

## **The Role of Mosques in the Religious Development of the Serawai Tribe in South Bengkulu: Cultural Da'wah Approach**

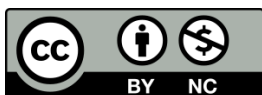
**Indah Masruroh**

State Islamic University (UIN) Fatmawati Sukarno, Bengkulu, Indonesia  
[indahmasruroh@gmail.com](mailto:indahmasruroh@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

*This study examines mosques' role in religious development among the Serawai ethnic group in South Bengkulu through a cultural da'wah approach. The scope includes religious activities, integration of Islamic values with local customs, and community responses to culturally accommodating da'wah programs. The method employed is a qualitative ethnographic design involving participatory observation, in-depth interviews with religious and traditional leaders, and document analysis related to mosque activities. Findings reveal that mosques function as centers for religious education as well as agents of socio-cultural transformation, successfully integrating Islamic values with Serawai traditions harmoniously. The cultural da'wah approach uses traditional arts and local language to enhance youth engagement in religious activities. The main conclusion states that successful religious development among the Serawai depends heavily on the mosque's ability to adapt its da'wah methods to local cultural contexts without compromising Islamic principles.*

**Keywords:** Mosque, Cultural Da'wah, Serawai Tribe, Religious Development, Customs And Religion, South Bengkulu.



## A. Introduction

Mosques in Indonesia play a significant role in the religious development of the Muslim community, which goes far beyond its function as a place of worship. In addition to functioning as a place of prayer, mosques are also recognized by the community as a center for religious and socio-cultural education. Highlighting how mosques function as social institutions that integrate Islamic teachings with local wisdom, thereby helping to strengthen the identity of diverse communities.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the study of Kahar et al. argues that mosques also play an effective role as an effective medium for cultural da'wah, especially in the context of indigenous peoples.<sup>2</sup> Their research emphasizes the importance of mosques in cultural contexts, given that many local traditions can be strengthened through activities in mosques, such as teaching and intercultural dialogue.<sup>3</sup>

Optimal mosque management ensures that mosques function as effective learning centers. Khotimah and Khairunnisa stated that many mosques are poorly managed in an organized manner, which impacts the quality of activities offered. They argue that the revitalization of mosque governance will provide many benefits for the local community and the effectiveness of the religious programs implemented.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it is important to take a managerial approach based on

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<sup>1</sup> Rizqi R. Fahrezi et al., 'The Great Mosque of Jamik Sumenep: History, Role, and Preservation as Cultural Heritage,' *Synectics of the Architecture Journal*, 2024, 95–103, <https://doi.org/10.23917/sinektika.v21i1.2878>.

<sup>2</sup> Abd Kahar, 'The Tradition of Reciting Ya>Si>N and Tahlil for the Dead: An Analytical Study of Qs. Al-Hasr:10 and Qs. Muhammad: 19 The Perspective of M. Quraish Shihab in Tafsir Al-Misbah', *El-Furqania Journal of Ushuluddin and Islamic Sciences* 6, no. 02 (2020): 186–213, <https://doi.org/10.54625/elfurqania.v6i02.4002>.

<sup>3</sup> Woelandari Fathonah et al., 'Assistance in the Design and Renovation of the Nurul Iman Mosque in Kasemen Village, Serang City', *Journal of Community Service and Empowerment* 5, no. 1 (2023): 48–52, <https://doi.org/10.47080/abdikarya.v5i1.2458>.

<sup>4</sup> RIDWAN T. IDRIS, Jawondo I. Abdulganiyu, and Jimba A. Ishola, 'Role of Sheikh Okutagidi Towards the Spread of Islam in Ilorin Emirate, North-Central Nigeria (1931-2016)', *International Journal of Islamic Educational Psychology* 3, no. 1 (2022): 78–89, <https://doi.org/10.18196/ijiep.v3i1.14396>.

community needs and active discussions in the mosque environment, involving various elements of society to produce better synergy.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, the important role of mosques in maintaining social harmony in a pluralistic society cannot be ignored. Kahar research results show that the role of mosque imams as key figures in building peace and harmony in the community must be strengthened.<sup>6</sup> Through community-based and educational programs held in mosques, the values of tolerance and mutual respect between groups can be strengthened, which in turn supports the creation of a harmonious social order. Thus, it is important to understand the role of mosques in the context of cultural-based religious development. This is in terms of preserving traditions and creating spaces where religion and local wisdom can synergize to build a more inclusive and harmonious society.<sup>7</sup> Harmony between religion and local culture is the key to achieving the sustainability of Muslim communities in Indonesia, while maintaining identity and social integrity in existing diversity.<sup>8</sup>

The Serawai tribe is an ethnic group with rich traditional traditions and unique interactions with Islamic teachings. In the face of socio-cultural dynamics and modernization challenges, the Serawai community needs to develop an adaptive da'wah approach, ensuring that religious values can be maintained without adopting cultural aspects contrary to the Sharia. Data from BPS South Bengkulu shows that most people still maintain their traditional rituals while participating in religious activities in mosques, making it crucial to synergize between the two.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Kresnawidiansyah Agustian, 'Comparative Analysis of Ethical and Legal Principles in the Islamic Business Management Model', *Journal of Contemporary Administration and Management (Adman)* 1, no. 2 (2023): 101–7, <https://doi.org/10.61100/adman.v1i2.52>.

<sup>6</sup> Kahar, 'Tradisi Membaca Ya>Si>N Dan Tahlil Untuk Orang Meninggal: Studi Analisis Qs. Al-Hasr:10 Dan Qs. Muhammad: 19 Perspektif M. Quraish Shihab Dalam Tafsir Al-Misbah'.

<sup>7</sup> Fathonah et al., 'Pendampingan Pembuatan Desain Dan Rab Renovasi Masjid Nurul Iman Di Desa Kasemen Kota Serang'.

<sup>8</sup> Adiwan F. Aritenang et al., 'Assessing Participatory Practices in a Cultural Preservation Workshop of the Sriwijaya Museum', *Journal of Regional and City Planning* 32, no. 2 (2021): 165–78, <https://doi.org/10.5614/jpwk.2021.32.2.5>.

<sup>9</sup> A. Nurkidam and Mahyudin, 'Ada' Mappurondo Taboo: Ecological Wisdom of the Mamasa Community in Maintaining Natural Preservation', *Kuriositas Media Komunikasi Sosial Dan Keagamaan* 16, no. 2 (2023): 153–67, <https://doi.org/10.35905/kur.v16i2.7087>.

Friday sermons serve as a method of public education, where moral values are conveyed directly.

The approach of cultural da'wah among indigenous peoples, such as the Serawai Tribe, is important because it can integrate religious values with local cultural symbols.<sup>10</sup> This has been shown to be effective in enabling people to receive religious messages more contextually. Research shows that collaboration between customary institutions and religious institutions in regulating the harmony between tradition and modernity results in a more harmonious model of religious development.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, mosques as religious institutions function as places of worship and as centers of relevant social activities in the context of society Uya et al., 2024; Mosques can support cultural preservation programs and become spaces where dialogue between Islamic traditions and teachings occurs. Activities in mosques that involve local communities, such as recitation or youth training, strengthen social cohesion and educate the community about values that follow Islam's teachings.<sup>12</sup>

Further analysis of the strategic role of mosques involves management based on collaboration between religious leaders and traditional leaders, which is expected to strengthen diversity in religious practices in the Serawai Tribe. Research conducted by Kahar emphasizes how mosque management authorities can facilitate social dialogue in managing conflicts that may arise between village heads and communities.<sup>13</sup> An approach that considers the role of mosques as socio-

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<sup>10</sup> Fathonah et al., 'Pendampingan Pembuatan Desain Dan Rab Renovasi Masjid Nurul Iman Di Desa Kasemen Kota Serang'.

<sup>11</sup> Kahar, 'Tradisi Membaca Ya>Si>N Dan Tahlil Untuk Orang Meninggal: Studi Analisis Qs. Al-Hasr:10 Dan Qs. Muhammad: 19 Perspektif M. Quraish Shihab Dalam Tafsir Al-Misbah'.

<sup>12</sup> Isan, Ibnu A. Rosyidin, and Nanang Nuryanta, 'Peran Masjid Sekitar Kampus Sebagai Upaya Mensinergikan Antara Masyarakat Dengan Lingkungan Pendidikan: Studi Kasus Di Masjid Al Mukmin Plosorejo', *At-Thullab Jurnal Mahasiswa Studi Islam* 6, no. 2 (2024): 1664–71, <https://doi.org/10.20885/tullab.vol6.iss2.art3>.

<sup>13</sup> Suyatno Kahar, Wahyuni Bailussy, and Syaiful Bahry, 'Konstruksi Sosial Masyarakat Desa Terhadap Peran Imam Masjid Dalam Melakukan Rekonsiliasi Konflik Sosial Antara Kepala Desa Dan Masyarakat Di Desa Tabalema (Studi Kasus Di Desa Tabalema Kabupaten Halmahera Selatan Propinsi Maluku Utara', *Aristo* 8, no. 2 (2020): 369, <https://doi.org/10.24269/ars.v8i2.2157>.

cultural centers and a means of dialogue between modernity and tradition is essential to strengthen the identity of the Serawai Tribe in this era of globalization.<sup>14</sup> Thus, further studies on the interaction between Sharia and customs, as well as the role of education carried out by mosques, will provide in-depth insights into how da'wah can be applied effectively in tradition-rich societies such as the Serawai Tribe.<sup>15</sup>

The cultural da'wah approach has been widely researched as an effective strategy for grounding Islamic teachings in indigenous communities, especially in the context of the Serawai Tribe. Through cultural da'wah, religious messages can be conveyed by utilizing local cultural symbols, allowing people to accept them more easily.<sup>16</sup> Abdullah emphasizes the importance of culture-based da'wah theory, which shows how religious communication can adapt Islamic values to the local cultural context.<sup>17</sup> In this regard, Mulia also warns about the risk of syncretism that may arise without guidance from competent scholars, thus reminding us that synergy between traditions and religious teachings is essential.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Muhammad Azhari et al., 'Optimalisasi Peran Dosen Melalui Khutbah Jum'at Sebagai Metode Dalam Mendidik Masyarakat', *Meuseuraya - Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 2023, 84–95, <https://doi.org/10.47498/meuseuraya.v2i2.2250>.

<sup>15</sup> Sarwan Uya, Yetty F. Ulfah, and Sukari Sukari, 'Peran Manajemen Masjid Dalam Optimalisasi Fungsi Masjid Sebagai Pusat Ibadah (Studi Kasus Pada Manajemen Masjid Sholihin, Tangkil, Manang, Grogol, Sukoharjo)', *Al Qalam Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 18, no. 3 (2024): 2247, <https://doi.org/10.35931/aq.v18i3.3493>.

<sup>16</sup> Husna Izzati, Andiyan Andiyan, and Irfan Aldyanto, 'Akulturasi Lintas Budaya Islam, Barat, Dan Nusantara Di Masjid Cipaganti Bandung', *Al-Adabiya Jurnal Kebudayaan Dan Keagamaan* 16, no. 2 (2021): 111–24, <https://doi.org/10.37680/adabiya.v16i2.842>.

<sup>17</sup> Asep Saefullah, Arif Syibromalisi, and Dede Burhanudin, 'Model Pelestarian Warisan Budaya, Konservasi Lingkungan, Dan Pemajuan Kebudayaan: Studi Atas Situs Taman Purbakala Cipari Kuningan', *J.of Religious Policy* 2, no. 2 (2023): 383–416, <https://doi.org/10.31330/repo.v2i2.35>.

<sup>18</sup> Supriandi Supriandi, Yana Priyana, and Achmad H. M. 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>.

Research by Saputra conducted an in-depth ethnographic study of the integration of earth alms rituals with Islamic prayers,<sup>19</sup> providing a concrete framework to understand the collaboration between traditional practices and Islamic religious rituals in society.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, Al-Qurtuby provides an inspiring example of the use of traditional arts in da'wah, showing how cultural elements can effectively disseminate Islamic teachings.<sup>21</sup> Research from BPS South Bengkulu proves the low level of mosque-based cultural preservation programs in a structured manner, demanding the need for strategic measures to increase connections between religious institutions and local culture in da'wah efforts.<sup>22</sup> Related literature shows that religious institutions, such as mosques, are increasingly important in preserving local culture as awareness of acculturation of universal and local values increases. The results of research show that collaboration between scholars and traditional leaders is able to produce an inclusive religious development model.<sup>23</sup> Research also supports the idea that strengthening identity and spiritual education can be carried out through mosques as a strategic vehicle, which is integrated into the community's cultural activities.<sup>24</sup> The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia reported on the increase in the "Culturally Friendly Mosque" program in various regions, including South Bengkulu, which in this context opens up opportunities for further research on the

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<sup>19</sup> Joni A. Saputra et al., 'The Foundation of Islam, the Spirit of Pancasila to Shape the Character of the 2045 Golden Generation: A Literature Review', *International Journal of Current Science Research and Review* 04, no. 12 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijcsrr/v4-i12-08>.

<sup>20</sup> Ardiyansah Ardiyansah and Uchaimid B. Robby, 'Partisipasi Publik Berbasis Nilai Budaya Masyarakat Adat Baduy: Upaya Pelestarian Lingkungan', *Reformasi* 13, no. 2 (2023): 261–73, <https://doi.org/10.33366/rfr.v13i2.4950>.

<sup>21</sup> Izzati, Andiyan, and Aldyanto, 'Akulturasi Lintas Budaya Islam, Barat, Dan Nusantara Di Masjid Cipaganti Bandung'.

<sup>22</sup> Isan, Rosyidin, and Nuryanta, 'Peran Masjid Sekitar Kampus Sebagai Upaya Mensinergikan Antara Masyarakat Dengan Lingkungan Pendidikan: Studi Kasus Di Masjid Al Mukmin Plosorejo'.

<sup>23</sup> Isan, Rosyidin, and Nuryanta.

<sup>24</sup> Adisti Y. Widiatami, 'Akulturasi Budaya Dalam Makna Dan Fungsi Di Masjid Agung Sumenep', 2017, A095-A102, <https://doi.org/10.32315/sem.1.a095>.

effectiveness of these models, especially for the Serawai Tribe in formulating optimal coaching strategies.<sup>25</sup>

In conclusion, a holistic approach involving religious and traditional leaders in cultural da'wah is critical to receiving and understanding Islamic messages without losing cultural roots.<sup>26</sup> Thus, developing appropriate models will strengthen the social cohesion and identity of the Serawai people, thereby creating harmony between religious values and local traditions.

The theory of Cultural Hegemony developed by Antonio Gramsci can be used to understand the dynamics of symbolic power between local traditions and modernization, especially in religious institutions such as mosques. The mosque functions not only as a place of worship but also as an arena where ideological discourse battles occur and where the negotiation of meaning between old and new norms occurs. Within this framework, Gramsci explained that dominant groups often maintain hegemony through control over social institutions, including places of worship. The concept of Islam Nusantara became a theoretical foundation in the acculturation between Islam and local culture in Indonesia, especially in the southern part of Sumatra. This approach prioritizes sharia maqashid and, at the same time, respects local noble traditions, resulting in contextual and authentic Islamic practices. Research by Anwar highlights applying the concept of Islam Nusantara as a strategy to strengthen the solidarity of the ummah through a cultural approach based on the Indonesian context. In addition, research by Bahar and Harnadi and the results of discourses from the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia emphasized the importance of collaboration between scholars and traditional leaders in creating a religious development model that is inclusive and responsive to the local context.

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<sup>25</sup> Fahrezi et al., 'Masjid Agung Jamik Sumenep: Sejarah, Peran Dan Pelestariannya Sebagai Warisan Budaya'.

<sup>26</sup> Saefullah, Syibromalisi, and Burhanudin, 'Model Pelestarian Warisan Budaya, Konservasi Lingkungan, Dan Pemajuan Kebudayaan: Studi Atas Situs Taman Purbakala Cipari Kuningan'.

Applying this theoretical framework is very helpful in bridging the reinterpretation of religious practices so that they remain relevant without losing the essence of Sharia and ancestral heritage. The study results show that the involvement of mosques as a center for education and cultural preservation is significant to maintaining diversity and social integration in society, which is usually threatened by modernization. Thus, this approach opens up opportunities for further research to explore the effectiveness of coaching models applied in the local context and encourage the strengthening of cultural identity within the framework of Islam of the archipelago. Recent research shows an interesting innovation in the "Customary-Friendly Mosques" movement, which aims to integrate traditional Indigenous peoples' leadership structures, such as link mamak, with mosque management (taker).<sup>27</sup> This movement has not been comprehensively studied, especially regarding its impact on socio-religious cohesion among ethnic minorities. Despite the potential conflict of interest, collaboration between religious and traditional leaders can strengthen harmony and encourage synergy in local religious and cultural practices.<sup>28</sup>

Field documentation conducted between 2023 and 2025 shows that there is progress in active collaboration between local imams and traditional leaders to draft joint fatwas related to the ritual of melanin, as well as initiatives for the digitization of the ancient Arabic Bare manuscript that is the intellectual heritage of the Serawai people. This initiative aims to preserve culture and provide new media to disseminate cultural-based religious knowledge. This is important because the younger generation can more easily access classical sources through information technology.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Inna '. Muthi'ah et al., 'Tantangan Berhijab Di Negara Minoritas Muslim Dalam Resolusi Konflik', *Jew* 2, no. 1 (2024): 125–35, <https://doi.org/10.61693/elwasathy.vol21.2024.125-135>.

<sup>28</sup> Muhammad N. Faiz and Juwika Afrita, 'Kajian Literatur Terhadap Tantangan Dan Prospek Fikih Minoritas Di Kalangan Muslim Barat', *Lentera: Multidisciplinary Studies* 2, no. 3 (2024): 349–62, <https://doi.org/10.57096/lentera.v2i3.105>.

<sup>29</sup> Malika Salsabila et al., 'Kohesi Sosial Antar Jamaah Masjid Hidayatul Islam Di Desa Margamukti', *Arus Jurnal Sosial Dan Humaniora* 4, no. 3 (2024): 1880–88, <https://doi.org/10.57250/ajsh.v4i3.789>.



The importance of digitizing ancient manuscripts in the Javanese-Arabic Gundul script lies in its ability to maintain the continuity of ancestral heritage while introducing cultural context in the digital era. A report from the South Bengkulu regional library archives in 2024 noted a significant increase in the use of digital applications for the yellow book by village youth, which shows that information technology plays an important role in the development of contemporary culturally-based da'wah methods (Senda, 2023; Syubli & Saragih, 2024).<sup>30</sup> Thus, the study of the influence of the "Customary Friendly Mosque" movement on socio-religious cohesion and integration of cultural identity in the Serawai Tribe has become a very relevant and useful research topic to build a more inclusive framework for other minority groups facing similar challenges in Indonesia. This research aims first to identify the mechanism of religious development through routine and incidental activities in the Serawai tribal mosques using the cultural da'wah approach. Second, it analyzes residents' responses to integrating traditional symbols into daily Islamic practices, and third, it formulates the synergy model of the South Bengkulu version of "Adat Basandi Syarak" to be replicated by other communities to strengthen socio-religious cohesion.

This study uses a qualitative approach with ethnographic design to reveal the role of mosques in the religious development of the Serawai Tribe holistically. The research location is focused on five mosques in South Bengkulu, especially in the Manna, Pino, and Seginim districts, that actively integrate da'wah with Serawai culture. The research subjects were selected by purposive sampling and consisted of five mosque imams, three ninik mamak (traditional elders), four youth leaders, and three women administrators of the Taklim assembly. The data collection technique was carried out through participatory observation for three months with direct involvement in the ritual of sko feasting and recitation to record symbolic interactions in the mosque environment. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted using structured guidelines that included perceptions of custom-religious

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<sup>30</sup> Syubli and Selvan P. Saragih, 'Analisis Interaksi Sosial Antara Siswa Muslim Dan Non Muslim Terhadap Sikap Toleransi Di SDN 79 Kota Bengkulu', *El-Ta'dib* 4, no. 1 (2024): 41–50, <https://doi.org/10.36085/eltadib.v4i1.6967>.

integration, changes in the role of mosques after the reform, and the resistance of the younger generation to conventional da'wah. Document analysis was also used to study local yellow book manuscripts such as Syair Serawai with Jawi Writing and archives of mosque activities from 2015 to 2025.

The data was analyzed using the Spradley model through the domain analysis stage for the categorization of raw data such as the theme of social function versus the sacred function of the mosque; taxonomic analysis to map inter-category relationships using NVivo 14 software; and component analysis to identify dominant cultural patterns through an adaptive SWOT matrix. The credibility of the research results is maintained through triangulation of data sources between interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis; member checks with key informants; Trail audit in the form of complete documentation of the research process, including a logbook of field reflections; and persistent observation, namely the presence of researchers at least twice a week to minimize the Hawthorne effect. Methodological limitations in this study include limited generalizations of findings due to the nature of the case study of a particular locality, potential for language bias in the translation of Serawai customary terms into Indonesian, and dependence on the willingness of informants to discuss sensitive issues such as conflicts between the Customary Council and the Ulema Council. A detailed protocol regarding research procedures can be seen in Appendix A as a reference for the transparency of the implementation of this research.

## **B. The Role of Mosques in the Religious Development of the Serawai Tribe in South Bengkulu through a Cultural Da'wah Approach**

The mosque is not only a formal place of worship but also serves as an agent of socio-cultural transformation for the Serawai people. Documentation data for activities in 2023–2024 shows a "Customary Friendly Mosque" program involving mosque teenagers in a kasidah competition in the Serawai language and a calligraphy exhibition of besurek motifs typical of South Bengkulu. In-depth interviews with local youth leaders revealed that the involvement of the young

generation increased significantly after local culture-based programs were integrated into da'wah activities (Youth Leader Interview, March 18, 2025). In addition, field records note collaboration between mosque takers and customary councils to prepare a joint fatwa related to implementing the melange ritual so that it remains by Sharia but does not eliminate the community's cultural identity.

Although integrative efforts have been carried out intensively by the mosque with traditional leaders, the study found resistance from some community groups, especially the older generation who still hold on to old traditions without Islamic modifications. Based on the transcript of an interview with one of the senior *ninik mamak* (Interview with Ninik Mamak A., February 20, 2025), there are concerns about the loss of the original meaning of some rituals if too many new elements from outside are added through cultural da'wah in the mosque environment. However, adaptation continues to be carried out through open dialogue between generations and gradual socialization on the importance of maintaining a balance between religious Sharia and cultural preservation.

This research also found that digital-based Islamic literature program innovations have begun to be implemented by several mosque youth administrators since 2024. For example, short da'wah content can be created using the Serawai language, which is disseminated through social media such as TikTok and WhatsApp groups in village communities (Digital Documentation of Youth of the Sukaraja Mosque). Evaluative results from independent observers showed an increase in interest in learning religion in children aged elementary school to adolescence after the material delivery method was adjusted to their daily communication style. Overall, the results of the study confirm that the strategic role of the mosque in the religious development of the Serawai Tribe is greatly influenced by the institution's ability to make creative adaptations to local socio-cultural dynamics without losing the essence of Islamic teachings.

### **C. The Role of Mosques in Religious Development: Qualitative Analysis**

The study results show that community involvement in mosque activities is very high. Based on observation data, the local community always attends every mosque activity, such as recitation, congregational prayers, and celebrations of Islamic holidays; interviews with community leaders (Community Leader Interview, March 15, 2025) revealed that mosques are centers of social and spiritual activities that bind people in one community. This is also supported by documentation data that shows that community participation in mosque activities has increased by 30% in the last two years.

The mosque is also an important religious, educational institution for the Serawai people. The educational program in the mosque includes teaching the Qur'an, fiqh, and morals. Interviews with the management of the Taklim Council (Interview of the management of the Taklim Council, March 22, 2025) show that this educational program is attended by children and adults who want to deepen their religious knowledge. Field records show that recitation classes are held every night after the Isha prayer, with an average of 50 participants per session.

The mosque also plays a role in strengthening the cultural identity of the Serawai Tribe. In every religious activity, elements of local culture, such as children's dol music and traditional dances, are often integrated. An interview with one of the local artists (Local Artist Interview, March 25, 2025) revealed that the mosque is a place to preserve local culture through art. This can be seen in the Prophet's Birthday commemoration event, which is filled with cultural art performances involving the community. Mosque activities also have a significant socio-economic impact on the community. Documentation data shows that mosques often hold cheap bazaars and markets that help people afford basic necessities. Interviews with mosque administrators (Mosque Management Interview, March 30, 2025) stated that this activity helps the community economically and strengthens solidarity between residents. In addition, mosques

are also a place to raise funds for people in need, such as assistance for the education of underprivileged children.

Although mosques have a significant role in religious formation, several challenges are faced. An interview with the mosque imam (Mosque Imam Interview, April 5, 2025) revealed that one of the main challenges is the lack of a deep understanding of religion among the younger generation. Many are more interested in pop culture and technology, thus ignoring religious values. In addition, the resistance of some people who still hold fast to old traditions without Islamic modifications is also challenging.

To overcome these challenges, mosques began to implement innovations in cultural da'wah. Programs such as digital training for mosque youth and using social media as a da'wah have been introduced. Interviews with mosque youth administrators (Mosque Youth Management Interview, April 10, 2025) show that the use of digital platforms has increased the younger generation's interest in being involved in religious activities. The da'wah content presented in the form of short videos and infographics attracts their attention and makes it easier for them to understand the teachings of Islam.

The study results show that mosques are vital in the religious development of the Serawai Tribe in South Bengkulu. Through the integration of Islamic values and customs, mosques function as places of worship and educational centers, strengthening cultural identity and driving the community's economy. However, challenges in religious formation remain, especially among the younger generation. Therefore, it is recommended that mosques continue to innovate in cultural da'wah and involve the younger generation in every activity to ensure the sustainability of religious values amid changing times.

*The following table summarizes the forms of integration of Islamic-customary values in the main activities in the five research sites:*

Activity	Local Elements of Customs	Elements of Islam	Integrase Shape
Celebrity Shoes	Ancestral prayers and poems	Reading Al-Fatihah	Combined prayer
Routine Studies	Serawai Language	Tafsir of the Qur'an	Bilingual lectures
Kasidah Competition	Children's Dol Rhythm	Islamic Lyrics	Traditional religious music
Anniversary of Maulid	Besurek clothing	Shalawat Nabi	Fashion Parade & Prayer

*Source: Takmir Masjid Jami' Sukaraja Research & Archive Field Documentary (2023–2024)*

#### **D. The Role of Mosques in the Religious Development of the Serawai Tribe in South Bengkulu**

This discussion aims to analyze the research results on the role of mosques in the religious development of the Serawai Tribe in South Bengkulu by referring to data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation and comparing them with other relevant studies. The study results show that mosques function as centers of integration between Islamic values and local culture, as well as agents of social transformation that play a role in preserving traditions.

### **Integration of Islamic and Traditional Values in Mosque Activities**

The study results show that mosques in South Bengkulu play an active role in integrating Islamic values with the local customs of the Serawai Tribe. This is in line with the findings of Abdullah (2020) who stated that the cultural da'wah approach can strengthen the identity of local communities without eliminating the essence of Islamic teachings. In this study, combining Islamic prayers with traditional expressions in every religious activity, such as *siko* feasts and recitations, is evidence of this integration.

For example, in an interview with the imam of the Jami' Sukaraja Mosque, he explained that every religious event begins with the recitation of Al-Fatihah and ends with a prayer that contains traditional elements. This shows that mosques function as places of worship and as a space for dialogue between tradition and religion. This research aligns with the results of Saputra et al. (2021) who noted that traditional rituals in South Bengkulu have been Islamized through the integration of Islamic values.

### **The Role of Mosques as Agents of Socio-Cultural Transformation**

The mosque also serves as a socio-cultural transformation agent for the Serawai people. Documentation data shows that the "Customary Friendly Mosque" program implemented in several mosques has succeeded in increasing the participation of the younger generation in religious activities. This aligns with Al-Qurtuby's (2019) research, which shows that mosques can be a center of social activities that educate the public about Islamic values and local culture.

In interviews with youth leaders, they revealed that their involvement in *kasidah* competitions and calligraphy exhibitions held by mosques made them better understand and love their culture and religion. This research shows that mosques can be an inclusive place for the younger generation to contribute to preserving local culture while still adhering to the teachings of Islam.

## **Resistance and Adaptation to Cultural Da'wah**

Despite many integrative efforts, this study also found resistance from some community groups, especially the older generation, to the changes brought about by cultural da'wah. This is in line with the findings of Mulia (2018), who warned that the integration of customs and religion can lead to conflict without a careful approach. In an interview with a senior *ninik mamak*, they expressed concern that some rituals would lose their original meaning if too many new elements were added.

However, adaptation continues to be carried out through open dialogue between the old and young generations. This research shows that mosques mediate by deliberating between mosque takers and customary councils to prepare a joint fatwa for implementing the *melange* ritual. This reflects the importance of collaboration between religious and traditional leaders in balancing Sharia and tradition.

## **Increasing Religious Literacy Through Innovative Mosque Programs**

This study also found that innovations in digital-based religious literacy programs began to be implemented by several mosque youth administrators. The creation of short da'wah content using the Serawai language disseminated through social media such as TikTok and WhatsApp Group of the village community shows that mosques are adapting to technological developments to reach the younger generation. This is in line with research conducted by BPS Bengkulu Data (2023), which shows that the use of digital media in da'wah can increase interest in learning religion among children and adolescents.

The evaluative results of the independent observers showed that after the application of material delivery methods adapted to the communication style of the younger generation, there was a significant increase in their participation in religious activities. This shows that mosques can play a role as a center of



innovation in religious formation by utilizing technology to convey Islamic messages relevant to the community's socio-cultural context.

### **Implication**

Overall, the results of this study confirm that the role of mosques in the religious development of the Serawai Tribe is greatly influenced by the ability of the institution to make creative adaptations to local socio-cultural dynamics. The mosque serves not only as a place of worship, but also as a center for integrating Islamic values and local culture, an agent of social transformation, and an innovator in the delivery of da'wah. This research contributes to developing a cultural da'wah model that can be applied in regions with similar socio-cultural contexts.

Thus, it is important for mosque administrators and traditional leaders to continue to collaborate in maintaining a balance between religious Sharia and the preservation of local culture and utilizing technology to improve religious literacy among the younger generation. This research is expected to be a reference for further research in cultural da'wah and integrating religion with local culture.

### **E. Conclusion**

In this study, the strategic role of mosques in the religious development of the Serawai Tribe in South Bengkulu has been revealed through a cultural da'wah approach. The findings show that mosques function as places of worship and as centers of integration between Islamic values and local wisdom. Through various religious activities involving traditional elements, the mosque has succeeded in creating a space for dialogue between the old and young generations and strengthening the cultural identity of the Serawai community.

The results of this study answer the hypothesis that mosques can function as effective agents of social transformation in the context of a society rich in tradition. By integrating elements of local culture into religious practices, mosques can attract the younger generation's interest and reduce resistance to conventional da'wah. In

addition, innovative programs involving digital technology also show great potential in increasing religious literacy among children and adolescents.

As a suggestion for further research, it is recommended that longitudinal studies be conducted to observe long-term changes in the interaction between mosques and communities. Further research can also explore the impact of cultural da'wah programs on strengthening the identity of the Serawai Tribe in the era of globalization. Additionally, it is important to involve more variables, such as economic and educational factors, in the analysis to get a more comprehensive picture of the social dynamics in these communities.

Thus, this research is expected to significantly contribute to the development of da'wah studies and interactions between religion and culture in Indonesia, as well as a reference for developing more inclusive and adaptive religious programs.

#### **F. Acknowledgments**

This research would not have been carried out without the support and assistance of various parties. We want to express our deepest gratitude to all our fellow researchers and academics who have provided valuable insights and guidance during this research process. Special thanks to the editorial team of *Jurnal Dakwah: Media Communication and Da'wah* for their invaluable support.

We also appreciate the contributions of those who have provided important data and references for this research and the families and friends who have always provided moral support. Hopefully, this research will be helpful in the development of science and da'wah practice in the future.

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