

Jihad Fi Sabilillah of Acehese Women against Occupation; Inspiration for the Resilience of Women during Conflicts, Tsunamis, and Pandemics

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Abstract

The existence of Acehese women has an extraordinary place in the public sphere. The study aims to describe the jihad fi Sabilillah of Acehese women against colonialism, which inspired women's resilience during the conflict, tsunami, and Covid-19 pandemic. The greatness of Acehese women has been known to the world for centuries for their toughness in various fields, such as the military, politics, government, and religion. Aceh is always said to have given birth to fighters who fought colonialism, such as Laksamana Malahayati, Cut Nyak Dhein, Cut Mutia, et al. The Aceh conflict significantly impacted the heroism of Acehese women against Dutch colonialism and the spirit of the Sabil War. During the conflict, Acehese women were actively involved in various activities. When the tsunami occurred, women also participated in resolving the impacts arising from the disaster. The Covid-19 pandemic has also had a huge impact on women. And Acehese women's resilience was tested when facing the pandemic until the pandemic was over. The process of gathering resource persons in the paper was through documentation review and interviews with women directly involved in the events during the conflict, tsunami, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The study results show that Acehese women are known for being brave, being shields (protectors/fortresses of the family) during times of crisis, and never giving up, especially if the resistance is in upholding or defending religion and protecting the family and nation.

Keywords: *Jihad Fi Sabilillah, The Toughness of Aceh's women, conflict, Tsunami, Pandemic.*

Abstrak

Eksistensi perempuan Aceh memiliki tempat yang sangat spesial dalam ranah publik. Kajian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan tentang *jihad fi Sabilillah* perempuan Aceh dalam melawan penjajahan menjadi inspirasi ketangguhan perempuan di masa konflik, tsunami dan pandemi covid-19. Kehebatan perempuan Aceh telah dikenal di mata dunia sejak berabad-abad yang lalu. Ketangguhan mereka dalam berbagai bidang; seperti militer, politik, pemerintahan, serta bidang agama. Aceh selalu disebut telah melahirkan pejuang-pejuang yang ikut berperang melawan penjajahan seperti Laksamana Malahayati, Cut Nyak Dhein, Cut Mutia dan lain-lain. Konflik Aceh memiliki pengaruh yang sangat besar dengan tokoh heroisme perempuan Aceh melawan penjajahan Belanda dan semangat hikayat perang Sabil. Masa Konflik perempuan Aceh terlibat aktif dalam berbagai

kegiatan, ketika tsunami terjadi, perempuan juga berada di depan untuk menyelesaikan berbagai dampak yang muncul akibat dari bencana. Pandemi Covid juga memberi pengaruh besar bagi perempuan, dan ketahanan perempuan Aceh sangat teruji untuk menghadapi wabah, sampai wabah berlalu. Proses pengumpulan sumber dalam tulisan ini melalui telaah dokumentasi, dan wawancara dengan perempuan yang terlibat langsung dalam peristiwa, masa konflik, tsunami, dan pandemi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan perempuan Aceh dikenal dengan pemberani, menjadi tameng (pelindung/benteng keluarga) pada masa krisis dan pantang menyerah lebih-lebih jika perlawanan yang dilakukan dalam menegakkan atau membela agama, demikian juga dalam membela keluarga dan bangsa.

Kata Kunci: *Jihad Fiabilillah, Ketangguhan Perempuan Aceh, konflik, Tsunami, Pandemi.*

INTRODUCTIONS

Historically, the resilience of Acehnese women in dealing with various crises has been tested. Several major events that befell Aceh, such as war, conflict, tsunami, and the Covid-19 pandemic, can be passed well. Even though the role of women is barely visible, women's defenses are known after the crisis occurred. Women show their achievements with success in the economic, social, educational, legal, and government fields. The reality shows that today Acehnese women have succeeded in occupying strategic positions previously occupied only by men. Conflicts and tsunamis provide their success in optimizing the role of women.

Aceh is known as an area with many past treasures, both textual and contextual evidence. As textual evidence, it can be seen from the work of Acehnese scholars in the form of manuscripts and other historical objects. While contextual evidence, Aceh is used as a reference in various scientific fields and has given birth to prominent figures and women.¹ The figures of Acehnese women exist in many fields, such as politics and government; there are Ratu Nahrasiyah, Safituddin Syah, Putro Phang, and others. In the military, there are Laksamana Malahayati, Cut Nyak Dhien, Cut Mutia, and others, and in the field of religion or education is known as Teungku Fakinah.²

Acehnese people are thick with patriarchal culture. In the public sphere, including the economic sector, men dominate. Generally, men in Acehnese society are known as the main actors in earning a living and as the head of the family. Acehnese culture is also popular with going abroad to supplement family finances. Coupled with the conflict conditions of men who go abroad for security reasons, some of them have become victims of conflict, and in these circumstances, women bear the primary responsibility for family life. Finally, women are directly involved in the productive economy.³

¹ Farid Wajdi (ed), *Aceh Bumi Srikandi* (Yogyakarta: Multi Solusindo Prees, 2008), p.1.

² Farid Wajdi (ed), *Aceh Bumi Srikandi* p.1

³ Eka Srimulyani, "Perempuan Dan Program Micro Finace (Keuangan Mikro) Di Aceh: Dampak Dan Tantangan Program Pasca Tsunami Dan Konflik, Dalam Takammul" Volume 1, Number 2, July-December 2012, p. 2.

As explained by T. Lembong Misbah, cooperatives have played a significant role in Indonesia's economic history. In Banda Aceh, there is a *Koperasi Wanita* (women's cooperative). Regarding assets and managed funds, they are still quite far from cooperatives in Indonesia in other regions, such as Setia Bhakti in Surabaya and the Annisa cooperative in West Nusa Tenggara. However, in Banda Aceh, there are Kopwan that are showing progress and have good progress and have the potential to progress, such as the Bijeh Mata Bunda Women's Cooperative in Gampong Lueng Bata, the Bina Mandiri Cooperative in Gampong Lampeuneurut, the Al-Ummahat Women's Cooperative in Gampong Darussalam, the Cut Nyak Dien Cooperative in Gampong Lambapang, and the Fortuna Women's Cooperative in Gampong Sukadamai. These cooperatives have managed hundreds of millions of funds with smooth loan repayments.⁴

One of the informants shared her experience in trading, and her business spirit has been instilled since she was a child. In elementary school, she was educated that the pocket money given by her parents was stored in the school cooperative with the agreement that she would be given a daily bonus of a glass of mung bean porridge. Then it continues until the high school and college levels. She started selling clothes by taking them to their destination. When she was married, she opened several clothing stores. Due to economic conditions, the pandemic, and market demands, closed clothing stores were replaced with supermarkets known as "Uleikareng Supermarkets," providing the community's basic daily needs. It was interesting to say that to maintain financial stability, she manages it herself (with the help of workers) and has to report it daily. At night the shop is controlled by her husband.⁵ The family also forms a person for doing business by being entrusted by parents since childhood to manage money for daily needs.

The patriotic spirit of Acehese women in fighting and defending their lives can be seen from the spirit of the past, inspired by female fighters. Acehese women dare to survive and risk their lives in facing all difficulties because, in the historical dimension, Acehese women are known to be tough and brave. The region's climate also determines, as a region adjacent to the Indian Ocean, allows people to travel by sea transportation, and to do this, it takes courage. Acehese women can do that because courage has grown since childhood.

⁴ T. Lembong Misbah, "*Pemberdayaan Perempuan Melalui Koperasi Wanita Di Banda Aceh, Dalam Takammul*" Volume 1, Number 2, July-December 2012: p. 14.

⁵ Interview with Suriyawati, in Darussalam on the 31st of October 2022.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on historical disclosure efforts in Aceh. The method used is a historical research method⁶ that emphasizes the oral history method more. The historical research method is finding sources, testing, analyzing, and compiling historical stories. An explanation of the steps of the historical research method is below.

The first step is collecting sources (heuristics). In this heuristic process, written sources are collected from books, articles, and other records relating to *jihad fi Sabillab*, conflicts, tsunamis, and pandemics. Oral sources were obtained from community information, women entrepreneurs, teachers, and academics. Oral sources were important information in this study, and information was collected through interviews with women.

The next step is to evaluate (criticize) all sources that have been collected, both externally and internally.⁷ External criticism is made on document materials such as paper and ink to obtain certainty that the material comes from the era (original). On internal criticism, it turned out that there were no empty gaps or words tucked in on each page, likewise, in the use of spelling and style of discussion in writing that reflects a specific period. Oral sources are taken compared to other information closer to objective, through what is conveyed, seriousness, and there is no element of interest or anything else.

In the next step, interpretation or analysis is carried out to obtain several facts in documents and oral information. Then the facts are combined into an appropriate and logical unit to create a historical story.⁸ Good historical works depend not only on their ability to examine historical sources and bring up historical facts but also require the ability of the imagination to describe historical stories in detail.⁹ The presentation in the form of writing with new thoughts is conveyed in such a way as to capture the reality of the resilience of Acehnese women during the conflict, tsunami, and pandemic.

⁶ Teuku Ibrahim Alfian, *Tentang Metodologi Sejarah* Dalam Teuku Ibrahim Alfian, *Dari Babad Dan Hikayat Sampai Sejarah Kritis* (Yogyakarta: UGM Press, 1992), p. 413; Gilbert Garraghan, *A Guide to hertorical Method*, (East Fordhm Road & New York: Fordham UP, 1957), p.33; Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr, *A Behavioral Approach to hertorical Analysis*, (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p 292.

⁷ Internal criticism is criticism of sources aimed at finding out whether the source value of this document has a high degree of credibility (qualitative in nature), while external criticism is criticism to find out the truth of the time of manufacture, place, author, material analysis, and the original form of the document., Garraghan, *Guide to hertorical Method* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1957), p. 168

⁸ Each part has a relationship with the other parts, as well as these relationships as a whole, see Jr. Robert. F. Berkhofer, *Behavioral Approach to hertorical Analysis* (New York: The Free Press, 1997),p. 188.

⁹ Bambang Purwanto, *“Interpretasi Dan Analisis Dalam Sejarah*, a paper, Presented at a Historical Methodology Course Organized by the Yogyakarta State Institute of Research, IKIP” (Yogyakarta, 1994), p. 7.

The next step is collecting oral sources through a voice recorder, taking notes, and listening when delivered by the resource person. Some sources are not allowed to mention their full names in this paper. They are only mentioned by their initials. Interview sources were collected in Pijay District (the conflict period was included in Pidie District), Aceh Besar District, and Banda Aceh. The selected areas are directly affected by conflicts, tsunamis, and pandemics.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Understanding of the Civil War and the Position of Women

According to Poerwadarminta, the Sabil War was a war to defend Islam. The Qur'an has a general term called "Sabil Allah," used for all who perform acts pleasing to Allah. Sabil war is another term that means jihad. Jihad comes from the word *jahada*, which means earnest effort, often also called the holy war, which is a religious principle regarding war for the spread of Islam in *dar al-Harb* (non-Islamic territories which are described as 'battlefields') or to defend Islam from opposing attack. Rachmat Taufik Hidayat has defined jihad as consisting of sincere devotion of the mind, strength, and ability to achieve goals or fight abominable objects such as visible enemies, demons, and passions. Besides meaning strength to fight against enemies, the greatest jihad (*jihad kabir*), according to the al Qur'an, is jihad to uphold Allah's religion worldwide. Most of the al Qur'an verses emphasizing the word war do not use the word jihad but *qital*.

On the other hand, the Great Indonesian Dictionary provides three definitions of jihad: first, do all efforts to achieve goodness; second, an earnest effort to defend Islam by sacrificing wealth, life, and body; and third, holy war against infidels in defense of Islam. Jihad *fi Sabilillah* is defined as jihad in the way of Allah (to advance Islam or uphold the truth). Jihad is the same as fighting in the way of Allah.¹⁰

Muhammad Abduh divided jihad into three parts: jihad of weapons against weapons or da'wah jihad, which aims to make people do good and leave despicable deeds. Iqbal defines jihad as the love of truth. In comparison, Maulana Sayid Abul' Ala Maududi understands jihad in the form of struggle at the level of action. Together with that, it provides the necessary strength and power to carry out the intended purpose.¹¹ Maududi classifies jihad into two types, namely defensive and corrective (renewal). The first form of jihad is a war to protect Islam and its adherents from

¹⁰ Ibrahim Alfian dkk, *Perang Kolonial Belanda Di Aceh* (Banda Aceh: Pusat Dokumentasi dan Informasi Aceh, 1997), p. 36

¹¹ Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin, *Revolusi di Serambi Mekah: Perjuangan Kemerdekaan Dan Pertarungan Politik di Aceh 1945-1949* (Jakarta: UI-Press, 1999), p. 142.

foreign enemies and subversive forces within Dar al-Islam. The second form of jihad is directed against the tyrants who dominate the Muslim community living in their own country. Jihad has another form, spiritual jihad, for personal gain and upholding justice. In the al Qur'an, Hadith, and Fiqh, jihad refers to some struggles, such as studying Islamic law. Jihad is a religious obligation; those who die in jihad are martyrs. As an armed struggle in defense of Islam, Jihad is multivalent in the scriptures and Islamic legal tradition. Muslims who face direct opposition from the unbearable majority can fight for jihad or migrate to migrate.¹²

The purpose of the Sabil war is to elevate, maintain and defend the religion of Allah (Islam). Islam allows fighting not just any war but by determining the causes and the intended purpose, namely respecting places of worship, rejecting tyranny, eliminating slander, guaranteeing the homeland's independence, and guaranteeing everyone's freedom to embrace and practice religion, as in surah al-Hajj verses 39-41.¹³

The war that took place in Aceh for a long time gave rise to the spirit of jihad fi Sabilillah, and the saga of the Sabil war was written. In the Sabil war saga circulating in society, fighting against colonialism (Dutch) is the duty of all people. Moreover, Ibrahim Alfian¹⁴ stated that men and women have equal obligations in fighting against colonialism, along with several verses from the saga of the Sabil War;

Either a woman or a man
Everyone, young and old
Adult, child
According to Ijmak, participate
Pious, wicked, ignorant
All must participate
King, people, uleebalang
Must play an equal role
Infidels who attacked our country
Mandatory here, against immediately
It's forbidden to run, and you have to fight
Fardh'ain upon us

The Sabil War saga influenced the people of Aceh to fight against colonialism and was proven in the war against the Dutch. Many women and children died in the fighting in Central Aceh and Southeast Aceh. In the battle at Penosan on the 11th of May 1904, 95 women and children died.

¹² Rusdi Sufi, dkk, *Wanita Utama Nusantara Dalam Lintasan Sejarah* (Jakarta: Menteri Negara Urusan Peranan Wanita, 1994), p. 82.

¹³ Mualimbunsu Syam Muhammad, *Motivasi Perang Sabil Di Nusantara* (Ciputat: Madania, 2013), p. 38-39.

¹⁴ Ibrahim Alfian, *Refleksi Tentang Gempa-Tsunami: Kegemilangan Dalam Sejarah Aceh, Dalam Sardono W. Kusumo, (Pengantar), Aceh Kembali Ke Masa Depan* (Jakarta: IKJ Press, 2005), p. 119.

At Tampeng on the 18th of May 1904, 51 women and children died. In Kuto Reh also died 248 women and children on the 14th of June 1904, and in Kuto Lengat Baru, died 316 women and children.¹⁵

Zentgraaff described the same thing about Acehese women on the battlefield;

“Regarding the Acehese women, it can be said that their role in the war is difficult to assess and is usually very active. The Acehese woman is brave but is the incarnation of an incomparable grudge against us (the Netherlands, author) who knows no peace. If she joins the fight, the task is carried out with deathless energy and usually overpowers the male. She is the bearer of a burning grudge that, even to the grave or in the face of death, still dares to spit in the face of the “kaphe” (infidel).¹⁶

Historic of Sabil War and Women’s Resilience

To see the resilience of Acehese women in history against colonialism, the following is a story about three (3) Acehese female figures.

The first is *Laksamana Malahayati*. Keumalahayati, known as Malahayati, was a brave woman who was the core of the royal family at that time. His father, Laksamana Mahmud Syah, was a descendant of Sultan Ibrahim Ali Mugayat Syah (1513–1530), the founder of the Aceh Darussalam Sultanate. During the reign of Sultan Alauddin Riyat Syah al-Mukhammir (1589-1604), Malahayati was appointed as a commander of the Darud-Dunia Palace, ahead of the bodyguard and a commander of the palace protocol against the Portuguese in Haru Bay in Malacca waters as a successor to her husband who died at that time. Malahayati led an army dominated by men and mobilized a female force called Inong Balee. Apart from managing the military, she oversees all seaports and trade ports in the Aceh Darussalam region and their ships. On the 21st of June 1599, a group of Dutch explorers led by the de Houtmann brothers anchored at the port of Aceh Darussalam. Ibrahim Alfian, in *Wajah Aceh dalam Lintasan Sejarah*¹⁷ mentions that the large ships that came were named de Leeuw and de Leeuwin. Frederick and Cornelis de Houtman served as captains of their respective ships.¹⁸

Sultan Alauddin ordered Laksamana Malahayati to attack the two Dutch ships still in the Malacca Strait. So, there was a battle in the middle of the sea. The Dutch fleet seemed overwhelmed

¹⁵ Ibrahim Alfian, *Refleksi Tentang Gempa-Tsunami: Kegemilangan Dalam Sejarah Aceh, Dalam Sardono W. Kusumo, (Pengantar), Aceh Kembali Ke Masa Depan* (Jakarta: IKJ Press, 2005), p. 119..

¹⁶ H.C.Zentgraaff, *Aceb.Terj. Aboe Bakar* (Jakarta: Beuna, 1983), p. 78.

¹⁷ Ibrahim Alfian. *Refleksi Tentang Gempa-Tsunami: Kegemilangan Dalam Sejarah Aceh, Dalam Sardono W. Kusumo, (Pengantar), Aceh Kembali Ke Masa Depan*. Jakarta: IKJ Press, 2005.

¹⁸ Iswara N Raditya, “Cornelis De Houtman Tewas Dalam Tikaman Rencong Malahayati,” accessed on the 8th of November 2021, 09:35. <https://tirto.id/gugurnya-cut-meutia-mutiara-kesayangan-aceh-c8ow>.

by the tenacity of the Malahayati soldiers, numbering in the thousands, including widows ready to die. Finally, Laksamana Malahayati reached Cornelis de Houtmann's ship and stabbed Cornelis to death. The incident occurred on the 11th of September 1599, exactly 421 years ago today. The Dutch fleet lost and lost a lot. The rest were arrested and imprisoned, including Cornelis' brother, Frederick de Houtmann. Laksamana Malahayati died, leaving a name recognized by European countries. Her body was buried at the foot of Krueng Raya Hill in Lamreh, Aceh Busar. Malahayati was declared a national hero during the reign of President Joko Widodo.¹⁹

The second figure is Cut Nyak Dhien. She was born in the village of Lampadang Aceh Besar in 1848. She was the daughter of an *uleebalang*, Teuku Nanta Seutia, who served as *uleebalang* in VI, part of the XXV area. Even though she was born into a noble family, warrior blood also flows in her because her father was a staunch fighter against Dutch colonialism. Teuku Nanta Seutia is a descendant of Makoedoem Sati, an immigrant from West Sumatra. Meanwhile, her mother was descended from an *uleebalang* from the village of Lampageu, also part of the VI area. The following is the lineage of Cut Nyak Dhien as quoted from the *Aceh Bumi Srikandi* book.²⁰ In 1873 the Aceh War broke out against Dutch colonialism, which aroused all the people of Aceh to fight against the colonialists. Cut Nyak Dhien's husband, often called Teuku Nyak Him, fought with other fighters.²¹ Teuku Cik Ibrahim, the husband of Cut Nyak Dhien, continued to fight against the Dutch until, on the 29th of June, 1878, T. Cik Ibrahim and his soldiers died on the battlefield.²² Regarding Cut Nyak Dhien's struggle against the Dutch, if classified, it can be seen from two phases, namely the struggle behind the scenes and the direct struggle on the battlefield. The behind-the-scenes struggle was marked when Cut Nyak Dhien was not yet married to Teuku Umar. She was still the wife of Teuku Cik Ibrahim Lamnga. Cut Nyak Dhien did not take up arms against Dutch colonialism in this phase. With her tenacity, she inflamed the fighting spirit. She made the people of Aceh aware that what the Dutch colonialists had done was a heinous act that polluted the sovereignty of the Acehnese people and the ideology of the Islamic people. It was seen during the Dutch burning of the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque in January 1874. The people of Aceh were in an uproar and peaked in their anger when the Dutch troops burned the mosque, the pride of the Acehnese people

¹⁹ Iswara N Raditya, "Cornelis De Houtman Tewas Dalam Tikaman Rencong Malahayati," accessed on the 8th of November 2021, 09:35.

²⁰ Farid Wajdi, *Aceh Bumi Srikandi...*, p. 367-368.

²¹ Irini Dewi Yanti, *Cut Nyak Dhien*, *Dalam Rusdi Sufi, Enam Pahlawan Nasional Asal Aceh* (Jakarta: ajian Searah dan Nilai Tradisional, 1996), p. 15.

²² Muctaruddin Ibrahim, *Cut Nyak Dhien* (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan Indonesia, 2001), p. 8.

as their place of worship as well as the stronghold of the Acehese troops.²³ In the phase of direct struggle on the battlefield, it was marked by Cut Nyak Dhien, who went straight to war by fighting against Dutch colonialism after she received permission from his second husband, Teuku Umar. After Teuku Umar died, Cut Nyak Dhien's role on the battlefield became more active. Cut Nyak Dhien was determined to continue the struggle of Teuku Umar.²⁴ The tactic of Cut Nyak Dhien's struggle so that the enemy did not know was to divide her troops into the smallest number.²⁵ Cut Nyak Dhien breathed his last in exile on the 9th of November 1908, after serving two years in Sumedang, West Java. On the 2nd of March 1964, through the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia No. 106 of 1964, Cut Nyak Dhien was declared a National Hero.²⁶

The third is Cut Meutia, the daughter of Teuku Ben Daud Pirak and Cut Jah. Cut Meutia inherited Minangkabau blood from her parents from the Sijunjung area, West Sumatra. Her father was a scholar and a government leader in the Pirak area then. During her lifetime, Cut Meutia was married three times. Her first husband was better known as Teuku Chik Bintara, with the real name Teuku Syamsarif. Her second husband was Teuku Chik Muhammad. Cut Meutia took to the battlefield for the first time in the second marriage against the Dutch. Together with her second husband led an attack against the Dutch in 1899.²⁷ The early 20th century was a crucial period for Cut Meutia. In 1901, Sultan Alauddin Muhammad Daud Syah ignited the spirit of the Acehese people to fight the very ambitious Dutch who wanted to take control of the porch of Mecca. The spirit of the fighters for the Land of the Rencong, including Cut Meutia, was further stimulated by the courage of the leader of the Aceh Darussalam Sultanate. Since then, Cut Meutia has become a loyal companion to her husband, Teuk Chik Tunong, as a supporter at the back. Cut Meutia often advised on valuable tactics to serve the Dutch recorded in 1901-1905. When Pang Nanggroe married Cut Meutia in 1907, the fighting continued under the command of the duo Pang Nanggroe and Cut Meutia, repeatedly worrying the Dutch.

Cut Meutia lost her husband for the third time on the 26th of September, 1910. In a fierce battle in the Hague hills in North Aceh, Pang Nanggroe died at the hands of the Dutch army. Luckily Cut Meutia escaped with her son Teuku Raja Sabi. The Dutch continued to chase Cut

²³ Rusdi Sufi, *Wanita Utama Nusantara Dalam Lintasan Sejarah...*, p. 84.

²⁴ J. Jongejans, *Land En Volk van Atjeh Vroeger En Nu: Negeri Dan Rakyat Aceh Dahulu Dan Sekarang*, (Terj.) Rusdi Sufi (Banda Aceh: Badan Arsip dan Perpustakaan Aceh, 2008), p. 483-484.

²⁵ H.M. Zainuddin, "Kenang-Kenangan Almarhumah Srikandi Nasioanl Cut Nya Dhien" (Medan: Panitia Peringatan Almarhumah Srikandi Nasioanl Cut Nya Dhien, 1964), p. 34-35.

²⁶ Farid Wajdi, *Aceh Bumi Srikandi...*, p. 390.

²⁷ Verelladevanka Adryamarthanino, "Cut Meutia: Kehidupan, Perjuangan, Dan Akhir Hidup," accessed on the 8th of November 2021, 09:35. <https://www.kompas.com/stori/read/2021/06/02/140047479/cut-meutia-kehidupan-perjuangan-dan-akhir-hidup?page=all>.

Meutia, and her followers' remnants invaded the wilderness. On the 24th of October, 1910, Cut Meutia's position was surrounded. But even though she had to fight to the last man, she did not give up.²⁸ Cut Meutia was martyred on the 25th of October, 1910, along with Teungku Paya Bakong, Teungku Mat Saleh, and five of her bodyguards.²⁹ She became a national hero of Indonesia based on Presidential Decree No. 107/1964.

Women's Resilience During Conflict, Tsunami, and the Covid-19 Pandemic

Conflict Period

Aceh is at odds with the central government because it considers this share unexpected. After Indonesia became independent, the people of Aceh wanted Islam as the foundation of their country, but Sukarno preferred nationalism. Many of Aceh's resources were drained when the authoritarian and aggressive Suharto government undertook development. The people of Aceh are disappointed because the central government does not care about their welfare. Because Aceh was used for dairy farming and its natural wealth was increasingly exploited, the people formed GAM (Free Aceh Movement) to oppose the central government. The prolonged conflict from implementing the Military Operations Area/DOM (1989-1998) until the Military Emergency/DM (May 2003-June 2004) destroyed Aceh's life and civilization. We can see that many houses have been damaged, the economy has been paralyzed, many men have fled, disappeared because they were kidnapped, died from being shot or tortured, children dropped out of school, and even experienced severe trauma.³⁰

Like Mrs. Ramlah's experience as an MTsN teacher, during times of conflict, the learning process at school continued unless there was a shootout. When there was a shootout during the learning process, everyone experienced fear. It was because the Indonesian National Armed Forces suspected someone near the school. Also, Mrs. Ramlah experienced an incident one day when she finished teaching and was about to head home. On the way, she was stopped by an army car surrounding her, and gunfire occurred. She ran, hid in the clinic around the incident, and came out when all was well. Then she said that society was categorized into three (3) groups. The first group, namely the white group, is marked by profession, such as a teacher, meaning that this group is safe or has nothing to do with the army. The second group is the gray group, meaning this group is a

²⁸ Iwara N Raditya, "Cornelis De Houtman Tewas Dalam Tikaman Rencong Malahayati." accessed on the 8th of November 2021, 16:08.

²⁹ Farid Wajdi, *Aceh Bumi Srikandi...*, p.424.

³⁰ Eka Srimulyani and Inayatillah, *Perempuan Dalam Masyarakat Aceh: Memahami Beberapa Persolan Kekinian* (Banda Aceh: Logca-Arti-Puslit IAIN Ar-Raniry, 2009), p 123.

group or community still being monitored, and the third group is the black group. This community is classified as a target for army members.³¹

Cut Azizah experienced the same thing during the 1989 conflict. There was extortion by Indonesian National Armed Forces members for unclear reasons, such as being late to raise the flag, and extortion, such as a ransom of Rp. 500,000 - 1,000,000, taking away her grocery business and physically abusing her husband. Furthermore, Cut Azizah said that she often came to ask for help on behalf of certain people, making people afraid. On the other hand, sometimes those who came to drink coffee were also limited because of the curfew, and it was justified to open a shop until late at night.³²

Tsunami Period

At the end of December 2004, an earthquake and tsunami hit Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam and North Sumatra. The disaster caused fatalities, significantly impact the population's mental condition, paralyze basic services such as education, health, public order, and social problems, destroy basic facilities and infrastructure, and caused government dysfunction due to decreased human resources.³³

Based on the Satkollak report, the number of fatalities reached 236,116 people, the number of refugees was 514,150 people, orphans 1,086 people, the population that had lost their eyesight reached 44.1 percent, damage to various aspects such as the economy, society (Housing = 34,000 units, education = 105 units, health and religion), \$1.657 million infrastructure (transport, communication, energy, and water) \$877 million, productive (agriculture, forestry and fisheries, mining) US\$1.182 million, cross-sector (environment, government, banking, finance) for \$652— conditions like this impacted in increasing poverty and unemployment rates, which in turn would affect family life.³⁴

The experience of the tsunami was recounted by Fatimah and all her family who experienced post-tsunami trauma. Many people's houses collapsed when the tsunami occurred, and everyone screamed for help. At that time, she was rescued by an Indonesian National Armed Force member by climbing on his shoulders. She further said that she couldn't swim. The tsunami claimed valuable items, such as a car containing important documents. Fortunately, the documents were not far from the location stranded, and water did not enter the car so the documents were safe. Behind

³¹ Interview with Ramlah, in Pidie Jaya on the 9th of February 2021.

³² Interview with Cut Azizah, in Banda Aceh on the 16th of January 2022.

³³ Siti Maryam, et al., "Analisis Faktor-Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Keberfungsian Pasca Gempa Dan Tsunami Di Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam," *Media Gizi & Keluarga*, Number 2 (2008): p. 40.

³⁴ Iwan G. Tajaksuma, "Analisis Pasca Bencana Tsunami Aceh," *Alami* Number 2 (2005): p. 18.

the disaster that befell her, some lessons could be learned, such as a colonel offering her jobs and assistance such as food and vehicle.³⁵

Suryani also experienced the tsunami. The tsunami disaster on the 26th of December 2004 claimed her husband's and children's lives. At that time, Suryani was at home while her husband and children were away. Suryani's house and many others collapsed due to the earthquake, and when the water started rising, everyone screamed hysterically. Suryani then left the house, trying to save herself. After saving herself by staying alone at her relative's house, Suryani immediately looked for her husband and children but could not find them. For a week, Suryani did not find her family. It caused Suryani to be depressed, coupled with her condition when she was pregnant. Furthermore, Suryani said that her son had visited her in a dream. In the dream, Suryani said:

"The son called, "Mom... mom..." "Where are you, son... Mom is tired of looking. Why aren't there any clothes? Where are you and your brother, son?" "Yes, father and brother are there in Alue Naga" "Let's take mom, son" When I arrived at Alue Naga, my child asked to come down, "Mom is here, don't go there" "The water has risen, let's go home," "No mom, just go home we're here." ³⁶

During the Covid-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic is the most difficult time for the affected country, including Indonesia. The pandemic has not only had a direct impact on health but also on other aspects of life, including economic and social aspects. Social restrictions and local quarantine measures can limit people's ability to carry out economic activities, thereby hindering the movement of goods and services. This situation lasted a long time and caused economic growth in areas affected by COVID-19 to slow down.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a difficult period for all countries that have experienced it, including Indonesia. The policy of social restrictions and regional quarantine can limit the community's economic activities so that the circulation of goods and services is hampered. This condition occurred for quite a long time, causing a decline in economic growth in regions experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic.³⁷

Coronavirus is the virus that causes the COVID-19 infection. This infection originally emerged in Wuhan, China, at the end of 2019 and spread to Indonesia at the end of March 2020.

³⁵ Interview with Fatimah in Banda Aceh on the 17th of January 2022.

³⁶ Interview with Suryani, in Banda Aceh on the 24th of January 2022.

³⁷ Nurul Aeni, "Pandemi COVID-19: Dampak Kesehatan, Ekonomi, Dan Sosial COVID-19 Pandemic: The Health, Economic, and Social Effects," *Jurnal Litbang : Media Informasi Penelitian, Pengembangan Dan IPTEK*, Number 1 (2021), p. 19.

The Indonesian people continue suffering from an infectious disease called the 2019 coronavirus. The covid-19 epidemic has spread throughout Indonesia, with 1,26 million people infected with COVID-19, 1.07 million recovered, and 34,152 deaths.³⁸

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the government implemented Work From Home (WFH) policy. This policy effort was applied to all people to break the chain of the spread of the Covid-19 virus in Indonesia by completing all work at home. With restrictions on interaction, the Ministry of Education in Indonesia has also implemented a policy of closing schools and replacing the Teaching and Learning Activities (KBM) process using an online system. Using this online learning system, students and teachers sometimes faced various problems, such as subject matter that the teacher had not finished delivering and then replaced with other assignments. Many students complained because the tasks given by the teacher tended to be more.³⁹

Hamidah's experience as a mother and teacher was that as long as education was carried out online, the obstacle experienced was access to information constrained by poor signal or internet network, causing delays in accessing information. Due to poor signals, students often missed the information. As a result, students were late collecting the teachers' assignments. The teacher checked many tasks given to students. Therefore, gadget storage space was becoming increasingly scarce. Online learning also forces educators to think about learning models and methods. Previously a teacher had prepared a learning model to be used, then had to change the learning model. Both mothers and teachers must be able to share time to accompany children to study and teach students online. The next obstacle she faced was when the school was offline, but her children were still online. It forced them to be included in the school where she taught since her husband was also a civil servant.⁴⁰

Suraiya told the same thing as the female head of the family and a lecturer. During the pandemic, she was overwhelmed because sometimes the teaching schedule coincided with accompanying children to do assignments that had to be sent to the teacher at the child's school.⁴¹ Fatimah also told the same thing as a lecturer and female head of the household. In terms of facilities, it didn't matter because there was a cell phone, a laptop for themselves, and reserves that

³⁸ Wandra, et al., "WABAH CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19) (Studi Pada Desa Pandansari Lor Kecamatan Poncokusumo Kabupaten Malang)" *Jurnal Inovasi Penelitian*, Number 5 (2021): p. 1627.

³⁹ Matdio.Siahaan, "Dampak Pandemi Covid-19 Terhadap Dunia Pendidikan," *Jurnal Kajian Ilmiah*, Number 1 (2020): p. 2.

⁴⁰ Interview with Hamidah in Aceh Besar on the 25th of January 2022.

⁴¹ Interview with Suraiya in Banda Aceh on the 26th of January 2022.

their children could use.⁴² Furthermore, Fatimah shared her experience in terms of time. She had to be disciplined in managing time and work that had to be completed daily.

Women's Strength and Motivation: Ability to Survive in All Conditions

Women are the pillars of the state, and a good woman will bring the country to goodness, while a bad woman will bring the country down. This proverb indicates the importance of the role of women in supporting the glory, unity, and integrity of a State, Nation, and Region (the Aceh region is no exception). Acehnese women in the past have carried the spear of Aceh's glory with a very significant portion and role, namely as the ruler of Aceh, which began with the reign of Sri Ratu Safiatuddin Tajul Alam (1641-1675) who was the daughter of Iskandar Muda Johan Pahlawan Meukata Alam, Sri Ratu Naqiatuddin Nurul Alam (1675-1688), Sri Ratu Zaqiatuddin Inayat Syah (1678-1688), Sri Ratu Kamalat Syah Zinatuddin (1688-1699).⁴³ The previous Queens formed a coalition with the clergy during their reign to build a glorious Aceh.

During the colonial period, Acehnese women took part in the struggle to defend and liberate Aceh from colonialism, as was the role of tough and brave women who have not been spared in history, such as Laksamana Malahayati, Cut Nyak Dhien, and Cut Meutia.⁴⁴ After the independence of the Republic of Indonesia, the Acehnese women's movement grew. When the Aceh conflict occurred, Acehnese women took part in various roles through various organizations such as *Dharma Wanita*, *Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga* (Family Welfare Development), *Dharma Pertimi*, *Badan Kerjasama Organisasi Wanita* (Women's Organization Cooperation Agency) and several others. After the conflict, the role of women was getting stronger because no more conflict constraints limited women's space for movement. Economic progress also began to move when the gates of peace were opened, even though the world of investment was not optimal. However, after Aceh was in a period of peace, women could work such as trading, gardening, and taking roles in other activities such as politics.

Along with the development of civilization and the existing situation, the role of women certainly experienced ups and downs. As the existence of women was often doubted, women's voices were almost ignored, and the status of women was always considered weak. It encouraged

⁴² Interview with Suraiya in Banda Aceh on the 28th of January 2022.

⁴³ Cut Asmaul Husna, "Partisipasi Politik Perempuan Dalam Pembangunan Aceh PascaKonflik," *Jurnal Public Policy*, Number 1 (2018), p. 84.

⁴⁴ Novl Nur Lailisna, "Fiqih Nisa' Sebagai Pondasi Gerakan Perempuan Islam," *Proceedings ANSOPS*, Number 2 (2020): p. 35.

women's strength and motivation to continue to survive in building a more decent life for themselves and their families, up to the nation and the country. Survival was an attempt to maintain life by staying and struggling to get out of a condition in which this condition changed suddenly from normal to foreign life.⁴⁵ This condition was like the colonial period that occurred in the Republic of Indonesia and was then continued by the conflict in Aceh and the occurrence of natural disasters such as the tsunami in 2006 and the Covid-19 pandemic that hit the whole country. In the face of sudden changes, strength and motivation were needed to survive.

Strength and motivation also met individual needs, which were divided into physiological needs, the need to be accepted, the need to feel safe, the need to be appreciated, and the need for self-actualization.⁴⁶ This strength and motivation were found by emulating past female characters' struggles, perseverance, and resilience. With the strength and motivation to survive, especially from women, the adversity would be resolved more carefully. Because of that, women had a significant role in building areas with peace in them.

During the conflict period, the condition of women, especially in the economic field, experienced many obstacles and difficulties, especially traders, who were uncomfortable and safe. For example, a woman entrepreneur who sold chips was forced out of business when the conflict hit, her trading business was burned down, and all her capital was used up. Back again to zero trading on the street with very little capital. Because of her persistent efforts and prayers to God, her business is growing rapidly and has even been favored by various people from Aceh and outside Aceh. The conflict made Mrs. C strong and tough, not giving up easily; even though she had fallen to the lowest point, she kept getting back up to achieve success, and it was proven that she could be successful.⁴⁷

The same thing was experienced by Mrs. R, a salon entrepreneur in the city of Banda Aceh, who was also affected by the conflict and had to start a business from scratch. Before the conflict, her business did not develop, but after the conflict and tsunami, her business continued to grow and succeed. Until now, it has many branches. Her income has tens of millions with dozens of employees, and her success has inspired women in her area. The journey to success has many obstacles, but all can be passed with a firm and strong attitude. Learning from the Aceh conflict,

⁴⁵Juli Astutik, et al., "Strategi Survival Perempuan Penyandang Disabilitas sebagai Kepala Keluarga (Study pada Perempuan Penyandang Disabilitas di Desa Kabuh, Kecamatan Kabuh, Kabupaten Jombang)", in *Jurnal Perempuan dan Anak* Number 2, 2019, p. 38.

⁴⁶ Juli Astutik, et al., "Strategi Survival Perempuan Penyandang Disabilitas Sebagai Kepala Keluarga (Study Pada Perempuan Penyandang Disabilitas di Desa Kabuh, Kecamatan Kabuh, Kabupaten Jombang)," *Jurnal Perempuan Dan Anak* Number 2 (2019): p. 38.

⁴⁷ Interview with Mrs. C, An Entrepreneur, January 2020.

women must be responsible; otherwise, it will be difficult for women to succeed.⁴⁸

CONCLUSION

The success of Acehese women in achieving success, even though various crises and conflicts often hit them, is inseparable from the spirit of struggle of female heroes in the Dutch colonial era. This spirit continues to grow and inspires every Acehese woman that life is a struggle and that humans, as creatures of Allah SWT, have the potential to be able to change for the better. Three (3) tough female figures who replaced their husbands and, together with their husbands, became martyrs in fighting colonialism are clear proof that Acehese women can survive in any condition and at any time. The three taken in this paper have received local, national, and international recognition and have been designated by the government of the Republic of Indonesia as National Heroes.

Women in times of conflict, whether as mothers, farmers, traders, entrepreneurs, teachers, or lecturers, had proven they were the front liners. For example, being farmers in the rice fields, even in a tense atmosphere, they still passed the Indonesian National Armed Forces posts by giving a logical explanation. If they didn't work, their children would abandon. Likewise, women whose families left survived the tragedy during the tsunami by being closer to God. During the Covid-19 pandemic that just ended, women became more responsible, especially those who work as lecturers, teachers, as well as mothers and heads of households. However, they all survived the ordeal; children receive attention from mothers, and work as civil servants can still be carried out.

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⁴⁸ Interview with Mrs. R, An Entrepreneur, April 2019.

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