

**Maintaining the Existence of the Mosque, Preserving Islamic History:  
Lessons from Masjid Jamik Siulak Mukai, Kerinci**

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**Abstract**

The existence of mosques serves as one of the proofs of the Islamization process in Indonesia, as well as historical evidence of the development of Islam. This research aims to trace the role and significance of mosques in the Islamization process. Masjid Jamik Siulak was chosen as the research object due to its authentic historical background in spreading Islam among the Kerinci community in Jambi. This study is a qualitative research that employs three data collection techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of this research indicate that Masjid Jamik Siulak, besides being a place of worship, also plays a role in social activities and the education of teenagers and children. These roles have been in place since the early development of Islam until the present, making Masjid Jamik Siulak an important evidence in the development of Islam in Kerinci.

**Keywords:** *mosque, Masjid Jamik Siulak, Kerinci, sejarah*

## Introduction

Islamization in Indonesia began with international trade activities. From the 7th to the 16th century, bustling trade occurred along the trade routes between Asian countries, such as Arab, Persian, and Indian states (Tjandrasasmita, 1984). The Islamization process was initiated by Arab traders who stopped at the coastal areas of Sumatra, specifically in Aceh. Aceh served as the first gateway for Islam to enter Indonesia's territory (Sukardi, 2022). According to Tregonning in Nasution Fauziah (2020), Arabs played a crucial role in maritime and trade activities, as they had long dominated almost all the ports in India. From India, Arab traders continued the trade process, eventually bringing Islam to Southeast Asia (Nasution, 2020).

Islam is estimated to have arrived in Jambi in the 13th century. The history of the Jambi Sultanate marks the early Islamic process in the region, believed to have occurred in the 15th century AD. Over the centuries, the people of Jambi gradually embraced Islam through generational transmission, starting from the era of the Jambi Sultanate led by Raja Orang Kayo Hitam, around the 16th century AD. The development of Islam in Jambi occurred peacefully, with no recorded conflicts between local religions and the growth of Islam in Jambi itself (Mustaqim, 2019).

The spread of Islam in the Kerinci region took place in the 14th to 15th centuries AD, brought by immigrants from West Sumatra who initially traveled to the Siak region (Riau) and then settled in Kerinci. As a result, many individuals who understood Islam (syekh) resided in the Kerinci Regency. The Indrapura Kingdom served as a trading contact between Minangkabau society and Kerinci, contributing to the process of Islam's dissemination (Sukardi, 2020).

In the Islamization process in the Jambi region, the Jambi Sultanate took the initiative to send letters to the Depati (leaders in Kerinci) to abandon their old customs and beliefs and immediately embrace Islam. They were instructed to comply with and accept all the rules of the Jambi region, which followed Islamic regulations and principles. This Islamization process was political in nature, with the Jambi Sultanate commanding the leaders of Kerinci (Depati) to embrace Islam. One of the evidence of the development and Islamic civilization during the sultanate era until today is the Keramat Mosque and the Great Mosque of Pondok Tinggi (Sukardi, 2020).

Among the evidence of the development of Islam in Indonesia is the large number of mosques that have been built both during the spread of Islam and in the present time. The word "masjid" originates from the Arabic word *sajada yasjudu masjidan* (a place of prostration) (Harahap, 1996: 26). Sidi Gazalba elaborates on the meaning of masjid; in terms of its literal meaning, it is indeed a place for prayer. The word "masjid" is derived from the Arabic language. The root word is "sujadan", and the past participle is "sajada" (he has prostrated). By adding the prefix 'ma' to *fi'il*

*sajada*, it becomes an *isim makan* (a place where an action takes place). This transformation leads to the forms “masjidu” and “masjida”. The original spelling is “masjid” (with ‘a’). However, when the Indonesian language adopts foreign words, it often involves changing the ‘a’ sound to ‘e’, resulting in “masjid”. This change occurs due to the addition of the prefix ‘me’ in the Indonesian language. Such common errors in the Indonesianization of foreign words are quite usual. In linguistics, it is considered correct if a deviation or mistake becomes widely accepted (Gazalba, 1994: 118).

The meaning of “masjid” is a special place designated for performing the obligatory 5-time daily prayers. From this statement, it is clear that open spaces typically used for celebrating Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha cannot be called mosques (Al-Qahthani, 2003: 1). In technical terms, a mosque is a building with designated areas for men and women, constructed for performing worship to Allah, including the 5-time daily prayers, remembrance of Allah (*zikr*), recitation of the Quran, and other beneficial acts to earn rewards.

One of the pieces of evidence of Islamization in the Kerinci region, particularly in the Siulak Mukai sub-district, is the existence of numerous places of worship, especially large and old mosques that serve as centers of religious activities for the local community. An example of such a mosque is Masjid Jamik, located in the village of Mukai Mudik, Siulak Mukai sub-district. This mosque is quite spacious and magnificent, situated in the middle of a densely populated village.

## Methods

This research is a qualitative study with a phenomenological approach. According to Bogdan and Taylor (in Moleong, 2007: 4), this method utilizes scientific works as a way to understand the phenomena that are the subject of the research to be investigated. The data collection techniques used in this study are observation, interviews, and documentation. The observation technique is used to observe the activities in Masjid Jamik Siulak. According to Sugiyono (2010: 145), observation is a well-structured process of psychological and biological complexity. Important elements in the observation process are memory and observation skills. In the interview stage, the researcher involves religious and community figures to gather information about the history and existence of Masjid Jamik Siulak. An interview is a form of interaction between individuals to obtain information. In this context, the interviewer requires delicate, sharp, accurate, and quick capturing of thoughts during the process (Nasution, 2006: 113-114). Meanwhile, the documentation technique focuses on historical evidence such as writings, buildings, records, and artifacts

related to the development of Islam in the past. Subsequently, the collected data is analyzed using narrative analysis techniques.

## **Discussion**

### **Profile of the Mosque**

This mosque is located in the middle of Mukai Mudik village, Siulak Mukai sub-district. The mosque consists of two floors and is grand with a dominant green color both on the exterior and interior. It also has a six-level tower with orange and yellow colors. No informant knows for sure when Masjid Jamik was built, but renovations were done around 1980 when the community rebuilt and expanded the mosque magnificently. The mosque's tower was constructed in 2017.

The facilities available at Masjid Jamik Siulak Mukai are quite adequate, thanks to the increasing participation of the community in providing sadaqah and infaq (charitable donations) to the mosque. Currently, the supporting facilities at Masjid Jamik Siulak Mukai include:

1. Main prayer hall equipped with air conditioning (AC) for congregation prayers
2. Minbar for delivering sermons
3. Prayer barriers (shaf) for congregational prayers
4. Mosque library containing the Quran, Yasin books, and other Islamic literature
5. Clean ablution area, toilets, and bathrooms
6. Prayer essentials for both men and women, such as prayer mats, veils, and sarongs
7. Adequate sound system
8. Racks for sandals and shoes
9. Funeral management equipment, including mortuary beds, shrouds, and coverings
10. Facilities for Quranic education, such as desks and whiteboards
11. Storage room for utensils such as plates, glasses, spoons, trays, and napkins, commonly used during communal feasts.

### **Activities at Masjid Jamik Siulak Mukai**

Amidst the impact of Covid-19, many people have been struggling economically. They have faced job losses, leading to disruptions in their family's economic conditions. In response to this, the Islamic Youth Movement of Masjid Jamik

(Rismaja) in Mukai Mudik village organized a free food aid distribution in front of Masjid Jamik Siulak Mukai. The distribution aimed to support those in need, especially those economically affected by Covid-19 in Tebing Tinggi and Senimpik, Siulak Mukai sub-district, Kerinci Regency, Jambi.

This movement created a unique approach to the food aid distribution. Unlike typical distributions, they placed food items or provisions in a designated area, allowing people who wish to donate to bring their contributions and those in need to take what they require. The banner in front of the mosque stating “You can place your donation and take this charity” touched the hearts of the community, encouraging mutual sharing. Some community members expressed their happiness because the Islamic Youth Movement of Masjid Jamik’s program was able to assist those facing economic difficulties due to the Covid-19 impact.

According to the Masjid Jamik management and Rismaja members, the activity was well-received by the community, as it showed care for the people affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Through this program, the daily needs of those economically affected could be met with the support of the local community. The program was appreciated and considered heartwarming for its humanitarian aspect. People did not have to wait for the government to provide food aid, as the community voluntarily and independently contributed to help each other during the Covid-19 pandemic. Such positive activities are hoped to serve as examples for other villages in Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh city, fostering a sense of mutual care and sharing with those in need.

However, now that the Covid-19 pandemic has ended, the distribution of free food aid has also come to an end. Currently, people make direct donations to the mosque, specifically for orphans and mosque facilities and development.

**Commemoration and Celebration of Islamic Festivals** A large mosque like Masjid Jamik hosts various committees and organizations, including the mosque's youth committee. Their responsibility is to manage Islamic activities held in the mosque, with the assistance of the *majlis taklim* group to prepare for all the needs of these events. The events include communal feasts during the holy month of Ramadan, communal feasts as a gesture of gratitude for Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, the commemoration of Prophet Muhammad’s Isra Mi’raj, and the celebration of Prophet Muhammad’s birthday (Maulid Nabi).

These Islamic festival commemorations are typically held in the evening and consist of various activities, such as the recitation of the holy Quran, charitable contributions (*infaq*) and alms-giving (*sadaqah*), recitals of blessings (*shalawat*) and tambourine performances by students from the Quranic education center (TPQ), and sermons by religious figures.

### **Venue for Religious Institutions' Activities**

A mosque serves as a venue for various religious-social institutions' activities, such as hajj and umrah training organized by travel agencies. These travel agencies carefully select mosques for their activities based on factors like capacity and location. Masjid Jamik Siulak Mukai, being spacious and strategically located in the middle of Kerinci Regency, can accommodate a large number of pilgrims. This highlights the significant role of Masjid Jamik Siulak Mukai in serving the local community and religious institutions.

### **Educational Facility**

Masjid Jamik Siulak Mukai also facilitates educational activities, such as the Quranic Education Center (TPA) for children in Siulak Mukai. The teaching method involves the teacher sitting in front of the students, and one by one, the students recite Iqra' and the Quran while being directly listened to by the teacher. Additionally, the teacher reads the Quran first, and then the students follow along, maintaining a rhythmic tone (naghmah), such as bayati, sikah, nahawand, and hijaz.

### **Marriage Venue**

Masjid Siulak Mukai warmly welcomes the community in Siulak Mukai to perform wedding ceremonies (Akad Nikah) in the mosque. This aligns with the local tradition in Kerinci, where the majority of people conduct their wedding ceremonies in mosques. The purpose is to gain blessings during the wedding procession and to enrich the mosque's spiritual atmosphere.

### **Collection of Zakat Fitrah**

The mosque management carries out the collection of zakat fitrah as Idul Fitri (Eid al-Fitr) approaches during the fasting month of Ramadan. This activity helps support the poor, needy, and travelers in Siulak Mukai to meet their daily needs. During Ramadan, besides fulfilling the obligation of fasting, it is also mandatory to pay zakat fitrah to purify one's wealth, assist others, and help the poor.

## **Conclusion**

As the oldest mosque, Masjid Jamik Siulak Mukai has played a central role in the community from the early development of Islam to the present day. This central role is supported by effective management strategies, organizational systems, and active community involvement, making the community's care an essential factor for the existence of Masjid Jamik. Furthermore, Masjid Jamik is not only positioned as a religious center but also as a hub for educational and social activities.

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