

Letter of Acceptance

Dear

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It's our great pleasure to inform you that manuscript entitled "*The Impact of Turun Ranjang Marriage: An Analysis of The Jantho Sharia Court Decision No. 277/Pdt.G/2024/Ms.Jth*" has been reviewed and *accepted* for publication in AL-RISALAH: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah dan Hukum with E-ISSN 2550-0309 P-ISSN 2252-8334, National Journal Accreditation (ARJUNA) SINTA 3 grades for Volume 26 Issue 1, May 2026. This letter of acceptance is considered as an official acceptance of your manuscript with no further amendments required.

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Gowa, 21 January 2026
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THE IMPACT OF *TURUN RANJANG* MARRIAGE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE JANTHO SHARIA COURT DECISION NO. 277/PDT.G/2024/MS.JTH

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Abstract

This study examines the phenomenon of turun ranjang marriage in Aceh, a practice in which a man marries the younger sister of his deceased wife. The analysis focuses on the Jantho Sharia Court Decision No. 277/Pdt.G/2024/MS.Jth, which granted a divorce due to the absence of mutual consent. Employing a qualitative case study approach through interviews and document analysis, this research reveals that although turun ranjang marriages are legally valid under both Islamic law and Indonesian positive law, they often lead to serious issues in practice – particularly when coercion or emotional pressure from family members and the husband occurs. The case under study shows that the couple never lived together and experienced conflict from the very first day of marriage. The judges ruled in favor of divorce based on continuous disputes and evidence of psychological coercion. From an Islamic legal perspective, such a marriage falls under the category of 'urf sahih (a legitimate custom) as long as it does not contradict Sharia principles and is entered into willingly by both parties. However, from a social standpoint, it poses significant risks, including psychological distress, family disintegration, and customary conflict. This study recommends that all marriages – particularly turun ranjang marriages – be entered into only after careful consideration and without any form of coercion, to promote family well-being and harmony.

Keywords: *Turun Ranjang Marriage, Marital Coercion, Sharia Court Decision*

INTRODUCTION

In Islam, marriage is regarded as a sacred covenant (*miitsaaqan ghalidhan*) that aims to create peace, affection, and the continuity of family life. However, in practice, not all marriages are founded upon mutual willingness, love, and readiness in both physical and emotional aspects. One deviation that still occurs in society is the practice of *turun ranjang* marriage, namely a marriage between a man and the younger sister of his deceased wife. This phenomenon generates controversy from religious, social, and legal perspectives.

The Jantho Sharia Court Decision No. 277/Pdt.G/2024/MS.Jth serves as an important precedent in this matter. In this case, the plaintiff was the younger sister of the defendant's deceased wife. Shortly after her sister's death, the defendant proposed to the plaintiff, and the marriage took place on May 7, 2024. However, the marriage was never lived out properly. From the time of the marriage contract, there was no conjugal relationship between the two parties, nor did they ever live together as husband and wife. Their relationship was marked by conflict from the very first day of marriage.

In her lawsuit, the plaintiff revealed that she was coerced into marriage due to the defendant's threat: if she refused, he would take away the child from his previous marriage (with the plaintiff's deceased sister) and forbid her from meeting the child again. The plaintiff had no real freedom of choice; emotional pressure led her to accept the marriage despite her unwillingness. This indicates the presence of psychological coercion, which is contrary to the principle of mutual consent in both Islamic and Indonesian marriage law.

This case is significant because it represents a conflict between religious, state, and customary norms. On one hand, the *Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI)* does not explicitly prohibit marriage with the sister of a deceased wife. On the other hand, from moral and sociological perspectives, the practice of *turun ranjang* marriage presents serious problems for family relations and social harmony.

Based on this background, this study analyzes the impact of *turun ranjang* marriage through an examination of the Jantho Sharia Court Decision No. 277/Pdt.G/2024/MS.Jth, aiming to uncover the legal, sociological, and customary dimensions inherent in this practice.

Classical Islamic legal scholarship establishes that marriage has specific conditions and pillars (*rukun*), including the prohibition of marrying women who are *mahram* due

to lineage, breastfeeding, or marital ties (*mushaharah*). Scholars differ in opinion regarding the permissibility of marrying the younger sister of a deceased wife. Some permit it, arguing that the prohibition only applies while the wife is still alive, whereas others view the act as morally inappropriate and contrary to family ethics.

From the perspective of Indonesian positive law, Law No. 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage does not explicitly prohibit marriage with a sister-in-law. However, Article 8(b) of the Law lists prohibitions due to certain *semenda* (affinal) relationships, allowing for varying interpretations. Research by Ihsan shows that the *turun ranjang* practice in Aceh often causes family conflict because it is perceived as violating customary norms that uphold family dignity.¹

Regarding divorce before *dukhul* (consummation), both *fiqh* and Indonesian positive law agree that the wife is entitled to half of the dowry. This is affirmed in Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah verse 237 and Article 35(1) of Law No. 1 of 1974.² In the Jantho Sharia Court case, the judge decided that half of the dowry, amounting to 12 *mayam* of gold, should be returned because the divorce occurred before consummation.

In addition, customary law plays a strong role in the Acehnese context. Research by found that the *tutup malu* custom (a compensation for social embarrassment) is often invoked in short-lived marriages, even though it is not always recognized by the courts. This shows a dynamic interplay between customary and state law.³

Previous literature has been limited to normative studies on Islamic and customary law, without integrating juridical, sociological, and cultural analyses into a unified framework. Therefore, this research contributes a novel perspective by examining the impact of *turun ranjang* marriage through court decisions, as a means of advancing academic understanding of the intersection between religion, law, and social tradition.

METHOD

This study employs field research (*field research*) with both statutory and case approaches to analyze *turun ranjang* marriage based on the Jantho Sharia Court Decision No. 277/Pdt.G/2024/MS.Jth. The research adopts a qualitative design using descriptive data obtained through document analysis and interviews with judges of the

¹ Ihsan, "Fenomena Pernikahan Turun Ranjang dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam dan Adat Aceh", Jurnal Hukum dan Syariah, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2019, h. 145.

² Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 1974 on Marriage, State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia Year 1974 Number 1; see also Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah (2): 237.

³ Nurjannah, "Tutup Malu dalam Adat Perkawinan Aceh", Jurnal Al-Ahwal, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2018, h. 160.

Jantho Sharia Court and village officials (*perangkat gampong*). The primary legal materials include statutory regulations, court decisions, and authoritative Islamic legal sources.⁴

Data collection techniques consisted of participatory observation and in-depth interviews. The researcher ensured objectivity and data validity by confirming that all collected information accurately represented the real impacts of *turun ranjang* marriage. Data were analyzed qualitatively, aiming to summarize field findings into conclusions that address the research problem. The qualitative method was chosen to allow for a comprehensive understanding of the socio-legal context surrounding *turun ranjang* marriages, especially in cases involving coercion, psychological pressure, and customary considerations.⁵

This methodological approach enables the integration of Islamic legal norms, Indonesian positive law, and Acehnese customary law (*adat Aceh*) into a coherent analytical framework. Such integration provides a more holistic understanding of the complexities that arise in *turun ranjang* marriages, which often intersect moral, social, and legal dimensions.⁶

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Concept of *Turun Ranjang* Marriage

According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI)*, the term *turun ranjang* refers to a marriage between an individual and the sibling of their deceased spouse, often occurring as a continuation of the previous marital relationship following the death of a husband or wife. In essence, this form of marriage arises not out of new affection but from a social and familial obligation that emerges after one partner's death.⁷ The concept, although rooted in traditional family structures, reflects a complex interplay between religious permissibility, cultural expectations, and personal autonomy.

In many local traditions, especially within Acehnese society, the *turun ranjang* marriage—also known regionally as *pulang balee*—is perceived as a way of maintaining kinship ties between the families of the deceased and the surviving spouse.⁸ The term *pulang balee* literally

⁴ Soerjono Soekanto, *Pengantar Penelitian Hukum*, UI Press, Jakarta, 1986, p. 12.

⁵ Peter Mahmud Marzuki, *Penelitian Hukum*, Kencana, Jakarta, 2005, p. 35.

⁶ Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*, Remaja Rosdakarya, Bandung, 2017, p. 157.

⁷ *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, “Turun Ranjang,” <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/entri/turun%20ranjang>, accessed July 13, 2025, at 15:10 WIB.

⁸ Ridhai Saifira, *Dampak Perkawinan Pulang Balee dalam Kehidupan Rumah Tangga di Kecamatan Darussalam Kabupaten Aceh Besar*, Undergraduate Thesis, UIN Ar-Raniry, 2021.

means “returning home to the widow,” emphasizing the familial continuity that the community expects from such arrangements. When the husband marries the deceased wife’s younger sister, the act is called *turun ranjang* or *pulang balee*, while if he marries the older sister, it is commonly referred to as *ganti tikar* (changing the mat), symbolizing the replacement of the deceased with her elder sibling.⁹ In several Acehese subregions, the term *ganti lapik* (replacing the bedding) is also used, showing that this custom is deeply ingrained within local linguistic and cultural expressions.

From a sociological perspective, *turun ranjang* marriage represents the community’s attempt to preserve harmony, avoid gossip (*fitnah*), and ensure the well-being of the children left behind.¹⁰ In traditional settings, when a man loses his wife, remaining close to his late wife’s family can create social tension if no new marital bond is established. Therefore, marrying within the same family is often seen as a moral and cultural safeguard. The custom also reflects a patriarchal pattern, in which family elders or village leaders influence marital decisions more than the individuals directly involved.

Islamic jurisprudence, however, clearly distinguishes between customs (*urf*) that are considered *sahih* (valid) and those that are *fasid* (corrupt). While a *turun ranjang* marriage may be tolerated as a legitimate cultural practice (*urf sahih*), its validity in the sight of Sharia depends strictly on the absence of coercion (*ikrah*) and the presence of *ridha* – mutual consent of both parties. The Qur’an explicitly prohibits coercive marriage, as stated in Surah An-Nisa (4:19): “Do not compel women to marry against their will.”¹¹ This verse emphasizes that even in socially justified arrangements, the personal autonomy of women must remain protected.

In this light, although *turun ranjang* marriage may preserve family integrity and provide care for orphans, it becomes problematic when emotional or social coercion replaces genuine consent. Such coercion often arises from pressure by elders or community leaders, who view refusal as a violation of cultural obligation. Therefore, the practice – while culturally meaningful – carries the potential for significant psychological and moral harm when the principle of *ridha* is compromised.

2. The Practice of *Turun Ranjang* Marriage in Gampong Lampanah Tunong, Indrapuri, Aceh Besar

The case in Gampong Lampanah Tunong, Indrapuri District, Aceh Besar, provides a concrete example of how *turun ranjang* marriage continues to operate as a living tradition. Field data and court documents from the Jantho Sharia Court case reveal that the defendant was

⁹ Ihsan, “Fenomena Pernikahan Turun Ranjang dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam dan Adat Aceh,” *Jurnal Hukum dan Syariah*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2019, p. 145.

¹⁰ Qur’an, Surah An-Nisa (4): 19.

¹¹ Interview with Almusahhari (Village Secretary of Lampanah Tunong), conducted by Delvina Yuspita Sari, August 2, 2025.

previously married to the plaintiff's deceased sister. After her passing, the defendant proposed to and married the younger sister as part of a family agreement, with the stated aim of protecting the orphaned child and maintaining family unity.¹²

At first glance, the marriage appeared to comply with both Islamic and state legal requirements. It was officiated by a lawful guardian, witnessed by two parties, and registered with the local Office of Religious Affairs (*KUA*). Yet, despite its formal validity, the marriage lacked the essential element of emotional willingness. Interviews conducted with local religious figures and community leaders revealed that the bride was under significant emotional pressure from both her parents and the widower himself.¹³ The parents, motivated by compassion for their grandchild and fear of social stigma, encouraged the marriage; meanwhile, the widower allegedly threatened to take away the child if the proposal was refused.

According to testimony from the local *Tengku Imam* (village imam), this practice of *pulang balee* is often rationalized as a moral solution to prevent slander and preserve the reputation of both families. However, he also emphasized that when the decision is made under pressure, the marriage loses its ethical and spiritual value in Islam. He explained that although *pulang balee* follows the formal structure of marriage in Islamic law – requiring a guardian, witnesses, a dowry, and a valid contract – it often departs from the spiritual essence of marriage when consent is absent. In his words, such unions “protect social appearances but destroy inner peace.”

Furthermore, observations from the *KUA* official in Indrapuri confirmed that while *turun ranjang* marriages are legally recorded, they usually emerge from collective family decisions rather than personal choice.¹⁴ The process often lacks courtship or individual consent, with families prioritizing social harmony over emotional compatibility. As a result, these marriages frequently face challenges after the wedding, as seen in this case where the couple never lived together and conflicts surfaced from the first day.

The persistence of *turun ranjang* marriage in Aceh reflects a continuing negotiation between religion, law, and custom. It underscores the need for more active guidance from religious leaders and legal institutions to ensure that such practices, if conducted, uphold both the letter and spirit of Islamic marriage principles. The case of Lampanah Tunong demonstrates that when cultural tradition overrides individual consent, the result is not marital harmony but emotional distress and eventual legal dissolution.

¹² Interview with Zunaidi (Village Imam of Lampanah Tunong), conducted by Delvina Yuspita Sari, August 2, 2025.

¹³ Interview with Nurul Husna (Judge of the Jantho Sharia Court), conducted by Delvina Yuspita Sari, February 17, 2025.

¹⁴ Government Regulation No. 9 of 1975, Article 19(f); *Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI)*, Article 116(f) and Article 76.

3. Judicial Consideration in the Jantho Sharia Court Decision

The Jantho Sharia Court Decision No. 277/Pdt.G/2024/MS.Jth provides a critical legal precedent for understanding how *turun ranjang* marriages are assessed when consent and coercion are at issue. The case revealed that the couple had never cohabited nor consummated the marriage since the day of the wedding. The evidence presented during the trial included witness testimony, family statements, and documentation showing that persistent conflict existed between the parties from the very beginning. The plaintiff's statement further emphasized that she was forced into the marriage under emotional duress due to the defendant's threats that he would deny her access to the child of his previous marriage with her deceased sister. Such conditions reflect a clear violation of the Islamic and legal principles that require marriage to be based on free will.¹⁵

The panel of judges considered several key legal and moral aspects in rendering their decision. First, the judges recognized that the marriage had fulfilled the formal requirements of Islamic law – there was a guardian (*wali*), witnesses, and a valid *akad nikah*. However, they also concluded that the absence of mutual affection, continuous disputes, and the presence of psychological pressure were sufficient grounds to dissolve the marriage. The court determined that the relationship between the plaintiff and the defendant had never achieved the essential objectives of marriage, namely *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* – tranquility, affection, and compassion.

Second, the judges applied the legal foundation set forth in Article 19(f) of Government Regulation No. 9 of 1975 and Article 116(f) of the *Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI)*, both of which state that divorce may be granted when there is continuous conflict and no hope for reconciliation. They further referred to Article 22(2) of the same regulation and Article 76 of the KHI, which require that claims of irreconcilable differences must be supported by valid evidence and witness testimony.¹⁶ The court found that the facts of the case met these conditions, given the consistent and substantiated proof of emotional coercion and verbal abuse.

Third, in its reasoning, the court acknowledged that while *turun ranjang* marriage is legally permissible under Islamic and state law, it becomes invalid in spirit when consent is coerced. The judges ruled that the plaintiff's marriage could not achieve its intended social or spiritual purpose and therefore granted the divorce (*fasakh*). The decision also stipulated that half of the dowry – amounting to twelve *mayam* of gold – should be returned to the husband, in accordance with both Qur'anic guidance and national law, since the divorce occurred prior to consummation. This ruling aligned with Surah Al-Baqarah (2:237), which affirms that if divorce

¹⁵ *Qur'an*, Surah Al-Baqarah (2): 237; *Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 1974 on Marriage, State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia Year 1974 Number 1*.

¹⁶ Wahbah al-Zuhaili, *Al-Fiqh al-Islami wa Adillatuhu*, Vol. VII, Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, 1989, p. 145.

takes place before *dukhul* (consummation), the wife is entitled to only half of the agreed dowry.¹⁷

In reaching this conclusion, the court exercised judicial sensitivity to both the letter and spirit of Islamic law. The verdict not only resolved a marital dispute but also reaffirmed a broader principle: that marriages grounded in coercion, regardless of cultural justification, cannot be sustained within the framework of Islamic ethics or Indonesian law. The Jantho Sharia Court's decision thus contributes to a growing legal awareness that the legitimacy of marriage lies not merely in its formal legality but also in the sincerity and freedom of both parties' consent.

4. Islamic and Legal Analysis of Turun Ranjang Marriage

From the standpoint of Islamic law, *turun ranjang* marriage is not explicitly prohibited as long as it adheres to the conditions and pillars (*rukun*) of marriage and does not contravene the Qur'an or the Sunnah. This type of marriage may fall under the category of '*urf sahih*, or legitimate custom, provided it does not cause harm (*mafsadah*) or violate Sharia principles.¹⁸ In Acehnese society, this custom often arises from communal concern for the welfare of children and the preservation of family bonds, reflecting a sense of collective moral duty. However, the validity of such a practice ultimately depends on whether both parties enter into the marriage voluntarily.

Classical Islamic jurisprudence supports this interpretation. Scholars such as Wahbah al-Zuhaili explain that '*urf* can serve as a supplementary source of law when not in conflict with textual evidence.¹⁹ The Prophet Muhammad himself demonstrated tolerance for similar circumstances in the case of Uthman ibn 'Affan, who married two of the Prophet's daughters in succession – first Ruqayyah, then, after her passing, Umm Kulthum.²⁰ This example, however, occurred under the condition of mutual consent and should not be interpreted as legitimizing marriages conducted under duress or social pressure.

Conversely, the hadith of Khansa bint Khidam, narrated in *Sahih Bukhari*, establishes the Prophet's rejection of forced marriages. In this narration, the Prophet annulled a marriage arranged by a woman's father without her approval, affirming that no guardian has the authority to impose a marriage upon a woman against her will.²¹ This prophetic precedent underscores that in Islam, consent (*ridha*) is the foundation of marital validity and moral integrity.

¹⁷ Sahih Bukhari, Hadith No. 6454.

¹⁸ Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat al-Kubra*, Vol. 8, Dar Sadir, Beirut, 1990, p. 50.

¹⁹ Sahih Bukhari, Book of Marriage, Hadith No. 5138.

²⁰ *Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 1974 on Marriage, State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia Year 1974 Number 1; Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI)*, Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 1991, Articles 40 and 72.

²¹

From the perspective of Indonesian positive law, there is no explicit prohibition of *turun ranjang* marriage, as long as it does not violate the prohibitions on consanguinity (*nasab*), affinity (*semenda*), or foster relations (*radha'ah*). Law No. 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage declares that a marriage is valid when performed according to the laws of the respective religion and faith of the parties.¹⁶ The *Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI)* Articles 40 and 72 outline specific prohibitions related to blood, marital, and foster relationships, but none mention the sister of a deceased spouse. Therefore, *turun ranjang* marriages are legally valid under Indonesian law, provided all formal requirements are fulfilled and the marriage is entered into freely.

Nevertheless, the Jantho Sharia Court case demonstrates that legality alone is insufficient when ethical and emotional dimensions are disregarded. A marriage that formally meets legal standards but violates the moral principle of mutual consent fails to achieve the objectives of Islamic law. In this context, the decision to dissolve the *turun ranjang* marriage in the Jantho case represents not only the enforcement of legal provisions but also the restoration of justice and dignity to the coerced party.

Thus, both from Islamic and Indonesian legal perspectives, *turun ranjang* marriage occupies a conditional space of permissibility—lawful when conducted with full consent, but unlawful when marred by coercion.²² The Jantho decision underscores that the spirit of Sharia and positive law converge in one moral truth: that marriage must be built upon love, compassion, and the free will of the individuals involved. Only under those conditions can it fulfill the higher purpose of marriage—creating a harmonious, balanced, and spiritually sound household.²³

KESIMPULAN

The practice of *turun ranjang* marriage, as illustrated in the Jantho Sharia Court Decision No. 277/Pdt.G/2024/MS.Jth, reveals a tension between cultural tradition, religious norms, and individual autonomy. While this form of marriage—between a man and his deceased wife's sister—is legally valid under Islamic law and Indonesian marriage law when conducted with mutual consent, the case study shows that it can lead to serious moral and psychological harm when driven by emotional coercion or family pressure. The judges' decision to dissolve the marriage emphasizes that legality alone does not ensure validity in the eyes of Sharia; a marriage devoid of *ridha* (mutual

²² Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Al-Halal wa al-Haram fi al-Islam*, Dar al-Risalah, Cairo, 1994, p. 208.

²³ Amir Syarifuddin, *Hukum Perkawinan Islam di Indonesia*, Kencana, Jakarta, 2007, p. 25.

willingness) cannot achieve the objectives of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* (tranquility, affection, and compassion).

This case further demonstrates that the integrity of marriage lies not only in fulfilling formal legal requirements but in upholding justice and personal freedom. Therefore, *turun ranjang* marriages—and all marital unions—must be entered into only after careful consideration and sincere willingness of both parties. Only under those conditions can marriage truly reflect the principles of Islamic law and the moral foundation of Indonesian family life.

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Wawancara:

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Interview with Zunaidi (Village Imam of Lampanah Tunong) conducted by Delvina Yuspita Sari, August 2, 2025.

Interview with Iman (Head of KUA Indrapuri, Aceh Besar) conducted by Delvina Yuspita Sari, August 2, 2025.

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