

## **ABDUL LATIF: THE FORGOTTEN MERCHANT OF THE WESTERN COAST OF SUMATRA**

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### **Abstract**

Minangkabau merchant is a kind of typical entrepreneurship of Minangkabau closer equivalent to the concept of merchant rather than as an entrepreneur in terms of capitalist industry. Abdul Latif is a portrait of a Minangkabau merchant managed to build a business network through the shaft Malaya, India, Arabia, and Egypt. Business profits, channeled through the efforts evoke a sense of nationalism and encourage the modernization of Islam in West Sumatra, and the Nagari Koto Anau, in particular. However, the figure of entrepreneurs is not widely known, especially among the younger generation of Minangkabau. Who is Abdul Latif?, How to build world business? How to encourage modernization efforts and Islam in West Sumatra?

Keywords: Merchant, Trade, Koto Anau, Coastal, Modernization of Islam.

### **1. Introduction**

On October 20, 2007, around 700 merchants of Minangkabau from around the world held a meeting in the city of Padang with establishing a relationship agenda, sharing experiences in a business dialogue, and building network to face the challenges of globalization.

<sup>2</sup>Related to this Minang merchants meeting, the topics of the discussion about the economy and Minangkabau merchants world rarely gets the attention of the researchers of history and other social sciences. Historically, the merchants of Minangkabau have been a cornerstone of the economy of the people, they are important and should be protected and facilitated by the country<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup>“Saudagar Minang dari Penjuru Dunia akan Bertemu di Padang.”, further reading at [http://www.waspada.co.id/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2000:saudagar-minang-dari-penjuru-dunia-akan-bertemu-di-padang](http://www.waspada.co.id/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2000:saudagar-minang-dari-penjuru-dunia-akan-bertemu-di-padang) &catid=17 &Itemid=30. Accessed on 18 Februari 2013. Minang merchants from Around the World will meet in Padang. "Further baca[http://www.waspada.co.id/index.php?Option=Com\\_content&view=article&id=2000:merchants-were-minang-of-the-world-corner-to-meet-the-field](http://www.waspada.co.id/index.php?Option=Com_content&view=article&id=2000:merchants-were-minang-of-the-world-corner-to-meet-the-field) &catid=17 &Itemid=30. Accessed on February 18, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Capitalism and the nation state tends to marginalize the lives of small merchants, so they often postulated as the power of "shadow economy" or "informal sector, which is not recorded in official statistics, and therefore untouched by government provisions and tax liabilities

Minangkabau merchant is a kind of typical *entrepreneuship* of Minangkabau closer equivalent to the concept of merchant rather than as an entrepreneur in terms of capitalist industry. The term *galeh* or reworded into *galas*, at the beginning the word is related to the middle class merchant society and not upper class society. The prior orientation of these merchants is not on capital and maximum profits gain, but rather on the orientation of foraging and meet the complicated social demands. The next development in the middle-class merchants moving towards to be successful merchants or it is now called conglomerates.

The more important thing that is the advanced level to create self-awareness of the ideas of "improvement" related to the nationalism of modern Indonesian, as well as the agent of change in addressing the challenges time. Merchants life in coastal areas of Western Sumatra have been described by the beach and sea life, but unfortunately, most of the merchants surround the coast are engaged in the spice trade sector, textiles trade, or engaged in banking. Based on the origin of the western coast of Sumatra merchants were not only all from the region, but there were also derived from Darek and Rantau Minangkabau region.

The dynamics life of western coast of Sumatra merchants were quite unique, especially their strategy for maintaining the existence of the trade, and the pattern of relationships built through merchant associations. The successful merchants were not only struggling in the business world, but also devoted themselves into the world of education, social, and accelerated the process of modernization of Islam in Minangkabau. One of the interesting figures from the western coastal Minangkabau merchants to be discussed in this paper is the figure of Abdul Aziz Latif who tend to be forgotten nowadays.

Abdul Latif, so merchants origin Nagari Koto Anau Solok fondly called, is one of the successful profile merchants from western coast of Sumatra not only in the business world, but also has contributed to the relatively large on the process of Islamic modernization in his hometown. Why is Abdul Latif worthy appointed as a subject in this article? First, his business trip began by selling tobacco, palm and palm leaves, betel leaves in his hometown Koto Anau. In the next stage he migrated to Padang and became agents of branded calico/mori cloth from Garut, West Java.

Second, in 1916 Abdul Latif had joined *the Vereeniging merchants* chaired by by Nurdin Saleh<sup>4</sup>. In 1929 the association was renamed into the Association of Indonesian Merchants, chaired by Taher Marah Sutan. Third, in 1930 Abdul Latif served as President of Sumatra Banking, Trading Corporation Ltd (company docks and shipbuilding), and the owner N.V Haji Abdul Latif (a textile company that manufactures sarong) located in Simpangharu Padang. Fourth, Hamka specifically in his work “*Ayahku*” wrote his impression on Abdul Latif. Hamka wrote, merchant of Anau Koto had fought for the struggle of youth in West Sumatra<sup>5</sup>.

Abdul Latif’s business rapidly developed in Padang, influenced the *zeitgeist* of the Minang merchants movement engaged in *Pasar Gadang, Pasar Ilir, Pasar Mudik, Pasar Batipuh, and Pasar Malintang*. Those markets served as a business center and a gathering point for merchants coming from Darek and Coastal. In addition to his function in a Minang merchants association, *Vereeniging merchants* at that time also served as counterpart to hold Chinese traders who tried to monopolize trade along the western coast of Sumatra.

Talking about Abdul Latif are inseparable from the concept of *entrepreneurship*. *Entrepreneurship* means *business ownership*, the one’s ownership of the company who are with small and medium enterprises. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, from the standpoint of motivation, a person chooses to establish and run their own business on the basis of:

1. Starting a business in order to exploit or pursue opportunities that can generate revenues and profits in the future, so-called *opportunity entrepreneurship*.
2. Starting a business due to the factor of necessity caused by the lack of other better options to build his own business, called *necessity entrepreneurship*

According to Wagner, A person can decide to be entrepreneurs because he has rationally calculated that by setting up his own business, he will obtain discounted

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<sup>4</sup> Further reading on “Persatuan Saudagar Indonesia” dalam *Propinsi Sumatera Tengah*. (Jakarta: Kementerian Penerangan, 1953), hlm. 753. Further reading “Unity Merchant of Indonesia” in Central Sumatra province. (Jakarta: Ministry of Information, 1953), p. 753.

<sup>5</sup>Hamka, *Ayahku*. (Jakarta: Widjaja, 1950), hlm. 189.

life-time utility better than he works in a company. Based on the theory of entrepreneurship above, factor encouraging Abdul Latif plunged in business and commerce at that time was a factor of *opportunity entrepreneurship*.

Anthropological study of the market states that the personal bonds made the market system function. Clifford Geertz, shows that the relations in the Indonesian market generally consistently in accordance with the desire for profit and rationality.<sup>6</sup>

Nonetheless, in the context of Minang merchants, many observers argue that one of the weaknesses of Minang entrepreneurs, so far, precisely because it relies on the family relationships; competition is becoming weaker and less innovative, so that a family history of a large merchant class continuing from one generation to the next generation become rare.

In addition to the concept of entrepreneurship, the factors drove the success of Abdul Latif as a successful merchant on the western coast of Sumatra caused by *n Ach*. David C Mc.Clelland in his experiments, managed to find a virus named *n Ach* (*need for Achievement*), the need to achieve results or achievements. This virus is a personal attitude causing people to behave more aggressive. People who in every action derive satisfaction achievement<sup>7</sup>. When connected with the activities of Abdul Latif in managing his business, the virus also infected him, where he wants to be successful, then the result of the business profits were used for social purposes and encouraged the modernization of Islam in West Sumatra in general and in particular Anau Koto.

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<sup>6</sup>Clifford Geertz, *Penjaja dan Raja*. Terjemahan. (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor, 1989).

<sup>7</sup>Myron Weiner (ed), *Modernisasi Dinamika Pertumbuhan*. (Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press, 1986), hlm 3-12

## B. Discussion

### 1. From Anau Koto to Kota Padang: Development Process of Abdul Latif's Entrepreneurship

#### a. Abdul Latif Childhood

Abdul Aziz Latif lahir years 1885 di Sungai Dareh Nagari Koto Anau<sup>8</sup> yang indah permai. Koto Anau merupakan sebuah nagari yang terletak di kaki Gunung Talang Kecamatan Lembang Jaya. Menurut historisnya Nagari Koto Anau merupakan bagian dari konfederasi Kubuang Tigo Baleh yang secara adat disebut sebagai Nagari Adik. Menurut Geertz, pengamatan tentang personalitas berkaitan dengan stuktur pengalaman (*structure of experience*) seseorang.<sup>9</sup>

Abdul Aziz Latif was born in 1885 at a beautiful scenery of Sungai Dareh Nagari Koto Anau. Koto Anau is a village located at Mount Talang slope in District of Lembang Jaya. According to history of Nagari Koto Anau is part of a confederation Kubuang Tigo Baleh customarily referred to as Nagari Adik. According to Geertz, the observation of the personality associated with the structure of experience (*structure of experience*) of person.<sup>10</sup> The structure experience is a total accumulated of cultural patterns, the conclusion of symbols built based on each event experienced by someone, embodied in the concept of symbolic structures which can be felt by everyone.

There are some important words in *psychoanalysis* about the "structure of experience" Geertz states namely: cultural patterns, symbols, and personalities. The prior of the analysis seems clear on the cultural roots of Nagari Koto Anau, where

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<sup>8</sup>The name of Nagari Koto Anau was derived from the word koto anam which means six koto (village) namely Anam Koto, in the territory of the Kingdom of Koto Anau past that includes Land Sirah, Koto Tower, Batu Many, Koto Laweh, Limau Lunggo, and Bajanjang Batu. In the development history, after the Kingdom of Koto Anau does not exist anymore, Stone Many, Koto Laweh, Limau Lunggo, and Stone Bajanjang then broke away and formed their own villages. Only Land Sirah and Koto Gadang that still survive and continue to use the name Koto Anau to mention the name of their area. Name Nagari Koto Anau sometimes also called Koto Gadang because their area is located in the center of Koto Tower. The former territory of the Kingdom Koto Anau then later called the District Lembang Jaya territory in addition to covering Anam Koto Inside also include Ampek Koto ax Redai which is the former Kingdom Camin Taruih and the Kingdom Camin Talayang which later became Mountain region Basil IV-Koto covering Bukik Sileh, Salayo Tanang, Kampung Batu In and Simpang Tanjung Nan Ampek. Nagari Simpang Tanjung and Kampung Batu Nan Ampek In 2002 broke away from the District Lembang Jaya and formed District of Twin Lakes.

<sup>9</sup>Rudolf Mrazek, *Semesta Tan Malaka*. (Yogyakarta: Bigraf Pub, 1994), hlm. 2.

<sup>10</sup>Rudolf Mrazek, *Semesta Tan Malaka*. (Yogyakarta: Bigraf Pub, 1994), hlm. 2.

Abdul Latif was born, grew up and even grew in conflicts early Islamic reformation also influencing his characters. Abdul Latif was born from his parents named Latif and Rendo Ameh<sup>11</sup>. Abdul Latif was the second of the two brothers. He went through basic education was the People Elementary School. Late afternoon until the evening, Abdul Latif studied Quran at Surau. For every Minangkabauneses, indeed the nature (macro-microcosmos) of Minangkabau affecting his personality the character. A beautiful and lush Nature, customs based on islamic law and islamic law based on holly Quran; traditions or norms and social values referring to islamic law which then leads anyone to do good and useful for society. Those patterns of strong personal culture affects the character of Abdul Latif.

*b. The development of entrepreneurial spirit of Abdul Latif*

Culture trade of Minang people can be seen from the profession of their merchants (Marchant) daily life. Known locally is *manggaleh* (trade), means conducting the sale or exchange in the system of local or regional markets. Perhaps for these reasons that the term Minangkabau frequently spoofed by *Minangkiau* expression. When we go exploring on Nagari Koto Anau, it can be seen that this area is one area, where the people's economy and trade to every corner of the interior retained by the locals.

Similar conditions also experienced by Abdul Latif who has been honed his entrepreneur spirit when Haji Gadang (his brother) invited him to trade tobacco, palms and palm leaves, and betel leaves as an ingredient in cigarettes every weekends<sup>12</sup> at Koto Anau. Although born of a wealthy merchant family, but Abdul Latif never hesitate to help her brother trade every weekend. Abdul Latif's *manggaleh* tradition is closely related to the market system in Minangkabau villages existed long before the arrival of the Western Nation to Indonesia. Abdul Latif's *manggaleh* tradition is also related to the proverbial tradition of Minang, namely

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<sup>11</sup> Arizal (65 tahun), *wawancara*, tanggal 10 Februari 2013 di Koto Anau Kabupaten Solok.

<sup>12</sup> Rotation traditional market runs every day of the week (week) after the name of the day (from Arabic) as Week Akaik (Sunday), Sinayan (Monday), Salasa (Tuesday), Rabaa (Wednesday), Kamih (Thursday), and so forth.

the *customs badagang, duduak dagang, tagak dagang, bakato dagang sakali. Indak baban batu digaleh.*

On the weekends, many farmers brought their crops to market and instead they buy goods for everyday or other household appliance; partly for resaling the goods in smaller traditional markets or *lepau-lepau* in Koto Anau. Instead, bigger traders sold in bigger market places weekly through *Galeh babelok* and even became an important part of the network pitchman (peddlers) in archipelago as identified by Van Leur.<sup>13</sup>

After graduating, in 1905 Haji Gadang invited Abdul Latif migrated to Padang. His first activity of the day was branded calico cloth in Pasar Gadang Padang. Besides Abdul Latif, appeared some merchants who helped rose the popularity of Pasar Gadang that time, among them:

1. Rahman Tamin, a merchant, the general manager of the firm Rahman Tamin (one of the strongest importer in the 1920s). Moreover, Rahman Tamin also the pioneer of Indonesian Importers Association (GINDO), in 1951 renamed the Association of Indonesian Importers Purchase (GAPINDO).
2. Ismail Gani and Jan Tamin, a well known merchant and also an importer until the city of Medan.
3. Salim Jalil, the leader of Salim Jalil firms and an importer in Surabaya.<sup>14</sup>

High spirit of entrepreneurship of Abdul Latif rapidly developed his trading business. A year later, he had become a sales agent of clothes sent from Garut, West Java. Besides trading in the Pasar Gadang, Abdul Latif also brought the the merchandises to the Koto Anau. When the Dutch colonial government introduced soft loans for looms to merchants in Pasar Gadang, Abdul Latif interested in opening this new venture, setting up the first weaving convection located on Jalan Diponegoro-now.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Further reading at H. - D. Evers (ed.), *Sociology of Southeast Asia: Readings on Social Change and Development*, (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980) dalam [www.googlebooks.com](http://www.googlebooks.com). Further see H. - D. Evers (ed.), *Sociology of Southeast Asia: Readings on Social Change and Development*, (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980) in [www.google books.com](http://www.google books.com).

<sup>14</sup> Further reading on "Persatuan Saudagar Indonesia" dalam *Propinsi Sumatera Tengah*. (Jakarta: Kementerian Penerangan, 1953), hlm. 754.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Hanifah (71 years), dated 19 February 2013 in Padang.



**Gambar 1** Pasar Gadang atmosphere in the era of 1900s In this area Abdul Latif developed his fabric business bisnis kainnya.

*Sumber:* <http://www.kitlv.ac.nl>

In 1910, Abdul Latif married with a girl from Koto Anau named Amirah from Sikumbang Tribe. From his marriage, Abdul Latif was blessed with three children, among them Latif Fatima, Aziz Latif and Rahman Latif. While on his second marriage to Dalisah her mother was from Sumanik, Tanah Datar and her father came from Silungkang.<sup>16</sup> Abdul Latif was blessed with 12 children, among them: Abd. Malik Latif, Abd. Muis Latif, Abd. Munir Latif,<sup>17</sup> Abd. Muluk Latif, Abd. Muzir Latif, Abd. Murad Latif, Siti Latifah, Siti Dawiyah, Siti Rahmani, Siti Zulfa, and Siti Yunizar.

In 1915, beside his fabric store in Pasar Gadang, Abdul Latif also had convection trademark Genuine Weaving looms Padang. A few years later, in 1920 Abdul Latif founded a textile weaving factory named N.V Abdul Latif. According to Combo (65 years), Abdul Latif N.V company located in Simpang Aru (Campus of STIE Dharma, ndalas-now) produced some renowned fabric products, including stamped Randai and Pahlawan.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, and interview, aged 71 years, date 19 February 2013 at Koto Anau Kabupaten Solok.

<sup>17</sup> Abd Munir Abd Latif, one of the fighters, who are victims of events Setujuh, Limopuluh Koto district on the Dutch Aggression

<sup>18</sup>B. Andoeska (Mak EtekCombo). Age (65 years), *interview*, dated 17 February 2013 in Padang.





**Figure 2.** Abdul Latif upon receiving an honor as a successful merchant and his devotion to the social life from the Dutch Government

**Source:** Repro from the photo collection Abdul Latif's family

The rapid development of Abdul Latif's business at that time was not influenced by the network of local trade-Batavia-Dutch, but filled the trading network in Peninsular Malaya, established trade connection with Singapore, India, Arabia, and Egypt. Awakening trade network with the Islamic world, facilitating Abdul Latif to built a travel agent called Kongsu Tiga.

Kongsu Tiga is one of the pilgrimage ship travel in the colonial period<sup>19</sup>. The travel agent, free costs for the Minangkabau modernist scholars to pilgrimage, among them Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah, Sheikh Muhammad Djamil Djambek, Inyik Parabek, Haji Abdullah Ahmad, and others

The development of the textile business in West Sumatra was one of the effects of *Cultuur Stelsel* in West Sumatra. Annie Both argues that, the greatest impact felt by people living in the villages, both economy and wealth increasing. Furthermore Annie Both said that in the economic field, the village people increasingly depended on goods trade, especially salt and textiles purchased with money. <sup>20</sup>Post *Cultuur Stelsel*, the western coast merchants, including Abdul Latif monopolized the textile stuffs and put high prices on sales.

<sup>19</sup>Hamka, *Ayahku*. (Jakarta: Widjaja, 1950), hlm. 189.

<sup>20</sup>Annie Both, William J.O Malley, Anna Weidemann (ed.), *Sejarah Ekonomi Indonesia*. (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1988), hlm. 161-162.

In times of economic depression, the company N.V Abdul Latif also felt the impact. Abdul Latif business venture during the world crisis nearly bankrupted (*failliet*) because of his debts of thousands Gulden. Freek Colombijn asserts, in times of economic depression Padang municipal government gave loans to some large companies f 450,000 to the market. However, higher interest rates, causing the municipality to give up and cause swelling of installments to be paid by merchants, Abdul Latif was including in this case<sup>21</sup>.

Despite of his debt, Abdul Latif would not close his business. To the creditor, Abdul Latif promised to pay the debt within a few months. If he was not able to fulfill that promise, the creditor was allowed to seize all assets of his company. One thing that was praised by Hamka in his writing, though in a state of almost *failliet* Abdul Latif never refused to give assistance to those who needed a help, as written in the following quotation.

“So with his patience, tough and sweet smile, he faces the difficulties. Although in a very difficult situation, when people come asking for help, he gave the relief well, never seems surly.”<sup>22</sup>

## 2. His role in The Vereeniging Merchant and in promoting Modernization of Islam in West Sumatra

Not only struggled in the business world, but Abdul Latif was also active in Vereeniging merchants associations in 1916. Association chaired by Minang merchants Nurdin Saleh was one of the merchants association in Indonesia aimed to counter the monopoly of China trade. The Vereeniging merchants at that time centered on Pasar Gadang in Padang oversee the organization branches including *Pasar Ilir*, *Pasar Mudik*, *Pasar Batipuh*, and *Pasar Malintang*<sup>23</sup>. From those markets, these merchants from the western coast of Sumatra carried out business

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<sup>21</sup>During times of economic depression, the municipal government stopped distributing lump sum City Council members congratulated themselves because it can rely on its own sources of revenue fairly stable from company-company. During times of economic depression, the benefits merchants continued to decline. In 1937 direct taxes, the end was inevitable. Further see Freek Colombijn, *Paco-paco (City) Padang*. (Padang: Tourism and Cultural Heritage Agency of Padang and West Sumatra, t.t), p. 89

<sup>22</sup>Hamka, *Ayahku*. (Jakarta: Widjaja, 1950), hlm. 189.

<sup>23</sup> Further reading on “Persatuan Saudagar Indonesia” dalam *Propinsi Sumatera Tengah*. (Jakarta: Kementerian Pengerangan, 1953), hlm. 753.

activities and in the following period this merchant associations fighting to the national level.



**Figure 3:** Board members of Vereeniging merchants: (from left to right): A. Fatah Sutan Malano (comissaris), A. Karim Yusuf (comissaris), Abdul Aziz Latif (Peningmeester/treasurer), Marzuki Yatim (Vice Voorzitter), Mr. Sutan Harun al-Rasjid (Hoofdcomissaris), Turkey Bagindo Anger (voorzitter), Oemar Marah Alamsyah (Secretaris), M. Thaib Sutan Mangkuto (Comissaris), Datuk Madjo Kayo (Comissaris), H.M Thaib (comissaris).

**Source :** Repro of photo collections of Abdul lati's family

Selain itu, *Saudagar Vereeniging* turut mendorong saudagar-saudagar membentuk perusahaan besar yang bergerak di bidang ekspor-impor. Menurut catatan Kementerian Penerangan pada masa 1920an hingga years 1953 di Pasar Gadang bermunculan perusahaan dagang besar, seperti Firma Marah Taharuddin (eksportir), Firma Sjakur Munaf (importir), Firma B. Datuk Madjo Kajo (importir), Firma Abdul Fatah Sutan Melano (importir), N.V Sridharma, dan N.V Abdul Latif (pabrik tekstil, importir). In addition, the *Vereeniging merchants* also encouraged merchants to form large companies engaged in export-import. According to the Ministry of Information during the 1920s until 1953 in Pasar Gadang sprung major trading companies, such as Firm of Marah Taharuddin (exporters), Firm of Sjakur Munaf (importers), Firm of B. Datuk Madjo Kajo (importers), Firm of Abdul Fatah Sutan Melano (importers ), Sridharma NV and NV Abdul Latif (textile mills, importers).

In 1929, The Vereeniging merchant associations renamed into the Association of Merchants Indonesia chaired by Taher Marah Sutan<sup>24</sup>. But six years later (1935), a trade association returned to the Vereeniging merchant. Congress held in 1941 to elect a the board member of merchants period 1941-1943. At that time elected Mr. Sutan Harun al-Rasjid (Hoofdcommissaris), Abdul Aziz Latif (Penningmeester / object-hara), Marzuki Yatim (Vice Voorzitter), Turkey Bagindo Marah (voorzitter), and Oemar Marah Alam (Secretaris) had an influence in an attempt to push modern<sup>25</sup> nationalism and modernization of Islam in West Sumatra. As Thaher Marah Sutan Muhammad who founded *Sarikat Usaha*,<sup>26</sup> Abdul Latif also played an active role in helping youth preaching the modernization of Islam in West Sumatra. Abdul Latif became popular and well known among youth since his friendship with Sheikh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi.

Hamka wrote that, after Abdul Latif pilgrimage in 1905, gave financial assistance to Youth. Some activities which he helped in financial fund included the release of *Al-Munir*, assisted finance of Madrasah Adabiah led by Haji Abdullah Ahmad Diniyah School led by Zainuddin Labay el-Yunussi, Normal Islamic School, Muhammadiyah schools, and several mosques in West Sumatra. Not only that, through Kongsu Tiga travel agency, Abdul Latif eliminate the cost of the pilgrimage for scholars of the Islamic modernists.

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<sup>24</sup> Marah Sutan finished his education only up to grade 5 elementary school, but Hatta stated that, 'huge interest to promote youth education, and believes that the only science that scientific and rational to be able to create responsible citizens'. See biography by Mardanas Safwan, 'Taher Marah Sutan: The Forgotten People', Minangkabau Cultural Monthly Magazine (Jakarta), January 1974, p. 52-55. Marah Sutan his education only up to grade 5 elementary school, but in view of Hatta, 'huge interest to promote youth education, and believes that the only science that scientific and rational to be able to create responsible citizens'. See biography by Mardanas Safwan, 'Taher Marah Sutan: The Forgotten People', Minangkabau Cultural Monthly Magazine (Jakarta), January 1974, p. 52-55.

<sup>25</sup>Modern nationalism of the 20th century also from the group of merchants who are members of the association Sarikat Islam (1912), the first party whose members include all the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia). Minangkabau role in trade groups is not confined to efforts to build schools suasta outside the colonial education system, but also supporting Youth movement which became the basis of the movement of nationalist groups. Generally centered in Padang Panjang.

<sup>26</sup>This organization is engaged in various social fields - education, commerce, organizing funeral, construction contractors, publisher of religious magazines and books, and the management of the cinema. The organization also has a four-page tabloid, Sarekat Oesaha, which is published twice a week. Sarikat Enterprises set up branches in other cities in West Sumatra, and businessmen, both being members and non-members. They not only fund commercial activities, but also activities of political parties, religious organizations, all forms of publishing, private schools, and youth organizations. One of the most active merchant Padang is Abdullah Basa Bandaro. Other board members, Sutan Said Ali, was a school teacher and member Sarikat Adabiah Islam. Said Ali later left Sarikat effort and a major driver of the Communist Party. Hatta described it as a 'teacher meek'. Mohammad Hatta, Memoir (Jakarta: Tintamas, 1979), p. 36.



**Figure 4** Board merchant Vereeniging: (seated from left to right): Oemar Marah Alamsyah, Marzuki Yatim, Turki Bagindo Marah, Mr. Sutan Harun al-Rasjid and Abdul Aziz Latif (standing from left to right): H.M Thaib, Buyung Tamin, A. Fatah Sutan Malano, M. Thaib Sutan Mangkuto, A. Karim Yusuf, and Dt. Madjo Kayo.

**Source :** repro of one of H. A. Latif families in Koto Anau.

Not only Hamka wrote about the role of the merchant from western coast of Sumatra, the Ministry of Information also noted the role of merchants, such as Abdul Latif in helping financially to Islamic College, Islamic Religious Teachers Association (PGAI), and orphanages Normal Islam. Abdul Latif efforts to encourage education and modernization of Islam not only done in some areas, but also in Nagari Koto Anau<sup>27</sup>

1. In 1905, Abdul Latif build a *surau* as means of Islamic education in Koto Anau, located behind his parents' house, Sungai Dareh Koto Anau and supported by a teacher named H. Munaf Lantai batu, Tanah Datar.<sup>28</sup>
2. In 1929, he built a women school then developed into Diniyah Madrasah, located on land owned by the Caniago Supanjang tribe. Madrasah burned during the PRRI 1959.
3. Bring modernist scholars, such as Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah, Sheikh Muhammad Djamil Djambek, and Haji Abdullah Ahmad Koto Anau.

<sup>27</sup>Rosma (82 tahun), *Interview*, dated 10 February 2013 at Koto Anau Solok.

<sup>28</sup>Further reading on Zusneli Zubir In thesis “Peranan Madrasah Diniyah Koto Anau dalam Pengembangan Pendidikan Islam di Kabupaten Solok. Fakultas UNAND, 1987



**Figure 5.** Surau Gadang , Koto Anau, Surau Gadang, Koto Anau, built in 1905 AD, restored in 2008

**Source:** Zusneli collection Zubir, February 10, 2013

Some Efforts undertaken by Abdul Latif in Koto Anau definitely accelerate the modernization of Islam, earlier in this village still adopted traditional Islam. Thus, the dynamics that characterized the nationalist movement in Minangkabau not primarily rely on instinct of modernization of narrow bureaucratic elite group of Western-educated, but rather rely on a tangled interests among the religion, education, and merchants in West Sumatra. In any how to prepare the leaders of religion, politicians, education, soldiers and others.<sup>29</sup>

Abdul Latif and the Vereniging merchants in 1930s and before the fall of the Netherlands and Japan, helped some organizations with finance and facilities to support nationalist movements and means of communication between the West Sumatra and Java and the Malay Peninsula. Despite the obstacles from the Dutch, Minangkabau merchants maintained a strong relationship with the world business in the Malay Peninsula, and had a family relationship with the leaders and members of the radical party. This group, too, who contributed in financing the struggle during the revolution from 1945 to 1949.

### **C. Conclusion**

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with dr. Yavis, MS. Aged 1974, dated 29 January 2013. Further reading on MD. Mansoer, 1970. *Sejarah Minangkabau*, hal 168

Abdul Latif is a portrait of a merchant from the Western coast of Sumatra who participated and helped fill out the modern nationalism history and supported the efforts to modernize Islam in West Sumatra. Merchants, such as Abdul Latif incorporated in the Vereeniging merchant is basically a group that upholds the Islamic idealism.

The interests of this association are implemented through a series of relationships that **meutus** network colonial Batavia, West Sumatra, and the Netherlands, but rather through a network of alternative relationship between Sumatra and Singapore, Cairo and Mecca. Reliability mutual relations in the field of religion, commerce, and education to areas outside the colony, not only reflected in the writings of Hamka, stories, popular literature, but also novels published in Medan and *Fort de Koc*

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### **Interviews**

Arizal, aged 65 years, dated 10 Februari 2013 di Koto Anau

B.Andoeska (mak Etek Combo), aged 65 years, dated 17 Februari 2013 in Padang

H. Hanifah, dr. 67 years, dated 19 February 2013 in Padang (Abdul Latief's grand son)

Rosma, aged 82 years, dated 10 February 2013 at Koto Anau

Yavis, MS. dr, aged 74 years, dated 29 January 2013 at Koto Anau.

Zoray aged 75 years, dated 29 Februari 2013 at Koto Anau Kabupaten Solok.

### **Magazine**

*Minangkabau Monthly magazine (jakarta), january 1974.*

### **Photoes Documentation**

Zusneli Zubir Collection

<http://www.kitlv.ac.nl>

Abdul Azis Latief's familie photo collection