

Trade Role in Shaping Multicultural Society Aceh During Iskandar Muda Period

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Abstract: This study aims to determine: 1) socio-economic life period of Iskandar Muda. 2) The role of trade in shaping the multicultural society of Aceh. This study uses qualitative research methods with the historical approach. In the aspect of social life of contemporary Acehnese Iskandar Muda is open to outside influence for these effects was not against the rules or traditions of the people of Aceh. In the economic aspect, the lives of the people of Aceh strongly influenced by trading activity. At the time of Iskandar Muda, Aceh became an important trading port for local merchants, regional and international levels. Trading activity is what causes the formation of Aceh multiethnic society, evidenced by the number of ethnic villages, among others: Arab settlements (Pekojan), Javanese village, township Malay, Indian Village, etc. These communities live side by side so as to create a social harmony.

Keyword : Aceh, multiculturalism, trade

Since the seventh century, Aceh became a gateway for Muslim traders. Trading activities in the Kingdom of Aceh was centered in the capital of the kingdom. So the city of Bandar Aceh Dar as salam was more crowded city than all other ports in the east and west coast of the island of Sumatra. There were a number of foreign traders that consists of a variety of nations, of which were Chinese traders, Gujarat, Portuguese, Arabic, Bengali and Pegu (Ibrahim, Muhammad, et al 81: 1991). The merchants inhabit certain places are located separately within the city. They live in groups, according to their country of origin. These traders well received in Aceh, either from the emperor himself or from officials of other Acehnese kingdom.

When the Portuguese came to Aceh, there were two important ports

contested namely Pedir (Pidie) and Pasai. Pasai port into the city transit and make prosperous Aceh. Results of the Kingdom of Aceh primary commodities were rice, meat, fish, fruits and livestock. But these commodities less attractive foreign traders. Foreign traders were more interested in pepper, tin, gold, silk, oil, camphor, incense, meat, nut and elephants. In the trading activity was also obtained goods imported from abroad such as spices, garments from India and porcelain from China. Trade has grown considerably in the past in the form of exports and imports.

Kingdom of Aceh experienced rapid development since trading activity was highly developed. This led to the establishment of multicultural interaction processes were so good. Many foreign traders who were so interested in the pepper

in Aceh. Multicultural interaction process is also going well between Indian and Chinese traders. Many items of clothing and porcelain imported from India and China. In addition, multicultural interaction process also occurs in the Aceh open attitude towards the arrival of foreign nations.

Islam is growing rapidly in Aceh. Aceh community life based on Islamic law. Nonetheless, the Acehnese people do not discriminate against foreign traders of different religions though. This has become an attraction for foreign traders. The merchants were able to establish good relations with the Sultan and other Acehnese people. This was proved evidenced by the settlement of foreign traders who live grouped according to their country of origin, such as the Arab village (Pekojan), Malay Village, China Village, and others.

In the kingdom of Aceh, the agricultural sector was not so developed. Rice was the staple food for Acehnese. However, it was also needed by many foreign crew coming there to trade. Limited supply of rice will threat the lives the trading. The state of nature was not too bad, Aceh especially those has fertile soil. Which lay around the stamp. The soil can produce all sorts of grains and fruits, there are nice meadows, many buffalo are used to cultivate the land, to plow or charge. European sailors were angry when they came to Aceh and knew that the rice field were lost treated properly. According to the Public opinion, people of Aceh was not farmer. Those people are so arrogant that do not have the heart to hold the plow (Lombard 80: 1991).

Recognizing this, the Europeans came to bring the rice and then sold at high prices, or import slaves from Coromandel (slaves who brought the UK and Denmark from the Coromandel coast, they were introduced to the types of farming Aceh). It is said that Siam exports rice by more than 10,000 tons. Tome Pires (144: 2014) states that all trading is done in the Chinese Siamese, Pasai, Pedir and Bengal. Anthony Reid (26: 2014) said Pegu exporting ports at least forty boats were full of rice (may be equal to 14,000 tons) to Pasai, Pedir (Pidi) and Malaka at the beginning of the century. This is in line with the Tome Pires (135: 2014) which says people Malacca and Pasai used to go there (Pegu).

Commodity rice became the main staple for the people of Aceh. So the need for rice is so increased. Aceh must not only meet its own needs, but also to meet the needs of rice to foreign traders who are doing trade or commerce in Aceh. If food needs do not met will affect the trading activity in Aceh. Therefore, there were much rice imported from Vietnam, Siam and from the Port of Pegu.

Problems of the supply of rice effect on the increase of a multicultural interaction . Among those are Pasai people who have become accustomed to Pegu, Siam kingdom of Aceh in terms of rice imports, and others. The process of multicultural interaction in the field of agriculture can be seen from the import process and how sultan who treat slaves.

In agriculture, Aceh is not so developed. However, this is not in line with the plantations, plantation in Aceh is

growing rapidly. One result is a growing plantation of pepper. Of all the goods produced in Aceh, pepper which is a major trading commodities. Anthony Reid (10: 2015) states that Lada grow so well in Sumatra, so the record of the Portuguese early estimates, that Pasai alone produces about half (1400-1800 tons) as well as Malabar, Pires thinks that the city Pidi in Sumatra adjacent never produce more than this amount, though at times it only produces about 500 tons.

Until about 1530, most of this pepper was brought to the north to meet the supply of large Chinese market. Correspondingly, Tome Pires (204: 2014) said that the region Pasai produce 8,000-10,000 thousand bahar pepper annually. It is also described Ibrahim, Muhammad, et al (81: 1991) said that the pepper trees in Aceh thrives so much so that every year, the Kingdom of Aceh were able to load the results of this pepper on 20 ships. Lombard (88: 1991) said that the pepper has become the principal export goods. First export destination is China, then spread to Western merchants, both the Islamic and the European nation. Ibrahim, Muhammad, et al (82: 1991) states, there is also pepper traded by foreign traders as traders from Gujarat, Arabic and Chinese. The common people also took part in the pepper trade, but most of the pepper-pepper they traded it belonged to their employer.

In Ibrahim, Muhammad, et al (82: 1991) said that the price of pepper in the Kingdom of Aceh, before the arrival of the merchants of the West, about 3 rials per bahar (1 bahar \pm 375 lbs), then after the

arrival of the Dutch and the UK price rises , to 20 rials per bahar. With the arrival of the French traders, pepper prices rose again, reaching 48 rials per bahar, this new price on the west coast of Sumatra. While in the capital of the Kingdom of Aceh at the same time, the price of pepper can reach 64 rial per bahar.

Tome Pires also stated that not only produces Lada Pasai but also produce silk. Lombard (87: 1991) said that the silk is still produced in a number of quite a lot in the area around Aceh. Farmers cultivate silk in large enough quantities, which are treated in Aceh into a variety of popular items throughout the island of Sumatra. Those who come from the Coromandel brought the rest which was still a raw silk, silk was not white like that of China, nor it is as smooth and as good as its management. Silk of Aceh was yellow and hard, though it can be used as a fabric Taf pretty good.

This is in line with the opinion of Ibrahim, Muhammad, et al (83: 1991) said that in addition to the rice, Pedir also famous for its silk worms that produce results silk for the Kingdom of Aceh. In the field of trade multicultural interaction processes emerging from Aceh relationship that send or export pepper to China. Pepper is necessary to meet the needs of the Chinese market. In addition, also the interaction to the Europeans at that time held an urgent request to the Aceh Lada.

According to William marsden and William C.hunter, "In the second half of the eighteen century the average garden managed by a single person had 500 trees, while Reviews those taken care of by a

family averaged 1000 trees". Farmers have been able to manage their lands, and defend their land individually or in the family. A farmer is able to care for a maximum of 500 trees or 1000 trees per family tenants. Based on government data Banda Aceh, which form the main export pepper done with this system of cultivation by farmers. If farmers are concentrated in an area, then formed alliance called "Seuneubok". If the farmer is capitalized by others, the financier nobility generally called "peutuha pangkay" (Government of Banda Aceh 1988: 120).

Correspondingly, Ibrahim, Muhammad, et al (82: 1991) said that to collect pepper as much as possible in the capital of the kingdom of Aceh sultan sent representatives located on the west coast of Sumatra to collect pepper in there, and then transport it to the Aceh overwater. Number of pepper produced each year on the west coast Suamtera was 50,000 sacks. It was assumed that the sultan of Aceh took 16,000 sacks (each bag of 60 lbs), so the total number of 960,000 lbs or 43 584 kg.

Planting Pepper managed by farmers in the highlands, and Sultan would send a representative to collect pepper, and transported through the river. Pepper is in great demand by foreign traders. Pepper exports a lot outside Aceh. In this case it can be seen the process of multicultural interaction Aceh with foreign trader, through export of pepper. Because pepper is the main commodity, the Sultan maintain good relations with foreign traders so that they keep buying pepper in Aceh. It made the Acehnese economy remains stable. The process continues with multicultural

interaction with Chinese, Gujarati and Arabic. Even Lada in Aceh used as commodities to be used to meet the needs of the main markets in China.

Not only pepper, silk is also a commodity that should be taken into account. Though it is not as attractive as pepper. It was because pepper was the main commodity. But silk is well developed across Aceh, although the results of the silk is not as good and not as white as those in China, China. So that the silk is not exported outside. Silk in Aceh was limited in the interest of the people in Sumatra, which will be used as the fabric Taf pretty good. The process of multicultural interaction arises with the silk trade was limited to those that exist in the entire island of Sumatra.

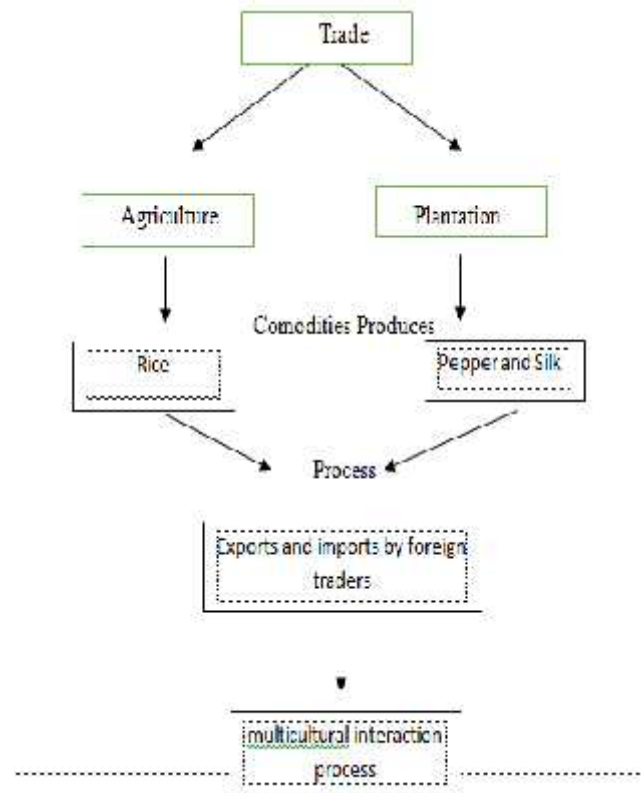


Image: The concept of multicultural interaction process in the context of trade, agriculture and farming in the kingdom of Islam in Aceh

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