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LEGAL PLURALISM IN THE PROTECTION OF THE FISHERIES AND SHIPPING INDUSTRY REGARDING THE ROLE OF THE PANGLIMA LAOT IN ACEH

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ABSTRACT

Fisheries and shipping are important sectors that support the economic, social, and cultural life of Aceh's coastal communities. In addition to formal regulations stipulated in laws, government regulations, and the Aceh Qanun, there is also customary maritime law implemented by the Panglima Laot institution. This institution has a strategic function in maintaining marine sustainability, regulating seagoing regulations, resolving disputes between fishermen, and protecting fishermen's rights. This condition reflects the existence of legal pluralism, namely the interaction between formal state law and customary law. This study aims to analyze the forms of legal pluralism in protecting the fishing and shipping industries in Aceh and explore the role of Panglima Laot within this framework. The method used is qualitative with a descriptive-analytical approach through literature studies, interviews with fishermen and customary leaders, and regulatory reviews. The results show that Panglima Laot has strong social legitimacy among fishermen, is effective in mediating disputes, and maintains the sustainability of marine resources. However, there are obstacles such as limited formal recognition in national law, conflicts between central and regional regulations, and weak institutional capacity. Thus, the integration between customary law and formal law needs to be strengthened, while also increasing the capacity of the Panglima Laot so that they can play an optimal role in protecting the fishing and shipping industries in Aceh.

Keywords: Legal Pluralism, Customary Law, Panglima Laot, Fisheries, Shipping; Aceh.

1. INTRODUCTION

Aceh is a province in Indonesia with a strategic geographical, historical, and socio-cultural position. Its location at the western tip of the archipelago, directly bordering the Indian Ocean and the Strait of Malacca, makes this region rich in abundant marine resources. The fisheries and shipping sectors are the backbone of the coastal economy and a pillar of regional development. Beyond its economic importance, the sea for the Acehnese people also represents a social, cultural, and

spiritual space that has bound their identity since the time of the Aceh Darussalam Sultanate.[1]

Over time, maritime governance in Aceh has been governed not only by formal state law but also by customary law that has existed within the community for centuries. Maritime customary law, also known as hukum adat laot (traditional maritime law), is enforced by a traditional institution called Panglima Laot. This institution has historically played a role in regulating fishing activities, overseeing maritime regulations, prohibiting the use of certain fishing gear, and resolving maritime disputes through non-litigation mechanisms. The existence of the Panglima Laot (Laot Commander) confirms that the Acehnese community had a marine resource management system based on local wisdom long before the advent of formal state regulations.[2]

This phenomenon reflects legal pluralism, namely the existence and interaction between the state legal system and customary law. On the one hand, the state, through Law Number 45 of 2009 concerning Fisheries, Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, and Aceh Qanun Number 10 of 2008 concerning Customary Institutions, strives to provide legal certainty in fisheries and shipping management. These formal regulations are crucial for ensuring the sustainability of marine resources, preventing illegal fishing practices, and protecting the rights of fishermen within the national legal framework. However, on the other hand, customary law, with its flexibility and deliberation-based approach, is more widely accepted by the community because it aligns with local values.[3]

In practice, this legal pluralism creates complex dynamics. Some central government policies are sometimes deemed inappropriate to local conditions in Aceh. For example, the implementation of Government Regulation Number 85 of 2021 concerning Types and Tariffs of Non-Tax State Revenue at the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries is considered burdensome for traditional fishermen.[4] The Aceh Panglima Laot emphasized that this policy should be discussed with the Aceh Government and the Aceh People's Representative Council (DPRA) to ensure

[1] Rahmat Rizqi, Domu Simbolon, & Mustaruddin. Interaksi Kebijakan Perikanan Tangkap dan Kearifan Lokal di Perairan Utara Aceh. Albacore*: Jurnal Penelitian Perikanan Laut*, 3(1), 65–77. 2019, https://journal.ipb.ac.id/index.php/pspalbacore/article/view/19021

[2] Mansur. Kedudukan Hukum Adat Laot dalam Sistem Hukum Nasional. *Kanun: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum*, 21(2), 235–254. 2019. https://jurnal.usk.ac.id/kanun/article/view/6294

[3] Jalaluddin, Budi Handoyo, Anhar Fazri, & Mukhlizar. Optimalisasi Peran Panglima Laot Terhadap Ketertiban Wilayah Pesisir di Aceh. *Perahu: Jurnal Hukum dan Syariah*, 2(2), 45–60. 2023. https://jurnal.unka.ac.id/index.php/Perahu/article/view/759.

[4] Abdurrahman, *Peradilan Adat di Aceh Sebagai Sarana Kerukunan Masyarakat*, Banda Aceh: Majelis Adat Aceh, 2009, hlm. 27.

it aligns with Aceh's unique characteristics.[5] This indicates a potential conflict between national and local laws, which, if not managed properly, could lead to regulatory conflicts and social unrest.

However, legal pluralism also presents significant opportunities. Customary maritime law encompasses conservation principles relevant to environmental sustainability issues. For example, there are prohibitions on going to sea on certain days, regulations on fair profit-sharing systems, and supervision of the use of environmentally friendly fishing gear.[6] These practices align with the principles of sustainable fisheries, as advocated by national law and global policies. The integration of customary and formal law has the potential to result in more inclusive and sustainable fisheries governance.

Beyond its regulatory function, the Panglima Laot also has a significant socio-political role. They serve as a bridge between coastal communities and the government, as well as a representative actor in advocating for the interests of fishermen. Panglima Laot frequently plays an active role in humanitarian issues, for example, when addressing the Rohingya refugee problem using a traditional approach. This demonstrates that Panglima Laot is not merely a traditional customary institution, but also a dynamic one capable of adapting to contemporary issues.[7]

Amidst the development of the modern fishing industry, trade globalization, and environmental challenges, Panglima Laot's existence faces several obstacles. First, limited formal recognition at the national regulatory level means that customary law does not always have strong binding force before state law. Second, weak institutional capacity, both in human resources and administrative aspects, presents a barrier to navigating the increasingly complex dynamics of the fishing industry. Third, potential conflicts of interest between central government policies, regional governments, and local community aspirations often hinder the creation of harmonious synergy.[8]

Therefore, research on legal pluralism in protecting the fishing and shipping industries, highlighting the role of the Panglima Laot (the Commander of the Sea) in Aceh, is crucial. This research can provide insight into how customary law and state

[5] ANTARA News. *Panglima Laot Aceh Dukung Program Perlindungan Nelayan*. 2021. https://www.antaranews.com/berita/2003729

[6] Zaitun Munar, dkk. Peranan Panglima Laot Lhok Dalam Pengelolaan Sumberdaya Laut Berbasis Adat di Kecamatan Mesjid Raya Kabupaten Aceh Besar. *Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Pertanian Unsyiah*, 6(3), 8726. 2021. https://jim.usk.ac.id/JFP/article/view/8726.

[7] *Ibid*

[8] *Ibid*

law can complement each other in protecting fishermen, resolving disputes, and maintaining the sustainability of marine ecosystems. Furthermore, this study is also expected to provide policy recommendations to strengthen the integration between customary law and formal law, so that the fishing and shipping industries in Aceh can develop fairly, sustainably, and in accordance with Aceh's unique characteristics as a region with special autonomy.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The research questions are as follows: (a) What forms of legal pluralism exist in protecting the fishing and shipping industries in Aceh? (b) What is the role of the Panglima Laot (the Commander of the Sea) in harmonizing customary law with state law regarding marine resource management?

This research uses a normative-empirical (socio-legal) research method, combining the study of laws and regulations with the practice of customary law in Aceh. The research data consists of primary data in the form of interviews with Panglima Laot (the Commander of the Sea), fishermen, and coastal community leaders, as well as secondary data in the form of legal materials (Laws, Qanuns, literature, and scientific journals) and relevant news.[9] Data collection techniques included library research, semi-structured interviews, and direct observation in coastal areas of Aceh. Data were analyzed qualitatively using descriptive-analytical techniques, comparing written legal norms with customary practices in the field, then drawing conclusions regarding the interaction of legal pluralism in protecting the fishing and shipping industries.[10] Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and methods, ensuring scientific accountability for the research results.

3. DISCUSSION

A. Legal Pluralism in Protecting the Fisheries and Shipping Industry in Aceh

Legal pluralism in Aceh arose from the intersection of customary maritime law, Islamic law, and state law. The existence of the Panglima Laot (the Commander of the Sea) and its customary rules is a long-standing historical legacy dating back to the Aceh Sultanate. After Aceh obtained special status through Law No. 11 of 2006 concerning the Governance of Aceh, customary law gained further formal recognition. Aceh Qanun No. 9 of 2008 concerning the Development of Customary

[9] Soerjono Soekanto. *Pengantar Penelitian Hukum*, Jakarta: UI Press, 1986, hlm. 51.
[10] Moch Nazir. *Metode Penelitian*, Jakarta: Ghalia Indoensia, 2008, hlm. 22.

Life and Qanun No. 10 of 2008 concerning Customary Institutions affirm the position of customary maritime law as an integral part of community governance.

Legal pluralism is a socio-legal reality that occurs when more than one legal system exists and is recognized by both society and the state within a given territory. In the context of Aceh, legal pluralism has been a distinctive feature since the enactment of Law No. 11 of 2006 on the Government of Aceh (UUPA), which recognizes the existence of customary law, Islamic law, and national law. This has created unique dynamics, including in strategic sectors such as the fisheries and shipping industries. These two sectors are not only the backbone of Aceh's economy but also part of the social and cultural identity of coastal communities. Therefore, legal protection for the fisheries and shipping industries in Aceh cannot be separated from the presence of legal pluralism that regulates and shapes the governance of the maritime sector comprehensively.[11]

At the level of national law, protection of the fisheries and shipping industries is regulated by several key regulations such as Law No. 45 of 2009 on Fisheries, Law No. 17 of 2008 on Shipping, and their implementing regulations. These laws govern licensing, sustainable fisheries management, shipping safety, and the protection of fishermen. National law emphasizes the importance of sustainability, maritime security, and the prevention of crimes such as illegal fishing and marine pollution. For Aceh, these national legal provisions serve as an umbrella that applies generally as part of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. However, their implementation in Aceh is not singular, because Aceh's special autonomy through the UUPA provides space for Islamic law and customary law to coexist alongside state law.

In addition to national law, Aceh has the distinctiveness of implementing Islamic law, which is codified in various Qanun (regional bylaws). In the context of fisheries and shipping, Islamic law plays a role in providing ethical values and moral principles for business actors. For example, the principle of halal and haram in the trade of marine products, the prohibition of fraud in weighing, and the obligation to protect the marine environment, which is considered a trust (amanah) from God to be managed properly. Qanun Aceh No. 7 of 2016 on Fisheries, for instance, not only emphasizes technical aspects of fisheries but also reflects Islamic principles by prioritizing justice, sustainability, and blessings in fishing activities. Islamic values also influence shipping practices, particularly in contractual relations such as cooperation agreements between vessel owners and fishermen, which often use partnership contracts (syirkah or mudharabah) in accordance with Islamic

[11] Iman Sudiyat, *Asas-asas Hukum Adat Bekal Pengantar*, Yogyakarta: Liiberity Yogyakarta, 1978, hlm. 22.

principles. Thus, Islamic law in Aceh is not merely a religious norm but also provides an ethical and juridical framework that complements national regulations.

On the other hand, customary law also plays an important role in protecting the fisheries and shipping industries in Aceh. Acehnese customary law, known as hukum laot (sea law), is a traditional regulatory system that lives and develops within fishing communities. Hukum laot governs various aspects of fishermen's activities, such as fishing procedures, fishing zones, catch-sharing systems, conflict resolution among fishermen, and mechanisms for preserving the marine ecosystem. Customary institutions such as the Panglima Laot (Sea Commander) have the authority to enforce this customary law in Aceh's coastal areas. The role of the Panglima Laot is formally recognized in the UUPA and several regional qanun, making customary law not only culturally valid but also legally acknowledged within the formal legal structure.[12] The existence of hukum laot proves that legal pluralism in Aceh is not merely a concept but a living reality that is effective in maintaining order and protecting the fisheries and shipping industries.[13]

Collaboration between state law, Islamic law, and customary law forms a unique model of legal pluralism in Aceh. For example, when conflicts occur among fishermen, disputes are not always resolved through litigation in court. Often, problems are first settled through customary law mechanisms by the Panglima Laot. If the case involves serious crimes or violations of national regulations, such as illegal fishing by foreign vessels, then the case is handled by state law enforcement agencies in accordance with statutory provisions. At the same time, Islamic principles remain upheld in the pursuit of justice, such as the prohibition of oppression (zulm), the obligation of deliberation (musyawarah), and the preservation of communal welfare (maslahah). Thus, legal pluralism in Aceh produces a comprehensive model of protection for the fisheries and shipping industries by integrating formal regulations, religious norms, and local wisdom.

However, legal pluralism in the protection of Aceh's maritime sector is not without challenges. One major challenge is the potential overlap of authority between customary law, Islamic law, and national law. For example, customary law that allows local fishermen to fish in certain zones may conflict with national law provisions on marine conservation or restricted fishing areas. Similarly, the application of Islamic law principles in the trade of marine products sometimes clashes with modern trade mechanisms regulated by national law. Moreover, globalization and the development of modern fishing technology also pose new

[12] Kamaruzzaman Bustamam Ahmad, "Al-Jami'ah: A STUDY OF PANGLIMA LA'ŌT An 'Adat Institution in Aceh''. Journal of Islamic Studies, Vol 55, No 1, 2017, hlm. 77.

[13] Andri Kurniawan, Faktor-Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Efektivitas Panglima Laot dalam Pengelolaan Sumber Daya Alam Laut di Kota Sabang, *Skripsi,* 2008.

challenges for legal pluralism, since customary law rooted in tradition may find it difficult to adapt to the dynamics of large-scale industrial fisheries. Therefore, synergy and harmonization among the different legal systems are needed to ensure that protection of the fisheries and shipping industries in Aceh can be effective.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the form of legal pluralism in the protection of fisheries and shipping industries in Aceh is manifested through the coexistence and synergy of three main legal systems: national law, Islamic law, and customary law. National law provides a formal regulatory framework and modern legal standards, Islamic law offers moral and religious values in managing marine resources, while customary law through hukum laot provides regulations based on local wisdom that have long proven effective in maintaining order in fishing communities. This legal pluralism is Aceh's uniqueness in managing the maritime sector and serves as a model of legal integration that prioritizes sustainability, justice, and the welfare of coastal communities.[14]

In reality, however, based on the author's observation, this pluralism does not always run harmoniously. On one hand, customary rules are more flexible and well accepted by coastal communities because they are rooted in local wisdom (such as prohibitions on fishing on certain days, rules on fishing gear, and catch-sharing systems). On the other hand, formal rules (Law No. 45 of 2009 on Fisheries, Ministerial Regulations, and Aceh's Qanun) emphasize legal certainty, national standards, and administrative compliance.[15]

Tensions arise, for instance, when there are differing rules regarding fishing gear. In some cases, fishermen consider formal regulations too rigid and unsuitable for local conditions, while law enforcement officials view violations as fisheries crimes. This situation shows that legal pluralism is not merely about the coexistence of two legal systems but also about the processes of negotiation and compromise in their implementation. Thus, legal pluralism in Aceh serves a dual function: as a means of preserving local wisdom in marine governance and as a space for contestation between customary and state regulations.[16] To avoid conflicts, an integrative legal model is needed that positions hukum laot not as a subordinate to state law but as a strategic partner in fisheries and shipping governance.

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[14] Zaitun Munar, Agussabti, and Irwan A. Kadir, "Peranan Panglima Laot Lhok Dalam Pengelolaan Sumberdaya Laut Berbasis Adat Di Kecamatan Mesjid Raya Kabupaten Aceh Besar," Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Pertanian 3, no. 4 (2018): 508–17, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.17969/jimfp.v3i4.8726.

[15] Ansor, Muhammad "Being Woman in the Land of Shari„a: Politics of the Female Body, Piety, and Resistance in Langsa, Aceh" Al-Jami‟ah: *Journal of Islamic Studies*, Vol. 52 No. 1, 2014. https://aljamiah.or.id/ajis/article/view/25.

[16] Zaki Ulya, dan Meta Suriyani. Re-Strukturisasi Kelembagaan Panglima Laot Sebagai Hakim Peradilan Adat Laot Di Aceh. Fakultas Hukum Universitas Samudra. *Jurnal Rechtsvinding*. Volume 12 Nomor 3, Desember 2023, hlm. 444.

B. The Role of the Panglima Laot in Harmonizing Customary Law and State Law

Aceh has a strong tradition of customary law in managing marine resources, known as hukum laot (the law of the sea). This customary law has been passed down for generations, regulating the lives of fishermen, from fishing zones, safety rules at sea, the distribution of catches, to dispute resolution among fishermen. The customary institution that leads the implementation of hukum laot is the Panglima Laot, who functions not only as a customary leader, but also as a mediator, customary judge, and guardian of marine sustainability. In the modern context, the role of the Panglima Laot has become increasingly important, as they must be able to bridge customary law and state law. This reflects the reality of legal pluralism in Aceh, where customary law, state law, and Islamic law coexist and complement each other.[17]

The role of the Panglima Laot in harmonizing customary law with state law can be seen in conflict resolution. In practice, when disputes occur between fishermen regarding fishing territories or profit-sharing, the Panglima Laot resolves these issues through deliberation based on customary law. However, when conflicts involve broader dimensions, such as criminal acts like assault or the use of explosives in fishing, these cases are handed over to state law enforcement authorities. Thus, the Panglima Laot acts as a filter, ensuring that social problems within fishing communities can be resolved quickly and peacefully through customary law, while still recognizing the supremacy of state law in more complex cases. This mechanism reflects the harmonization between customary and formal law, creating order without disregarding local wisdom.[18]

Beyond dispute resolution, the Panglima Laot also plays an important role in sustainable marine resource management. The core principle of hukum laot prohibits environmental destruction, such as the use of poison, bombs, or fishing gear that damages coral reefs. These values are consistent with state law, such as Law No. 45 of 2009 on Fisheries, which prohibits destructive fishing practices. The Panglima Laot internalizes these state regulations in the local context by educating fishing communities. Through their social authority, the Panglima Laot instills awareness that prohibitions in state law are not merely formal rules but are aligned with long-standing customary norms. This makes state law more easily accepted by

[17] Mongabay Indonesia. Menjaga kelestarian laut Aceh dengan aturan hukum adat. 2024. https://mongabay.co.id/2024/10/08/menjaga-kelestarian-laut-aceh-dengan-aturan-hukum-adat/. Diakses 25 September 2025: Pukul 16:30 Wib.

[18] Abdullah, M. A., Arifin, A. dan Tripa, S. "Panglima Laot : His Legacy and Role in Conserving Marine Resources in Aceh, Indonesia," SHS Web of Conferences, 2018, 45, hal. 06003. doi: 10.1051/shsconf/20184506003.

the community, as it is not seen as foreign, but rather as a continuation of values they have always understood.[19]

In addition, the Panglima Laot serves as a communication bridge between fishing communities and the government. In the management of marine resources, many state policies require active community participation, such as marine conservation programs, the establishment of marine protected areas, and the eradication of illegal fishing by foreign vessels. The Panglima Laot plays a strategic role as an intermediary, conveying government policies to the fishermen while also bringing community aspirations to the authorities. The presence of the Panglima Laot ensures that communities feel included in the decision-making process, making government policies easier to implement. In other words, the Panglima Laot functions as a harmonizing agent, ensuring that state law is not only formally present but also understood, accepted, and practiced by the community through the lens of customary law.[20]

The Panglima Laot's role is also evident in strengthening institutional frameworks. With the formal recognition of customary law in Law No. 11 of 2006 on the Governance of Aceh (UUPA) and several local qanuns (bylaws), the Panglima Laot's existence is not only cultural but also legally legitimized. This allows the Panglima Laot to collaborate with government institutions such as the Department of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, the police, and the Indonesian Navy in safeguarding Aceh's maritime sovereignty and security.[21] For instance, in operations against illegal fishing, initial information often comes from the Panglima Laot's coastal networks. This collaboration shows that customary law is not positioned as an opponent of state law but as a partner that strengthens the effectiveness of law enforcement.[22]

However, harmonizing customary law and state law through the Panglima Laot does not always run smoothly. Challenges include overlapping jurisdictions, differing perceptions between state officials and customary leaders, as well as pressures from modern technological advances in the fishing industry. For example, customary law may permit the use of traditional fishing tools in certain areas, while state law restricts their use for conservation reasons. In such cases, the Panglima

[19] Abdullah, M. A., Tripa, S. dan Muttaqin, T. Selama Kearifan Adalah Kekayaan - Eksistensi Panglima Laot dan Hukom Adat Laot di Aceh. 1st ed. Diedit oleh M. H. P. Rasyid, H. Hass, dan M. Hamzah. Banda Aceh: Lembaga Hukom Adat Laot - Yayasan Kehati, 2006.

[20] Sri Walny Rahayu, "Lembaga Penyelesaian Sengketa Adat Laut 'Panglima Laôt' Di Aceh Sebagai Bentuk Pengembangan Alternatif Penyelesaian Sengketa Dalam Sistem Hukum Di Indonesia," Padjadjaran Jurnal Ilmu Hukum 1, no. 3 (2014): 448–67, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22304/pjih.v1n3.a2.

[21] *Ibid,*

[22] *Ibid,*

Laot must possess strong negotiation skills to find middle ground that does not disadvantage fishermen while still complying with state law. Another challenge is that younger generations of fishermen, influenced by modern mindsets, may show less respect for customary authority. This highlights the importance of innovation by the Panglima Laot in reinforcing customary values while adapting them to contemporary developments.

Overall, the Panglima Laot's role in harmonizing customary and state law in the management of marine resources in Aceh can be seen across several dimensions: (1) as a mediator in dispute resolution, (2) as a guardian of marine environmental sustainability, (3) as a communication intermediary between communities and government, and (4) as a strategic partner in state law enforcement. These dimensions demonstrate that the Panglima Laot not only preserves the existence of customary law but also serves as a bridge for the effective implementation of state law at the local level. Legal pluralism practiced through the Panglima Laot's role represents a unique model of harmonization, where custom and the state complement each other in maintaining the sustainability of marine resources.[23]

Thus, it can be concluded that the Panglima Laot is a key actor in harmonizing customary and state law in Aceh. Their presence ensures that customary law does not remain solely within the realm of tradition but also gains legitimacy within the national legal system. At the same time, state law does not enter rigidly but is translated into the customary language that fishing communities can easily understand. This synergy is the strength of Aceh in managing marine resources in a sustainable, just, and locally rooted manner.[24]

The Panglima Laot maintains the balance between customary traditions and formal state regulations. In practice, this role is carried out through three main functions:[25]

1. Regulatory and Customary Function: The Panglima Laot regulates fishing regulations, including prohibitions on fishing on certain days, regulations on the use of fishing gear, and the resolution of disputes between fishermen. This mechanism is both preventative and repressive because it prioritizes deliberation-based resolution and restorative justice (Munar et al., 2022, JIM USK).

[23] *Ibid*

[24] *Ibid*

[25] Zaitun Munar, Agussabti, and Irwan A. Kadir, "Peranan Panglima Laot Lhok Dalam Pengelolaan Sumberdaya Laut Berbasis Adat Di Kecamatan Mesjid Raya Kabupaten Aceh Besar," Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Pertanian 3, no. 4 (2018): 508–17, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.17969/jimfp.v3i4.8726.

2. Mediation Function with the State: In many cases, the Panglima Laot acts as a liaison between fishermen and the government. For example, when conflicts arise due to fisheries law enforcement by authorities, the Panglima Laot is often asked to mediate so that formal sanctions can be tailored to the social conditions of the community. This strengthens the Panglima Laot's legitimacy as a "bridge" between customary law and state law (Ulya et al., 2024, JARBI).
3. Socio-Humanitarian Function: The Panglima Laot also carries out social roles beyond fishing regulations, for example, assisting in the evacuation of Rohingya refugees stranded at sea in Aceh, based on humanitarian customary principles. This demonstrates that the Panglima Laot's authority extends beyond customary law and also contributes to humanitarian issues and solidarity among coastal communities (Antara News Aceh, 2023).

Despite its vital role, the Panglima Laot faces several obstacles. First, limited formal recognition: although recognized through qanun (a legal regulation), customary law has not been fully integrated into the national legal system. Second, limited institutional capacity: both in terms of human resources and financial support, the Panglima Laot still relies on local initiatives. Third, the challenge of modernization: the entry of large-scale fishing industries and modern marine exploitation practices often displace the traditional role of the Panglima Laot, necessitating adaptation to remain relevant.

Moving forward, the harmonization of customary law and state law must be directed towards institutional synergy. The government needs to actively involve the Panglima Laot in the formulation of maritime policy in Aceh, while strengthening its capacity through legal education, access to information, and institutional support. In this way, legal pluralism can be a force to protect the fishing and shipping industries, not a source of conflict.

4. CONCLUSION

Legal pluralism in Aceh is evident in the existence of customary maritime law, which exists among fishing communities alongside state law. Customary maritime law serves to maintain local wisdom, resolve disputes, and preserve the sea, while state law provides certainty and enforces formal law. In this context, the Panglima Laot plays a crucial role as a customary regulator and mediator between the community and the government. However, his role still faces obstacles in formal recognition, institutional capacity, and the challenges of modernization. Therefore, the harmonious integration of customary law and state law needs to be strengthened to ensure the protection of the fishing industry, the welfare of fishermen, and the sustainability of marine resources in Aceh.

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