

THE ROLE OF DATUK ABDUSSALAM IN THE SPREAD OF ISLAM IN TIMBANG LAWAN VILLAGE, LANGKAT REGENCY IN 1590-1620

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ABSTRACT

The spread of Islam in the archipelago took place gradually and involved various important figures, including Sheikh Abdus Salam or Datuk Landak. A cleric from Malaysia who settled in Timbang Lawan Village, Langkat Regency in the 15th century AD. He played an important role in inviting the local community to embrace Islam through a spiritual approach and the Naqshbandiyah order. This study began with the following problems: (1) how did Islam enter Timbang Lawan Village, (2) what was the role of Sheikh Abdussalam in spreading Islam in the area, and (3) what are his legacies and influences on the religious life of the local community. The purpose of this study is to answer the third question through a qualitative descriptive historical and sociological approach. The methods used include observation, interviews, literature studies and documentation of secondary sources in this study including journals and books that support this research. This research is expected to contribute to scientific studies of local Islamic history in Indonesia. The results of the study show that the people of Timbang Lawan Village greatly appreciate the cultural heritage left by Sheikh Abdussalam, such as the tomb of the Sheikh himself. Until now, the local people still greatly appreciate his legacy.

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INTRODUCTIONS

Islam entered the archipelago, one of which was through trade routes. Trade that stops at the west coast of Sumatra not only carries out buying and selling activities, but also carries a da'wah mission with the aim of spreading and teaching Islam in the archipelago. Muslim traders from Arabia, Persia, and Gujarat played an important role in the spread of Islam, especially on the coast of Sumatra. Although theories say that Islam came in the 7th century AD or the 1st century Hijri, unfortunately there is no written evidence of the existence of an Islamic society in Indonesia until the 10th century AD or the 4th century Hijri. Written evidence in question, such as mosque buildings, tombs, or others. (Ningsih et al., 2024) (Aizid, 2016)

The entry of Islam into the archipelago does not take place at the same time simultaneously, but gradually according to the conditions experienced by certain regions. The people who first accepted and embraced Islam were those around the coast because of the beginning of the entry process through trade routes which certainly passed through important ports in the archipelago. (Rohmah & São Paulo , 2014)

The establishment of the Islamic Kingdom was an important period in the struggle for Islamization in the archipelago. The formation of the Islamic Kingdom marked the beginning of the integration of Islamic teachings more massively into the social and political system in the archipelago. In fact, the sultanate became the basis for efforts to implement Islamic teachings among the community. Where previously the presence of Islam was limited to the formation of Islamic communities in the center of trade. (Saleh et al., 2023)

The spread of Islam in Langkat Regency could not be separated from the influence of the Sultanate of Aceh and the Sultanate of Deli, which at that time became the center of da'wah and the spread of Islam in the northern part of Sumatra. The guardians also played a role in building social and political networks that built the development of Islam. One of the important figures in the spread of Islam in Langkat is Sheikh Abdussalam or known as Datuk Landak, who is known for his role in Islamizing the community in Timbang Lawan Village. (Syafuddin, 2024)

Timbang Lawan Village has existed since 1942 and used to be the largest area in Bahorok District, Lalat Regency, North Sumatra. The village has a history that is closely related to tolerance and social dynamics between its people and neighboring hill villages. The name "Weigh Opponents" itself has a meaning that reflects their attitude that always gives in to various things. However, at one time, when the pressure was getting heavier, the Weigh Lawan community began to fight back rather than keep giving in, which is why they were called Timbang Lawan. The history of this village cannot be separated from the figure of Sheikh Abdussalam (Datuk Landak), a scholar who brought great influence in the life of the community, both spiritually and culturally. (Nurchaya et al., 2024)

Sheikh Abdussalam is a scholar from Malaysia, precisely from Pangkor Island. Sheikh Abdussalam had three siblings, two boys including himself and a sister. come from a family that has a different background. His father was from Pakistan who was a spice merchant and his mother was from Malaysia. Since childhood, he has been very diligent in studying religious knowledge. He joined the naqsabandiyah tareqat after leaving his hometown, he continued his journey to study in China, where he studied religion until he received the title of sheikh. (Hasibuan et al., 2022)

At the beginning, Sheikh Abdussalam migrated to Indonesia, precisely on the island of Sumatra, to look for his brother. He was told that after returning from studying from China, his father explained that his brother left without leaving any news and that is why Shaykh Abdussalam decided to emigrate. Until his karomah he managed to meet his siblings in the land of Karo (between Kabanjahe and Berastagi). (Dahlan, 2018)

After meeting, Sheikh Abdussalam did not immediately return to Malaysia but settled in Sumatra. Sheikh Abdussalam's journey in Sumatra was as a farmer, he lived from one place to another until he reached Langkat. Upon arrival in Langkat, Sheikh Abdussalam chose to settle in Timbang Lawan Village and began to spread Islam and its naqsabandiyah tareqat to the local community. Through his thoughtful approach he managed to Islamize many of the population and leave a deep spiritual footprint in the area. (Sitorus et al., 2024)

Based on the description above, the researcher is interested in researching the role of Sheikh Abdussalam in the spread of Islam in Timbang Lawan Village, Langkat Regency. Some of the research objectives are; *First*, the history of the entry of Islam in Timbang Lawan Village, Langkat Regency. *Second*, the role of Sheikh Abdussalam in the spread of Islam in Timbang Lawan Village, Lalat Regency. *Third*, the legacy and influence of Sheikh Abdussalam in the religious life of the people of Timbang Lawan Village, Lalat Regency.

METHOD RESEARCH

The research method used in this study is a qualitative method with a descriptive approach to history and sociology. The analysis carried out was simple using observation, interview, literacy, and documentation techniques. Qualitative research methods are often also referred to as *naturalistic* research methods because the research is carried out in natural conditions. To obtain data that is relevant to the existing discussion, this study follows several stages, namely heuristic, verification, interpretation, and historiography (Wardah, 2014), so that the data that the author can have been processed as well as possible and considered reliable. The location of this research is in Timbang Lawan Village, Bahorok District, Lalat Regency, North Sumatra Province. The informants involved in this study are Mr. Norman (a descendant of Sheikh Abdussalam) who is also the master of the tomb, and Mr. Abdul Malik Nasution (Head of Timbang Lawan Village). (Nurdin, 2019)

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Village Timbang Lawan

Timbang Lawan is one of the villages located in Bahorok District, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province. This village was established in approximately 1942 with an area of 100.85 km². Timbang Lawan Village has 9 hamlets, consisting of 14 RWs and 32 RTs, with a total population of 4,154 (four thousand one hundred five and four) people. The majority of the population of Timbang Lawan Village itself is Muslim with a ratio of 96.44% and the majority of tribes are Malay tribes with a ratio of 54.34%.

The origin of the word weigh-against itself comes from the weigh-against community and the hill village always coexists with full tolerance. The name "Timbang Lawan" sendiri has a meaning that reflects their attitude that always gives in to various things. However, at one time, when the pressure was getting heavier, the Timbang Lawan community began to resist rather than continue to give in. That is why they are named the village "Timbang Lawan". (Nasution et al., 2023)

History of the Entry of Islam in Timbang Lawan Village, Langkat Regency

The process of entering and developing Islam in Indonesia was initially due to trade. Initially, Muslim traders from Gujarat, India came to Indonesian territory to trade. Using sailing ships, they sailed the ocean until they arrived in Indonesian territory. Trade that stops on the west coast of Sumatra not only carries out buying and selling activities, but also carries a da'wah mission with the aim of spreading and teaching Islam in the archipelago. Muslim traders from Arabia, Persia, and Gujarat played an important role in the spread of Islam, especially on the coast of Sumatra. (Kamaliah et al., 2023) (Lestari, 2017)

Before converting Islam to Northern Sumatra, the local people had embraced Hinduism. This is evidenced by the news that Sultan Malik as-Shaleh. The first Sultan of Samudera Pasai, embraced Hinduism before finally being Islamized by Sheikh Ismael. Despite playing a role in religion, Samudera-Pasai has never united North Sumatra from a political perspective. As Islam spread throughout the archipelago, Islamic values gradually merged with the traditions, norms, and daily life of the Indonesian nation. Their willingness to allow foreigners to live in their country shows that they are ready to share a life together. The establishment of several Islamic kingdoms on several Indonesian islands, such as the island of Sumatra, is proof of the strong influence of Islam. Islam as an external factor succeeded in uniting ethnic groups consisting of several tribes in Sumatra. (Venus, 2016) (Sakdiah et al., 2021)

The process of Islamization and the development of Islamic culture and civilization in this regard played a significant role in the history of the Malay sultanate in the regions in Indonesia, including the history of the Malay sultanate in East Sumatra such as the Sultanate of Deli, the Sultanate of Langkat, the Sultanate of Serdang, the Sultanate of Kualuh, the Sultanate of Bilah, and the Sultanate of Asahan. With this government, Islam developed

rapidly in the region. Mosques were built, Islamic education developed, and Islamic leaders played an important role in spreading Islamic teachings in society.

The spread of Islam in Timbang Lawan Village, Langkat Regency, is part of the dynamics of Islamic development in the eastern coastal region of North Sumatra, which has long been known as an area with a strong influence of the Malay sultanate. Although it is not specifically recorded in historical documents that the Langkat sultanate sent dai or ulama directly to Timbang Lawan Village, because Timbang Lawan Village itself did not exist during the Langkat sultanate era, this village was only inaugurated in 1942. However, it is clear that during the Islamization period, this village was part of the administrative and cultural area of the Lalat sultanate. So even though it is not instructive or formal, the sultanate of Langkat still serves as an important foundation in the process of Islamization of the village.

The Role of Sheikh Abdussalam in the Spread of Islam in Timbang Lawan Village, Langkat Regency

Timbang Lawan Village, which is part of Langkat Regency, cannot be separated from the Islamization process, where the role of religious leaders is the main key in introducing Islam to the community. One of the figures who is known to be influential in the spread of Islam in Timbang Lawan Village is Sheikh Abdussalam, who is known as a scholar as well as an educator who teaches Islamic religious teachings through the traditional da'wah approach.

The people of Timbang Lawan Village are more familiar with calling Sheikh Abdussalam as Datuk Landak, this is because in the past when Sheikh Abdussalam came to the village there were a lot of hedgehogs animals, therefore the villagers called him Datuk Landak.

Sheikh Abdussalam is a scholar from Malaysia precisely from Pangkor island, he is the 2nd child of 3 brothers consisting of two boys and one girl. Sheikh Abdussalam's father was a merchant from Pakistan and Ibunhya was originally from Malaysia. Since childhood, Sheikh Abdussalam has been very diligent in studying religious knowledge. As time went by, he joined the Nasqabandiyah tareqat. In his teenage years he left his hometown and traveled to China to further study religious knowledge. (Suharno et al., 2024)

At first, Sheikh Abdussalam migrated to Sumatra because he wanted to find his brother who had left without telling his father and mother. Finally, Sheikh Abdussalam was determined to find his brother on the island of Sumatra. Until some time ago, Sheikh Abdussalam finally managed to meet his brother in the land of karo (between kabanjaha and berastagi). It turned out that his brother had converted to Christianity and had married a native woman there.

Sheikh Abdussalam did not return home but traveled to every region by farming, Sheikh Abdussalam always moved from place to place in farming until he arrived in a village in Langkat Regency. Shaykh Abdussalam chose to settle down and began to spread Islam and his naqsabandiyah tareqat to the local community. Then the area was then known as Kampung Kewilldak, which comes from the word "will" which means God's will. Sheikh Abdussalam is also known as a person who teaches religious science on a hill, in a durian orchard. There Sheikh Abdussalam broadcast Islam and many local residents also converted to Islam because of it. (Roswandi et al., 2024)

Over time, Islamic teachings are increasingly rooted in the social life of the village community. The spread of Islam in this village is not only limited to the aspect of religious rituals, but also affects the socio-cultural order of the community, making Islam an inseparable part of the identity of this Timbang Lawan Village. The role of Sheikh Abdussalam was very influential in the spread of Islam for the local population, therefore Sheikh Abdussalam was highly respected by the community. Until now, the tomb of Sheikh Abdussalam is still guarded and the community is always present for pilgrimage. (Rambe et al., 2021)

The Legacy and Influence of Sheikh Abdussalam in the Religious Life of the People of Timbang Lawan Village, Langkat Regency

Trust in Sheikh Abdussalam was very strong among the population. The people of Timbang Lawan Village really appreciate the cultural and historical heritage around them. Especially related to the Tomb of Sheikh Abdussalam. They maintain the traditions and customs related to the tomb of Sheikh Abdussalam as part of their socio-cultural identity. Activities such as pilgrimages, joint prayers, and commemorations of Islamic holidays are often held around the tomb, this is also a means to strengthen the bond of brotherhood between residents. (Armansyah et al., 2024)



Figure 1. Tomb of Sheikh Abdussalam
 (Source: Personal Documentation, 2025)

The relics of Sheikh Abdussalam include plates, rice measures, and the king's wooden stick. He is also known as a person who teaches religious knowledge on a hill, around a large durian orchard. There, the durian seeds that he planted had previously been boiled, then bedveloped into durian seeds that still exist today. Even so, the land that used to be a place to recite and where Sheikh Abdussalam interacted with the community still has blessings. At the bottom of the hill is his tomb, right on the edge of the river where he took ablution water. Around the tomb of Shaykh Abdussalam there is a mound of earth, which is forbidden to be dug. According to stories from ancestors, the land is a place that is highly respected by the locals. (Abdurrahman, 2018)

The clothes, peci and Qur'an relics of Sheikh Abdussalam were not found, because at that time, not many people understood the importance of historical relics. However, Shaykh Abdussalam's life, although simple, was full of blessings. All that remains are two relics, namely a wooden placemat for eating, and a bushel of rice. These objects have a deep meaning for the descendants of Shaykh Abdussalam as a symbol of their life and hard work in the past.



Figure 3. Wooden Placemats
 (Source: Personal Documentation, 2025)



Figure 4. The Priest
 (Source: Personal Documentation, 2025)

CONCLUSION

Timbang Lawan Village, which is part of Langkat Regency, cannot be separated from the Islamization process, where the role of religious leaders is the main key in introducing Islam to the community. Sheikh Abdussalam or the local community familiarly calls him Datuk Landak is one of the figures who is considered to spread Islam in the area, he also plays an important role in shaping the social, spiritual, and cultural identity of the local community. Trust in Sheikh Abdussalam was very strong among the population. The people of Timbang Lawan Village really appreciate the cultural and historical heritage around them. Especially related to Sheikh Abdussalam, such as his tomb and his relics such as rice bushels and wooden placemats.

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