



Original Article

Transformation of Batoh from an Agricultural Village into Urban Area in Banda Aceh City 1987-2022

Muhammad Rahmatillah^{1✉}, Alfian³

^{1,2,3}Syiah Kuala University, Banda Aceh, Indonesia, 2025.

Corresponding Author: mrahmatillah2202@gmail.com ✉

Abstract:

The phenomenon of transformation or change of rural areas into urban areas is something that often occurs in Indonesia, where rural areas that were originally quiet away from the hustle and bustle of cities are then drawn into the flow of urbanization or the development of nearby cities so that they then develop into crowded urban areas. The phenomenon of rural to urban transformation also occurred in Aceh Province, precisely in Batoh Village, Lueng Bata District, Banda Aceh City. This research then tries to discuss how Batoh was before the development; the stages of its development until the transformation occurs, as well as the impact caused after the transformation. This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical historical method. Data collection techniques were carried out by means of literature review, documentation and interviews. The results of the study found that Batoh Village has existed since the Aceh Sultanate period and the Dutch colonial period as evidenced by a number of historical evidence in the form of ancient tombs and placemarks on old colonial maps, which is shown Batoh area is still dominated by rice fields, swamps and coconut plantations. The transformation of Batoh then occurred in several stages of development, starting with the construction of the Muhammadiyah University of Aceh (UNMUHA) campus and Serambi Mekkah College (PTSM) in the eastern part of Batoh in the late 1980s to the early 1990s and then reached its peak with the development of Batoh into a new city center after the 2004 tsunami disaster. The physical impact arising from the transformation is the addition of new buildings and infrastructure, while the social impact is the increase in population, the increase in the community's economy and the reduction in social interaction between people in the community.

Keywords: *Transformation, Village, Urban, Batoh*

Introduction

Indonesia has two main types of settlements, namely Villages and Cities. Villages are sparsely populated residential areas and their residents tend to predominantly work in the agricultural sector (agriculture, plantations and so on). While cities or urban areas are more densely populated residential areas and their residents tend to work in trade or services.

Geographically, many villages are part of a suburban area around a city. A city or urban area will naturally continue to grow, expanding into the surrounding suburbs. Because in essence the development of a city is always associated with the countryside. A city itself generally starts from a village which then develops through certain stages and is caused by certain factors (Basundoro, 2016: 1). The phenomenon of change or development of villages into cities occurs not only in Indonesia, but also throughout the world as is currently happening massively in China (Meulder, et.al, 2014: 5). As a result, many rural areas that originally lived peacefully away from the hustle and bustle of the city were suddenly swept away by the current of development around them and then turned into part of a dense urban area, which is termed spatial transformation or rural to urban transformation.

Rural-urban transformation is the change of a rural area into an urban area, both in terms of the physical aspects of its development and the social aspects of its population (Ma, et.al., 2019: 3). In terms of development, there is a change where a rural area that previously had inadequate infrastructure then experiences large-scale development until the area becomes an area with complete infrastructure. In terms of population, there is a change where a rural area that was originally sparsely populated then experiences a large increase in population until the area becomes a densely populated area.

The transformation of rural areas into urban areas also occurred in Aceh Province, precisely in the outskirts of Banda Aceh City. One interesting case is the Batoh area. Batoh is administratively a Gampong (Village) level area located in Lueng Bata District, a district located in the southern or southeastern part of Banda Aceh City. Batoh Village was originally still an area characterized by an agricultural village, with many of its areas still consisting of rice fields, trees and swamps. Many of its residents were also still active in agriculture or animal husbandry at that time. This is interesting because even though Batoh is a village, administratively it has also become part of a city, namely Banda Aceh City, but Batoh at that time still maintained the characteristics of its rural life.

The Batoh area then underwent a transformation process so that it has now become an economic center area in Banda Aceh City (Banda Aceh City Government, 2019: 14). Various types of trade, culinary and service businesses are now available in the Batoh area. The Batoh area has also become a transportation center area because it is the location of the main land transportation terminal in Banda Aceh City, namely the Batoh Bus Terminal which is a center for buses and minibuses to the east coast of Aceh and Medan City, North Sumatra. The existence of these places makes the Batoh area now a busy and dense urban area in Banda Aceh City, where many immigrants from within and outside Aceh choose Batoh as their place of residence in Banda Aceh City.

This then caught the attention of researcher regarding Batoh Village which had undergone a transformation from an agricultural village into a dense urban area that became an economic center. So then this prompted the researcher to raise a study entitled "The Transformation of Batoh from an Agricultural Village to an Urban Area in Banda Aceh City, 1987-2022" in order to answer how the transformation or change in the Batoh area occurred.

Method

This research is a research that uses a descriptive qualitative approach. According to Moleong in Sidiq & Choiri (2019: 4), qualitative research is research that uses a natural

background to understand phenomena about things experienced by research subjects and by means of descriptions in the form of words and language.. The type of research conducted in this study is historical research because the author conducted a study on the transformation process or changes in the Batoh area which was previously an agricultural village then became a dense urban area with trade and service sectors. The historical method is then applied in this study so that it can explain how the initial process of an event occurred accompanied by evidence of the event; the perpetrator or witness of the event and the time of the event. The Historical Method or Historical Method according to Daliman (2012: 27) is a method of research and writing history using systematic methods, procedures or techniques in accordance with the principles and rules of historical science. According to Kuntowijoyo (1995: 70-82) the historical method consists of 5 steps, namely topic selection, heuristics, verification/criticism of sources, interpretation and finally historiography.

Topic selection is the initial process where researchers determine the research topic to be studied. After choosing a topic, researchers then carry out a heuristic process, namely collecting sources that are relevant to the research being conducted. The next stage is source verification or criticism, namely re-examining the sources that have been obtained to determine the authenticity and truth of the contents of the source. Furthermore, researchers carry out interpretation, namely interpreting the information obtained from verified sources into a collection of historical facts. The final stage is historiography where historical facts that have been obtained through previous processes are then written down to become a work of historical research writing.

1. Location and Time of Research

When conducting a study, it is important to determine the location and time of the study so that the study runs neatly, orderly and directed. The location of the study is in Gampong Batoh and also to government agencies such as Bappeda Kota Banda Aceh so that the required data can be obtained. The time of the study was carried out since the researcher conducted observations in September 2023 to August 7, 2024.

2. Data source

As a historical research, this research uses two types of data, namely primary data and secondary data.

a. Primary Data

According to Bungin in Rahmadi (2011: 71), primary data is data that is directly obtained from the first data source at the research location or research object. Primary data sources consist of 2 (two) types of sources, namely written data in the form of writing or authentic evidence that documents the historical events being studied, and oral data in the form of data obtained through oral communication in the form of interviews and direct dialogue with sources in order to obtain information. In this study, the primary data used were in the form of interviews with the locals of Batoh, and documents discussing the development of Batoh, mainly from government agencies including Batoh Village Government; document from the World Bank discussing the construction of highways in Batoh; and old maps from colonial era from Leiden University Digital Archives and other sources.

b. Secondary Data

According to Herlina (2020: 26), secondary sources are sources whose authors only hear the event from other people, where the information is then processed first. Meanwhile, according to Bungin in Rahmadi (2011: 71) secondary data is data obtained from a second data source or secondary data source, namely a source that did not witness the historical event directly but knew about it from the first source or primary source. This comprises some journals and books related to the topic that is being researched.

Results

Condition of Batoh Before Undergoing Transformation from an Agricultural Village to an Urban Area

The condition of the Batoh area before undergoing transformation into an urban area can be divided into two periods, namely:

1. Early Batoh Period to Independence Period

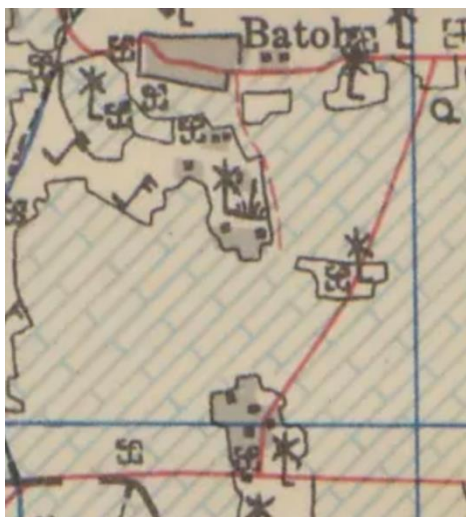
Based on the generational story believed by the local people of Gampong Batoh, the Gampong Batoh area is believed to have been inhabited since the time of the Aceh Darussalam Sultanate, although it still had a very small population. At that time the Batoh area was said to be a kind of inspection place for goods to be brought to the city center, namely Banda Aceh as the capital of the sultanate at that time, where the carriers of the goods were raided by the sultanate's officers and asked to hand over their goods for inspection, which in Acehnese uses the sentence "Peukaba? Toh!", which means "What are you bringing? Bring it here!". This sentence then became the origin of the name Batoh. Historically, this can also be proven by the existence of ancient graves from the Aceh Sultanate era in Gampong Batoh.

Meanwhile, the earliest evidence of Batoh's existence as a residential area/village is on a map of Kutaraja (Banda Aceh) in 1891 during the Dutch colonial period. where the map has listed the name Batoh (spelled as "Batoek") for the area around the current Dusun (Hamlet/Sub-village) of Batoh Jaya in the western part of Batoh Village. The map also shows that Batoh is still dominated by rice fields, swamps and coconut trees, only a few areas are residential areas.



Picture 1. Batoh in an 1891 Dutch Colonial era map
(Source: Leiden University Digital Archive)

Until the Japanese occupation and independence, the geographical condition of Batoh was still the same as during the Dutch colonial period. In a map of the Kutaraja (Banda Aceh) area released in 1944 during World War II for the needs of the Allies, it shows that the Batoh area is still dominated by rice fields and coconut trees, but when compared to the map of the Dutch colonial period, it can be seen that the residential area in Batoh has been slightly wider than before.



Picture 2. Map of the Batoh area in 1944 during World War II
(Source: Oldmapsonline.org)

2. Post-Independence Batoh to Transformation

In the decades after independence, Batoh experienced development on a slow scale. Gampong Batoh began to recognize a structured government system during the leadership of Keuchik Insya from 1952 to 1958. A modern government system was then officially implemented during the leadership of Keuchik Basyah from 1958 to 1966. The implementation of a modern government system in this case was marked by the formation of “formal” government positions such as Keuchik (village head), Secretary and Youth Chairperson.

Before the expansion of the administrative area of Banda Aceh City in 1983, Gampong Batoh was still part of Mesjid Raya District, Aceh Besar Regency. At that time, Mesjid Raya District was still a large sub-district in the eastern part of Aceh Besar Regency, starting from the Lueng Bata area (including Batoh) to Teluk Krueng Raya. The Batoh area was still dominated by rice fields, coconut plantations and swamps. The residential area in Gampong Batoh at that time was divided into 3 (three) groups of houses separated by rice fields and coconut plantations, not geographically connected to each other, namely Batoh (the core area of Gampong Batoh which became the forerunner of Dusun Batoh Jaya), Lampuuk (which became the forerunner of Dusun Lampuuk Jaya), and Lamreh (which became the forerunner of Dusun Suka Jaya). Although geographically separated, these three groups of houses were led by the same Keuchik (village head).

The houses of the residents in Batoh at that time were also still simple, generally

made of wood and the majority were in the form of stilt houses. The village roads in Batoh at that time were still in the form of rocky dirt roads without asphalt pavement, plus alleys through the gaps between houses and trees, as well as rice field embankments.

The Process of Batoh's Transformation from an Agricultural Village to an Urban Area

1. Period 1987-1994: Campus Development in the Eastern Part of Batoh

The beginning of the transformation of Gampong Batoh, which was originally a backward agricultural village, into a developing urban area, was the construction of two large neighboring private university complexes in the eastern part of Gampong Batoh, namely the Muhammadiyah University of Aceh (UNMUHA) and the University of Serambi Mekkah (USM) which was originally called Perguruan Tinggi Serambi Mekkah (PTSM) around 1987 and 1989. The construction of the two campuses in Batoh occurred in a close period. Initially, the construction of the two campuses was not planned in Batoh, but in another area. However, due to land limitations at the initial planned location, the two campuses then found large and cheap rice fields in the eastern part of Gampong Batoh. The construction of the campus was then started by UNMUHA in 1987 and followed by PTSM which bought land not far from the UNMUHA development land not long after.

The construction of the two campuses in the eastern part of Gampong Batoh then pioneered the development of development in the area. The road to the campus, which was originally just a rice field embankment road, was then widened and repaired so that it could be passed by cars. Throughout the early 1990s, many new residents began to be interested in the economic opportunities in the area so that they then bought rice fields and swamps around the campus to then build various kinds of businesses such as stalls, photocopying businesses, boarding houses and so on.

2. Period 1995-2001: Land Development in the West Part of Batoh

Entering the mid-1990s, along with the development of the eastern part of Gampong Batoh due to the activities of the two campuses, another event occurred in the western part of Batoh which is a large rice field area, around Dusun Lampuuk or which is currently divided into Dusun Lampuuk Jaya and Dusun Harapan Jaya. The rice fields in the area became no longer productive for planting rice due to changes in soil conditions so that they later became abandoned empty land. The Banda Aceh City Government together with the Batoh Village then arranged the former rice field land into an area prepared as future housing for residents, through a program called Land Consolidation (LC) funded by aid from Japan.

According to Candrakirana, et.al. (2014), Land Consolidation (LC) is a policy in the field of land in the form of reorganizing land ownership for development purposes by involving active community participation. In the LC program, landowners only need to provide 15 percent (%) of the value of their land, called Land Contribution for Development (Sumbangan Tanah Untuk Pembangunan, STUP) for road construction as

well as adjusting the differences in the area of each land before the arrangement. Meanwhile, the remaining 85% of the land that has been neatly arranged will be returned to the landowners, complete with land certificates, where each old landowner will receive a new plot of land with the same area, even though before the LC they had land with different areas.

However, until the 2000s, only a few residents built houses in the former rice field areas in the western part of Batoh Village, so that many of the empty lands were then reused by Batoh residents to plant secondary crops such as chilies, and to build livestock pens.

3. 2002-2009 Period: Construction of Highways, Terminals and Development of Batoh as a New City Center

In 2002, the Banda Aceh City Government under the leadership of Mayor Drs. Zulkarnain began planning the construction of a new highway connecting the Simpang Surabaya area in Banda Aceh City with the Lampeuneurut area in Aceh Besar Regency, as part of the main road project connecting the northern and southern parts of Banda Aceh City. The plan to build this road crossed Batoh Village right in the middle so that many Batoh residents' lands were affected and some Batoh residents' houses needed to be evicted. The process of land compensation for residents by the Banda Aceh City Government together with the Batoh Village Government under the leadership of Keuchik Drs. Hasbi and then by Keuchik Fachruddin took place around 2003 to 2004, with road construction starting in the second semester of 2004. The compensation offered by the government was generally acceptable to residents, but the land acquisition and road construction process was then hampered by the existence of disputed land so that the land dispute had to be resolved.

The earthquake and tsunami disaster on December 26, 2004 in Banda Aceh City did not have a direct impact on the Batoh area. However, the disaster changed the development paradigm of Banda Aceh City so that the outskirts of Banda Aceh City such as Batoh which was not affected by the tsunami then became a strategic area. The Banda Aceh City Government then designated the Batoh area as the new city center plan area of Banda Aceh City through the 2006 Banda Aceh City Spatial and Regional Planning (RTRW) Revision Report. The construction of the highway which was initially hampered then became smooth again where the road project received international assistance of US\$ 1.3 million through the Multi-Donor Fund (MDF) managed by the World Bank (World Bank, 2010). The road project is known as the New Town Access Road. The road project was completed in 2009 and inaugurated on March 31, 2009 by the then Indonesian Vice President Jusuf Kalla and was named Jalan Mr. Mohammad Hasan, after a national hero from Aceh who established the PTSM.

At the same time, the government also moved the Banda Aceh City bus terminal which was originally located in Seutui, Baiturrahman District to a new location on the edge of the Batoh highway project. Construction began in 2007, and was then inaugurated by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) on February 23, 2009.

4. 2010-2016 Period: Rapid Development of Batoh After Road and Terminal Construction

During this period, the Batoh area experienced massive development. The massive development in the Batoh area then made Batoh fulfill its function as a new city center for Banda Aceh City. Various new infrastructures such as a gas station, some car dealerships, restaurants and coffee shops, shophouses, and new homes were built in

Batoh, mostly around the new road during this period. During this period, Batoh also built a large new mosque, where the construction of the mosque began in 2011 and began to function in 2013 although it was not fully completed, then officially inaugurated on May 20, 2016 by the Governor of Aceh at that time, Dr. Zaini Abdullah.

5. Period 2017-2022: Further Development of Batoh Development and Current Agricultural Land Conditions in Batoh Village

After rapid development in the previous period until 2016, the level of development in Batoh in the period 2017 until now has begun to decline, along with the reduction of empty land in Batoh due to rapid development in the previous period, accompanied by an increase in land prices in Batoh which have begun to touch millions of rupiah per square meter (m²). During this period, developments that occurred in Batoh included the construction of the UNMUHA Convention Center (UCC) Ahmad Dahlan building owned by UNMUHA, as well as various culinary businesses and new houses in the western part of Batoh.

Rapid development over the past dozen years has not completely erased the traces of Batoh as a farming village. If looking further into Gampong Batoh, there is still a lot of evidence that Batoh was originally a farming village. There are a number of street or alley names in Gampong Batoh that indicate that the area was originally an agricultural area such as Jalan Sawah Besar ("vast/large rice fields" in Indonesian), Jalan Cot Bak U ("high ground where coconut trees grow" in Acehnese) and Jalan Umong Paya ("swampy rice fields" in Acehnese). In addition, there are still some empty lands, swamps and a number of remaining rice fields.

Currently in the Gampong Batoh area, there are only a few plots of rice fields that are still actively managed. Among them are three plots of rice fields located side by side right behind the UNMUHA campus complex and also not far from behind the USM campus complex. The rice fields are managed by an elderly woman, a native of Batoh named Siti Aman, who is 70 years old, and her family. The location of the rice fields in the city means they have to manage the rice fields with various efforts, such as pumping water using a machine and a long hose from a swamp hundreds of meters away to irrigate the rice fields, and bringing in agricultural equipment from Montasik, Aceh Besar Regency, which is dozens of kilometers from Batoh.



One of the last

Picture 3. rice fields in Batoh
(Source: Personal Documentation)

The Impact of the Transformation of Batoh from an Agricultural Village to an Urban Area

The transformation of the Batoh Village area from what was originally an agricultural village to an urban area has caused a number of impacts, both physically and socially.

1. Physical Impact of Batoh Transformation from Agricultural Village to Urban Area

The most visible impact of Batoh's transformation into an urban area is the increasing number of new buildings in Batoh, mainly residential houses. The development of the number of houses in Batoh can be seen in the following table in the next page:

Table 1. Number of Houses by Type in Gampong Batoh between 2006 and 2010

No.	Type House	Number of Houses in 2006 (Units)	Number of Houses in 2010 (Unit)
1	Permanent Home	491	3500
2	Semi Permanent House	110	550
3	Wooden/Bamboo House	102	50
	Amount	703	4100

Source: Central Statistics Agency (BPS).

From the table, it can be seen that the number of houses in Batoh has increased significantly from 703 units to 4100 units, in just 4 years.

2. Social Impact The Transformation of Batoh from an Agricultural Village to an Urban Area

In the social field, especially in terms of demographics, the change of Batoh into an urban area also has an impact in the form of increasing population in Batoh. The development of the population can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Population Development in Batoh 1990-2022

No.	Year	Population (People)
1	1990	1536
2	2002	3600
3	2007	4204
4	2012	5773
5	2017	5883
6	2022	5862

Source: Central Statistics Agency (BPS) & Batoh Village Data.

From the table it can be seen that in the 5 year period between 2007 and 2012, namely the period of rapid development of Batoh, there was a drastic increase in the population of Batoh from 4204 people to 5773 people, an increase of 1569 people.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research, the conclusions based on the results of this study are as follows: First, Gampong or Batoh Village has existed for a long time, proven by the inclusion of the name Batoh on a number of maps from the Dutch colonial era. This information then became something important in the historical study of Gampong Batoh because it can be stated that Batoh is one of the old gampongs or villages in Banda Aceh that has existed since the colonial era. Second, that before the transformation or change of appearance into a dense urban area as it is today, Gampong Batoh was an agricultural village with agricultural characteristics. This is indicated by the vast area of rice fields in Batoh before the transformation as evidenced by the ancient maps of Batoh. Third, the process of transformation or change of Gampong Batoh from an agricultural village to an urban area, although it occurred quickly, did not occur spontaneously, but rather went through several previous stages of development that pioneered the transformation. Fourth, the transformation of Batoh from an agricultural village to an urban area has not completely eliminated Batoh's old characteristics as an agricultural area, as evidenced by the existence of a number of empty lands and swamps, as well as the existence of 3 plots of rice fields that are still actively being worked in the Gampong Batoh area.

Suggestion

Based on the research results and discussions that the researcher has outlined previously, the suggestions for this research are as follows: For government agencies, researchers hope that in the future, government agencies can have better bureaucratic governance to facilitate further research in the future. For the government of each village in Banda Aceh City or other areas that do not yet have a book or document that summarizes the records of developments in the village from year to year, whether in the form of a list of development, population and so on, so that they can make one because this will help facilitate studies on the history of the village in the future. For further researchers who research themes related to this research, especially those related to the history of the development of Gampong Batoh, in order to perfect all the shortcomings of this research and to be able to produce better research work in the future in order to realize a chronological work on the history of Gampong Batoh from year to year.

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