

The 2nd International Conference of
Imam Bonjol Library 2024
"KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY"
<https://proceeding.perpus.uinib.ac.id> e-ISSN:

*Alternatives to Preserving Cultural Heritage:
Preservation of Ancient Assets of Tanoh Abee Library
in Aceh*

*Alternatif Menjaga Warisan Budaya: Pelestarian Aset
Kuno Perpustakaan Abu Tanoh Abee di Aceh*

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Abstract

Background of the study: Aceh is one of the regions in Indonesia that is not only rich in diversity of cultural and historical heritage but also still has another valuable value, namely the Tanoh Abee Islamic library which is interesting to look at. Tanoh Abee Library has a diverse collection of ancient Islamic sciences and manuscripts that contain valuable value not only for the world of education but also have valuable value for cultural heritage

Purpose: This research will greatly contribute as a foundation and reference in efforts to preserve and increase appreciation of the cultural heritage of Aceh in particular and Indonesia in general

Method: This research is a field research by adopting descriptive qualitative methods with data collection techniques taken by means of observation and documentation. While data analysis is carried out by reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions.

Findings: The results showed that the importance of preservation of the ancient assets of Tanoh Abee library because it has positive contributions such as being a source of historical information, developing science, developing education, maintaining cultural heritage and creating educational tourism.

Conclusion: The strategic steps to achieve the preservation of the ancient assets of the Tanoh Abee library include restoration and conservation, preservation and management, cooperation and coordination, digitization, socialization, and discussion and promotion.

Keywords: Preservation; Asset; Ancient; Library; Tanoh Abee

Abstract in Indonesia

Introduction

Aceh is one of the regions in Indonesia that is rich in diversity of cultural and historical heritage. It is undeniable that Aceh does have its own characteristics, not only in terms of diverse food, cultural customs, beautiful natural attractions, and its title nicknamed Serambi Mecca. (Redaksi, 2022) In addition, Aceh also still has another valuable value, namely an interesting Islamic library to look at. This library is known as the Tanoh Abee Library which has been established since 16 AD. Abu Tanoh Abee Library is an ancient library located in the Dayah Tanoh Abee Complex area, precisely located in Seulimuem District, Aceh Besar. Abu Tanoh Abee Library or also known as *Zauyah* or Tanoh Abee is a private library owned by a descendant of Teungku Chik Tanoh Abee named Al-Fairusi Al-Baghdadi. Amazingly, this library has a variety of manuscripts that are very valuable and of historical value, especially

texts that contain Islam such as fiqh, Sufism, worship, the science of the creation of the universe and other knowledge. These various collections were sourced and collected by previous Acehnese scholars and have been kept for generations, especially by the founding family of the pesantren. Apart from the diversity of valuable manuscripts, Abu Tanoh Abee library is also known as one of the oldest Islamic libraries in Southeast Asia and the archipelago with a very large and valuable collection of handwritten works by previous Acehnese scholars. (Redaksi, 2023)

Unfortunately, the various scientific collections contained in the Abu Tanoh Abee library did not make this library crowded with visitors and the collection began to disappear. This condition can be caused by several reasons such as the remote location of the library in Aceh Besar making it difficult to access by the wider community. Furthermore, the library is not open to the public but for groups or individuals who have certain interests, the library has a collection of historical manuscripts with poor paper quality so that they are easily worn out or weathered over time. Many manuscript collections in Abu Tanoh Abee's library have received little attention or proper care, which has damaged some of the collections. In addition, many collections or handwritten manuscripts owned by the Abu Tanoh Abee library were also lost during the first exhibition or Aceh Cultural Week (PKA) in Aceh. So it is very important to review the preservation of ancient assets owned by the Abu Tanoh Abee library as a form of maintaining cultural heritage and being a relay in passing on knowledge from previous Acehnese scholars. (Redaksi, 2023)

The existence of collections and manuscripts contained in the Abu Tanoh Abee library has become increasingly very important, especially after the destruction and destruction of several institutions storing historical assets and documents owned by the Aceh region such as the Aceh Documentation and Information Center and the Center for the Study of History and Traditional Values due to the earthquake and tsunami that occurred in Aceh on December 26, 2004 ago. Therefore, it is very important to examine the preservation of ancient assets in the Abu Tanoh Abee library so that the various collections contained in it can be a reference for science, especially those related to sharia, for scholars and generations of Aceh in a sustainable manner in order to maintain the heritage of knowledge and culture.

In addition, the lack of scientific studies on the preservation of ancient assets of the Abu Tanoh Abee library is also one of the reasons for this research to be carried out. It is known that several previous studies have not comprehensively discussed the preservation of the ancient assets of the Abu Tanoh Abee library such as the research studied by (Siregar dkk., 2022) which sought to examine the process of preserving ancient manuscripts in the Tanoh Abee library. The next similar study examined by (Widiari, 2024) briefly discussed the use of technology in an effort to strengthen local cultural identity, one of which was in the collection at the Tanoh Abee library. Other related research was also explored by (Siregar dkk., 2022) who sought to provide solutions in the process of preserving ancient manuscripts through the preservation process. Similar scientific analyses have also been studied by (Sakti, 2011), the findings of which provide an overview of the development and preservation of ancient manuscripts.

A number of scientific studies above show that there has not been a similar study that specifically discusses the preservation of ancient assets in the Tanoh Abee library that specifically explores the angle of preservation problems faced, describes the contribution of preservation and even simultaneously offers strategies that can be applied in efforts to preserve ancient assets in the Tanoh Abee library as a form of maintaining cultural heritage.

This research intends to reveal, identify and understand the historical, cultural, and intellectual values embodied of the Abu Tanoh Abee library as well as provide the strategic steps needed to preserve the Abu Tanoh Abee library. So that this research will greatly contribute as a foundation and reference in efforts to preserve and increase appreciation of Aceh's valuable cultural heritage.

Method

This research is a descriptive qualitative field research. The method of collecting research data is pursued through observation and literature *Reviews* from various works both books, articles, and web *Online*. The various sources of information implemented in this study are generally sourced from various information that the author tries to collect from reading materials, and the public. Meanwhile, research data analysis techniques are taken by referring to Miles and Huberman analysis techniques (Sugiyono, 2019) That is starting from the steps of data reduction, data presentation, and finally drawing conclusions. Research data and information are collected clearly and intact until the research results are saturated.

Result and Discussion

History of Abu Tanoh Abee Library

Abu Tanoh Abee Library has a long and precious history. It was founded by a cleric from Baghdad, Fairus Al-Baghdadi who came to Aceh during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607-1636 AD). Fairus Al-Baghdadi brought seven of his brothers and founded Dayah Tanoh Abee, a pesantren that became an intellectual model in resistance to Dutch colonialism. The library has been managed for generations by the founding family of the pesantren, with the 9th generation, Abu Dahlan Al-Fairusy Al-Baghdady, who died in 2006. The Abu Tanoh Abee library building is made of wood and looks like an Acehese traditional house. The bookshelves are arranged as they are and the majority of the collection inside is old enough that care is needed when touching or reading them.

This library contains more than 3,000 manuscripts of ancient manuscripts and 900 titles of books containing information about Islam such as the science of Fiqh, Sufism, the science of Worship, and others. These manuscripts were collected by previous Acehese scholars and kept for generations by the founding families of pesantren. This library also has a very valuable and historic collection of manuscripts. This library is known as one of the oldest Islamic libraries in Southeast Asia and Nusantara, with a very extensive and valuable collection. Even amazingly, the Abu Tanoh Abee library is also one of the nuanced libraries of Islamic collections that is quite popular among Islamic scholars in various countries. This is evidenced by the documentation of the guest book stored in the library manager's house which contains the names of visitors from various countries ranging from Europe, Australia, the United States, the Middle East, South Asia and including Africa. It is also known that some of these visitors live in the area near the library for days to research and take references in research such as theses and books. So that the Abu Tanoh Abee library is not only part of the center of scientific development but can be a destination in historical and cultural educational tourism.

The Problem of Lack of Visitors at Tanoh Abee Library

1. Lack of Promotion

The lack of promotion and qualified information related to the existence and values contained in the Abu Tanoh Abee library. So that makes this library not so well known by the wider community comprehensively.

2. Digital Library Accessibility Limitations

Digital-based physical accessibility to various collections of manuscripts at the Abu Tanoh Abee library is also an obstacle in efforts to introduce this library to the wider community. This obstacle becomes the biggest obstacle when coupled with the factor of remote geographical location due to inadequate technological and communication infrastructure in the area

3. Low Public Awareness

The lack of public awareness of the importance of maintaining and preserving as well as appreciation of cultural heritage can also be one of the factors causing public

misunderstanding about the Abu Tanoh Abee library. This is due to the lack of cultural and historical education among the local community, followed by low educational programs and social activities themed on promoting knowledge about the importance of caring for regional cultural heritage. Therefore, various strategic steps are needed to increase public awareness of the importance of the presence of the Abu Tanoh Abee library.

Contribution to the preservation of ancient assets of Tanoh Abee Library

Tanoh Abee Library has significant benefits for Islamic history in Indonesia as well as can help the development of science, education, and can even be an educational tourism in Aceh in particular and Indonesia in general. Here are some of the benefits of preserving the Tanoh Abee library:

1. Historical Resources

Tanoh Abee Library contains various collections of manuscripts that are very valuable and historic including ancient Islamic manuscripts such as the science of Fiqh, the science of Sufism, the science of worship, the science of the creation of the universe, and others. These ancient collections can be a source of reference information that is very important and useful for researchers and academics, especially Islamic historians for efforts to understand the current development of Islam in Indonesia, especially in Aceh from the 16th to 19th centuries. In addition, this library contains more than 3,000 manuscripts of ancient manuscripts and 900 titles of books containing information about Islam such as Fiqh, Sufism, Worship, and others. These various collections can be a reference for knowledge and decision making of scholars because they contain very extensive and valuable information about Islam and Islamic history in Indonesia, especially in Aceh. Scholars both in Aceh and Indonesia and even the world's Islamic scholars can use this collection as a reference in writing scientific papers, conducting research, and developing science, as well as being a source of inspiration for future generations in understanding and developing Islamic culture in Indonesia.

2. Science Development

Tanoh Abee Library also contains a wide collection of manuscripts that are very extensive and valuable for the development of science and science in Indonesia and become reference material for researchers and experts in their fields.

3. Education Development

The existence of the Tanoh Abee library will greatly help the development of the world of education in Indonesia, especially in the field of Islam. Various manuscript collections in the Tanoh Abee library can be used as teaching materials and references for teachers and students in the country.

4. Preserving Cultural Heritage

Various collections of manuscripts and manuscripts stored in the Tanoh Abee library are very valuable and of historical value, especially manuscripts about Islam that can help maintain and maintain Islamic cultural heritage in Indonesia. The collections contained in the Tanoh Abee library can be an inspiration and reference for future generations, especially in order to understand and develop Islamic culture in Indonesia.

5. Creating Educational Tourism

Tanoh Abee Library can also be used as a very interesting educational tourism destination in Indonesia in general and Aceh in particular. Various manuscript collections stored in the Tanoh Abee library will be very helpful in developing educational tourism in Indonesia and can be used as a source of inspiration for local tourists even to foreign countries, especially activists of knowledge about Islam.

Tanoh Abee Library's Ancient Asset Preservation Strategy

Preserving the ancient assets of the Tanoh Abee library requires a variety of strategic efforts that are integrated and carried out in a sustainable manner. Some of these strategic steps include:

1. Restoration and Conservation

The importance of restoration of Tanoh Abee library is to maintain the physical condition of manuscripts and manuscripts to ensure that the information contained in the manuscripts and various collections can still be accessed and understood by future generations in a sustainable manner.

2. Preservation and Management

The importance of managing and preserving the Tanoh Abee library which is managed professionally and sustainably. Effective management to ensure that ancient assets are maintained and managed properly. In addition, preservation of damaged manuscripts needs to be done with appropriate steps in order to maintain their physical condition. Tanoh Abee library must ensure that its collection of ancient manuscripts and manuscripts are maintained in good condition and safe. Traditional means such as lamination, patching, and the use of protective coatings such as covering manuscripts can be used to preserve severely damaged collections. In order to maintain more preservation and management, it can also be done with a modern system that adopts digital technology to ensure the durability of the quality of ancient asset collections in the Tanoh Abee library in the future.

3. Cooperation and Coordination

Cooperation between stakeholders in their fields such as the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia (ANRI), local government, and the community is needed to preserve the ancient assets of the Tanoh Abee library. This collaboration is carried out to ensure that efforts to preserve these ancient assets can be carried out and run in an integrated and sustainable manner.

4. Digitization

In addition, it is necessary to convert manuscripts in the Tanoh Abee library to be converted in digital form to help preserve these ancient assets. This conversion of manuscripts and manuscripts in digital form will allow the collection of manuscripts to be accessible and also understood more widely for many people without being limited by space and time. This digital conversion is also a form of ensuring that the information contained in the manuscript remains accessible and well understood for future generations. The adoption of digitization technology to manage and promote ancient manuscript collections can help in reducing the risk of damage and enable wider access to library collections (Siregar dkk., 2022).

5. Socialization and Education

As a supporting step in preserving the ancient assets of the Tanoh Abee library, it is also important to carry out socialization and education in a structured manner. It is important to educate the public about the collection of manuscripts and the manuscripts contained have historical and cultural value so it is very important to preserve these ancient assets for future generations. Tanoh Abee Library can provide education and empowerment to the community about the importance of cultural heritage preservation and how to maintain ancient manuscript collections. This can help increase public awareness and participation in conservation efforts.

6. Promotions and Discussions

Tanoh Abee library can foster cultural discussion and promotion through the preparation of relevant reading materials and the offering of interesting cultural programs. This can help raise public awareness of the importance of cultural heritage preservation and increase participation in preservation efforts.

Conclusion

Aceh is one of the regions in Indonesia that is not only rich in diversity of cultural and historical heritage but also still has another valuable value, namely the Tanoh Abee Islamic library which is interesting to look at. Tanoh Abee Library has a diverse collection of ancient Islamic sciences and manuscripts that contain valuable value not only for the world of education but also have valuable value for cultural heritage. So that this research will greatly contribute as a foundation and reference in efforts to preserve and increase appreciation of the cultural heritage of Aceh in particular and Indonesia in general. The existence of collections and manuscripts contained in the Abu Tanoh Abee library has become increasingly very important, especially after the destruction and destruction of several institutions storing historical assets and documents owned by the Aceh region such as the Aceh Documentation and Information Center and the Center for the Study of History and Traditional Values due to the earthquake and tsunami that occurred in Aceh on December 26, 2004 ago. Therefore, it is very important to examine the preservation of ancient assets in the Abu Tanoh Abee library so that the various collections contained in it can be a reference for science, especially those related to sharia, for scholars and generations of Aceh in a sustainable manner in order to maintain the heritage of knowledge and culture. The results showed that the importance of preserving the ancient assets of Tanoh Abee library because it has positive contributions such as being a source of historical information, developing science, developing education, maintaining cultural heritage and creating educational tourism. The strategic steps to achieve the preservation of the ancient assets of the Tanoh Abee library include restoration and conservation, preservation and management, cooperation and coordination, digitization, socialization, and discussion and promotion.

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