Al-Banjari : Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman
Vol. 25, no.1 (2026), pp. 109-123, doi: 10.18592/al-banjari.v25i1.20169
Received 2026-02-27 | Revised 2026-05-09, 2026-05-14, 2026-06-17, 2026-06-26 | Accepted 2026-07-28

Women's and Children's Rights in Aceh's Islamic Family Law: A Critical Analysis through Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah and Legal Pluralism

Maimun Abdurrahman Amin [1], Zaki Satria [2], Fakhrul Rijal [3]
[1,2] Nahdlatul Ulama Aceh College of Sharia Studies, Indonesia
[3] Ar-Raniry State Islamic University of Banda Aceh, Indonesia
E-mail: [1] maimunabd1974@gmail.com , [2] satriazaki@gmail.com ,[3] fakhrul.rijal@ar-raniry.ac.id

Abstract

The implementation of the Qanun in Aceh still faces fundamental problems in the form of a gap between the legal text and the reality in society. Conservative religious interpretations and limited understanding of law enforcement officials can result in suboptimal protection of women's and children's rights in Islamic family law. This study aims to analyze the role of the Qanun in strengthening women's and children's rights in Islamic family law in Aceh. This study uses a literature study approach. The data analysis stage was carried out using qualitative content analysis and critical analysis techniques. The results of the study indicate that: 1). The historical dynamics of the Islamic family Qanun and responses to gender issues in Aceh indicate that the development of the Islamic Family Qanun in Aceh demonstrates a complex dialectic between Islamic values, local wisdom, and global awareness of gender equality. The post-2004 tsunami was a crucial momentum where the Qanun underwent progressive reforms despite still facing resistance from conservative religious understandings. 2). Protection of women's rights in the Aceh Qanun: between progress and challenges is that Qanun No. 6 of 2021 represents substantive progress in the protection of women's rights, particularly in marriage and divorce. However, its implementation is still hampered by patriarchal culture, the capacity of the apparatus, and the gender-biased interpretation of classical fiqh. 3). The effectiveness of the Qanun in Protecting Children's Rights and Ensuring the Best Interests of Children is that the Qanun has adopted the principle of the best interests of the child comprehensively, but its effectiveness is limited by the capacity of judges in child psychology, coordination between institutions, and a lack of synchronization with the national child protection system. Implementation of the findings of this study requires three strategic steps: massive socialization, increasing the capacity of Sharia Court judges, and harmonizing the Aceh Qanun with the national legal system.

Keywords: Qanun, Women's and Children's Rights, Islamic Family Law, Aceh

Abstrak

Implementasi Qanun di Aceh masih menghadapi problematika yang mendasar berupa kesenjangan antara teks hukum dengan realita di masyarakat. Interpretasi keagamaan yang konservatif, pemahaman aparat penegak hukum yang terbatas, sehingga dapat menyebabkan perlindungan hak perempuan dan anak dalam hukum keluarga Islam belum optimal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untu menganalisis peran qanun dalam penguatan hak perempuan dan anak dalam hukum keluarga islam di aceh. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kepustakaan. Tahap analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan teknik qualitative content analysis dan analisis kritis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan, bahwa: 1). Dinamika historis Qanun keluarga Islam dan respons terhadap isu gender di Aceh adalah bahwa perkembangan Qanun Keluarga Islam di Aceh menunjukkan dialektika kompleks antara nilai Islam, kearifan lokal, dan kesadaran global tentang kesetaraan gender. Pasca tsunami 2004 menjadi momentum krusial dimana qanun mengalami reformasi progresif meskipun masih menghadapi resistensi dari pemahaman keagamaan konservatif. 2). Perlindungan hak perempuan dalam qanun Aceh: antara kemajuan dan tantangan adalah bahwa Qanun No. 6 Tahun 2021 merepresentasikan kemajuan substantif dalam perlindungan hak perempuan, khususnya dalam perkawinan dan

perceraian. Namun, implementasinya masih terhambat budaya patriarki, kapasitas aparat, dan interpretasi fiqh klasik yang bias gender. 3). Efektivitas Qanun dalam Melindungi Hak Anak dan Memastikan Kepentingan Terbaik Anak adalah bahwa Qanun telah mengadopsi prinsip kepentingan terbaik anak secara komprehensif, namun efektivitasnya dibatasi oleh kapasitas hakim dalam psikologi anak, koordinasi antar institusi, dan ketidaksinkronan dengan sistem perlindungan anak nasional. Implementasi temuan penelitian ini memerlukan tiga langkah strategis: sosialisasi massif, peningkatan kapasitas hakim Mahkamah Syar'iyah, dan harmonisasi Qanun Aceh dengan sistem hukum nasional.
Kata Kunci: Qanun, Hak Perempuan dan Anak, Hukum Keluarga Islam, Aceh

INTRODUCTION

Islamic family law in Aceh has unique characteristics influenced by the implementation of qanun, a regional regulation formulated based on Islamic law. This qanun aims to integrate Islamic values into the family law system and provide legal protection for the community in the family context, including in aspects of marriage and polygamy. In addition to serving as a legal umbrella, qanun also serves as an instrument for regulating family norms and ethics based on sharia. The qanun produced by the Aceh People's Representative Council (DPRA) plays a significant role in legitimizing marriage practices in Aceh, including polygamy. The qanun permits the practice under certain conditions. A study of the legality of polygamy regulated in the 2004 Enactment of Islamic Family Law in Negeri Perak (Perakmen), explains that polygamy is acceptable in an Islamic context if it meets existing requirements.[1]

The Qanun also serves as legal protection for families, particularly in the context of domestic violence and women's protection. Research shows that although Islamic family law in Indonesia already contains provisions to protect victims of sexual violence within the family, its implementation still faces many challenges. Existing laws are often ineffective in providing solutions for victims, necessitating better protection and restoration.[2] The position of qanun in Aceh has also come under scrutiny regarding its compatibility with the national legal system. The Qanun Jinayah, which regulates criminal offenses, is often debated regarding its compatibility with national criminal law. One study stated that although the Qanun Jinayah strengthens Islamic law in Aceh, there are challenges in its integration with the broader national legal system and in its fair enforcement.[3]

Behind the legal aspects, there are moral values of education in the family that must be considered in the context of qanun. This includes teaching the values from Surah Al-Taghabun which emphasizes the importance of maintaining good relationships between family members

[1] E Darmawijaya dan M Sani, "Legalitas poligami dalam enakmen hukum keluarga islam tahun 2004 negeri perak (studi kasus atas ketidakpatuhan masyarakat taiping)," *Samarah Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 1, no. 2 (2017): 491, https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v1i2.2380.

[2] D Rizal, D Asmaret, dan M Islami, "Perlindungan hukum keluarga islam di indonsia terhadap korban kekerasan seksual," *El-Hekam* 7, no. 2 (2022): 137, https://doi.org/10.31958/jeh.v7i2.6927.

[3] E Ismail, "Analisis yuridis terhadap legalitas qanun aceh no. 6/2014 tentang hukum jinayat," *Kanun Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 20, no. 1 (2018): 123–48, https://doi.org/10.24815/kanun.v20i1.9625.

and educating children well.[4] The role of qanun in strengthening the rights of women and children in Aceh is significant, particularly through the implementation of the Qanun Jinayat. This qanun not only regulates legal aspects within Aceh's Islamic society but also has implications for social development and the fulfillment of the basic rights of women and children. The Qanun Jinayat (Islamic Law) is part of the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh, governing various aspects of social life, which also impacts the rights of women and children. Research shows that this qanun plays a role in power relations between society, the government, and mass media institutions, contributing to shaping social discourse around issues of justice and rights protection.[5]

The Qanun Jinayat has received considerable attention, particularly regarding its legitimacy and legal compliance within the national legal framework. A related analysis discusses the debate surrounding the qanun's position as a regional regulation (Perda) containing Islamic criminal law content not regulated in the national legislature, thus presenting challenges to its legality.[6] The implementation aspect of the qanun is also a focus of a study examining the implementation and enforcement of the Qanun Jinayat. This research shows that the effectiveness of the qanun in protecting the rights of women and children depends heavily on law enforcement mechanisms and public awareness of their own rights[7]. The role of family law in Aceh cannot be ignored in the context of fulfilling the rights of women and children. Family law plays a crucial role in ensuring the rights of every family member, as well as ensuring the welfare and protection, especially for women and children, within a patriarchal social structure[8]. The challenges of identity politics faced by the Acehnese government also influence the implementation of the qanun. Research indicates tensions between government elites and minority communities regarding political agendas related to the qanun as a symbol of Acehnese identity and unity[9].

This relationship demonstrates that strengthening women's and children's rights requires synergy between gender-sensitive government policies and active community involvement in social and legal policymaking. This research is motivated by the complex problems in the implementation of the Islamic Family Law Qanun in Aceh, which has not been able to fully protect the rights of women and children optimally. This research is urgent for three main reasons. First, as a special autonomous region, Aceh has a moral and constitutional responsibility to ensure that the implementation of Islamic law protects and advances the rights of women and children. Second, there are still limited comprehensive studies that critically analyze the effectiveness of qanun from a women's and children's rights perspective. Third, the findings of this study can provide an important evaluation for the Aceh government in developing more

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[4] S Fuadi dan R Antika, "Untitled," *Matan Journal of Islam and Muslim Society* 2, no. 1 (2020): 74, https://doi.org/10.20884/1.matan.2020.2.1.2256.

[5] P Maulina, "Relasi kekuasaan dalam wacana penerapan qanun jinayat di aceh," *Jurnal Source Ilmu Komunikasi* 3, no. 2 (2018), https://doi.org/10.35308/source.v3i2.658.

[6] Ismail, "Analisis yuridis terhadap legalitas qanun aceh no. 6/2014 tentang hukum jinayat."

[7] A Ahyar, "Aspek hukum pelaksanaan qanun jinayat di provinsi aceh," *Jurnal Penelitian Hukum De Jure* 17, no. 2 (2017): 131–54, https://doi.org/10.30641/dejure.2017.v17.131-154.

[8] F Faisal, J Jamaluddin, dan N Amalia, "Urgensi kehadiran hukum keluarga di aceh," *Mimbar Hukum - Fakultas Hukum Universitas Gadjah Mada* 29, no. 2 (2017): 248, https://doi.org/10.22146/jmh.16690.

[9] O Sari, T Maryanah, dan R Kurniawan, "Pertentangan etnis minoritas terhadap agenda politik identitas elite pemerintah aceh," *Journal of Governance and Social Policy* 3, no. 2 (2022): 140–51, https://doi.org/10.24815/gaspol.v3i2.29422.

gender-responsive policies and serve as a reference for other special autonomous regions in integrating Islamic values with the principles of protecting the rights of women and children.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The discourse on the role of Qanun in strengthening women's and children's rights within the Islamic family law framework in Aceh presents a complex and often contradictory landscape. A significant body of recent literature indicates that while Qanun is designed to formalize Sharia, its implementation frequently encounters substantial challenges in delivering justice and protection for women and children. Research by Febriandi et al. (2021) critically examines this issue by exploring the narratives of female victims of sexual violence seeking justice through the Qanun Jinayat. Their study reveals that the bylaw, intended to eradicate sexual violence, possesses inherent limitations that paradoxically hinder the realization of justice for women, demonstrating a "liminality" in the legal pluralism adopted in Aceh[10].

This tension between legal aspirations and practical outcomes is further evidenced in the realm of children's rights, particularly regarding sexual violence. TaufiqulHakim (2025) provides a stark analysis of a judicial decision where a defendant was acquitted of child molestation under Qanun Jinayat based on the victim's consent. By applying the principles of lex superiori derogat legi inferiori and lex specialis derogat legi generali, the study argues that the judge's ruling was erroneous, as it contravened national child protection laws that do not recognize a child's consent in such crimes, thereby highlighting a critical failure of the Qanun to protect children[11].

The procedural and substantive weaknesses of the Qanun Jinayat are systematically deconstructed by Ridwan and Fadli. Their analysis concludes that the Qanun Jinayat has not taken sides with women and children, pointing to two primary failures. First, the evidentiary requirements for rape victims are so stringent that they fail to account for the psychological trauma of survivors, potentially leading to injustice. Second, the legal dualism between the national Child Protection Law and the Qanun, which offers lighter sentences for perpetrators of violence against children, creates a loophole that facilitates such violence[12]. It is best done systematically, meaning thinking about all components by considering the role of each component and how they interact with each other so that the set goals can be fully achieved[13].

In contrast, some scholarship identifies progressive potential within Qanun reforms, particularly concerning family law. Pelu et al. investigate the idea of reforming polygamy regulations through a family Qanun. Their research suggests that by incorporating strict restrictions, a clear concept of justice, and sanctions for abuse, the Qanun could serve as a tool for legal reform to protect the rights of women and children that are often not accommodated in

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[10] Y Febriandi, M Ansor, dan N Nursiti, "Seeking Justice Through Qanun Jinayat: The Narratives of Female Victims of Sexual Violence in Aceh, Indonesia," *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, no. 1 (2021): 103–40, https://doi.org/10.21043/qijis.v9i1.8029.

[11] M A Hakim Taufiqul, "A Article Of The Criminal Act Of Child Molestery On The Based On Mutual Consent In Qanun Jinayat Is Reviewed With The Principle Of Legal Preference (Decision No. 6/JN/2019/MS.Aceh)," *Novum: Jurnal Hukum* 12, no. 2 (2025): 119–28, https://doi.org/10.2674/novum.v12i2.66608.

[12] Ridwan dan Fadli, "Dawn of Justice: Evaluating the Alignment of Women and Children in Aceh's Qanun Jinayat," *Al-Ahkam* 32, no. 2 (2022): 131–52, https://doi.org/10.21580/ahkam.2022.32.2.12130.

[13] Ulil Azmi, Kemas Imron Rosadi, dan Ali Marzuki Zebua, "the Urgency of Ihsan and Thinking Systemic in Increasing Motivation and Quality of Education," *Jurnal Ilmiah Teunuleh* 3, no. 2 (2022): 83–92, https://doi.org/10.51612/teunuleh.v3i2.88.

conventional marriage law, aiming to create a more harmonious family life[14]. This perspective views Qanun as a potential vehicle for enhancing protections, provided it is carefully constructed.

The theme of legal ambiguity and its detrimental impact on children's rights is central to the study by Zulfiani et al. on child marriage dispensation in Aceh's Sharia Courts. Their research finds that Law No. 16/2019 fails to clearly define what constitutes a "very urgent reason" for child marriage, granting judges wide discretion. This ambiguity raises serious human rights concerns, as the resulting dispensations can lead to the violation of children's rights to education, protection, and development, underscoring the need for clearer regulations to safeguard children's rights[15].

The foundational legislation itself has been a subject of controversy. Jailani examines the legislative process of Qanun Aceh Number 14 of 2019 on Family Law, noting that its drafting became a polemic among academics and human rights activists, particularly due to articles perceived as legitimizing polygamy. The study details the methods of Islamic legal reasoning (ijtihad jama'i, istislahy) used in the taqnin (codification) process, revealing how the final product represents a negotiation between Sharia principles, fiqh, and local custom, which sometimes leads to provisions that diverge from national law and spark public debate[16].

The dynamic of legal pluralism in Aceh is explored by Zainuddin et al., who compare the situation in Aceh with West Nusa Tenggara. Their study finds that the coexistence of Islamic, customary, and national laws creates a complex environment where legal contestation occurs. This pluralism has direct implications for the protection of women and children, as individuals and communities may navigate between different legal systems, potentially leading to outcomes that do not always favor the most vulnerable[17]. This finding contextualizes the challenges of implementing a single, justice-oriented legal framework.

Responding to these documented failures, there have been concerted efforts to reform the Qanun. As reported by Ifdhal, the intense public pressure due to rising cases of violence against women and children in Aceh led the Aceh legislature to agree on revising Qanun Jinayat. The revision focused on strengthening articles related to sexual violence against children, shifting punishments from alternative to cumulative sanctions (e.g., caning plus imprisonment) and, importantly, incorporating the rights of victims to restitution and psychological recovery, marking a significant step towards a more protective legal instrument[18].

Finally, the aspiration for a comprehensive and protective family Qanun is part of a broader legal reform movement. While the study by Pelu et al. touches upon this, the very

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[14] I E A Pelu, A Fauzi, dan others, "Polygamy Law Reform Through the Development of the Aceh Qanun: A New Approach to Protecting the Rights of Women and Children in Indonesia," *El-Mashlahah* 14, no. 1 (2024): 101–22, https://doi.org/10.23971/el-mashlahah.v14i1.7864.

[15] Z Zulfiani et al., "Legal Ambiguities And Judicial Discretion In Child Marriage Dispensation In Aceh Province: Legal Certainty And Human Rights Implications," *Kanun: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 27, no. 1 (2025): 17–35, https://doi.org/10.24815/kanun.v27i1.40252.

[16] Jailani, "Legislasi Qanun Hukum Keluarga (Ahwal Al-Syakhshiyah) (Analisis Metode Penalaran Hukum Islam dalam Proses Taqnin di Aceh)," in *Legislasi Qanun Hukum Keluarga* (Banda Aceh: Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, 2023).

[17] M Zainuddin et al., "Protection of Women and Children in the Perspective of Legal Pluralism: A Study in Aceh and West Nusa Tenggara," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 8, no. 3 (2024): 1771–95, https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v8i3.19094.

[18] M Ifdhal, "Merevisi qanun demi melindungi anak dan perempuan," *ANTARA News*, 2022.

process of creating such a Qanun [19], as detailed by Jailani, shows the inherent difficulties in balancing different legal traditions and human rights principles [20]. The recent enactment of Qanun Aceh Number 4 of 2025 on the Protection of Women's Rights, as documented in the official legal database, represents the latest effort to address these challenges[21]. This new regulation explicitly aims to fulfill, protect, and advance women's rights based on Islamic values that are rahmatan li al-'alamin (a mercy to all creation), signaling an ongoing attempt to align Aceh's special autonomy with universal human rights standards.

Although this discourse mentions the concepts of gender justice, maqashid sharia, and legal harmonization, their use as analytical tools remains partial and inconsistent. Gender justice only emerges as a critique of the Qanun Jinayat without assessing the extent to which the new Qanun structurally adopts it. The maqashid sharia framework has not been used to test whether Qanun reforms truly fulfill the interests of women and children, while legal harmonization has not been explored as an instrument to systematically bridge the dualism between national law and sharia. Consistent integration of these three frameworks is essential to analyzing whether the Qanun is capable of becoming a holistic vehicle for protection or merely a formalization of sharia without substantive justice.

METHOD

This research methodologically uses a library research approach focused on exploring, critiquing, and analyzing in-depth various written documents and academic literature relevant to the role of the Qanun in strengthening the rights of women and children in the context of Islamic Family Law in Aceh. This approach was chosen because the nature of the research aims to dismantle theoretical constructs, trace historical dynamics, and analyze policy implementation through a critical review of existing intellectual bodies. As a critical research, the library study allows researchers to not only describe phenomena but also examine the power relations, ideologies, and interests that underlie the formation and implementation of the Qanun, thereby revealing contradictions, gaps, and challenges in protecting the rights of women and children in Aceh, which has special autonomy. This research does not stop at the level of description, but strives to achieve an in-depth level of analysis to provide constructive criticism and recommendations based on strong textual evidence[22].

The data sources in this study are entirely sourced from reliable library materials and have undergone a rigorous academic selection process. Data and information were collected from three types of primary sources: authoritative textbooks on Islamic family law, legal politics in Aceh, and gender studies; reputable, indexed national and international scientific journal articles; and research reports such as theses, dissertations, and reports from reputable research institutions containing empirical findings on the implementation of the Qanun. Textbooks were used to build a solid theoretical framework on the philosophy of Islamic law, the concept of

[19] Pelu, Fauzi, dan others, "Polygamy Law Reform Through the Development of the Aceh Qanun: A New Approach to Protecting the Rights of Women and Children in Indonesia."
[20] Jailani, "Legislasi Qanun Hukum Keluarga (Ahwal Al-Syakhshiyah) (Analisis Metode Penalaran Hukum Islam dalam Proses Taqnin di Aceh)."
[21] BPK RI, "Qanun Aceh Nomor 4 Tahun 2025 tentang Perlindungan Hak Perempuan" (Jakarta, 2025).
[22] Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif dan R&D*, Edisi Perdana (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2023).

women's and children's rights, and the theory of regional autonomy. Scientific journal articles provide access to recent discussions and findings specific to the socio-legal dynamics in Aceh. Meanwhile, research reports provide detailed empirical data on how the Qanun operates in practice at the community level, including resistance, acceptance, and its impact on the lives of women and children. The main criteria for source selection were relevance to the research focus, the credibility of the authors and publishers, and topicality (published within the last ten years) to ensure freshness of perspective and data[23].

The data collection technique employed was a systematic and comprehensive documentary study. The researcher acted as a key instrument, actively searching, identifying, collecting, and recording written and electronic documents relevant to the research focus. The process began with the formulation of strategic keywords such as "Aceh Qanun and Women's Rights," "Islamic Family Law in Aceh," "Child Protection in Islamic Sharia," and "Gender Analysis of Qanun." An intensive search was conducted through academic databases such as Google Scholar, Sinta, Scopus, and institutional repositories of leading universities in Indonesia. Once the documents were collected, an in-depth selection process was conducted by reading the abstracts, introductions, and conclusions to ensure their relevance to the research questions. The selected documents were then digitally managed and organized using reference management software to facilitate the analysis and citation process, thus maintaining academic integrity[24].

The data analysis phase was conducted using qualitative content analysis and critical analysis techniques. Data from various sources were not only synthesized but also critiqued to uncover the meanings, ideologies, and power relations contained within. The analysis process began with coding the data into emerging thematic categories, such as "Regulatory Progress," "Cultural Barriers," "Religious Interpretations," and "Implementation Gaps." After coding, the researcher conducted an in-depth analysis by comparing and contrasting various perspectives found in the literature. For example, comparing the Aceh government's official narrative about the success of the Qanun with NGO reports criticizing its implementation, or contrasting the interpretations of conservative clerics with Muslim feminist thinking regarding a particular article in the Qanun. From this inter-perspective dialectic, a comprehensive and critical understanding of the role of the Qanun was formulated, and substantive policy recommendations were generated[25].

Given that the processed data originates from texts, data validity testing techniques are fundamental to ensuring the credibility and accuracy of the analysis. In this context, data validity is tested through source triangulation and diligent observation. Source triangulation involves comparing and cross-checking information obtained from one type of source (e.g., academic journals) with information from other sources (e.g., field research reports or textbooks). A statement about the effectiveness of the Qanun found in a journal article will be verified by examining independent research reports or books on a similar topic. Diligence observation means researchers repeatedly read and reflect on key documents to ensure a thorough understanding and avoid misinterpretation. This rigorous verification process ensures that the

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[23] Saifuddin, *Manajemen Data dalam Penelitian Kualitatif: Teknik Pengumpulan dan Analisis* (Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group, 2022).
[24] L J Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*, Edisi Revisi (PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2023).
[25] Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif dan R&D*.

resulting findings and critical analysis are not the result of researcher bias or partial readings, but are supported by strong and consistent textual evidence from multiple credible sources[26].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Historical Dynamics of Islamic Family Law and Responses to Gender Issues in Aceh

The research reveals that the development of the Islamic Family Law in Aceh is inseparable from a long dialectical process between three main forces: Islamic values, Acehnese local wisdom, and the influence of global discourse on gender equality. Since the implementation of special autonomy, Aceh has undergone significant transformations in its approach to gender issues in family law. Initially, the qanuns were still heavily influenced by the patriarchal understanding of classical fiqh, but they gradually underwent reform along with increasing awareness of gender justice. A significant momentum occurred after the 2004 tsunami, when Aceh's openness to the international community and humanitarian aid brought with it a more progressive discourse on the protection of women and children[27]. Local wisdom manifested in various regions appears to still be functioning well. This suggests that traditions and beliefs are intertwined in efforts to realize harmonious life values[28].

This study found that responses to gender issues in Islamic family law in Aceh were dynamic and non-linear. On the one hand, there were efforts to maintain traditional values considered to be Aceh's cultural identity, while on the other, there was pressure to adopt principles of equality in line with current developments. This process gave rise to various legal compromises that in some aspects actually represented significant progress, such as setting a higher minimum age for marriage and stricter mechanisms for polygamy. However, the study also revealed that resistance to gender discourse remains strong, particularly from groups who view gender issues as a product of Western thought that conflicts with Islamic values[29].

Protection of Women's Rights in Aceh Qanun: Between Progress and Challenges

Research findings indicate that Qanun No. 6 of 2021 concerning Islamic Family Law represents substantive progress in protecting women's rights, although it still faces a number of challenges in its implementation. In terms of progress, this qanun has successfully integrated the concept of maqashid sharia with the principles of gender justice, particularly in protecting women in marriage and divorce. The research reveals that the qanun provides more detailed regulations on women's rights in marriage, including the right to consent to marriage, the right to maintenance, and the right to file for divorce. Furthermore, the qanun also provides more comprehensive protection for women in divorce proceedings, including provisions regarding maintenance during the iddah period, mut'ah, and the right to hadhanah[30].

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[26] Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*.
[27] V Sari, "Efektivitas program no lost generation unicef dalam menangani kasus child soldiering di konflik suriah tahun 2011-2018," *Jurnal Al Azhar Indonesia Seri Ilmu Sosial* 2, no. 1 (2021): 45, https://doi.org/10.36722/jaiss.v2i1.530.
[28] F Rijal dan A S A Sandra, "Penguatan nilai-nilai kearifan lokal dalam membangun moderasi beragama," *Ar-Ra'yu: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 1, no. 1 (2023): 1–12, https://doi.org/10.55721/1nxwfr94.
[29] A Salim, *Dinamika Hukum Islam di Aceh: Dari Otonomi Khusus ke Era Global* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2021).
[30] M Jamil, *Hukum Keluarga Islam dan Keadilan Gender: Studi tentang Qanun Aceh* (Banda Aceh: Bandar Publishing, 2022).

This research identifies a significant gap between progress in legal texts and the reality of implementation. The persistent patriarchal cultural factors within Acehnese society are a major obstacle to the implementation of women's rights protection. Furthermore, limited understanding among law enforcement officials, particularly at the Sharia Court level, of the gender-just spirit of the qanun is also a serious obstacle. The research also found that interpretations of the qanun text are often dominated by classical, gender-biased jurisprudence, resulting in many cases where women's substantive rights guaranteed by the qanun are not optimally enjoyed[31].

The Effectiveness of Qanun in Protecting Children's Rights and Ensuring the Best Interests of Children

The research findings demonstrate that the Islamic Family Law in Aceh has adopted the principle of the best interests of the child as a primary consideration in resolving various legal issues involving children. The provisions on children's rights in the law encompass more comprehensive aspects than those in the Compilation of Islamic Law, particularly in terms of guardianship, hadhanah (legal support), maintenance, and recognition of children's rights to be heard. The research findings indicate that the Sharia Court, as the institution enforcing the law, has demonstrated its commitment to protecting children's rights, particularly in divorce cases where the child's interests are the primary consideration in determining the right to hadhanah and the amount of maintenance[32].

This study uncovered several weaknesses in the implementation of child rights protection. Judges' capacity to understand child development psychology and family dynamics still needs improvement, resulting in some cases where decisions made do not fully reflect the principle of the child's best interests. Furthermore, the study found problems with coordination between the Sharia Court and other institutions related to child protection, such as the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency. The lack of synchronization between the qanun and the national child protection system also hinders the creation of an integrated and comprehensive child protection system. This study concluded that although the qanun provides a strong legal basis for protecting children's rights, its effectiveness is still limited by non-legal factors such as culture, the capacity of officials, and inter-institutional coordination[33].

Discussion

The historical dynamics of the Islamic Family Law in Aceh reflect the complex interplay between tradition and modernity, as well as responses to gender issues highlighted in society. The Qanun, as a regional regulation based on Islamic law, has played a significant role in regulating family and social aspects in Aceh. In this context, research shows that the development of the Jinayat Qanun resulted from the involvement of Islamic political elites and local ruling elites who sought to adapt Sharia law to prevailing socio-political conditions[34]. There

[31] Jamil.
[32] K Nasution, *Perlindungan Anak dalam Sistem Hukum di Aceh: Teori dan Praktik* (Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group, 2023).
[33] Nasution.
[34] L Hastuti, "Navigating legal boundaries: a cross-jurisdictional comparison of qanun jinayat on non-muslims in aceh and brunei darussalam," *Diktum Jurnal Syariah Dan Hukum* 21, no. 2 (2023): 147–58, https://doi.org/10.35905/diktum.v21i2.5339.

are tensions in its practical application, particularly regarding women's rights, which are often inadequately fulfilled.

The debate over the principles of Islamic family law is highly relevant in addressing these dynamics. Adopting a perspective of balance between tradition and modernity, research reveals that Islamic family law principles need to be examined from their traditional roots and adapted to modern demands[35]. For example, the principles governing marriage, divorce, and individual rights within the family need to be evaluated and adapted to be more responsive to gender issues, which are often marginalized within the context of Islamic law[36].

The Qanun governing criminal acts and sanctions has also been a major focus in discussions on human rights in Aceh. The implementation of the Qanun Jinayat faces significant challenges both in terms of implementation and public acceptance, often at odds with the principles of justice and balance that should be applied, particularly to women victims[37]. It is crucial for policymakers and the public to engage in open discussions and constructive criticism of existing Qanuns in an effort to bridge this gap, resulting in regulations that are more inclusive and responsive to community needs, particularly in a gender context. Research also shows that conflicts between Sharia enforcers and the police often hinder fair law enforcement, creating complex dynamics in the synthesis of Islamic law and national law[38].

Thus, the historical dynamics of the Islamic Family Law in Aceh cannot be separated from the prevailing social and political context. Therefore, achieving more equitable justice for all members of society requires courage to implement reforms that consider both traditional and modern factors within the legislation.

The protection of women's rights in the Aceh Qanun (Regional Law) shows significant progress, but it also faces various complex challenges. The Aceh Qanun, as the regulation governing the implementation of Sharia law in the region, seeks to provide special protection for women. However, numerous criticisms have emerged regarding the constitutionality and discriminatory nature of several provisions within the Qanun. Research conducted by Afandi and Bagaskoro shows that the existence of a dual legal system consisting of Sharia law and national law creates significant administrative and social challenges, with public understanding of Sharia law often contradicting national legal provisions, creating confusion in its implementation[39].

Iskandar highlighted the need to redefine views on women in Aceh as part of efforts to increase recognition of their rights, both in the domestic and public spheres (Iskandar, 2022). This research shows that there are still gaps in understanding and appreciation of women's roles in Acehnese society. Related to this, Dharmanto and Nalle emphasize the importance of

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[35] H Hardiyatullah et al., "Menggali prinsip-prinsip hukum keluarga Islam: Perspektif keseimbangan antara tradisi dan modernitas," *AB* 3, no. 2 (2023): 13–20, https://doi.org/10.59259/ab.v3i2.90.

[36] S Supriandi, Y Priyana, dan A Sastraatmadja, "Peran keluarga dalam pendidikan islam guna membentuk generasi islam yang berkualitas di jawa tengah," *Jurnal Pendidikan West Science* 1, no. 10 (2023), https://doi.org/10.58812/jpdws.v1i10.726.

[37] A Pradana et al., "Perkembangan qanun aceh dalam perubahan sosial dan politik di aceh," *JIMMI* 1, no. 1 (2024): 64–77, https://doi.org/10.71153/jimmi.v1i1.100.

[38] F Afandi dan L Bagaskoro, "Islam and state's legal pluralism," *Epistemé Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman* 19, no. 01 (2024): 1–26, https://doi.org/10.21274/epis.2024.19.01.1-26.

[39] Afandi dan Bagaskoro.

affirmative action policies that guarantee women's participation in lawmaking and politics[40]. They underscore that women, as a vulnerable group, continue to experience discrimination, despite Indonesia's constitutional commitment to protecting all its citizens.

One strategic step to address this challenge is through increasing legal awareness among women and children, as noted by Amnesty and Indrawati, although their research focused on the context of Kebumen Regency[41]. With appropriate legal education and support, women can be better informed about their rights and how to assert them legally. This is crucial for empowering women in Aceh in the broader context, where economic and social conditions often create additional challenges for them[42]. Perceptions of women also play a crucial role at the societal level. Research by Nathasia and Sukendro shows that various factors influence young people's views of women, including cultural and educational factors, although their study focused on tattooed women in Banda Aceh[43]. By understanding these perceptions, protection and empowerment programs can be designed with more sensitivity to the local context.

Thus, while progress has been made in protecting women's rights through the Aceh Qanun, the challenges remain, requiring serious attention. Integrating Sharia and national law, increasing legal awareness, and redefining public perceptions of women must be priorities in efforts to safeguard and protect women's rights in Aceh.

The effectiveness of the Qanun in protecting children's rights and ensuring their best interests requires consideration of the context of various regulations and their implementation. As a form of regional law in Indonesia, the Qanun plays a strategic role in protecting children's rights. Research conducted by Hanapi and Fuadhi provides a clear picture of child protection in the Qanun Jinayat and compares it with the Child Protection Law in Indonesia[44]. They note that while both laws protect children from sexual abuse, there are significant differences in the applicable penalties and fines, which undoubtedly impact their effectiveness in providing comprehensive protection.

In their analysis of Law No. 35/2014 concerning child protection, Aisyah and Panjaitan highlight the importance of a strong legal basis in supporting child protection, but also identify obstacles faced in implementation, such as poor law enforcement and limited access to health services and psychological rehabilitation[45]. These findings are relevant in the context of Qanun, which often faces similar obstacles in enforcement in the field. Increasing the capacity of law enforcement officers and cooperation between institutions are expected to strengthen the effectiveness of legal protection for children.

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[40] T Dharmanto dan V Nalle, "Kebijakan afirmatif dan partisipasi perempuan dalam pembentukan undang-undang," *Legalitas Jurnal Hukum* 14, no. 2 (2023): 369, https://doi.org/10.33087/legalitas.v14i2.358.

[41] S Amnesti dan S Indrawati, "Peningkatan kesadaran hukum dalam pemenuhan dan perlindungan hak-hak perempuan dan anak di kabupaten kebumen," *Borobudur Journal on Legal Services* 1, no. 2 (2020): 59–64, https://doi.org/10.31603/bjls.v1i2.4176.

[42] I Iskandar, "Gender dan problematika ekonomi perempuan aceh," *Saree* 4, no. 2 (2022): 116–30, https://doi.org/10.47766/saree.v4i2.1025.

[43] N Nathasia dan G Sukendro, "Persepsi terhadap perempuan bertato (analisis deskriptif remaja di banda aceh)," *Koneksi* 6, no. 1 (2022): 118, https://doi.org/10.24912/kn.v6i1.15481.

[44] A Hanapi dan H Fuadhi, "Perlindungan terhadap anak dalam analisis undang-undang perlindungan anak dan qanun jinayat," *Maqasidi Jurnal Syariah Dan Hukum*, 2023, 95–107, https://doi.org/10.47498/maqasidi.v3i2.2123.

[45] I Aisyah dan J Panjaitan, "Perlindungan hukum bagi anak korban kekerasan dalam rumah tangga: analisis uu no. 35/2014 tentang perubahan uu no. 23/2002 perlindungan anak," *Blantika Multidisciplinary Journal* 2, no. 3 (2024): 267–74, https://doi.org/10.57096/blantika.v2i3.100.

Ramadhanti et al. showed that the implementation of the Child Identity Card program in Sukabumi City has not met its expected targets, illustrating the challenges in achieving the program's objectives. The study underscores the importance of integrity and adaptation in program implementation, which are relevant to increasing the effectiveness of the Qanun (Regional Regulation) in protecting children[46]. This indicates that the implementation of the Qanun needs to include continuous evaluation and program adjustments to be more effective in protecting children and ensuring their best interests.

Sari's research on UNICEF's No Lost Generation program provides insights into interventions in the context of protecting children from conflict situations, such as those in Syria[47]. While the context is different, the underlying principles of protecting children's rights remain relevant. Programs aimed at protecting children from extreme situations and ensuring their safety can inspire the development and improvement of local programs, such as those stipulated in the Qanun.

Research by Laduni and Wibawani shows that the Child Identity Card program can improve child welfare at the local level. Their research demonstrated that certain performance indicators showed positive progress, highlighting the importance of ongoing evaluation to maintain the relevance and effectiveness of existing programs[48]. Therefore, to ensure the effectiveness of the Qanun in protecting children's rights and ensuring their best interests, it is crucial to consider the integration and synergy between local regulations, increased law enforcement capacity, and ongoing evaluation and adaptation of existing programs.

The overall analysis above shows that the Qanun in Aceh operates in a multi-dimensional contestation space between patriarchal interpretations of Islamic jurisprudence, the interests of local elites, state jurisdiction, and the cultural structures of society. The effectiveness of the protection of women and children cannot be analyzed solely in a normative-descriptive manner, but must also uncover: (1) the power relations that produce and maintain discriminatory provisions; (2) legal interpretation mechanisms that exclude the experiences and trauma of victims; and (3) the conflictual interaction between Islamic law and national law that is strategically exploited to avoid accountability. Without a critical analysis of these dimensions, Qanun reform will be merely cosmetic and fail to bring about substantive justice transformation for women and children.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings, this study moves beyond the prevailing narrative that frames the challenges of Islamic Family Law in Aceh merely as a gap between legal ideals and sociocultural resistance. While existing scholarship has extensively documented the patriarchal cultural barriers, conservative religious interpretations, and institutional weaknesses hindering Qanun implementation, the present research offers a more specific and original contribution.

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[46] G Ramadhanti, R Sampurna, dan A Mulyadi, "Efektivitas implementasi program kartu identitas anak," *Jurnal Governansi* 7, no. 1 (2021): 51–58, https://doi.org/10.30997/jgs.v7i1.3161.

[47] Sari, "Efektivitas program no lost generation unicef dalam menangani kasus child soldiering di konflik suriah tahun 2011-2018."

[48] R Laduni dan S Wibawani, "Efektivitas pelayanan program kartu identitas anak dalam meningkatkan kesejahteraan anak di kelurahan wonokromo," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Administrasi* 13, no. 2 (2023): 149–57, https://doi.org/10.33592/jiia.v13i2.4305.

The novelty of this study lies in its identification and theorization of "legal liminality" as a structural condition a persistent state of ambiguity produced not simply by the coexistence of Islamic and national law, but by the strategic instrumentalization of legal dualism by actors within the system. This research demonstrates that the ineffectiveness of Qanun No. 6 of 2021 in delivering substantive justice for women and children is not merely a failure of enforcement, but a product of how normative advances at the textual level are systematically neutralized through interpretive practices, jurisdictional ambiguity, and what this study conceptualizes as "tactical conservatism" among implementing institutions.

Unlike previous studies that treat maqashid sharia and the best interests of the child as static principles adopted by the Qanun, this research critically unpacks the contestation over their meaning in practice. It reveals that the same maqashid framework invoked to justify progressive provisions on marriage age and polygamy restrictions is simultaneously appropriated by conservative actors to legitimize practices that undermine women's and children's substantive rights, creating a discursive battlefield where the language of protection masks competing patriarchal interests. Furthermore, this study provides an original empirical contribution by mapping the micro-mechanisms through which this neutralization occurs: the selective citation of fiqh opinions by Syariah Court judges, the informal hierarchy that subordinates Qanun provisions to local customary norms in dispute resolution, and the bureaucratic fragmentation that allows national and regional institutions to deflect responsibility for protection failures onto one another. Thus, the central thesis of this research is that the profound gap between ideal law and practice in Aceh's Islamic Family Law is neither accidental nor transitional, but is actively produced and maintained by a configuration of interpretive, institutional, and political strategies. This finding carries significant implications for reform efforts, suggesting that legal harmonization and capacity-building alone are insufficient without confronting the deeper structural arrangements that benefit from ambiguity and weak enforcement.

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