan Basri Lubis often teaches the evening classes (Fadzir & Abdullah, 2020).

Sheikh Abdul Fattah developed a unique approach to knowledge acquisition. He instructed students to read and discuss different challenging sections in pairs. Subsequently, emerged questions whether the readers understood what they have read or not. This was the approach he took; mostly focused on stimulating ideas that could ignite passion, and his students and followers could reap the benefits. Sheikh Musthafa Husein also refined teaching techniques and methodologies. Creating the Classical system and using discussion techniques were Sheikh Musthafa Husein's most significant contributions to the world of teaching systems and methodologies. Sheikh Abdul Fattah was the original founder of the Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS) established in Natal, West Coast, Natal City. The disciplines taught there include Sufism, Tawheed, Hadith, and Tafsir. The madrasah teaches more than just religion; Post-independence, the Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS) was established in Natal, West Coast, Natal City, specifically to comply with Minister of Religion Regulation Number 7 of 1952. The shift in focus resulted in the addition of extensive teachings such as earth sciences and the history of civilization, which were well-received by an increasing number of students every year from all over Tapanuli, East Sumatra, Aceh (Abbas & Nuriana, 2023).

Happiness and sadness are the garments of a harsh life. That is indeed the romance of life—especially in creating *ijtihadh fi sabilillah*. Sheikh Abdul Fattah also had similar experiences in the schools he attended. Disaster struck when the new building was used, although not yet fully completed, and craftsmen continued to work. After a massive construction effort, the building suddenly collapsed and was completely destroyed due to flooding, causing the Madrasah and its inhabitants' homes to be washed away. And this was not just a trial for Sheikh Abdul Fattah but also for those who cared for and supported him. For all lovers and caretakers of Madrasah Musthafawiyah, in a stressful environment. In an attempt to appear resolute, Sheikh Abdul Fattah tried to allay the fears of the authorities and the community. Besides the natural disturbances experienced by Sheikh Abdul Fattah and his companions during the operation of Madrasah Musthafawiyah, there were several significant external obstacles. In fact, the fact that they came from a colonial group unhappy with the progress made by the community made them even more dangerous. The number of students during the Japanese occupation was smaller. Two things prompted this situation. First, the financial condition of the community at that time was quite concerning; In addition to the difficulty in financing their children's education, they also struggled to meet basic needs. Second, due to the cruelty committed by the Japanese occupation, parents

were reluctant to send their children to the Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS) established in Natal, West Coast, Natal City (Fahrudin et al., 2022)

Sheikh Abdul Fattah faced many difficulties in establishing the Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS) established in Natal, West Coast, Natal City, as well as in advancing education. He went through all these challenges with patience, faith, and belief in God's protection. Until Indonesia's independence, his influence, focus, and creativity were evident in the establishment of the Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS) established in Natal, West Coast, Natal City.

Based on the facts above, it is evident that despite facing challenges in establishing and developing the Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS) established in Natal, West Coast, Natal City, Sheikh Abdul Fattah persevered and never gave up. This is further demonstrated by the growth of Madrasah Musthaafwiyah into one of the leading intellectual institutions in North Sumatra.

In addition to his scholarly reputation, Sheikh Abdul Fattah was known for his intelligence and keen interest in listening to radio broadcasts. He greatly enjoyed tuning in to government broadcasts and news about Indonesia and abroad. He held strong political views; at that time, he favored the Masyumi Party. Although educated by one of the influential figures in Islamic creed application, he expressed a preference for teaching and preaching over being elected as a party member (Majid et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

Sheikh Abdul Fattah's influence in the development of Islam in Kota Natal during the period of 1745-1855 was significant. Through his dedication to establishing the Sheikh Abdul Fattah Private Islamic College (STAIS) and his efforts in educating the community, he succeeded in advancing Islamic education and deepening religious knowledge in the region. Sheikh Abdul Fattah's contribution not only cultivated educated and morally upright generations but also had a significant positive impact on the development of Islam in Kota Natal and its surrounding areas.

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