

THE HISTORY OF MUNAWATUL KHAIR ARABIC SCHOOL LAMPUNG BETWEEN 1930-1950

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ABSTRACT

Munawatul Khair Arabic School is one of the madrasah that played pivotal role in the history of Islamic education in Lampung during 1930-1950. This madrasah began in Tanjung Agugn, Bengkulu in 1925, founded by K.H. Hosen bin Abd Syukur. The madrasah is centered in Tanjung Karang, Bandar Lampung in 1930. This study is a form of literature research using historical and philosophical approach. The data source was collected from primary and secondary data. Primary data of this study is based on the records of the madrasah. While secondary data was similar researches from other researchers. This research used historical method, (1) Heuristic: data collection from primary and secondary data, (2) Criticism source, related criticism given internally or externally, (3) Interpretation involves combining various data sources to interpret a study, (4) Historiography, the historian's endeavor to reconstruct a history by writing it into a research.

The result of this study aims to enrich the value of education history, especially Islamic education in Lampung, focusing on the significant role of Madrasah Munawatul Khair Arabic School as a leading institution of its time. Little history is yet to be discovered regarding education in Lampung, specifically detailing the development of education in Lampung. The establishment of Munawatul Khair Arabic School in Lampung and Bengkulu provided Islamic education for the indigenous people of Indonesia. This action was particularly significant given the limited access to Islamic education during the colonial and post-colonial eras. While little impact this madrasah had provided globally, its influence was felt locally, especially among marginalized communities who had limited access to government-run schools during that period.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education comes from an arabic term, “Tarbiyah” with the root word “Robba” which means to nurture, educate and care for. As recorded in the History of Islamic Education in Indonesia, Ki Hajar Dewantara mentioned that education is a life-long necessity for the growth of children, meaning it can guide children in developing their self-identity as human beings and active members of society who can achieve the ultimate level of peace and happiness. Therefore, education itself is a crucial learning process in human life, whether it is formally obtained through an institution or informally obtained through family. Through education, we can dig, understand and implement the knowledge in the society, nation and state (Sofyan Rofi, 2020) .

Schools were indeed established during VOC period, although access were quite limited. The colonial government strictly separated between secular education from religious education. Secular education was primarily designated for elites, Europeans and indonesians closely associated with the colonial administration. This contrast discrimination against the Indonesian people was apparent through the disparities in educational infrastructure, costs and objectives. Colonial government provide low-quality of education for Indonesian to understand, read and be obedient (Prof.Dr. Abuddin Nata, 2011). Not until the early of 20th century, under the initiative of General Governor Van Heutz, schools began to established by the Dutch colonial government in small villages including first grade school, second grade school, village school (Volksschool), Europese Lagere School (ELS), Hollands Chinese School (HCS), Hollands Inlandse School (HIS) dll (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1982). Meanwhile there was a lack of clear policy regarding Islamic/religious education as the Dutch were reluctant to intervene on that matter. The Dutch colonial government tended to disregard the development of Islamic education at that time, allowing Islamic education to thrive relatively undisturbed during the colonial period. In contrast to education during Japanese colonials when Japanese arrived in 1940, islamic education in Indonesia was seemingly declining due to the decreasing number of learning spaces for Islamic education, direct supervision by Japanese authority towards Islamic institution and teachers and strict prohibition of religious instruction for advanced schools in 1943 (Sofyan Rofi, 2020).

Unlike the elites, common folk were limited to religious education obtained from mosques or boarding schools. Due to their financial means, they were unable to afford the educational institution established by the colonial government, which were relatively expensive. This concerning phenomenon led religious leaders to establish their own Islamic educational institutions as a response to the discriminatory educational policies implemented by the Japanese colonial government. This initiative aimed to advance the welfare of the indigenous people (Solihah Titin, 2021). While educational system had already developed in Java even before the 20th century, Lampung in contrast, did not have a formal education system until the early 20th century. It was only in the beginning of 20th century, educational system in lampung started to arise and set up

in every district. Determined to not be left behind by Dutch education, Islamic leaders in Lampung established Islamic education. This was motivated by the realization that Dutch schools were primarily established to create a cheap labor force for the Dutch. Muawanatul Khair Arabic School or oftenly referred as M.A.S is a religious education school founded by K.H. Osman Hosen, bearing the aspiration of the previous school founded by his father in 1925 (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1982). It was established in Teluk Betung Selatan region, Bandar Lampung in 1930. The school aimed to help the indigenous people surrounded the area to obtain education. During that time, Munawatul Khair did not have a tiered education system. There were only madrasas for all classes and ages. The school's founding principles were centered around mutual support and educational advancement. The inclusion of the English word 'School' was a strategic move to appeal to a wider range of students, from the general public to the upper class. Apparently, those efforts bore fruit. The school became attractive to children from both civil servant and indigenous commoner families, although the exact number is unclear in the written records.

With a background as an Islamic Madrasah, especially with an Arabic focus, Munawir Khair Arabic School uses Arabic as the language of communication within the school. Even the books and texts used are almost entirely in Arabic script and language. In fact, 75% of the lessons taught are Islamic religion and the remaining 25% are general subjects (Farida Os, 1985). Even though the teaching staff consists solely of graduates from Islamic boarding schools or close family members, the students' Arabic language skills have become a standout feature.

Getting a lot of recognition from people, the school center was rebuilt in Bengkulu. It also had a lot of oppression from the colonial government. Even it briefly stopped operating in 1950 due to numerous turmoil occurred at that time. Despite the numerous obstacles encountered from its establishment until 1950, Muawanatul Khair Arabic School has made significant contributions to society by producing prominent figures such as Ibrahim Hosen, a leading scholar in Islamic jurisprudence, who attended the school in Tanjung Karang, Bandar Lampung in 1932 (Ririn Fauziyah, 2019). It made Munawatul Khair School is one of the oldest islamic schools in Bandar Lampung.

In previous study written by Ahmad Abas entitled *Sejarah Islam di Bengkulu Abad XX M* (The History of Islam in Bengkulu in 20th Century) (Ahmad Abas Musofa, 2016) mentioned the presence of Munawatul Khair in Bengkulu during the 20th century. The difference between his study and this study lays on the taken place and time focusing on the development of M.A.S in Bandar Lampung from 1930-1950. Another reference is used from Nurul Fadhila Annisa entitled '*Peran Guru Pada Proses Pembelajaran Luring Dalam Perkembangan Sosial Emosional Anak Usia Dini di TK Islam Perkemas Bandar Lampung*'. The difference between this thesis and my research lies in the fact that this thesis is more general in nature, focusing on education as a whole. Additionally, the time period examined in this thesis is different, as it was conducted after the name

change in 1951, while my research is a historical study set during the colonial era. (Annisa Nurul Fadhilah, 2021)

This research hopefully reveals how Islamic education influence the surrounding indigenous community in advancing Islamic education in Lampung, such as the use of Arabic language, which introduced new perspectives on foreign languages. It also aims to demonstrate that Islamic education was equally competitive with other general education during that time. Through this research, it is hoped that historiography on Islamic education in Lampung can be enriched, as there has been limited research on this topic. A deeper exploration of the history of Islamic education in Lampung reveals a fascinating narrative that is no less compelling than other historical accounts, and it can provide new insights for future readers.

II. METHODOLOGY

In this research on the topic of “Munawatul Khair Arabic School Lampung 1930-1950”, the researcher used historical method based on books by Abd Rahman Hamid & Muhammad Saleh Madjid. Historical methodology consist of four methods; (1) Heuristic is data source collection of primary and secondary data that aligns with the theme of the reseach. The researcher used written notes by the care taker of the Madrasah (Farida Os, 1985), Hosen family tree, Tribun newspaper (Bayu Saputra, 2017), an interview with the grandson of K.H. Osman Hosen (Imelda Soraya, 2024) and also a book on The History of Education in Indonesia during colonialism (Djohan makmur, 1993). The secondary data was obtained from journals in Google scholars. (2) Source of criticism, to assess the authenticity of the source material. External criticism is used to determine the authenticity of a source, while internal criticism evaluates its content and selects relevant information. (3) Interpretation, at this stage, the sources that have passed through the previous stages are combined according to the theme chosen by the author to facilitate the reconstruction of historical events. The final stage in the historical writing method is (4) Historiography: at this stage, the author begins to reconstruct history using the sources obtained previously, having passed through the previous stages (Abd Rahman Hamid & Muhammad Saleh Madjid, 2011). This research not only provides an understanding of history but also delves into more detailed information about MAS, an Islamic school whose history is known to very few people and is only briefly described in one book. Despite this, this school was once able to compete with schools built by the colonial government at that time and could develop rapidly in the areas of Sumatera Selatan and Bengkulu.

Madrasah Munawatul Khair Arabic School is mentioned in the book ‘The History of Education in Lampung’ using the name PERKEMAS which is the abbreviation of *Persatuan Keluarga MAS* (MAS Family Association). It is the development of Munawatul Khair Arabic School with different year establishment. Munawatul Khair Arabic School was established in 1930 in Lampung while Perkemas was in the 1950s. However, it is not clearly explained how the

school conducted lessons at the time since there were intervention issues by colonial government and their educational system. The description of this madrasah is general and cursory, lacking specific local details (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1982).

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. The Process of Developing and Expanding Madrasah Education

1. The Process of Developing Madrasah

Madrasah is a modern adaptation of classic Islamic schools designed to compete with other secular schools. Madrasah has grown among muslim communities with the aim of advancing Islamic education, drawing on ideas from Muslim intellectuals (Hasnida, 2017). his phenomenon was a result of the colonial government's restrictions on religious access within the populace, particularly in the realm of education. Furthermore, this period witnessed the rise of educational reform movements spearheaded by prominent religious leaders. (Hamdie et al., 2022).

Lampung experienced a severe education crisis during 19th century until the early 20th century due to the lack of educational academies. There were limited secular schools and were only located in certain areas. Dutch schools were primarily established to serve their own interests. In response to the expansion of Dutch education, Islamic schools also began to proliferate, aiming to contribute to the broader educational landscape of Indonesia. In response, Islamic schools, which had traditionally confined as *pesantren*, started to emerge as formal institutions. Lampung itself was home to several pioneering educational institutions such as Taman Siswa, Syarikat Islam (Islam Association), Muhammadiyah, Munawatul Khair Arabic School or currently known more as Perkemas. (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1982).

Munawatul Khair Arabic School This madrasah originated from a family association formed with the purpose of providing mutual assistance, particularly in the field of education due to discriminatory educational policies imposed the colonial government at that time. The establishment of Munawatul Khair Arabic School in Lampung began when the madrasah, originally founded in Bengkulu by K.H. Hosen bin Abd Syukur in 1925, was relocated to Lampung in Bambu Kuning Village, Enggal Tandjung Karang in 1930 after 5 years of operating. This relocation happened due to coercion and intimidation from colonial government (saputra, 2017).

Contributing factor such as discriminatory education policies motivated Munawatul Khair Arabic School to exist providing education for indigenous communities. Accoridng to ideas and inspiration of M.A.S., this school aimed:

- a. Fostering knowledge and education.
- b. Cultivating critical thinkers grounded in Islamic values.

- c. Producing skilled and pious individuals.
- d. Providing education for indigenous communities.

Initially, the Madrasah established in Bengkulu was *Munawatul Khair* only. However, when it was relocated to Lampung, it was upgraded and renamed the Munawatul Khair Arabic School, maintaining its original foundation and ideals but expanding its aspirations. This name was coined by K.H. Osman Hosen, the son of the founder, K.H. Hosen. When the Madrasah was relocated to Tanjung Karang, K.H. Osman Hosen was entrusted with its development, which he continued until 1935.

Within 5 years of operating, Munawatul Khair Arabic School as a Madrasah captivated different groups of people and was well-received by the local community, resulting in its vast growth. The school's most outstanding feature is its extensive use of Arabic in the teaching and learning process. Almost all the books and texts used in the curriculum are in Arabic, as 75% of the subjects taught are related to Islamic studies. Additionally, the school is renowned for its tambourine playing skills, which have even been praised by the Dutch government and the local community, as documented by the school itself.

Munawatul Khair Arabic School has 2 approaches to attract the local community, *Bahagian Suka* (joys) and *Bahagian Duka* (sorrows).

- a. *Bahagian Suka* (joys): This activity is conducted to provide entertainment during joyous occasions, such as large-scale celebrations like weddings and other Islamic holidays. Students and teachers contribute their artistic talents, including dance, rebana playing, bedana dance, and more.
- b. *Bahagian Duka* (sorrows): This activity is conducted as a form of solace during times of grief, such as after a death. It involves condolences by presenting a 30-juz Quran recitation, tahlil and prayers for the deceased.

The classes offered at Munawatul Khair Arabic School have only been implemented at *ibtidaiyah* level (primary). The educational approach remains traditional, with strong emphasis on religious studies as previously mentioned (Farida Os, 1985). In 1936, Munawatul Khair Arabic School, which was already centered in Bengkulu, successfully established schools at RA (kindergarten), Ibtidaiyah (primary level), Tsanawiyah (secondary) and an Islamic Junior High School, focusing on teachers training confined as *Kweek School Islam (KSI)* spreaded across Tanjung Agung, Kembang Seri and Talang Empat, Bengkulu (Ahmad Abas Musofa, 2016). Unfortunately, this program has not yet been implemented in other branches located in various regions. It is only available at the Munawatul Khair Arabic School branch for this particular course of study. The other branches only offer primary level classes. At the end of each academic year, students

participate in an 'ihtifal', an end-of-year celebration to mark the conclusion of the school year.

Madrasah coined and established in Lampung Tandjung Karang in 1930 by K.H. Osman Hosen finally stopped operating after facing various problems. It was forced to stop in 1950 due to turmoils during the revolutionary period. However, the contribution that Munawatul Khair Arabic School had in education, prominently in religious education, had given a significant impact to local communities and left an important trace of history in the growth of Islamic education in Indonesia. Throughout its operation, the madrasah has strived to maintain and develop a curriculum rooted in religion, despite facing various challenges and obstacles. The existence of this madrasah reflects the spirit and dedication of its founders to advance Islamic education amidst a society undergoing significant social and political changes this madrasah has (Farida Os, 1985).

2. Development of Education in Madrasah

The journey of education history in Indonesia can be categorized in three periods of time. The first period started when Islam set foot in Indonesia, bringing forth Islamic reformist ideas in the early 20th century. On this period of time, Islamic education was held in traditional institution such as pesantren, dayah, surau or mosques, concentrated more on religious values and classical books only. Second period began with pioneering new perspective of Islam in the early 20th century, characterized by the emergence of upper level of school like madrasah. Madrasah gave a formal and structured learning compared to previous learning institutions. It integrated religious curriculum and secular curriculum.

On the third period, Islamic education had been integrated into national educational policies. It began at the enactment of Indonesian Law and Regulation of Undang-Undang No. 2 Tahun 1989 and reinforced by Undang-Undang No. 20 Tahun 2003. Both laws provide a legal framework for Islamic education to be aligned with general education. It ensured the curriculum, standard and quality of education in madrasah is equal with other secular schools in Indonesia. Consequently, the history of education in Indonesia shows an evolution from traditional, religious-based education to a more formal, integrated system of education. (Haidar Putra Daulay, 2007).

Similar to other madrasah, for example Madrasah Jami'yah Mahmudiyah in Langkat suffered from severe disadvantageous crisis by colonial policies and yet remained firm in delivering Islamic education (Syahri Ramadhan, 2019). Even before Islamic schools were established, learning activity was conducted in places like mosques, boarding schools, notably as pesantren played a pivotal role in creating great scholars. These early educational centers laid the foundation for the subsequent development of Islamic-based

institutions in the future (Taofik, 2021). The modernization of Islamic education presumably began with madrasah, which brought about significant advancements while keeping the core principles of Islam (Arief Subhan, 2012).

It is debatable whether Islamic education from Dutch colonialism to Japanese occupation experienced certain hindrances compared to the Islamic dynasty period. Despite the fact that colonial government did not really get involved in religious activities, a lot of challenges came across educational freedom as what Christian Snouck Hurgronje stated, “there’s no need to obstruct the conduct of Islamic education although its influence needs to be restricted” (Nadhif Muhammad Mumtaz, 2022). The policy forged by the Dutch colonial government limited the use of Arabic language and Islamic educational experience to merely Javanese, especially aristocrats and students (Thohir et al., 2021).

With the initiative of M.A.S active members in its development during 1930-1942, M.A.S was successfully gathered numerous supports from Islamic councils:

- a. Islamic council of Bengkulu, Ustadz Ibrahim Hosen as the chairman, an alumnus from M.A.S, Prof. K.H. Ibrahim Hosen is a professor in IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah in 1979, the Rector of IIQ of Ciputat Raya Jakarta Selatan and the representatives of PERKEMAS in Jakarta.
- b. Association of Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama’ah (PASW). Teluk Batang, Bandar Lampung. Chaired by the late K.H. Nawawi Muhiyidin, an ustadz (religious scholar) as well as advisor of M.A.S educational institution, Teluk Betung branch.
- c. Majelis Hai’atul Maarif Islamiyah in Jakarta, Chairman Sayid Dhia’ Shahab, a Director of Jamiatul Kher Tanah Abang, Jakarta (Os, 1985, p. 3).

The development of Madrasah Munawatul Khair Arabic School consists of several independent periods. *First* in 1930-1942, M.A.S experienced substantial development during Dutch colonialism. Due to the noninterference in religious activities by Dutch colonial government as they placed more importance on schools they established to cultivate cheap labors (Djohan Makmur, 1993).

Supports from numerous councils suggest that Munawatul Khair Arabic School experienced its golden age during that period. Record shows that between 1930 and 1942, madrasah successfully expanded 40 branches in various regions, including Lampung, South Sumatera and Bengkulu, regardless the exact locations of these branches remain unclear. In 1936, M.A.S operational base was relocated again to Bengkulu, due to more favorable conditions. Consequently, M.A.S in Lampung became a branch of the main M.A.S in Bengkulu. (Farida Os, 1985).

Second, a significant change in educational system of Munawatul Khair Arabic School during Japanese occupation between 1942-1945. It is arguably said that, Islamic education during this period experienced notable downturn as the tiered structure of the

Dutch colonial period was consolidated into *sekolah rakyat* (village school). Educational system was now transformed into a uniform one where individual needs and abilities of an individual are no longer considered. The decline during Japanese occupation is distinguished by insufficiently operated schools, additionally unsystematic and disorganized educational policies. Illiteracy was increased as a result of significant deterioration in the quality of education. (Djohan makmur, 1993).

Affecting Munawatul Khair Arabic School, the madrasah had to stop operating for board committee of M.A.S experienced oppression from educational policies by Japanese colonials. (Syarif, 2019). Only the central Munawatul Khair Arabic School in Bengkulu managed to survive, although facing difficulties. Even though it managed to hold on for a few years, the central of M.A.S eventually had to cease its operations. The center of Munawatul Khair Arabic School then moved back to Lampung in 1945, carrying with it the same ideals and aspirations (Farida Os, 1985).

Thirdly, the evolution of Munawatul Khair Arabic School during the Reform era (post-independence) between 1945 and 1950. The government of the older applied the 1945 Constitution as the foundation for developing the education system. This included both government and non-government schools, hence Islamic religious education was inevitable subject to these government regulations (Hartono, 2016). These efforts were made to prioritize nasionalistic values and to eradicate the education system implemented by the former colonial government. However, religious studies were reduced as the government intended to emphasize nationalism among students. As imposed in a joint decree between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture, religious classes were only provided in the fourth grade of elementary school, with specific hours allocated per week for Islamic education. While its evident that the government attempted to prevent the complete elimination of religious education, the less-than-conducive political climate, marked by conflicts between nationalists, secular communist and Islamic groups, ultimately impacted policies regarding Islamic education. (Muhammad Sholeh Hoddin, 2020).

The result of this imposition affected Madrasah Munawatul Khair Arabic School, after K.H. Osman Hosen along with his family moved to Lampung in 1945 and in 1946, continuing the operation of M.A.S in ibtidaiyah level under a different name, *Taman Pendidikan Islam (TPI)* or Islamic Learning Center in Enggal, Tandjung Karang. Although its journey only lasted 2 years before it went out of business due to because of the ongoing instability and safety concerns in Indonesia. Munawatul Khair suspended operation for a short while in 1950 due to K.H. Osman Hosen participation as a leading force within the Indonesian army. Munawatul Khair Arabic School implemented Arabic language in almost every learning method as teachers would present the outline of the

course material they will be covering, followed by more practical activities or direct application of the material discussed, this administration encouraged students to communicate with each other in Arabic. The implementation of direct teaching can be witnessed by Arabic scripts by the students.

Ibtidaiyah level offered classes like Tafseer (interpretation) where the students used Tafseer Jalalain book and also Fiqh (Islamic law) using Fathul Qaarib as its reference book. The students will practice reading aloud together. There are also extracurricular that the students could directly engage within the community, including tahlilan, marhabanan, rebana and traditional dances. These activities aimed to equip students with the skills and confidence to perform in real-world settings (Farida Os, 1985).

This application of learning method in Munawatul Khair Arabic School is expected to shape students' characters to become individuals who understand broader implications of education, both spiritually and academically.

B. The Impact of Establishing Madrasah on the Surrounding Community

Education is strongly linked to social (citizenship) to support intellectual advancement amidst the social life within colonialism era. The impact is also apparent in education sector by enabling continuous curriculum development and enhancing the management of education system, ultimately producing high-quality and outstanding graduates (Lubis, 2018).

According to Mrs. Soraya, the establishment of Munawatul Khair Arabic School in as a conduit to experience education for the community. Its existence was warmly received by the community in Lampung (soraya, 2021). The background of Islamic education development laid when muslims community was intellectually colonialized (Prof.Dr. Haidar Putra Daulay, 2012). At that time, education was only accessible for certain groups of people under the regulations from Dutch colonials. Munawatul Khair Arabic School has ideals and aspirations to be an Arabic based Islamic school, as Allah SWT has mentioned “Wata’wanu Alal Birri Wattaqwa” which means to helping each other in righteousness and piety prominently in education sector to cultivate devout and academically excellent students.

The founding of this madrasah in Lampung has greatly contributed to the intellectual development of local children, as evidenced by:

- 1) Students proficiency in Arabic
- 2) Deeper understanding of religious teachings
- 3) Increasing understanding of religious teachings within the community
- 4) Educational services of Islamic teachings for native and other groups of people

With that being said, Munawatul Khair Arabic School was capable of cultivating great scholars. One of the alumnus of Munawatul Khair Arabic School is K.H. Ibrahim Hosen, becoming a rector of IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta in 1979 (Ririn Fauziyah, 2019).

IV. CONCLUSION

This research concluded that Munawatul Khair Arabic School played a crucial role in the development of Islamic education in Lampung between 1930 and 1950. Established by K.H. Hosen in Bengkulu and run by K.H Osman Hosen in Tanjung Karang, Bandar Lampung. This madrasah aimed to provide Islamic education to indigenous people of Indonesia who had limited access to formal and religious education. Thorough an approach to learning that integrates Arabic language, religious texts and religious activities, Munawatul Khair Arabic School has successfully cultivated a generation with profound understanding of religion. Despite facing numerous challenges and policies shifting of education, this school stays consistent on its mission to expand knowledge. Between 1930 and 1950, this madrasah experienced a period of growth and recognition, successfully attracting diverse community and gained widespread appreciation, spreading positive impact on the local indigenous people, providing them with valuable benefits. This madrasah founded by K.H. Hosen due to his awareness of educational system at that time, especially in the field of education. The spirit of mutual assistance is timeless, and this madrasah undeniably has lasting impact on anyone seeking knowledge within its walls. One of many positive impacts the madrasah has given was, its member of community who wished on pursuing education but was hindered by various regulations imposed by colonial government or by financial hardships.

Therefore, Munawatul Khair Arabic School not only becomes one of the oldest Islamic schools in Lampung, but also becomes a symbol of resistance to advance Islamic education amidst the challenges of both the colonial era and the reform period. By the means of this study, it can be inferred the importance of religious institutions in shaping the characters and religious knowledge within the community in the past, and how its inheritance gave influence to this day.

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