

EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE SHARIA IMPLEMENTATION IN ACEH, INDONESIA

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EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE SHARIA IMPLEMENTATION IN ACEH, INDONESIA

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Abstract

The implementation of sharia in Bener Meriah, a regency in central Aceh, is closely related to the embodiment of traditional values, which were dissolved in Islamic values. Interestingly, the anthropological and social aspects also took part in the implementation of Sharia in that area. This qualitative study examined the implementation of Sharia in Bener Meriah as a social phenomenon reflected by the behaviors of people living there. Interviews toward respondents, which were selected by purposive sampling, were implemented as a data collection technique. The results revealed three things. First, the Sharia is more about understanding Islamic law as a punishment for lashing violators, while the authority and related institutions keep socializing the Sharia. Second, the construction of Sharia aims to integrate the values of Sharia, in terms of social interaction. Third, the awareness of the locals towards the Sharia plays a significant role in addition to the traditional values of Gayo culture, which is historically related. Accordingly, based on the results, the Sharia implementation runs appropriately considering the insignificant numbers of Sharia violations found.

Keywords: Sharia implementation; Social construction; Public views; Muslim communities

A. Introduction

Conceptually, Islam has had universal and absolute values throughout the ages. However, Islam is not a rigid dogma in the face of times and changes. If it is seen in Aceh Province as the only region in Indonesia which implements Sharia, the law itself has no distance from and the social life of locals since every tradition and behavior is familiar with Islamic teachings.

Social construction is a simultaneous and continuous process, in the stages of externalization, objectification, and internalization (Bungin, 2008). Each construction result will interact with individuals and communities who carry out externalization which then continues the process of constructing the next reality. Therefore, each repetition of the construction cycle will open a new construction.

The theory indeed is integrated into the Sharia in Aceh. Its implementation, which is issued in Law No. 44 of 1999 and No. 18 of 2001, is based on the special autonomy granted to Aceh Province to provide broad opportunities to regulate and manage one's household, empower natural and human resources, increase community participation, and implement a social order that follows the noble values of social life in Aceh (Hikmawati, 2007).

The law is also widely practiced covering aspects of education, culture, politics, economy, and other aspects (Abubakar, 2008). Simultaneously, one of the results of this granted "special autonomy" was the establishment of Islamic law in Aceh. This also orders the Islamic jurisdiction applied for every crime in Aceh (Hasan, 2007). The paradigm of Sharia presented among the Acehnese people is more orderly and organized as outlined in the rule of law. It is also supported by particular regulations that must be obeyed by the community

and sanctions in the form of penalties for the Sharia violators. Nevertheless, the existence of this law also turns into a polemic for them since many understand the Sharia but the number of violations is quite high and there is also injustice in deciding the law.

The number of Sharia violations that occurred in Aceh Province, which is quite high, indeed has an impact on the social life of the community. The Sharia has indirectly dared to be ignored so that, in the essence of law, the community is apathetic to the daily practice of Sharia. This attitude inevitably has an impact on the younger generation who tend to take actions that violate Sharia. The fact is that the implementation of Shariah law in Aceh continuously receives obstacles, especially from communities or organizations compelling the government to revise the regulation due to injustice or against human rights (Habiburrahim, Rahmiati, Muluk, Akmal, & Aziz, 2020).

The existence of Sharia in Aceh historically and socially indeed strengthens the notion that Islamic teachings are not only oriented to theological matters, but also human affairs related to social construction as well. The Sharia developed has become a part of social problems since it is an inseparable matter from various humanitarian issues. Social problems here can be interpreted that Sharia has been in the midst of people's lives and it is no longer only limited to the nature of the individual, but the problem of a more collective group.

Particularly, in the district of Bener Meriah, according to *Qanun* number 6 of 2018, in Bener Meriah District Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) for 2017-2022, in chapter II dan VII, it was stated the first mission of Bener Meriah Regency Government to "realize the implementation of Islamic values thoroughly or *kaffah*", which means all level of societies and life order should be rooted to the reinforced Islamic values to create a harmonious life and devoted and obedient humans to Allah SWT (Yanidin, Abubakar, & Akmal, 2020). The expectation of this regulation is to direct people who are aware of Islamic law and those who have the essence value for lives of the others. Consequently, the Sharia implementation in Bener Meriah Regency has various realities in building social construction. The values should be understood to form a religious community and the characters based on the Islamic teachings. This expectation is seen differently within the locals, where the Sharia has been socially constructed. The social construction within the Sharia implementation in the regency has made habit patterns in daily life no longer based on Islamic law. It is merely viewed as a Sharia punishment. Yet, the awareness of the community is increasing every day towards the practice of Islamic values applied in individual life and social life.

B. Method

This qualitative study obtained the data in the form of an interview with 10 informants from Bener Meriah Regency, who were selected purposively based on their social background. This selection is based on Lexy (2005) who proposes that purposive sampling provides subjects who understand the intricacies of the research problem. The informants selected included the locals, youth figures, village chiefs, the representatives of the Sharia office, and the representatives of the Islamic Scholar Assembly. The data collection was completed for six months starting from December 2020 until May 2021.

Furthermore, the data retrieved were analyzed by applying Miles and Huberman's framework (1994) - data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The result discussed might suggest the social construction in the Sharia implementation in the regency

by portraying and discursing the informants' views.

C. Results

Public Views on the Sharia Implementation as the Educational Construction

As an educational construction in their life, the Sharia implementation is responded to in various ways by the communities in Bener Meriah Regency. For them, the law is not something should they be afraid of, but such brings peace. This can be seen by the religious activities, including praying and having Islamic discourses as mentioned by RM (52, male, a village chief). The followings are the displayed excerpts (E) of the informants.

E1: The people here start their congregated prayers and discuss Islamic teachings at dusk, Isha, and dawn. This togetherness made them know each other, which in the end, strengthen their relation. In addition, their attendance at the mosque brings them a sense of security.

The Sharia is also considered as another 'tool' to educate communities. AY (47, male, a village chief) promoted the law in his interview excerpt below.

E2: The people in Remang Tige Jaya village need direction and guidance based on Allah's words to educate them to be better. The Sharia, which is based on Islamic teaching, is an appropriate law to have.

Even, the Sharia is concerned to strengthen the communities' faith in terms of Islamic education, particularly the younger generations. As the policymaker, the local government of Bener Meriah Regency is the one that can realize the integration of the law. The following excerpts stress the existence of the law.

E3: The local government should have clear rules and regulations that can save local young generations from falling into negative effects of globalization, such as cybercrime, drugs, online gambling, and online prostitution, which have been become the public attention. This issue is like an iceberg, which will eventually melt. Therefore, the government should anticipate it (AH, 41, male, a youth figure).

E4: I cannot imagine the case where children developing into adults have lacks monotheism values. The leadership will lead to deviations that can harm others. Sending them to religious places like pesantren is a good choice, although some still think that it must be caused by their bad attitudes. Thus, regardless publics' opinions, their piety must be fortified, and the government through the Sharia implementation may cope with this problem (RM).

E5: The government must provide an effective solution, for example, having the policy to send children to Islamic boarding schools to avoid the bad influences of modernization. Even though the institutions do not guarantee to change an individual into a better one, those will certainly improve one's human morals and shape the character. At least, the sending may reduce actions that lead to Sharia violations (IF, 37, male, a youth figure).

E6: The existence of Islamic boarding schools in Bener Meriah Regency has a significant role in the Sharia implementation since it can be the strategic partner in developing symbols starting from educational, bureaucratic, and community institutions. In the end, it is vital to enhance the education and social development of the community (NH, 45, female, a public figure).

Moreover, the Sharia is interestingly regarded as the means of converting guidance for non-Muslims. The selection means that the law is accepted as the educational construction within its implementation. One of the members in the Ulama Assembly of Bener Meriah Regency, MB (51, male, an Islamic scholar), admitted the argument as follows.

E7: In addition to improving the community's aqeedah, the Sharia implementation also offers the guidance to convert. It strengthens the converts' faith and integrates them into the Muslim communities. This program appears considering the findings that some 10-years converts still do not pray regularly because of the lack of Islamic teachings or their intentional willingness. The assembly also aids their economy.

Public Views on the Sharia Implementation as the Social Construction

The Sharia implementation directly builds the social construction within the communities of Bener Meriah Regency. Various responses, including the optimism and pessimism, of course, color the implication of the law. The pros promote Sharia as the appropriate law to regulate communities and construct an ideal civilization.

E8: If the government issues the law with the legal arrangements for the Sharia violators, the social values will turn into a model in social interaction to regulate the values of life (AH).

E9: Although Sharia violations like lewdness have occurred, the punishment process runs suitably starting from the levels of the village, the office of Sharia municipal police, and the Supreme Court. The Sharia indeed guides the communities (AY).

E10: The Sharia has aided Islamic figures to eradicate immoral actions committed in public sites. The local regent and his ulama deputy, Ahmadi and Abuya Syarkawi proved this when a tourist location named Ghop-ghop Ali-ali, where many Sharia culprits, gangs of troublemakers were hanging around, was closed after they had a persuasive approach with its business owners without getting flogged (IF).

If it is related to modern technology influenced by gadgets, the Sharia is considered able to limit the use of which.

E11: Children playing games on their smartphones during school hours and praying times should be taken into account. The Sharia implementation offers services to the communities, particularly parents, to limit the use of gadgets for their children. They should follow religious rules and local customary values and norms, instead of spending time on the internet (IF).

Nevertheless, some informants also have their cons related to the Sharia

implementation. They delivered doubtful opinions that the law has particular weaknesses throughout its implementation.

E12: *The Sharia implementation has been maximized from the past, yet, from a community perspective, there is still a lack of supervision and an unoptimized implementation of the law. Although the majority of people here still apply the custom, yet Sharia violations like seclusion and gambling still also exist (MH, 40, male, a Sharia office staff).*

E13: *Even though socialization and guidance related to the Sharia have been conducted by the Sharia authority, like the Sharia office, the Sharia has various problems encountered in each village (AY).*

E14: *Even though socialization and guidance related to the Sharia have been conducted by the Sharia authority, in this case, the Sharia office, its implementation has various problems encountered in each village. This is likely caused by the lack of public understanding of the applicable Sharia. The control should be integrated within all means, such as holding Islamic discussion after dusk prayers or emphasizing the law through Friday prayers (AY).*

E15: *The Sharia implementation does not reach the level of schools as those are indeed the root to socialize the communities. The schools and the Sharia authority should collaborate to provide socialization in a regular event like in Monday flag ceremonies. Unfortunately, at some points, this idea is not balanced with good support of funding (MB).*

E16: *Certain activities involving many people like horse racing are included as the target of Sharia socialization. People attending the events are asked to do congregational prayers in the race field, but the program did not work effectively (MH).*

D. Discussion

The Educational Construction in the Sharia Implementation

So far, the Sharia implementation carried out in Bener Meriah Regency can no longer be understood as a legal framing, yet it becomes a social concept, whose rules are integrated into social interactions. The local people never had a conflict against the social values and customs of the community, where the Sharia is used as their life guidance. This is what Feener (2012) once mentioned how Sharia law integrated as ideology and used in the judicial system had transformed Acehese society to urge modern perception about Islam beyond traditional views encompassing the education and economics sector. Due to this form of obedience, Gayo people have been constructing the system of their culture, tradition, and education based on Islamic teaching (Ibrahim, 2013). Specifically, the way people perceive this social interaction certainly shapes the governance of education in both local and provincial. Education is viewed as the core of cultural and social reconstruction (Robertson, 2014).

The active role of parents in the community to educate their children, provide a good

direction and practice good behavior, is necessary, whether they are included in Islamic boarding schools or not. In terms of educating children, giving advice is now a mere alternative instead of taking physical action due to human rights. In reality, this condition, the existence of human rights, makes it difficult for the community, specifically parents to educate children since they are afraid of being entangled with the child protection law.

A viral case in Bener Meriah Regency where parents hit their child had become the subject of discussion in the public and on social media at the end of 2019. The child who slept at his friend's house without his parents' permission made them hit the child with leather sandals and was caught on video. This case has been handled by the Bener Meriah police. By taking this case as an educational attempt, it is now hard for parents to provide teaching and education to their children. On the contrary, it may end as a misunderstanding since many see the attempt as a punishment. Nevertheless, it now contradicts and deals with human rights, which tends to be inconsistent with the culture of the locals. To overcome this, as RM in E4 and IF in E5 uttered above, religious educational institutions like Islamic boarding schools are an alternative to educate their children.

The in-line opinion – sending children to religious institutions – has a goal to make children have noble characters. This perception is in line with the data showing that most parents living in Banda Aceh would prefer to get their children enrolled in *pesantren* because they believed that it would provide a better quality of learning and characteristic based on Islamic teaching (Shah & Cardozo, 2014). It also will avoid them to do violations breaking the norms of society and religion. However, the challenges are getting tougher in facing the problems of globalization that affect the development of children and adolescents, which, of course, parents have more high vigilances. Hence, the policy to support them should be issued by the local government for children's safety.

In responding to this demand, Shah and Cardozo (2014) outlined four aspects, namely the discourse or ideas of *development*, *reconstruction*, *peacebuilding*, and *social justice* that have contributed to the social construction of justice occurred in Aceh's context. Those eventually would demand the actions to redistribute or broaden the access of educational opportunities; to decentralize the school governance in local areas under transparent representation; the national and provincial acknowledgment towards the *Islamic politics of education in Aceh*; and the dissociation *between short term rehabilitation and longer* plan of *peacebuilding* agenda.

Then, it does make sense now how many districts in Aceh now have the opportunity to develop the educational institutions as the demand of new social engineering due to the implementation of Sharia law. Principally, Bener Meriah Regency indeed has several places for fostering children like a small class for Quran recitation called Taman Pengajian Anak to educate children since they are young or a more comprehensive Islamic institution for any ranges of age called *pesantren*. The presence of *pesantren* may educate children to have disciplined, independent, tenacious, and honest values. The establishment of an Islamic boarding school in Bener Meriah Regency like the Bustanil Arifin Bale Atu Islamic Boarding School may avoid social and Sharia issues. Most of the *pesantren* alumni become community figures, such as imams and Friday preachers, since they learn both Islamic teachings and common sciences as the regular schools offer.

The comprehensive implementation of Sharia indeed cannot be carried out without

strong religious knowledge since many of its implementation has so far only been seen as based on the government's version, not based on the version of knowledge and practice. This is presumably caused by some individuals who do not understand the Sharia canons. The government occasionally only emphasizes normative matters by taking actions against Sharia violations only. Of course, to strengthen the Sharia in a whole area, the Islamic boarding schools in Bener Meriah Regency have a dominant position in constructing Islamic values within societies through spreading religious knowledge, both theories, and practices in the communities' daily activities. In addition, as RM criticized above, some people still perceive that a child sent to Islamic boarding schools is hard to manage by his or her parents. This wrong assumption appears due to their weak level of religious knowledge and awareness.

Furthermore, universally, the Sharia implementation is not only viewed to regulate its mere issues, but the Sharia also maintains the quality of its adherents' faith, as in Bener Meriah, for example, in terms of monotheism. Historically, before Islam entered Aceh through Peureulak and Pase in the eighth century, most Gayonese people still practiced animism (Ibrahim, 2007). Then, the existence of Islamic values has gradually changed Gayoneses' old belief (animistic practice) – the practice of feeding the ancestor spirits executed in every sacred and important cultural event – into more Islamic cultural practice (Husaini, 2021). As has been mentioned by MB in E7, the Sharia turned into guidance for converts. The importance of coaching for converts whether is held by the government through the Ulama Assembly is to socially integrate newcomers to Islam, so they are introduced to various Muslim habits and Islamic rules that must be followed.

Here, the role of Islamic education became crucial. The existence of *dayah* as an Islamic traditional educational institution along with the modern Islamic educational institution, called *pesantren*, were the front liner toward the case of faith devotion. Furthermore, the case took the attention of the government of Aceh. The government had initiated a program called 'Dai Perbatasan'. It was run based on the Governor Regulation No. 54 of 2014 about the *Dai Perbatasan* (borderline preachers appointed by the government). The program focused on reinforcing and strengthening the faith of Islam within the people who were considered as a susceptible group. Those who were susceptible included people who still confused the practice of Islamic tenet to the other belief as animism.

As aforementioned by MB in E7, the integration of a comprehensive Sharia also can be seen from the converts' economic status. In addition to providing religious understanding, the assembly through Baitul Mal (treasure house) also aids their daily goods. Baitul Mal Aceh has an essential role in improving the economy of society in Aceh. Besides being responsible as an authorized institution managing the mechanism of alms (*zakat*), Baitul Mal Aceh has also succeeded in putting down the poverty rate through a community economic empowerment program resulting in the long-term benefits and releasing the economic dependence from other parties (Basyah, 2009). Such a program is a part of the local government to strengthen *aqeedah* and *Tawheed* of the communities, particularly the converts and poor. Focusing on aiding the economy is imperative since every human being's necessity and social stability can be affected by the living expense. When converts are not supported by a balanced economy, they are automatically undermined from time to time by their faith and *aqeedah* to return to their original religion or others. Therefore, the program is expected to support their *aqeedah* through the distribution of assistance or business capital, so they may

economically develop.

The Ulama Assembly of Bener Meriah Regency indeed aims a wider scope of the Sharia implementation. This makes the institution focuses on fatwas by having special extensions in villages, such as village chiefs, imams, community leaders, and figures who provide information about various problems related to Sharia that occur within the community. In addition, the assembly has an important role to provide input on strategies regarding the Sharia implementation in the regency. The result shows that the existence of Sharia in Bener Meriah Regency has a big contribution to society in terms of social issues. It shapes the character of a civilized society. This formation of civil society cannot be separated from the Sharia that existed, which have religious values applicable in the economic, social, cultural, and political fields. This condition follows the way of the community's social life as taught by the Prophet Muhammad in the past of Medina.

The core of the traditional educational value of the people living in Bener Meriah, was reflected in a proverb saying *"'Edet kuet muperela agama, rengang edet benasa agama, edet munukum bersifet ujud, ukum menukum bersifet kalam"* (The culture was based on the religion, while the culture was not strongly held, the religion would fall, the culture was a physical representation of religion). This proverb indicated that religious values were a foundation for traditional values for them; the tradition which was a part of Central Aceh was known as *Mukemel* (Abdi, 2019). This value referred to one of the Islamic values, shame. The concept of *Mukemel* was embedded in every social aspect of Gayonese people, a native ethnic living in Bener Meriah. Thus, this value became one of the main goals of every traditional education. The people of Bener Meriah considered that a successful education indicated as the students had implemented the value of *mukemel* in their daily life.

The Social Construction in the Sharia Implementation

The Sharia implementation in Bener Meriah Regency *has been going on for a long time*. Based on *the* statement *of* MH *in* E12, for *the* locals, the Sharia is viewed as a divine law that should be obeyed starting from their birth. In Gayonese, *"ukum mu hukum besifet kalam, edet mu nukum besifet wujud"*. It means, Islamic law is derived from *Kalamullah* and *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad SAW, while tradition produces the law which goes hand in hand in supporting the implementation of Sharia (Ibrahim, 2013). It reflexes that local tradition in Gayo has been contributing to preserving the continuous Islamic teaching, including in Bener Meriah. Having a break during the midday prayer becomes a must, although some do not stop their activities as revealed by MH in E16. Principally, the locals have an appeal not to do Sharia violations in people's lives. The guidance of Sharia in the form of the spread socialization, for instance, the issue of drugs and juvenile delinquency, presumably have been carried out by the Sharia office.

AH in E8 argues that the social values as the result of the appropriate Sharia implementation will be the context of social interaction that allows the community to integrate the Sharia into public law. This finding reflects how the central government efforts once administered the implementation of *adat* penal law included into national penal law. This indicates that *adat* is not simply associated with locals' way of life, but also is used to tackle the instability of order and society in many areas in Indonesia (Arfiansyah, 2021; Aziz, 2016).

The community will have a synchronous regulation to be applied. In addition, most locals in Bener Meriah Regency are quite enthusiastic about the existence of the Sharia, which makes them able to anticipate forms of social disease that occur in the community such as lewdness, drinking, gambling, and stealing. This social belief towards law has been engineered since the Aceh government released the regional regulation called *qanun*. This finding is in line with Arfiansyah's statement (2021) stating that the local apparatus is responsible to keep the stipulation of *qanun* to handle slight violations that occurred in the village. Including locals Gayonese, they are being pleased to enjoy this development.

As the Sharia goes comprehensively, these violations indirectly will be decreased since the punishment is usually being whipped in the courtyard of the mosque, where many crowds witness the execution. This penalty indeed creates a deterrent effect with the shameful nature of Sharia violators. On the contrary, it also provides a positive social impact, meaning that it becomes a social control amid a society that has positive values.

The case mentioned by IF in E10 suggests that the Sharia is not merely about giving a penalty. The resolution can be generated in a more humanism or Islamic way. It was in line with the purpose of the implementation of Sharia in Aceh, to make people implement Islamic tenet in daily life. The implementation of the Islamic tenet cannot be forced toward the people, yet, people have to consciously understand and be aware that as a Muslim, it is an obligation to obey and to practice the Islamic tenet in daily life. One of the famous penalties was canning by rattan stick. The outsiders considered that this punishment was violated human rights as it was a form of violence. However, if it is deeply analyzed, the canning done was merely a form of education for people as the number of beats given was only a few. The main purpose of canning itself was to educate and to build the self-consciousness of shame when performing a deviant act as seclusion. It was also appropriate to the concept of *mukemel* as a value in Bener Meriah tradition. Commonly, the caning is carried out by the Sharia office, which is represented by the Sharia municipal police, while the Sharia socialization to communities and fostering to schools are deployed by the ulemas and the office staff. The final decision is then decided by the Sharia court.

The efforts of the Sharia authorities in spreading the Sharia socialization can no longer be observed as something that should be avoided due to its caning penalty. Rather, it is an initiative to implement the Sharia because of its legal factors, in addition to the awareness of the communities. Culturally, the Sharia and the existence of customary socio-culture within the Gayonese in Bener Meriah Regency cannot be separated.

Nevertheless, the advancement of technology directly affects the habits, morals, and behavior of individuals, including children. IF in E11 stressed that the presence of information technology should have strict supervision to evade the Sharia violations. Truly, information and technological advancement have gradually broadened people's mindset towards global issues associated with law and humanism.

Interestingly, a study from Arfiansyah (2021) has an appealing finding of how *adat* law has been socially transformed. His study – supported by the case of Rembele village, Bener Meriah in handling more complex violations, namely gender inequality, sexual and child abuse, and social discrimination – suggested that locals should also open their understanding to be more considerate in handling social issues and violation taking place in regencies in Aceh, especially in Bener Meriah. He believed that *adat* penal law is not limited only to Islam

and local cultures, but it is open to various ideologies, international norms, and a sense of humanism. It means that the Sharia does not constrict the global progression, yet it supports the communities to have the sense of being aware of all aspects of life, related to Islam, which then leads them to a better direction (*needs a theory*). This, therefore, requires the figures of Islamic scholars or *ulama* who are considered as the big umbrella for the communities.

The existence of Islamic scholars within the Sharia authorities, or even in the governmental scope, will ease the spread of the Sharia. In terms of social construction, an important figure will make people being secure and more manageable. The case depicted by IF in E10 reflects this condition, where the Sharia turns into a medium to bridge the unethical matters if its application is done in an ethical manner and commitment. In the end, the enforcement of the Sharia will be free of obstacles and challenges if all parties are committed to upholding the law as a whole.

Moreover, as has been stated by MB in E15, the weakness of the Sharia implementation in Bener Meriah Regency is influenced by the very limited budget for its programs. This is under the description of the head of the court facilities at the Sharia office. Besides, the ineffectiveness is also supported by the inconsistency in the enforcement of the Sharia itself. To illustrate, there will be selective slashing in deciding the law punishment. For the common people, they are usually ensnared, contrarily, for the people who have power in terms of economy and social status; they are not able to be punished. As a result, the Sharia is not enforced proportionally, which generates a lack of public trust.

In further discussion, there are more complex reasons why the implementation of Islamic Shari'a in Aceh faces some obstacles. The most fundamental and classic obstacle is the implementation of *Qanun* associated with the *qisas* and *rajm* for accused murderer and adultery violator often invites protests from National Criminal Code (KUHP), NGO's and international organizations that fight for human rights (Muhammad, Abdul Salam, Abbas, & Hussin, 2018; Razi & Mokhtar, 2020). Furthermore, particularly, the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh tends to discriminate against women, where women are dominantly accused to be involved in violations such as tight attire regulation, being fall under suspicions as prostitute and LGBT (Hasni, 2020). Regarding this issue, there was an interesting case, which indicated the support toward canning as a penalty, a violator, who was a protestant, chose canning as he considered it more humanized than the jail (Mahyadi, 2020). It is against the stigma that the canning violated the human right since it considered promoted violence.

Implications and Challenges of the Sharia Implemented in Bener Meriah

The culturalization of Islam in the Gayo Highlands is a logical consequence resulting from the regular religious preach. It is carried out commonly in a cultural approach, causing Islam to be easily accepted by the Gayonese people so that in the end it integrates with local cultural values. The preach inserts Islamic values into various cultural aspects, which have developed in the locals long before Islam came. As an example, Islam has infiltrated their arts, folklores, and custom terms.

As the impact of plurality on differences in society, the people are more tolerant and respectful of each other. This behavior reflects Islamic values, which love peace in social life. The mixing and adjustment between Islamic values and Gayo cultural norms are reflected not only in the cultural behavior of the Gayonese people but also in this Gayonese principle,

religion urum edet, song zet urum sifet (Islam and Gayo customs are substances with properties that cannot be separated) (Mustafa & Hidayat, 2017).

This confirms that the acculturation between Islam and the custom is close and mutually supportive. Islamic values have been immersed in all life aspects of people of Gayo, namely the belief and strong social relationship formed as a kinship. The combination between Islamic teaching and Gayonese culture has established supporting acculturation in significantly preserving the strong Gayonese identity through solid local tradition and custom (Husaini, 2021). The function of custom is to support the implementation of Islamic teachings as a cultural principle in the life of the Gayonese people. It is also to maintain the Sharia implemented properly so that there is no violation of the Sharia provisions. As it is integrated gradually, the custom is transformed into a part of religion. In this context, it strongly indicates that the Sharia constructs the social and educational values related to the societies' lives.

The behavior of the Gayonese people in Bener Meriah Regency has a strong essence of Islam as a teaching that is practiced in daily life, whether in the family levels, social institutions or educational sectors. In addition to integrating a legal regulation, the habit also strengthens the Sharia implementation as well as the pattern of awareness to a maximum effort.

E. Conclusion

The strong social control and local customs of the local community may cause this finding. It can be seen from the locals who still strongly hold the values of Gayonese cultural customs whose culture does not conflict with Islamic values, even those follow the values of Islamic teachings which become the local wisdom. Moreover, the strong support from the government, community leaders, and other social institutions also contributes to the conduciveness. The support from various parties mentioned certainly maximizes the Sharia implementation as a whole. The guidance and counseling carried out by the Sharia office to the villages also have a positive impact on the locals. At least, they do not only perceive that the Sharia is merely a caning punishment, but it is more about spreading knowledge about Islamic teachings to the public.

To support the implementation, the Sharia counseling programs are launched to provide awareness to the community about the importance of religious teachings in life. The religious values learned then become social values that can provide benefits to people's lives so that they can be used as educational and social constructions.

With the Sharia implementation, the people of Bener Meriah Regency see more of the Sharia values being practiced in everyday life. Indeed, this form of practice can prevent acts that are outside of the law. The local government is quite concerned about policies related to the Sharia so that several programs are run by the Sharia office. The successful Sharia implementation cannot be separated from the support of the community, which is in sync with the government and related agencies. Additionally, it is also seen from the cultural aspect, which can be reflected through its integration with Islamic values in the social interactions of the people. This is also realized due to factors of education and knowledge of the community.

However, a further study related to the Sharia implementation in schools and public sites may suggest a new insight to cover the lack of finding in this study. The wider scope of

research areas and numerous potential informants also will enrich the findings, thus another novelty of Sharia implementation can be elaborated and associated with other regions and certain socio-cultural conditions.

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