

Research Article

Hikayat Prang Sabi the Narrative of History and Religion as a Tool for Mobilizing Social Movements in Aceh

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ABSTRACT

The Hikayat Prang Sabi (*Acehnese Saga*) is a literary work known to contain historical and religious narratives that are full of the struggles of the Acehnese people. This study aims to reveal more about the Hikayat Prang Sabi, especially the historical and religious narratives as a means of mobilization in the social movements that occurred in Aceh. The research method uses literature studies from previous journals as qualitative research. The findings show that the Hikayat Prang Sabi contains themes such as struggle and resistance against the colonizers, and also contains religious values such as jihad, love of the homeland, piety and tawakal. The historical and religious narratives contained in this story are known to be able to inspire the Acehnese people to move in order to raise the spirit of carrying out social movements. Several social movements that are rooted in the struggle of the Acehnese people against the colonizers or the struggle to defend the truth of Islam are the Aceh War, or the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). From this social movement, it is known to have had an impact on various aspects of life in Aceh such as social, political, and cultural aspects.

Keywords: Aceh; Social Movement; Hikayat Prang Sabi; Religious Narrative; Historical Narrative

1. INTRODUCTION

Hikayat Prang Sabi (*Saga, Tale or Chronicle*) is a classic literary work that originated in Aceh and contains the story of the struggle of the Acehnese people against Dutch colonialism in the 19th century. There are two genres of literature that were created and read during this resistance period, namely *tambéh* and *epos* (Wahyudi, 2021). These literary works are not only of historical value, but also contain a very strong religious dimension. The content of these literary works is a reflection of how historical narratives and religion have contributed as a mobilization tool to social movements. In this context, Hikayat Prang Sabi It has the function of being a means to strengthen the spirit of resistance to colonialism through the connection of religious values as well as the spirit of nationalism.

Since the colonial period, Aceh has been famous as a region with its persistence in maintaining regional independence. The resistance carried out by Aceh not only involves military aspects, but is also supported by various cultural and religious elements as part of the identity of the Acehnese people. In Hikayat Prang Sabi (Saga), Islam functions not only as a belief system, but also as the basis of morality and ideology that supports the people's movement to be enthusiastic against the colonizers. Through this literary work, religious and historical narratives are formed in order to support the creation of solidarity and the spirit of struggle. The historical narrative contained in this saga also contains the story of heroic events as well as describing the role of religion in encouraging people's action. This indicates that the text in the saga has succeeded in igniting the spirit of ideological struggle to fight against colonialism (Machasin et.al, 2024). On that basis, the discussion of the Prang Sabi saga is a relevant and interesting topic to be studied further.

There are a number of previous studies that explore the topic of Hikayat Prang Sabi, such as the research of Fadhli, Moch Nur Ichwan, and Machasin who explored the tasfir of the saga and its contribution to the resistance, but have not revealed the specifics of social action in Aceh (Machasin et.al, 2024). Further research by Sari et al in 2022 also discusses the role of Hikayat Prang Sabi, especially in relation to the formation of Acehnese nationalism, but this article only explores how literary texts that originally functioned as a song of war turned into a song of peace, not discussing the role of literary texts as a means of mobilizing social movements in Aceh (Hamzah et.al, 2022). From here, there is still a gap in research so

that more in-depth research is needed related to Hikayat Prang Sabi by presenting the most up-to-date, namely a review of historical and religious narrative aspects. Through a review of Hikayat Prang Sabi in the context of social movements held in Aceh, this study aims to delve deeper into the role of literary texts in constructing the collective identity of the Acehnese people as well as their role in social mobilization, especially when facing the challenges of Dutch colonialism.

Based on the background of the problem, this article will reveal more related to Hikayat Prang Sabi. This article will explain in more depth the historical and religious narrative as a mobilization tool in the social movements that occurred in Aceh. The findings of this study are expected to enrich insights related to the relationship between literature, religion, as well as social movements that contribute to the study of Acehnese history and literature. Through understanding of Hikayat Prang Sabi Therefore, it is able to arouse the spirit of heroism as well as be able to review how historical and literary texts are used as a mobilization tool in social and political dynamics in the related period.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research conducted is qualitative and descriptive. This study analyzes certain phenomena with a qualitative approach that utilizes secondary data. The research data was obtained through previous research journals which were used as a source of literature where they were searched based on the relevance of the topic of the research, namely related to Hikayat Prang Sabi. Collection and analysis are carried out by literature study, namely the researcher will collect literature data, read, record, evaluate, and then interpret the results of the research. At this stage, library data will be collected, recorded and then processed as research discussion data. Data analysis techniques are in the form of qualitative analysis. This technique aims to review theories with relevance to research problems that are reference materials to be discussed in research. The stages in data analysis are 1) data collection, 2) data reduction, 3) data presentation, and 4) conclusion drawn.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Narrative in Hikayat Prang Sabi

The narrative in Hikayat Prang Sabi contains the story and virtues of waging jihad against the colonizers, especially the Dutch colonization in Aceh. This saga then succeeded in igniting the spirit of Acehnese fighters, especially Muslim fighters, in fighting colonialism (Kurdi, 2021). If reviewed more deeply, this saga also describes a number of war strategies, military tactics, and even the courage shown by Acehnese fighters to show tireless resistance in order to defend Aceh's independence. This saga succinctly not only contains stories about war but also discusses loyalty, sacrifice, and even courage to fight colonialism. Although many figures are told to have fallen during the war, the spirit of the struggle for independence continues to be exciting. Some of the content in the Prang Sabi saga also contains the life of the people of Aceh during the colonial period, which is highlighted based on cultural, social, or religious perspectives.

Hikayat Prang Sabi reveals the role of Islam as a moral and spiritual foundation in mobilizing the strength of the Acehnese people to show resistance to the colonizers. Victory and defeat in this war are described as God's destiny, but the spirit of struggle to defend the independence of the country must always burn. It is stated that Hikayat Prang Sabi is the most famous Acehnese literary text related to the Islamic Holy War which shows the perpetuation of jihad in order to obtain paradise when fighting the invaders in the life of the Acehnese people (Manan & Rizki, 2023).

The main themes in *Hikayat Prang Sabi* namely "The Struggle to Defend Independence", "Resistance to the Colonizers", "Religion of the Foundation", "Courage and Sacrifice", "God's Destiny". The theme in this saga is shown from the existing narratives. These narratives not only describe the history of the resistance and struggle of the Acehnese people against colonialism, but also are thick with religious narratives that describe how religion is a motivation in the struggle. The narrative in the saga also shows how brave and sacrificed the Acehnese people to unite with each other for the sake of the nation and religion. As previously explained, the narrative in *Hikayat Prang Sabi*, not only discusses the history of the struggle of the Acehnese people, but also contains religious values. There is a deep religious value in this saga narrative so that this literary work not only functions as a historical narrative but also serves as a moral and spiritual guide for the people of Aceh. Some of the religious values contained in *Hikayat Prang Sabi*, Among others:

1. Love for the Motherland (*Hubbul Wathan*)

The narrative in the saga also contains the value of nationalism where in Islamic teachings love the homeland is part of faith (*hubbul wathan minal iman*). In the analysis of this Hikayat it is also known that based on the book written by Ali Hasjmy, there are nationalist values contained in which the main ones are love for the homeland, willingness to sacrifice, prioritizing the interests of the state, heroic spirit, and never giving up (Rizal, 2021). There is a narrative that reflects the struggle of *Hikayat Prang Sabi* where the people of Aceh struggle to defend their religion while protecting their beloved

homeland from colonialism. This creates a synergy between love for Allah as well as love for the homeland.

Acehnese version:

Hai Teungku Cut Donya Ka Akhir
Agama Tan Le Segala Negeri
Bandum Ulama Narit Tan Lee
Keu Prang Kafir Tan Le Peduli
Allah Teungku Adek Sahabat
Jak Ibadah Ta Prang Sabil
Lafadz Hadis Tan Lon Baca
Makna Sahaja Lon Boh Sinan (Rizal, 2021)

English version:

Oh Teungku Cut (Noble Scholar), The World Is Nearing Its End
Religion Has Faded in All Lands
All the Ulama (Scholars) Remain Indifferent
They Care Not for the War Against Infidels
Oh Allah, Teungku Adek Sahabat (Noble Scholar), Dear Companion
Let us Worship and Fight in the Holy Struggle
I Do Not Recite the Words of the Hadith
Only Its Meaning Do I Hold Within (Rizal, 2021)

The poetry narrative in the saga has a meaning if the love of the Acehnese people for the homeland is so great that it triggers the spirit to defend the country during the Dutch colonialism. The community asked for help from Allah to be given strength to fight the invaders from the country. Love for the homeland is the main foundation owned by the people of Aceh in carrying out the struggle against the colonizers.

2. Jihad and Sacrifice

Hikayat Prang Sabi clearly raises the theme of struggle or jihad in defending the independence of Aceh, which is majority Muslim. This concept shows that there are efforts to resist colonialism carried out by the West. In this story, the sacrifice of soul and body is this for religious values that can be learned where the people of Aceh fight in the way of Allah so that they can get great rewards in the world. Hikayat Prang Sabi was written so that Muslims are called to carry out jihad in the way of Allah so as to strengthen the mentality of Muslim fighters to sacrifice for independence against the colonizers (Kurdi, 2021).

3. Leadership (Al-Qiyadah)

Leadership in this context is very visible where a leader has the responsibility to drive the struggle that is carried out with integrity. The leader hopes to lead the people fairly and emphasize the interests of religion and the state above personal interests. From this, it can be seen that there is a religious value in Islamic teachings regarding the responsibility of a leader. During the Aceh war, scholars emerged who became leading figures to move the people of Aceh to fight in the way of Allah and fight against colonialism (Midhio et.al, 2021).

4. Piety and Tawakal to God

Hikayat Prang Sabi also contains religious values, namely emphasizing the importance of fearing God as the basis for the deeds done. Various figures in the saga show an attitude of tawakal or surrender and believe that all efforts and struggles carried out are in the way of Allah so that they will get the right reward. The people of Aceh in resistance always in the name of God so that this struggle is carried out for the good of this world and the hereafter.

5. Morality in Running a War

Another religious value contained is the existence of morality and ethics in carrying out war. The war against the colonizers was carried out with the right and straight intentions. This saga is able to teach that although war is a must, in this war we must uphold ethics and morality, especially in the use of weapons. There are various moral values contained in the literary work *Hikayat Prang Sabi* (Fuadi et al, 2019).

3.2 Social Mobilization Based on Stories

Hikayat Prang Sabi triggering massive social mobilization because this saga contains various elements of struggle and encouragement to fight against colonialism so that a universal movement against the colonizers is created. One of the major movements in Aceh's history is the Aceh War (1873 – 1902). It is stated that *Hikayat Prang Sabi (Saga of Prang Sabi)* written by Tengku Chik Pante Kulu in the XIX century has burned the soul of the Acehnese generation to show their

participation during the Aceh War against the Dutch government and then the resistance to the Japanese colonizers in 1942 to 1945 (Fuadi et.al, 2019). This war involved many Acehnese leaders and fighters in fighting the enemy as reflected in the *Hikayat Prang Sabi*. The people of Aceh are known to have extraordinary persistence and struggle against the colonizers. For approximately four decades, the people of Aceh carried out various resistances that were not easily conquered by the Dutch. Both men and women show persistent struggle for something that is seen as part of the national interest and religious interests (Rizal, 2021) It is on these two foundations that the people of Aceh have the awareness to join each other and encourage mobilization so as to create social movements.

Hikayat Prang Sabi contains religious values that are so thick, especially related to the struggle to defend religion as well as the honor of the people. In this regard, there are several Islamic movements in Aceh carried out by figures with social mobilization to fight for religion. Some of these figures are for example Teuku Umar, Sultan Iskandar Muda, as well as Cut Nyak Dien who fought not only to defend the homeland, but also to maintain Islamic values from the threat of colonizers and the influence of foreign culture. The value in this saga is very thick with the struggle of Islam or jihad. In the Qur'an, it is stated that the justification of jihad is related to war to obtain peace (Manan & Rizki, 2023).

In modern times, one of the social movements inspired by *Hikayat Prang Sabi* is the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). The values and heroic narratives of religious struggle contained in *Hikayat Prang Sabi* are known to continue to be relevant as a symbol of the struggle of this social movement. In this modern era, a number of groups are trying to achieve Aceh's independence and autonomy based on the value of the saga as a moral and ideological foundation. In this context, the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) has a relationship with *Hikayat Prang Sabi* because it uses the values of struggle contained in *Hikayat War Sabi* as an ideological framework to strengthen the spirit of struggle of members of this movement (Hamzah et.al, 2022). The Free Aceh Movement at the beginning of its establishment carried a struggle for the people of Aceh to achieve independence by breaking away from Indonesia because they saw that Aceh could fight as a successor to resistance like the literary work *Hikayat Prang Sabi*, even though in different social and political contexts.

3.3 The Role of Religion in Mobilization

In social mobilization activities in Aceh, religion often plays a role in the collective actions carried out. Social movements carried out in both historical and modern contexts will relate the struggle to the concept of jihad in Islamic teachings both in order to defend religion and defend the homeland. For example, the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) which uses religious ideology to rally the spirit of struggle, especially the struggle to free itself from discrimination and centralize the power of the Indonesian ruler. There are various religious leaders and GAM leaders who cite Islamic teachings to call for motivation to defend the truth against oppression. The GAM leaders' calls linked Aceh's independence as a religious obligation to be free from colonialism that was considered to be resisted.

Religious leaders in social movements in Aceh play a very crucial role in moving the times as well as giving legitimacy to religion through various forms of social mobilization. During the Aceh war, it is known that ulama emerged as a leader who moved Muslims in Aceh (Midhio et.al, 2021). Ulama and other religious leaders in Aceh have a strong role and become the main driving force in various social movements such as Aceh's struggle against Dutch colonialism or in this modern context, Aceh's struggle for independence. Ulama are often leaders in spiritual, as well as social and political contexts. During the struggle against the invaders, for example, there was a religious figure involved, namely Teungku Muhammad Daud Beureuh who was enthusiastic in organizing the resistance of the Acehnese people. This religious figure collaborated the spirit of religion with the struggle against colonialism so that the social movements carried out were able to mobilize more people with the support of the religious people of Aceh.

3.4 Case Studies

Social movements in Aceh which at the beginning of its struggle were inspired by *Hikayat Prang Sabi* in modern times, namely the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). GAM is also a social movement of the Acehnese people who made gun contact against the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Juned, 2020). This social movement is rooted in the tradition of the struggle of the Acehnese people in *Hikayat Prang Sabi*. The literary work of *Hikayat War Sabi* written by Teungku Chiek Pante Kulu not only functions as a historical narrative, but also becomes a tool of social mobilization that arouses the spirit of resistance against whatever is considered colonialism. In this context, the Free Aceh Movement is known to take inspiration from the spirit of struggle contained in the saga. The spirit of struggle is encouraged by the people of Aceh because they consider that the Indonesian government does not pay attention to the aspirations of the Acehnese people, as well as some national decrees are considered not in line with the law and culture in Aceh which upholds the tradition of Islam and peace. Some of these things triggered Aceh's resistance from oppression so that GAM emerged in the name of Aceh's independence and the struggle to defend the truth of Islam.

The values contained in *Hikayat Prang Sabi* For example, the concept of jihad and sacrificing for the homeland, adopted by GAM in the context of modern struggle. In various demonstrations and social movements, there are saga poems that are often sung as a reminder of the spirit of struggle of the Acehnese people. During the 1999 referendum, the lyrics of the saga were also used to ignite the spirit of the masses in fighting for their rights. At this level, it is known that *Hikayat Prang Sabi* holds an important function as an effective mobilization tool for GAM. By igniting a sense of patriotism and the spirit of jihad among the people of Aceh, the saga is able to support the creation of a strong collective identity in the fight against oppression. The content of the Sabi War Story was also adopted into various other song verses which were used as part of the culture of resistance that continues to be relevant in the lives of generations in Aceh. Examples of songs include, for example, the song *dodaidi* with the stanza "*beu rijang rayek young seudang, ta jak help prang ta when nanggroe*" which shows the recommendation to wage a decisive war against the colonizers. This war was carried out to defend the homeland against various colonizers (Fuadi et.al, 2019).

The social mobilization that occurred had an impact on the people of Aceh, especially to increase the sense of unity and unity among the people of Aceh. Through social movements carried out such as GAM, it is believed that it can strengthen social integration in community groups so that the struggle and unity of the Acehnese people to fight against various forms of oppression is created. Furthermore, the people of Aceh who were members of GAM at the beginning of their struggle had the same perspective in defending the truth and using religious teachings as a guideline in living life. Unfortunately, in the dynamics of its struggle, the GAM Movement continues to transform with various elite and political interests and no longer reflects the struggle movement as it was at the beginning of its formation.

In addition to the positive side of the Free Aceh Movement, this movement also has a very significant effect and impact on the development of various social aspects in Aceh, one of which is education. During this period of GAM's struggle, many schools and other educational institutions were burned. Acehnese children who grew up at that time felt the negative impact very much. Education in Aceh is practically paralyzed instantly. However, this conflict on the other hand increases social solidarity in Acehnese society. This solidarity is shown by the community's efforts to rebuild Aceh independently and sovereignly. *Hikayat Prang Sabi* is also known to have a narrative text that plays a major role in conceptualizing the idea of GAM towards the Government of Indonesia (Rizki, 2020).

In the political aspect, there was the greatest political change after the Aceh conflict was marked by the granting of Special Autonomy to Aceh through Law No. 11 of 2006. Acehnese social movements reached a peace agreement with the Indonesian government through the Helsinki Agreement in 2005 (Hamzah et.al, 2022). From this agreement, it is known that the Government of Indonesia recognizes the right of Aceh to gain broad autonomy related to the management of the government and its natural resources. The Aceh region is known to be given authority in managing the budget and public policies independently even though it is still under the supervision of the central government. This autonomy makes Aceh have the freedom to implement policies that are tailored to local interests, for example the implementation of Islamic sharia more strictly than other regions in Indonesia.

Furthermore, this special autonomy is also shown through the authority for Aceh to conduct direct elections for regional heads. The first regional elections in Aceh after the peace agreement showed a major change in Aceh's political system. Local leaders who have involvement with GAM and community leaders have great potential to be elected as regional leaders. In Aceh, legitimate local political parties such as the Aceh Party have also emerged which are an extension of GAM. The rebel group of social mobility in Aceh after the social movement was carried out can be recognized as the political party with the largest political power in Aceh and has made a major change to the political map of Aceh.

In the cultural aspect, there was a significant impact of change after the peace agreement, namely the strengthening of Aceh's identity as a region with strong culture and traditions, especially Islam. The change in the political map that occurred in Aceh spurred the spirit of struggle in maintaining Aceh's culture and identity, which was considered threatened by outside influences and the Indonesian government, which was considered to have little respect for Aceh's local values. From this social movement, special autonomy is produced for Aceh so that it provides cultural change, namely Islamic sharia which is implemented more strictly. Aceh can then regulate various technical rules such as dress rules, associations, as well as moral teachings that must be upheld in daily life. Thus, *Hikayat War Sabi* as the initial narrative of the source of the struggle power of this social movement has provided inspiration and motivation for the struggle that brought Aceh into a better change (Hamzah et al, 2022).

4. CONCLUSION

Hikayat Prang Sabi is a monumental literary work from Aceh that provides inspiration for the people of Aceh in forming social movements. This work not only functions as a historical narrative, but also becomes a religious narrative because it contains religious values, especially jihad, which can be used as a moral and spiritual guide for the people of Aceh. Historical

and religious narratives can be a mobilization tool that ignites the spirit of the Acehnese people to continue to fight in the way of Allah and sacrifice on the basis of love for the homeland to defend the Aceh region from colonialism. One of the social movements in Aceh that was formed by using the Sabi War Story as its ideological inspiration is GAM (Free Aceh Movement). This social movement at the beginning of its formation had a mission and vision for the formation of Aceh that was free from various oppressions and inequalities, especially those originating from the national government. This social movement driven by GAM has a very complex impact on the people of Aceh, both positive and negative.

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