



## Historical Perspective of Acehese Women's Leadership Transformation as a Source of History Learning

Djono\*, Sutiya, Fachri Zulfikar

Department of History Education, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta 57126, Indonesia

Corresponding Author Email: [djono@staff.uns.ac.id](mailto:djono@staff.uns.ac.id)

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### ABSTRACT

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Acehnese women's leadership is an interesting topic to discuss because of the strong Islamic law in Aceh. There have been several transformations in Acehese women's leadership so it has become a topic of discussion and debate among the Acehese people. This research aims to (1) describe the transformation of Acehese leadership from a historical perspective and (2) describe the leadership of Acehese women as a source of historical learning. This study is qualitative research with a historical method. The main source of this research is an article that contains the transformation of Acehese women's leadership. The stages of this research are heuristics, verification or criticism, interpretation, and historiography. This study resulted in two findings. First, there have been several transformations of Acehese women's leadership, including Laksamana Malahayati, Cut Nyak Dhien, and Cut Nyak Meutia. Second, Acehese women's leadership as a source of historical learning includes the values of assertiveness, courage, and integrity as important points for the realization of student character. This research is a reference for teachers in fulfilling historical learning and for future researchers in conducting research about the transformation of Acehese women's leadership.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of brainpower that is focused on women has increased significantly from year to year [1]. This shows that many women take part in various community activities. In this regard, many women have succeeded in reaching positions ranging from low to the highest positions in institutions [2]. In history, several women succeeded in occupying several positions, such as scientists [3], village chiefs, ministers, head of courts, governors, vice presidents, to presidents [4, 5].

Women are now involved and take their roles in organizations and institutions [6, 7]. This involvement indicates that women also have a leadership spirit within themselves. Musta'an [8] define leadership as a process of giving meaning to something, either a collective effort or another that results in a willingness to achieve goals. Meanwhile, Singh et al. [9] explains that leadership is an interpersonal influence on a certain system and situation and is directed through the communication process to the achievement of goals. Leaders have an important role in an institution [10]. Leadership is the key to organizing the potential of the institution in achieving goals [11].

This leadership is related to the role of women. The role of women in nation-building has begun since the 1978 GBHN (Outlines of the State Policy) until now [12]. It is mandated that women have the same rights, obligations, and opportunities as men to build the nation [13]. Unfortunately, women's participation is currently not running according to their potential, even occupying the back position [14].

It has become polemic in various circles, which stems from the view of differences in biological structures that have implications for the roles they have in society. From this

biological structure, women are considered to have more weaknesses than men [15, 16]. Some circles see that male biological anatomy is more likely to play a leading role in public services because they are considered more powerful, potential, and productive [7]. These differences give birth to the separation of functions, roles, and responsibilities between men and women. Therefore, there is a view that men are more suitable to play a role in the public sector while women play a role in the household.

The low participation of women in development is caused by the dichotomy of masculine/feminist human roles as a result of biological determination, the dichotomy of public/domestic roles stemming from "women's role is at home", the concept of double workload, or women serving as housewives that tend to experience the actualization of women's potential, as well as the subordination syndrome and the marginal role of women to preserve insight into women's roles and functions in society which are secondary [17]. These illustrate the classic discrimination against women [18].

The historical structural roots of the position and status of women are of serious concern globally [19]. The world women's congress or the national congress has GBHN as a forum for programs to improve the leadership, position, and role of women [20]. Many historical stories talk about women's leadership in Aceh Province, Indonesia. Aceh's civilization is based on Islamic civilization. Islamic leadership is based on Islamic law, namely leadership by men both in worship and in the government bureaucracy [21]. The effectiveness of a leader is determined by his ability to influence and direct his members [22]. A man commonly leads a government, especially the one who uses Islamic law in his daily life. However, in certain cases, women appear as leaders.

History records that Aceh was once led by 4 female sultans (sultanahs) named Sultanah Taj 'Alam Syafiyat al-Din (1641-1675), Sultanah Nur al-'Alam Naqiyat al-Din (1675-1678), Sultanah 'Inayat Shah Zakiyat al -Din (1678-1788), and Sultanah Kamalat al-Din (1688-1699) [23].

The existence of Acehese women's leadership is different from Islamic law which is oriented towards the leadership of men. Although it is different from Islamic law, the birth of Acehese women's leadership has the support of the ulama or religious leaders in Aceh so it gains political legitimacy [24]. The existence of political legitimacy from religious leaders made the existence of these sultanahs even stronger in the government of the Aceh kingdom. Sheikh Nuruddin Ar Raniry is one of the Arab scholars who appointed Sultanah Syafiyat al-Din as the first sultanah of the Aceh kingdom.

Before the Aceh kingdom was led by four sultanahs, women's leadership in Aceh can be identified from the government of Sultan Aladdin Riayat Syah al-Mukammal (1589-1604) Keumalahayati as the admiral of the Aceh navy [25]. Then, during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda, the Keumala Cahaya Division was formed which consisted of widows whose husbands died while fighting against the Portuguese so that these women could avenge the death of their husbands. This women's squad is called Inong Bale, which is based in the Kuta Inong Bale fortress.

Women's leadership in Aceh was not limited to female kings or sultanates but continued in the era of the Indonesian independence struggle and the Acehese women's organization [25]. The transformation of Acehese leadership from the sultanates was the birth of Acehese female warrior figures such as Cut Nyak Dhien and Cut Meutia who became leaders of the Indonesian struggle for independence from the shackles of Dutch colonialism. The struggle of the Acehese people with the unification of all elements of society made Aceh the last area to be colonized and controlled by the Dutch colonials in 1904.

The transformation of women's leadership is a critical issue to discuss. This can be highlighted from various perspectives, such as religion, history, feminism, and so on. Previous findings have reviewed matters closely related to the transformation of women's leadership. Research on finding the relationship between leadership transformation and the performance of Acehese leaders has been carried out by previous researchers [26]. They revealed a relationship between leadership transformation and performance from a gender perspective. Similar research has also revealed the experiences of African-American women in leading a higher education institution in Mississippi [27]. He applied mixed method in his research. The results showed that they, African-American women, received support from educational narratives and literature regularly so that they successfully led and occupied positions in higher education.

Oyeniran [28] highlighted how women led their schools and changed the school situation for the better. The findings suggest that female principals contribute to student learning courses and positively influence school development. The same thing was also found about the experiences and outcomes of women's leadership development programs [29] with a qualitative approach. The findings conclude that the women's leadership development program has allowed women to develop knowledge, attitudes, and personality, improve learning activities, and develop social attitudes.

Acehese women's leadership is part of the local history. The history that contains the transformation of Acehese

women's leadership needs to be preserved for the next generation. Preservation of this history can be carried out through education [30]. Educational institutions can package the content of history lessons on the transformation of Acehese women's leadership as a source of learning for students as well to preserve the history of Acehese women's leadership. History subjects in schools are needed by utilizing historical learning resources as the main reference because they are created simultaneously with events that occur in society. It means that the contextual situation and atmosphere are contained in these historical learning resources.

If studied, historical learning resources are anything that can help students obtain some information, knowledge, experience, and skills about human activities in the past, either directly or indirectly. History learning resources are also a means or educational facilities to run learning smoothly. History learning resources are used to help teachers present and transmit educational content and students acquire knowledge and abilities about history [31]. The use of historical learning resources is a component of the concept of historical thinking which is circumvented by Seixas [32] to develop students' historical thinking skills. In the implementation of learning, teachers should take advantage of historical learning resources. Historical learning resources can be a tool to deal with civilization and becomes verbal and effective learning for students. The use of historical learning resources can improve students' thinking skills and historical analysis as well as make learning more conducive [33].

In this regard, the transformation of Acehese women's leadership has become a relevant source of learning for historical learning today [34]. Utilization of these learning resources is also a way to provide information to the younger generation that a region can be led by women and that there is no gender discrimination to lead an area. Stories and events of the transformation of Acehese women's leadership will provide understanding to students to feel the topics they are learning and to be wiser in dealing with life [35].

Some previous findings have in common with the finding of this study. However, this study has something different with a more interesting explanation. This study applies the historical method which is part of a qualitative approach. Another difference is that it focuses on Acehese women's leadership from a historical perspective. In addition, the researcher also discusses the leadership of Acehese women as an alternative learning resource for the content of history lessons. From this description, this study aims to describe the transformation of Acehese women's leadership from a historical perspective and describe Acehese women's leadership as a source of historical learning.

## 1.1 Statement of the problem

The statements of the research problem are:

- (1) How is the transformation process of Acehese women's leadership from a historical perspective?
- (2) How is the leadership of Acehese women as a source of historical learning?

## 1.2 Purpose of the study

From the formulation of the problem, the objectives of this research are:

- (1) Describe the transformation of Acehese women's leadership from a historical perspective.

(2) Describe Acehese women's leadership as a source of historical learning.

### 1.3 Problem of the study

The basis of holding this research is the polemic that occurred in the field. The polemic is that there are differences in biological structures that have implications for the role of women in society. Women are considered to have more weaknesses than men [16] because men are considered stronger, potential, and productive [7]. These differences give birth to the separation of functions, roles, and responsibilities between men and women. As a result, there is a view that men are better in their roles in the public sector, while women are only in the household sector. Women are considered suitable as housewives and in line with the role of women to preserve insight about the role and function of women in society is secondary. In addition, there is still classic discrimination against women [18].

In addition, there is an assumption that women's participation in the development of country cannot be maximized. This is since there is a greater workload between men and women. From this, there are other problems that have an impact on the existence of women in various aspects of life. Women are considered incapable of being a leader. This assumption was then broken by the leadership of the Aceh Sultanate by a woman.

The transformation of Acehese women's leadership is still not something that many people know, such as students. Educational Institutions have not presented historical learning about the transformation of Acehese women's leadership as a learning resource. The history subject in the school does not contain theories that discuss the theory of Acehese women's leadership.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Design

This research used the historical method. It is a research that passes critical analysis of the past track record and reconstructs imaginative events through related data by following the stages of heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography [36-40]. The historical method is a part of qualitative research. Indonesian researchers still rarely use this method. In this study, the sources used were articles related to the history of Acehese women's leadership.

### 2.2 Research procedure

In historical research, there is no rigid set of steps because it does not use special complex techniques. However, the researcher has summarized the stages of historical research that refer to Hana and Sulisty [41]. The first stage is heuristics or looking for relevant data sources regarding the history of Acehese women's leadership, starting from the Malahayati War Commander, Sultanah Aceh, to the Cut Nyak Dhien period, from articles, proceedings, and books. The next stage is verification or source criticism. This stage is done by assessing how far the quality of the sources obtained is to explain a theme. In the historical method, criticism is divided into two forms, namely internal criticism and external criticism. Internal criticism is related to the assessment of

whether data sources can be used as historical facts while external criticism is an assessment of whether data sources are appropriate to be used as references. The results of the criticism are then interpreted. This is the third step (interpretation) in historical research. The interpretation of the results is arranged in the form of a description so that the interpretation has a clear basis. The last stage is writing the results according to a clear framework in narrative form or called historiography.

## 3. FINDINGS

For centuries, women have been an integral part of Aceh's history. There are at least three periods of involvement of Acehese women in carrying out political movements to show the important role of women in Aceh. The first period was in the seventeenth century called the period of royal rule. The involvement of women in politics had already been in the constitution of the kingdom. For example, women held some government officials. The second period was the colonial period in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The role of women in the people's struggle against colonialism is a form of political awareness. Two of the famous figures in this periodization are Cut Nyak Dhien and Cut Meutia. It is also written that some of the highest leaders of the Islamic kingdom of Aceh were ordered by Sultanah who was exceptionally talented in the public sector. The third period relates to the national revival movement because of the ethical politics of the Dutch East Indies which gave the local people (the Bumi Putera) the opportunity to study at school.

The period of Acehese women's leadership began in 1353. The leadership had changed until the early 19<sup>th</sup>. This transformation involved 17 Acehese women who were leaders at that time. These women occupied distinct positions and periods. The data on the leadership of Acehese women are presented in Table 1 below.

### 3.1 Admiral Malahayati

Malahayati is a heroine from the Sultanate of Aceh. Her birth name was Keumalahayati. He was born in Aceh Besar in 1550. His father's name was Admiral Mahmud Syah while his paternal grandfather was Admiral Muhammad Said Syah, son of Sultan Salahuddin Syah who ruled around 15230-1539 AD. Her husband's name is Admiral Zainal Abidin. From childhood to adulthood, she received court education. She also followed in the footsteps of her father and grandfather by taking military education majoring in the navy at the Baitul Maqdis academy. From 1585 to 1604, she served as the Head of the Guards Palace, Commander of Secrets and Commander of Government Protocol from Sultan Saidil Mukammil Alauddin Riayat Syah. Malahayati led 2,000 Inong Balee troops (widows of martyred heroes) to fight against Dutch ships and forts on September 11, 1599, and at the same time kill Cornelis de Houtman in a one-on-one battle on the ship's deck. She received the title of Admiral for this bravery, so she is better known as Admiral Malahayati. When she died, her body was buried in Krueng Raya hill, Lamreh, Aceh Besar. Then, the second female hero is Cut Nyak Dhien.

The first Acehese female figure was Admiral Malahayati the warlord of the Aceh kingdom from 1589 to 1604. She had made a successful admiral and court official, but her rise to military leadership is closely linked to the decision of the

sultan Ala al-Din Riayat Shah to entrust him with a strategic position. She was then replaced by Meurahganti in 1604-1607 and her deputy, Cut Meurah Inseun, as the deputy warlord of the kingdom of Aceh.

Contemporary biographies show Malahayati as noble blood. Her father, Mahmud Syah, and grandfather, Muhammad Said Syah, had been admirals and related in their genealogy to the first sultan of Aceh. Admiral Malahayati was the leader of the commander of the Marine Fleet (AL) and led the Inong Balee fleet, but she was once appointed by the Sultan of Aceh as Commander of the Women's Palace Guards Troops. Besides, Malahayati is a reliable diplomat and negotiator. This is evidenced by various practical experiences in dealing with their counterparts from the Netherlands and England. As a military woman, Malahayati was assertive and has high discipline. However, in dealing with negotiations, she was flexible and wise without having to sacrifice her principles. As a military woman and Commander of the Fleet, she can be assertive and uncompromising against opponents. However, as a reliable diplomat, she could be friendly and flexible in dealing with her negotiating opponents.

Admiral Malahayati was a brave woman who fought against the ship's leaders from the Netherlands, namely Cornelis de Houtman and Frederijk de Houtman. On June 21, 1599, they entered the port of Banda Aceh and were received as befits a merchant ship of a friendly country. However, these two brothers betrayed the sultan. They made trade manipulation, disruption, incite, and so on. For the Sultan, there was no other way but to assign the Commander of the Inong Balee Fleet, Admiral Malahayati, to complete the engagement. Inong Balee's fleet attacked Dutch ships disguised as merchant ships. One-on-one battles took place on the decks of Dutch ships. Cornelis de Houtman was stabbed to death by Admiral Malahayati with her *rencong* while Frederijk de Houtman was imprisoned. During two years as a prisoner of war, she had time to translate a Malay-Dutch dictionary into Malay, prayer treaties according to Christianity.

Admiral Malahayati was a graduate of the Baitul Makdis Aceh Academy. She had a lot of achievements. From the Academy, admirals began to emerge and present themselves as people who influenced the development of women's leadership at the college level. She received the honor and trust of Sultan Aladdin Riyat Syah Al Mukammil (1589-1604) who was appointed as the Commander of the Protocols of the Darud-World Palace from the kingdom of Aceh Darussalam. This position for Malahayati is a high and honorable position with great responsibilities because, in addition to being the Sultan's sidekick, she also controlled ethics and protocol as usual which is applied in every royal palace anywhere in the world. After the death of Admiral Malahayati, several Acehnese women then led Aceh. It is proven that a sultan successively led the Aceh kingdom, namely Sultanah Safiatuddin (1641-1675), and, in his reign, there were two female regents, Cut Nyak Keureuto and Cut Nyak Fatimah. The next were Sultanah Nakiatuddin (1675-1678), Sultanah Zakiatuddin (1678-1688), and Sultanah Kamalatuddin (1688–1699). During the Dutch-Aceh war (1873-1912), there was more fighting and hostility. Figure 1 is a photo of Admiral Malahayati.



**Figure 1.** Admiral Malahayati

**Table 1.** List of previous Acehnese women's leaders

Name	Position	Period	Location
Putri Lindung Bulan	Prime Minister	1353-1398	Perlak Sultanate
Nihraiyah Rawangsa Khadiyu	Queen	1400-1428	Samudra Pasai Sultanate
Malahayati *	Admiral	1589-1604	Aceh Darussalam Sultanate
Meurah Ganti *	Warlord	1604-1607	Aceh Darussalam Sultanate
Cut Meurah Inseun *	Rear admiral	1604-1607	Aceh Darussalam Sultanate
Taj'Al Alam	Queen	1641-1675	Aceh Darussalam Sultanate
Cur Nyak Keureuto*	Head of the autonomous region ( <i>Uleebalang</i> )	1641-1675	Aceh Darussalam Sultanate
Cut Nyak Fatimah*	Head of the autonomous region ( <i>Uleebalang</i> )	1641-1675	Aceh Darussalam Sultanate
Seri Ratu Nurul Alam	Queen	1675-1678	Aceh Darussalam Sultanate
Nakiatu'ddin Sjah	Queen	1678-1688	Aceh Darussalam Sultanate
Sultan Inayat Zakiatuddin Sjah	Queen	1688-1699	Aceh Darussalam Sultanate
Seri Ratu Kamalat Syah			
Pocut Meuligo	<i>Uleebalang</i> , war advisor and general in Samalanga	Late 18 <sup>th</sup> century (1857)	During the early war against Dutch colonialism
Tengku Fakinah	Generals and religious leaders with dayah**	1856-1933	During the war against Dutch colonialism
Cut Nyak Dhien	General in West Aceh	Died on November 8, 1908 in exile	During the war against Dutch colonialism
Cut Meutia	General in North Aceh	Died on October 25, 1910	During the war against Dutch colonialism
Pocut Baren Biheue	General in West Aceh	Early 19 <sup>th</sup> century	During the war against Dutch colonialism

### 3.2 Cut Nyak Dien

Cut Nyak Dhien is a noble descendant from Lampadang Village (North Aceh). She was born into a family of one of the nobles in 1848. Her parents (Teuku Nanta Seutia) were nobles with the title uleebalang VI Mukim. Cut Nyak Dhien is also the grandson of Datuk Makhudum Sati who comes from Minangkabau. She studied religion and household (cooking, farming, and so on). She was married to the son of a relative named Teuku Cek Ibrahim Lamnga at the age of 12. They had one son named Cut Gambang. Cut Nyak Dhien was a strong woman who was appointed as a National Heroine in 1964 by Sukarno. Her name is very widely heard by other heroes in Indonesia. She participated in the war against the Dutch and became a fugitive among the Dutch colonels. She was called the master of guerrilla strategy because of her tenacity, courage, strength, agility, and decency. Because of this title, she got a position as a general in West Aceh. At first, she joined the war because she helped her husband to fight to expel the Dutch when they were in VI Mukim. However, Cut Nyak Dhien's husband died in the war in 1899. Therefore, she continued her husband's struggle to defend the Acehnese and expel the Dutch. A few months after the death of her husband, who was 30 years old, Cut Nyak Dhien married Teuku Umar and became his third wife.

The Dutch colonialists considered Cut Nyak Dhien a fanatic because she did not just give up on the Dutch. After the death of Teuku Umar, Cut Nyak Dhien was the most wanted person among the Colonies (1899–1905) because she presented as the successor to her husband's struggle. Through this change, Cut Nyak Dhien became an expert in guerrilla strategy and overwhelmed the Dutch colony. The firmness, courage, strength, and agility are the courtesy shown by Cut Nyak Dhien to be adopted by Indonesian women. She was highly respected among the Acehnese leaders, even the Dutch Colonies acknowledged it. They expressed admiration for the agility and spirit of Cut Nyak Dhien when fighting. Several Dutch leaders, such as Van Heutsz, Van Daalen, Van der Maaten, Veltman, H. Colijn, Christoffel, to ordinary officers, had tried to defeat her, but none succeeded. Figure 2 is a photo of Cut Nyak Dhien.



Figure 2. Cut Nyak Dhien

### 3.3 Cut Meutia

The leadership of the troops was taken over by Cut Meutia after Pang Nanggroe was killed, and the defense base was moved to the Gayo and Alas areas with troops led by Teuku Seupot Mata. On October 22, 1910, Dutch troops chased Cut

Meutia's troops who were thought to be in the Lhokreuhat area. The next day, the chasing was conducted back to the Krueng Putoe area towards Bukit Paya, making Cut Meutia's troops increasingly squeezed and always moving between mountains and the vast wilderness. In the battle on October 25 at Krueng Putoe, Cut Meutia's troops faced a Dutch attack. This is where Cut Meutia died with other Muslim troops such as Teuku Chik Paya Bakong, Teuku Seupot Mata, and Teuku Mat Saleh. He died in 1908 and was buried in Sumedang, West Java. Now, she is known as a National Heroine who is a woman from Aceh, Indonesia. Then, the third female hero is Cut Meutia's Profile.

One of the famous heroines from Aceh is Cut Meutia. She was born in Keureutoe, Pirak (Perlak), North Aceh, in 1870. She is the only daughter born to the couple Teuku Ben Daud Pirak and Cut Jah. Her father was one of the Islamic leaders and government leaders in the Pirak area. During her life, Cut Meutia was married three times. Her first husband was Teuku Syamsarif, better known as Teuku Chik Bintara. The difference in vision in the struggle finally made their marriage not last long. Cut Meutia considered her husband to be collaborating with the Dutch while she was a woman who desperately fought the Dutch who were colonizing.

She remarried Teuku Chik Muhammad who was none other than the brother of her first husband. Cut Meutia's second husband is better known as Teuku Chik Tunong. Together with her second husband, Cut Meutia was finally getting increasingly enthusiastic about fighting the Dutch. However, her second husband died because he was executed by the Dutch in the seaside city of Lhokseumawe. After he died, according to his will, Cut Meutia remarried Pang Nanggroe. Together with her third husband, they finally continued the struggle against Dutch colonialism.

The Netherlands had a bigger battle than the Aceh war [40]. It was the heaviest and longest battle in occupying Indonesia. The colony had to lose commanders, great soldiers, and some money. Occupying Aceh was remarkable because many rebellions were emerging throughout Aceh at the same time, and their fiery zeal made it difficult to occupy in a fleeting time. North Aceh was one of the areas that rebelled against the colony. Cut Meutia was the dominant leader there, whom the Dutch colonials were most interested in. She was another female patriot who rebelled against the Dutch colonials all her life. Cut Meutia (1870–1910), a female hero from the Pase region (eastern Aceh). She has the power of the spirit that runs in her blood. Cut Meutia's ancestor from his father's line (Teuku Ben Daud) who lived about 400 years before she was born was a religious noble person who was related to the Darud Dunia Sultanate in Banda Aceh. His name was Bineh Blang. Cut Meutia grew up during the Aceh war, so her parents taught her to defend her faith and especially her nation. Her father always cooperated with the Sultanate and against the Dutch Colonial. Therefore, the spirit of her father was indirectly instilled in her and her children from an early age.

Cut Meutia had always been on the front lines, especially in the Keureunto area, North Aceh. Like Cut Nyak Dhien, Cut Meutia is a loyal wife; she accompanied her husband in the war zone. Being a woman did not stop her from standing on the front lines against the Dutch. In addition, her intelligence helped her master the defensive and attacking strategies that cost the Dutch a lot of money. Dutch officers admitted that their 10 years had been wasted because of Cut Meutia. The ten years of struggle seemed perfect to them and must have been a happy day. After two years of Cut Meutia's struggle, the Dutch finally managed to ambush her in 1910. She died in the



war as a commander and received an honorary title from Queen Wilhemina. Cut Meutia's fighting spirit has had a tremendous impact on fighting for freedom. Figure 3 is a photo of Cut Meutia.



**Figure 3.** Cut Meutia

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Based on the result, three female figure namely Admiral Malahayati, Cut Nyak Dhien, and Cit Meutia, the leadership system of the Acehne people placed the religious leaders as royal advisors as well as the king's sidekicks. They had a prominent position after the king. Every decision on domestic and even foreign relations was intervened, meaning that the religious leaders are experts who have an eminent position in the kingdom. The history of Aceh records several names of great religious leaders who occupied these positions. Among them were Hamzah Fansuri, Samsuddin Assumatrani, Nuruddin Ar-Raniry, and Sheikh Abdur Rauf As-Singkili [23]. During the reign of the queens, the religious leaders got a special place and even protection. They were the advisors to queens so they ran the government according to religious teachings without considering in depth the permissibility of women's leadership. This does not mean that they did not pay attention to the development and treasures of the Islamic religion, namely the development of problems regarding the position of women in religion and politics.

Ar-Raniry and Abdur Rauf believe that if there are still men, they should be the leaders, not women. However, for certain reasons and considerations, women were allowed to rule a kingdom. As-Singkili seemed to have no particular interest in the sultanate other than the desire to uphold Islam. When dealing with legal decisions regarding women's leadership, he did not doubt deciding the law regarding the existence of these women as leaders. Thus, no concrete statements supported or rejected women as leaders other than obeying orders and just praising the greatness of the leadership of the reigning queen because it was proven that the Aceh kingdom was prosperous despite chaos and disintegration [42]. The Acehne people are a fanatical and religious community. Acehne people are mostly Muslims. They have always adhered to religious teachings that cannot be separated from the traditional customs in society. There is *hukum ngon adat lagee zat ngon sipheuet* (law-religious law-with custom is like substance with the character). This reflects that religious and traditional values cannot be separated from the Acehne people [43].

The legitimacy of the Acehne people for the existence of

women as leaders which cannot be separated from religious values can be seen by their religious leaders at that time, namely Ar-Raniry and Abdur Rauf [44]. They were part of a royal organization that influenced every aspect of Acehne life. The community adhered to the teachings of orthodox Islam, which was seen during the reign of the queen in Aceh. In Bustnun as-Salatin ar-Raniry describes every festive event that is celebrated together by the people of Aceh with the presence of the queen (Safiatuddin Syah). The queen was warmly and festively welcomed, which signified the people's acceptance of the greatness and leadership of Queen Safiatuddin. They enjoyed and took part in every festive event organized by the sultanate without noticing the growing problem among Islamic intellectuals that the existence of women as leaders was controversial.

From the historical facts and traditions of the Acehne people, most of the Acehne people did not agree if the kingdom was led by a woman, but the strength and will of Commander Sagi managed to maintain the position of women as leaders. For the people of Aceh, if security and peace are guaranteed in their state and community life, the Acehne people can accept anyone as a leader in the Aceh Darussalam Sultanate. The historical fact of women's leadership in Aceh as the highest leader in the Aceh kingdom shows the existence of gender equality in Aceh since the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. Also, in Islamic teachings, the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam provides an equal position between men and women [45]. In the civilization of the Acehne people, there is the unity of all elements of society in a struggle. An egalitarian and open society makes Aceh's strength in dealing with problems and challenges, both internal and external.

The transformation of the existence of Acehne women's leadership continued in the face of the Dutch colonial era. Female warriors appeared such as Cut Nya Dhien, Cut Meutia, and another female warrior, Uleebalang Pocut Meuligo [46]. The togetherness of the male and female warriors and the unification of the Acehne people made it difficult for the Dutch colonials to conquer Aceh so it was only in 1904 that the Dutch colonial mastered it after Snouck Horgronje studied the cultural knots of the Acehne people. Therefore, Acehne women may use political conditions to maintain their power for a long time.

When there was Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM or Free Aceh Movement) during the New Order, the women who were members of the Inong Balee troops took part in the GAM troops. The widows of the victims of the Military Operations Area (DOM) operation struggled to realize their goals. After the peace agreement between GAM and the government of the Republic of Indonesia on August 15, 2005, the struggle of the Acehne women was prioritized in social activities although some took part in Aceh's local political parties. Table 1 shows data from historical studies on the role of Acehne women in decision-making in the past. The table shows the number of women who participated in decision-making so that their active participation in politics is not a coincidence or political manipulation. Old Acehne women in the historical trajectory were strong, authoritative, and had "izzah" (nobility) and a good Islamic commitment. This is consistent with the opinion that Acehne women have the opportunity to take leadership power [47]. The existence of a prolonged conflict situation in Aceh has affected the joints of people's lives, and it is women/children who suffer the most from it. The opportunity to receive an education is low which results in weak human resources (HR) for women so the contribution of women to

play a role in the public, especially in the political field, is still lacking.

After the disaster and the Helsinki MoU, which was signed on August 15, 2005, Aceh's 'face of life' began to change. The Helsinki MoU was an exceedingly long journey; even in Singapore and Japan, they tried to create peace, but often encountered obstacles. Helsinki is an area that could create its MoU so that the province of Aceh finds peace and tranquility to this day [46]. Changes in the political constellation are increasingly visible. The role of women in the public, especially in the political field, is increasingly open, marked by the emergence of local political parties that give birth to Acehnese women cadres who have the spirit to fight and change [44].

Acehnese women's leadership is influenced by several factors. These factors include internal and external factors. The internal factor is, for example, the circumstances that require a woman to become a leader. This was also influenced by the existence of a woman's kinship with a leader who had been and was in power at that time, such as the leadership of Queen Shafiatuddin. She became the queen to replace her husband, Iskandar Tsani. The external factor is the quality or potential of a woman. She can lead like a male leader and has the qualities to be a leader. The appearance of women in the public sphere in Aceh is no longer surprising at all. Every agency, from the government to the private sector, has accepted women as workers. The dominance of this role has eliminated some jobs that were initially filled only by men. In the heyday of the kingdoms in Aceh, for the sultan, Acehnese women were highly exalted. They have several advantages that are sometimes not owned by men. In certain situations, women get special tasks and proportional positions. The position includes being the leader of the war fleet, especially the navy with the rank of admiral; she was Admiral Malahayati. They have a high leadership attitude and must be charismatic. Another position is the troops of the Suke Kawai Palace (palace guard regiment), the assembly of the people's court.

Acehnese women leaders, like other leaders, also have leadership values. Acehnese women have different leadership values. This is due to differences in terms of educational background, family, organizations, and the environment in which these women lead. The following will describe the values contained in Acehnese women's leadership. The first value of Acehnese women's leadership is assertiveness. Admiral Malahayati was not only the Commander of the Marine Fleet of the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam, known as the Inong Balee fleet but she had also been appointed by the Sultan of Aceh as Commander of the Female Palace Guards Troops. Besides that, Admiral Malahayati was a reliable diplomat and negotiator. This was evidenced by various practical experiences in dealing with their counterparts from the Netherlands and England. As a military woman, Malahayati was assertive and has high discipline. However, as a reliable diplomat, she could be friendly and flexible in dealing with her negotiating opponents [48]. This made Acehnese women had a fighting spirit, a spirit of liberation, and determination in thinking and acting [45].

The second value of Acehnese women's leadership is courage. Admiral Malahayati was not only as commander of the Marine Fleet of the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam and Inong Balee, but she was also appointed by the Sultan of Aceh as Commander of the Palace Guards. In performing her duties, Admiral Malahayati was known as a reliable diplomat and negotiator. This was evidenced by the various practical

experiences faced by partners from the Netherlands and England. One of the important stages in Admiral Malahayati's life to be remembered was her courage to face the Portuguese and Dutch troops and her strategy in dealing with the arrival of the British [45]. Admiral Malahayati's blockading of the Dutch lodge successfully brought Dutch ships to Sri Lanka on September 11, 1599. Various challenges in the Aceh kingdom showed her courages. As a leader, she never felt tired and subdued. She was a fanatic and steadfast [49]. Six years since the death of Teuku Umar, Cut Nyak Dhien and her followers had been in the forest. She continued to echo the sabil war with overflowing enthusiasm [50]. The story of Cut Meutia's headship was also proven by the basis of her tenacity and courage as a heroine. She and her troops continued to fight by attacking and seizing colonial posts while moving towards Gayi through the wilderness. Cut Meutia and her troops clashed with Marechausee.

The third value of Acehnese women's leadership is integrity. Cut Nyak Dhien also had remarkably high integrity in her efforts against the Dutch. As her husband, Teuku Umar received an offer from the Dutch to get positions and facilities, Cut Nyak Dhien suggested refusing and choosing to return to the Aceh troops and fight against the Dutch [51]. According to the findings, it was revealed that Cut Nyak Dhien was an Indonesian heroine with courage, determination, a strong soul, and agility [52]. She did not give up even though she lived in a remote area for 6 years and felt inadequate with a weakened body. When a soldier suggested surrendering to the Dutch, Cut Nyak Dhien was truly angry at the offer. She spat and spoke loudly [50]. That was Cut Nyak Dhien's persistence in defending her principle of defending her homeland to the last drop of blood.

The existence of Admiral Malahayati, Cut Nyak Dhien, and Cut Meutia as national heroines is evidence of the recognition of female figures in the public sector, gender equality in Indonesia, and the development of post-conflict Aceh [53]. The values of assertiveness, courage, and integrity became the main foundation in influencing the actions of leaders during the war against the invaders. Acehnese women's heroic stories can be used as a source of historical learning. History learning can be a way to shape the character of the Indonesian nation.

History subjects with various character values are highly effective for instilling character values in students. This is supported by the research stating that the character values of heroes can be used as guidelines in growing the character of the Indonesian nation today [54]. History learning has a very important role in the development of the nation which is meaningful in the formation of the Indonesian nation which has a sense of nationality and intellectually respects the struggle of the nation and nationalism [55]. Thus, history subjects become a crucial point for the realization of student character which is taken from the exemplary qualities of Acehnese women leaders, such as assertiveness, courage, and integrity.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it concludes that the findings about the transformation of Acehnese women's leadership become new information in the historical learning of students, especially regarding the historical values of Acehnese women's leadership. It is hoped that there will be values-based learning on the integration of

Acehnese women's leadership, such as Admiral Malahayati, Cut Nyak Dhien, and Cut Meutia. They can be examples for students to get a better attitude change. Teachers can use history subjects as a medium in instilling the character of assertiveness, courage, and integrity. History subjects can be used as a bridge to connect the past that cannot be observed directly with the present that can be directly felt by everyone, especially students. The Indonesian history of fighting for independence was carried out by the heroes. The fighting spirit of these heroes can help instill the character in students, especially in history subjects.

The process of instilling Acehnese women's leadership values is carried out by teachers in many ways. The values that are instilled in students when learning takes place such as the material for the proclamation of independence are assertiveness, courage, and integrity. Assertiveness and courage are identical to the struggle of the heroes in fighting against the invaders while integrity relates to persistence in defending the principle of defending the homeland to the last drop of blood. The leadership values of Acehnese women are relevant and should be role models for the younger generation. Heroic values need to be upheld with pride and practiced in various development activities as well as in daily life. There have been several transformations of Acehnese women's leadership, including Laksamana Malahayati, Cut Nyak Dhien, and Cut Nyak Meutia. Acehnese women leaders were considered capable and courageous in carrying out their leadership. This ability is seen in their assertiveness in carrying out programs that focus on human resource development and regional development progress. Women leaders are also influenced by their activeness in organizations.

In practice, Acehnese women's leadership is used as a source of historical learning by implementing the values of assertiveness, courage, and integrity which are important for the realization of student character. In addition to being effective in developing student characters, information about the spirit, tenacity, and greatness of Acehnese women leaders can also give birth to strong women who are persistent in fighting for education for the development of the nation.

This research has limitations that three Acehnese female figures who are the focus of this research discussion. In fact, there are still many other female figures influencing the development of the country, such as Cut Nyak Fatimah and Cut Meurah Inseuen. Therefore, future researchers are advised to examine the transformation of Acehnese women's leadership from other figures. In addition, this research also focuses on Acehnese women. Indonesia has large areas and many influential female figures for the development of the country, including in the Java Island. Researchers can then highlight research on the transformation of women in Java, for example Raden Ajeng Kartini, Mrs. Meener, Dewi Sartika, Sandiah (Ibu Kasur), and others.

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