

# Dutch Colonial Infrastructure Development in Takengon, 1904-1942

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## Abstract

*The events of the Gayo-Alas War that occurred between the Gayo-Alas people against the Dutch colonial marked the end of the Aceh War. This bloody conflict also marked the Gayo Plateau region, especially Takengon, which was occupied by the Dutch colonial authorities. Since then, Takengon, which was originally just an inland region of Aceh, has begun to grow, especially its infrastructure. Therefore, this study aims to examine the infrastructure that was built in the colonial era (1904-1942). The method used in this study is the historical method, which consisted of five analytical stages, namely topic selection, heuristics, leverage, interpretation, and historiography. The results of the study show that since the Dutch colonial came to the Gayo Takengon Plateau in 1904, Takengon was more developed comparing to previous period, all of which was inseparable from infrastructure development by the Dutch colonial. Some of the infrastructures were built successfully, there were the main road between Bireuen and Takengon, central government, Dutch and Tionghoa society, market, and Dutch school. The development of infrastructure also has had an impact for Takengon's area, such as the new society along Bireuen-Takengon highway, and the construction of Takengon-Gayo Lues' road. In addition, the opening of the road was aimed at opening the Dutch plantations and the private sector has made the emergence of the society's settlements, like in Redelong, Pondok Baru (Janarata), Lampahan and Isaq.*

**Keywords:** Gayo Plateau; Takengon; Infrastructure; Dutch Colonial.

## Introduction

Infrastructure is one of the requirements for the development of an area or even a country. Infrastructure development on the one hand is also considered a bridge that connects an area with economic and social growth of its people. Based on Joga, Atmawidjaja, & Indrajoga (2019:130) good infrastructure will certainly be able to improve and give efficiency for the business world and for the social life of its people. On the other hand, Faradis & Afifah (2020: 33) Basically, the infrastructure development is necessary to increase economic growth, but because of the nature condition in different areas can cause imbalance. Therefore according to Sukwita (2018: 115) infrastructure disparities that occur between regions are one factor causing economic disparities.

A number of literature states that infrastructure problems related to the economy of

a region and its people have emerged since the Dutch colonial period in Indonesia and continue to the present. In the book entitled "Kota Lama, Kota Baru Sejarah Kota-Kota di Indonesia sebelum dan sesudah Kemerdekaan" which is a collection of international conferences "sejarah kota" (Colombijn, Barwegen, Basundoro, & Khusyairi, 2005), several themes from the results of the study indicate that the infrastructure of each region during the Dutch colonial period was indeed different. Regional and political policies in time are also determinants of the development of a region. Moreover, there are several studies focus on infrastructure of the city, such as La Ode Rabani about the *Morfologi dan Infrastruktur Kota Buton 1911 -1964* (Morphology and Infrastructure of Buton City 1911-1964); Bambang Subiyakto about *Infrastruktur Pelayaran Sungai: Kota Banjarmasin Tahun 1900-1970* (The Infrastructure of River Cruise: Banjarmasin City

Year 1900-1970); Raymond Mawikere about *Infrastruktur Kota Manado* (1900-1970) (The Infrastructure of Manado City); dan Zulqayyim about *Pembangunan Infrastruktur Kota Bukittinggi Masa Kolonial Belanda* (The Infrastructure Development of Bukittinggi City, Dutch Colonial Era). The previous studies show that in addition to the current general understanding of infrastructure and economic ties, it turns out that the infrastructure of the Dutch colonial period also examines markets that are closely related to the economy, urbanization, settlements governed by the Dutch colonial, road construction, and also schools. All of these studies are part of the characteristics of the development of a region of the Dutch colonial era. Some regions that were once the parts of infrastructure were also a concern of the Dutch Colonial Government at that time. After independence, most of the parts were even made into cities or regencies.

Takengon is the capital of Central Aceh Regency in the central of Aceh Province, which is one example of a region that was once used as a part of the *onderafdeling* of the Dutch. As one of the cities in the Gayo Plateau (formerly covering Central Aceh, Gayo Lues, Tanah Alas, and Bener Meriah), the city is well-known as the best coffee-producing region, also had a special nickname in the colonial era namely "Daalen-Gebergte". The nickname in the colonial era was inseparable from the difficulty of the Dutch colonial conquering the Gayo Plateau. This area itself was only able to be occupied by the Dutch after the end of the Gayo-Alas War (1904) which was part of the Aceh War. Since then the Dutch Colonial Government began to establish power in the Gayo Plateau by establishing Takengon as *Onderafdeling* Takengon. The area which was formerly isolated and far from the coast began to develop, in terms of the economy, society, culture of modernization and infrastructure.

Takengon as one of the regions rich in natural resources, the Dutch Government had focused its attention on the development of the Takengon and surrounding areas. The Dutch attention to Takengon could be seen from the infrastructure development that had made Takengon exist compared to other areas in the Gayo Plateau. This was proven by the fact that Takengon was progressing faster than Gayo Lues

and the Tanah Alas District, which were previously part of the Gayo Plateau. Basically, all of the infrastructure development was part of the the Dutch interest especially for their economy. Furthermore, after independence, in 1956 Central Aceh with the capital city of Takengon was established as a regency through Law No.7 of 1956 while Gayo Lues and Alas was still part of Central Aceh District. Because various things such as development disparity and distance, Gayo Lues and Alas became regency in 1974.

The election of Takengon as the capital of the regency indicated that since 1904, Takengon had continued to grow into an area with a diversity of tribes and infrastructure. For this reason, researchers aim to explore the history of some Takengon infrastructures that were built during the Dutch colonial period in 1904-1942.

## Method

This research applies historical method. Based on Garraghan (1957: 33), the historical method is a set of rules and principles that are systematic. In historical method, there are several stages consisting of topic selection, heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography (Kuntowijoyo (1999: 81).

Furthermore, these stages can be described according to the topic of the research. First, the selection of the topics of the research according to available sources, since in historical research the emphasis is on the source. As for the focus of the topic in this study related to infrastructure development in Takengon during the Dutch colonial period.

Second, heuristic is the stage of collecting data/sources related to the topics. The sources are documents, books, photos, articles, newspapers, and others. These sources were collected from various places such as the Aceh Cultural Preservation Hall (known as *Balai Pelestarian Nilai Budaya*) Library, the Unsyiah Library, the Unsyiah Social Sciences Research Institute, the Aceh Archives and Library, the Aceh Regional Library, and articles from various managers.

Third, verification, is a stage to critic the sources. In order to serve a valid data, the source was assessed through both external and internal criticism. External criticism aims to assess the

accuracy of the source, while internal criticism aims to assess the credibility of the data.

Furthermore, to get the meaning of facts and the relationship between facts and other facts objectively, the researcher should conduct interpretation. In some cases, the subjective attitude will emerge, yet the subjective attitude should be more rational than emotional, because in reconstructing a history is hoped that can produce a true history or closer to the truth.

### **The Construction of Bireuen-Takengon Road**

Before the arrival of the Dutch colonial to the Gayo Plateau especially in Takengon, the roads in Takengon were only footpaths and difficult to pass. The path connects the Gayo area with the Aceh coast, such as Bireuen, Kutaraja and to the barrel area on the northern coast of Aceh. To walk heading to Bireuen and Kutaraja (Banda Aceh), people had to go through a path that passes through the Blang Rakal area; from this area, there will be another path that connects to Blang Pidie and Lhokseumawe (Hurgronje, 1996:11). Indeed, at that time the Takengon area (the Gayo Plateau) was still an inland country in Sumatra in general and Aceh in particular. Because the area itself was far in the middle of Aceh and far apart from the coast (Loeb, 2013: 291).

The number of paths made Gayo accessible from all directions, but along the path it passed through forests and mountains. That was why this road could only be accessed by foot, because most of the routes passed through steep terrain (Jongejans, 2008: 73). In addition to previously mentioned path, from the Takengon area there were also other paths that connect Takengon with Gayo Lues and could be continued to Tanah Alas. This trip usually passed several small rivers, mountains, hills, and grasslands. But most of these paths passed through dense forest. All of these trips certainly require quite a long time which was last for days. According to Madjid (2014: 272) why before the 20th century the Gayo Land (Gayo Plateau) was still likened to an area untouched by outsiders both political, geographical and social. Including the Dutch Colonial itself, before entering the 20th century the Dutch Colonial did not get much information about the Gayo Plateau.

After the outbreak of the Gayo-Alas War, to secure the Aceh region including Gayo, the Dutch Government no longer acted violently but with efforts that could arouse the sympathy of the people. The Gayo area was endeavored so that it was no longer isolated (Lekkerkerker, 1915: 299). Although in fact these efforts were inseparable from the interests of the pacific and the Dutch capitalist. Based on Lekkerkerker in Paeni (2016: 30) from 1904 until 1914, the Dutch colonial continue to strive to make the construction of facilities and infrastructure. One of the biggest development projects was the construction of the main road that connects Bireuen-Takengon.

The construction of the road was the idea of Joannes Benedictus van Heutsz who was the General Governor of Dutch East Indies. Although during the time, actually the Dutch financial treasury was empty because it had been used for the Aceh War over a prolonged period of time, but the construction of the road was very essential. Thus, various attempts were made to fill the void in the cost of construction of the road, such as the imposition of fines, taking booty during war, excise, and other means, but all of that was insufficient (Said, 2007: 314). Nevertheless, Van Heutsz still insisted to continue to build the road. It seems, van Heutsz's prediction based on information from Snouck Hurgronje before the Gayo-Alas war and his experiences during the Gayo-Alas war had given many pictures about the Gayo region which had the potential to be a place of exploitation of natural resources and western capitalism. According to C.L (1915: 299) the road began to be built by first focusing the road connecting the Gayo Lut (Takengon) area with the Aceh coastal area.

In 1905-1906, to overcome the costs of building the road, the Dutch began to set a strategy by forcing the Acehnese and Gayos to work. This system was a dark record in the history of Gayo, because this system became the first *corvée* system implemented in Gayo. Based on Kreemer (1922: 118), the road was built in 1905 starting in the Bireuen area (subdivision of the capital), exactly opposite the statue of the late captain Heinzenkneht. The road was built by crossing the Peusangan bridge which was one of the largest iron bridges at that time. Said (2007: 314) stated that at the beginning of the construction of the road, the

Netherlands needed a workforce of 2000 people. Most of the workers were people forced from the Peusangan area. Coercion was one of the factors, why at that time the people of Peusangan became drastically reduced, because most of them died due to hunger and disease.

Apart from the Peusangan, there were other workers, such as the Gayo, the Acehnese (other than Peusangan), the Javanese, and a small number of Chinese. However, at that time, the Gayo people themselves did not take part in the construction of the road, because from 1904 to 1912 the Gayo people themselves considered the Dutch to be infidels who had killed many Gayo people during the Gayo-Alas war which still contained injuries and revenge made Gayo people reluctant to follow Dutch orders. This made the Gayo community themselves still often resisted the Dutch. So from the Dutch themselves, to reduce the resistance was not possible to force the people of Gayo to come to work. As for Chinese and Javanese workers, workers were brought from Java and Medan. They were sent to replace the dead workers. Said (2007: 315) stated that for the people of Aceh (apart from Peusangan people) would be recruited by raiding certain villages that were considered to be able to provide strong workers.

Uniquely, to be able to do this coercion, Dutch argued to conduct inspections of houses to find Acehnese fighters. Whereas the purpose was to look for residents who do not have a family card, these people were dragged to be brought to work. Not infrequently also in some cases the village heads were also dragged along because they were considered to have protected the rebels.

The large number of victims in the construction of this road was inseparable from the Dutch atrocities. The workers are forced to work endlessly and work with the state of the hungry because of food shortages. This not only left wounds for the people of Aceh, Gayo, Java, and China, but also for some Dutch officials who still had a conscience, since workers must work without adequate food and almost full time. They were forced to work on the road by destroying steep cliffs that were steep and winding, such as the area of Cut Panglima, Enang-Enang (Figure 1), Timang Gajah, Wih Kulus, Tenge Besi (Figure 2) and many other areas. In some valleys, workers were also

required to build bridges which were also quite heavy.



Figure 1. Enang-Enang Bridge in 1911  
Source: Digital Collections Leiden University Libraries, KITLV.

Based on oral sources from the Gayo and Aceh communities, the number of domestic workers working on this road was more than 2000 people. Because at that time, there was no exact written data, but seen from the continuous addition of workers indicating that there were more workers than the mentioned number. According to C. Lekkerker in Paeni (2016: 30) the length of the main road the workers worked on was 76 km and the improvement of existing roads along 25 km, so the overall length was 101 km. The cost spent 1.5 million guilders. Iswanto, Sufi, & Abdullah (2012: 2) stated that the road that was built with this suffering was finally completed in 1911. Although according to Afadlal, Cahyono, Gayatri, Dewi, & Sartiani (2008: 170) the road was only completed and officially inaugurated in 1914.



Figure 2. The Construction of Tenge Besi Road  
Source: Digital Collections Leiden University Libraries, KITLV.

Since the completion of the road, the road began to be the main road that might be connected



one area with another region, especially road for areas that had Dutch colonial interests, such as the central government, settlements and plantations. At present, the main road still functions as the main road connecting Takengon with other coastal areas of Aceh. Now, this road is called Lebe Kader road. Although some bridges built by the Dutch colonial have been replaced with many new roads, some of the former buildings remain until the present day, such as the Tenge Besi bridge and the Enang-Enang bridge.

### Center of the Dutch Colonial Government and Settlement

In early 1904, after the Dutch occupied the Gayo Plateau in particularly Takengon, they initially occupied the strongholds of the Gayo people after the Gayo-Alas war. The fortresses were subsequently used as bivouacs, because the number of Dutch *marsoses* to maintain the security of the Gayo area was increasing, so several military headquarters were built.

The influence of the central policy on the existence of a government system and regional development was left to the regional government, so it had a big influence on the policies in Aceh. In *Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indie* (Year 1914, number 87) It was stated that in 1908 in the Takengon area a Dutch ruler with the title of *civielgezaghebber* (civilian ruler) named Captain Infantry P.H. Soetens. At the end of 1914, according to Paeni (2016: 30) The Dutch Colonial Government inaugurated the founding of *onderafdeeling Gayo Lut* and *Deret*, based in Takengon. In *Mailr*, Number 847/13 states that the division, among others, the *meegebied* area was the Gayo Lut or Takengon area, while the *dorotstreek* area was the area outside of Takengon.

Since the placement of the Infantry Captain P.H. Soetens as a civilian ruler, it was at that time several centers of the government were built, especially the posts that are bigger and of a growing number. In addition, several offices such as offices for *civielgezaghebber* began to be built. Most of the buildings at that time were built using wooden planks so that now there was no more left. Since 1914 with the completion of the Bireuen-Takengon road, the construction of government

centers and settlements had become more intense. Development began with careful planning, in which several areas began to be divided, such as the area for the center of government, an area for Dutch settlements, a market area, a Chinese settlement area, and an area for Dutch soldiers. Interestingly, the area seemed to be centered near a river, as if it showed that the Netherlands had planned that Takengon would become a city with the concept of "The Rectangular Cities" and became an elite area of the Dutch in the future. According to Melalatoa (1982: 77), the area that was once used as the central area of government by the Netherlands was a pavilion area, the regent's office, and its surroundings. It can be seen in the Figure 3. There was also a place where local kings reside, this area was located not far from the banks of the River Peusangan (Figure 4).



Figure 3. The Governmental Areas and Dutch Colonial Settlement (1932)  
Source: Digital Collections Leiden University Libraries, KITLV.



Figure 4. Elite Dutch Settlements in the River's Bank of Peusangan (1925)  
Source: Digital Collections Leiden University Libraries, KITLV.

Although Takengon did not meet the requirements as a city and indeed far from being a proper city, but since 1908 where the Bireuen-

Takengon road had not been completed, migrants had begun to arrive in Takengon, such as China, coastal Acehese, and Minang originating from Medan, followed by the arrival of Javanese contracts or Javanese colonization which added to the complexity of mixing between tribes to make a racial regression. According to Yeoh (1996: 1), usually in the colonial period, the city was synonymous with accommodating diverse societies, there were colonized people, migrants, and also natives. They usually lived in an urban area, but usually they would be differentiated based on race or skin color.



Figure 5. Dutch heritage hotel in Buntul Kubu  
(Source: zamri\_takengon/flickr)

In addition, because Takengon was increasingly visited by Dutch officials and especially since the coffee and pine plantations, it was common for private parties to come to Takengon, which made the Dutch built a hotel in the Buntul Kubu area (see Figure 5). This was the first hotel in Takengon. After independence, the area and the buildings gradually changed, many buildings had been replaced by new buildings. At this time of the many buildings only a few buildings remained, such as some Dutch housing and hotels. As for the residential area of China, the building had undergone a total change but this settlement was still named as *Kampung Cine* (pecinan).

### **Markets Development**

The construction of the Bireuen-Takengon road which was completed in 1911 had its own impact on Takengon and the surrounding area. Through this road, the private parties began to arrive to Takengon to invest their capital, especially in coffee and pine plantations. Iswanto, Sufi, &

Abdullah (2012: 2) stated not only that, the road had also opened opportunities for other ethnic groups to enter Takengon. The presence of these migrants was mostly to trade. This had triggered the emergence of commercial transaction places in the form of markets. According to Paeni (2016: 37) ethnic groups that began to arrive, such as coastal Acehese (mainly Pidies), Chinese, and Minang. These people later played an important role in the trade sector at Takengon. Handinoto (2015: 85) stated where during the Dutch colonial period, most Chinese people acted as intermediaries and retailers. They also have a position as merchants among indigenous people.

Besides the Acehese, the Chinese, and the Minang, the arrival of Javanese who at that time came as contract laborers for coffee and pine plantations (Jawa kontrak or Jawa kolonisasi) increasingly added color to the occurrence of highly complex trade interactions. This complex interaction finally triggered the emergence of a simple market in the form of the stall market. Because the wheels of the economy of the Dutch it self had to run with the impetus of a market, then around 1910 to 1918, the Dutch made a policy by determining two places where the market was centered. Since then, two big markets have emerged, the Baleatu market and Pasar Bawah.

At first the two markets were areas far from the settlements of traders and residents, especially the first market (now Baleatu Inpres Market). This market was actually close to the Dutch bivouacs, which were now Kodim 0106. This market area was not too far from the elite settlements of the Dutch in the village of Bom. Whereas Pasar Bawah was closer to the Dutch central government area, rivers, and settlements of Chinese and Minang people (see in Figure 6). Initially the two markets did not operate every day, only operate on certain days, but by 1930 this market began operating every day.

Several Dutch documents showed that in 1925 seen from the physical building form of the Baleatu market (see Figure 7), the market established by the Dutch government was still very simple, where the market building was only roofed with *serule* or *honje* leaves (*Etlingera hemisphaerica*) and without walls. Some market areas were deliberately opened like a field that served to be stall traders. At that time selling with

the degree stall system was still common, especially in terms of buildings, at that time it was impossible to be able to accommodate the growing traders.



Figure 6. Pasar Bawah Market in 1925  
Source: Digital Collections Leiden University Libraries, KITLV.



Figure 7. Baleeatu Market in 1931  
Source: Digital Collections Leiden University Libraries, KITLV.

In 1925, the physical condition of the market became better than before. The roofs that were previously made of *serule* leaves had been replaced by industrial materials. The increasing number of traders, population of Europe, in addition to the different tribes, led into greater interaction, made the market space also expanded, although there were still many traders who trade by using stalls but the market atmosphere was more crowded. Usually after the goods had sold, they would close their stalls by simply picking up the items. The characteristics of these markets were hereinafter referred to as traditional markets which had continued to develop until now. At present, the two markets had been transformed into more modern markets, the physical structure of the old building did not leave any remnant, only the two markets continued to operate until today, and this

market was also a pioneer market for the emergence of other markets in Takengon.

### ***Schools Establishment***

During the Dutch colonial administration, a small number of Indonesians had the opportunity to work with the Dutch (Melalatoa, 1982: 46). The change of the position clearly showed how Dutch politics in selecting candidates according to criteria was always adjusted to local conditions and time. It was increasingly apparent that the tendency was to prioritize skills and descent (Kartodirdjo, 2014: 401). Western education played an important role in this process, although it was limited (Zanden, Luiten, & Marks, 2012: 265). Since the establishment of Dutch educational institutions until the end of the 19th century, in Indonesia, the Dutch colonial education and teaching showed trends determined by political education in particular and cultural politics in general (Kartodirdjo, 2014: 410-411).

For the Dutch, general education was an important tool to train a person to be able to hold a position given by the Dutch and to be recognized in society. Education was also used as a criteria for the appointment of a position, both in government and the private sector. The salary of the person was also usually adjusted to function and education. In short, Western education was an attraction and dream so that people appreciate it without remembering one's origin (Soekiman, 2014: 59). Almost every colony, the Dutch colonial established Western educational institutions that were mostly contrary to the pattern of education before they entered, namely Islamic education. Even though, sometimes there were many people who wanted to go to school in the Netherlands for reasons of being employed by the government or the private sector.

Before the entry of the Dutch colonialism (1904), Gayo area was included in the territory of the Islamic Kingdom of Aceh. The people of Gayo and Alas similar the Acehnese were all devout Muslims. Religious life and Islamic religious life were flourish. In some villages, there were *mersah* and *langgar* as places of worship and education. Gayo culture with Islamic nuance colored the entire life of the local community (Melalatoa, 1982: 19). With regard to those who were Muslim,



the Kingdom of Aceh always took teaching attitude, occasionally Aceh sent a teacher to teach religion (Paeni, 2016: 3). Education at that time was supported by the preachers and emphasized the teaching of the Qur'an. It was the pattern of Islamic education in Gayo which always adapted to local customs so that the term "*Edet Pegerni Religion*" appeared, which meant *adat* was the fence of religion.

During the Dutch colonial period, they occupied Gayo, especially Takengon, a new education system had finally emerged, namely secular education. The Dutch provided the opportunity for aristocratic children to take part in secular education. The aim was none other than for the interests of the Dutch. Gayo people were deliberately educated to be teachers, later they became teachers in Gayo, especially to teach Gayo children from ordinary groups, sometime they also took education outside and were given the opportunity to know the outside world (Sufi & Wibowo, 2013: 72). Many adults, especially those from the Gayo aristocracy, were sent outside Aceh to attend Dutch education, especially in Bukit Tinggi. This secular education was actually introduced to keep Gayo people away from Islam and was directed to convert to Christianity, but none of it ever succeeded, in fact most of these educated people would put up a fight especially at the end of Dutch rule in Indonesia.

In Gayo, the first Dutch school appeared in the 1914s called the *Volk School*. According to Mestoko, Bachtiar, Sunityo, & Arif (1986: 113) the *Volk School* was the same as the Village School, which was provided for *Bumiputera* children with a three-year education. The school itself was only established in 1907, which began on the island of Java. Sufi & Wibowo (2009: 77) stated that in Aceh this school was first established in Aceh Besar on December 30, 1907, but the name of the school was not the *Volk School* but the *mukim*. It was a sign that the establishment of this school in Java was also immediately established in Aceh. This school continued to grow up to Gayo. In 1914, there were 165 in Aceh with a total number of 8200 students.

These developments led the Dutch East Indies Government to establish the first school in Gayo, considering that in 1914 the status of Takengon had become *Onderafdeling*. Based on

Ibrahim (2007: 112-113), in the Gayo Plateau the *Volk School* had been established in several areas, such as in the center of Takengon, Simpang Empat Bebesen, Kebayakan, Nosar, Ketol, Isaq and Tingkem. The school was established periodically but started in government centers, then spreaded to the surrounding areas. Because the school was the same as the primary school and needed a secondary school, the following year, the Dutch planned to establish two secondary schools. Therefore the Dutch Government established two *Vervolgschool* in Gayo (Paeni, 2016: 30). The *Vervolgschool* was first built in 1928 in the center of Takengon and in 1939 the *Vervolgschool* was built again in Kebayakan (see Figure 8).



Figure 8. *Vervolgschool* on the Red Line  
Source: Digital Collections Leiden University Libraries, KITLV.

There was no idea whatsoever of the physical condition of the buildings of each of these schools. But based on the story of the Gayo community, only one school that used to be post-independence was still left, namely *Vervolgschool Takengon*, which was located near the Dutch Government Center (now the area of SMA Negeri 1 Takengon and Central Aceh Regional Police), the construction of the school looked like a Chinese building. According to the story, the building was a Chinese heritage building that was converted into a school. Another school was the *Volkswagen School*. Physical building was similar to the school at that time, because the school was designed specifically for the place of education.

### Conclusions

Before the arrival of the Dutch colonial to the Gayo Plateau, especially Takengon, was an inland area far from the coast, not many knew how the



condition of the area, including the Dutch Colonial. Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the roads were only footpaths that were difficult to pass. The footpaths were a connecting road between Takengon and Aceh coastal areas, such as Bireuen, Kutaraja, Blang Pidie, Lhokseumawe, and others. In addition, another path was a path used as a link between Takengon and Gayo Lues, which later could also directed to Tanah Alas. The number of paths made Gayo reachable from various directions, but to go through it must pass through the forest and mountains. After the outbreak of the Gayo-Alas War, Takengon began to be occupied by the Dutch colonial. As one way to secure Takengon and its surroundings, the Dutch government began trying to win the people's sympathy. One of the Dutch efforts to win the people's sympathy was with infrastructure development.

The construction of the road connecting the Bireuen-Takengon area was the first and largest infrastructure in Takengon. The road was built on ideas and suggestions from Joannes Benedictus van Heutsz. In fact, those years were years where the Dutch financial treasury was empty because it had been used up a lot during the Aceh and Gayo-Alas War. However, due to Dutch considerations that Gayo Plateau was rich in natural resources, it would be able to reimburse all the development costs. To carry out the construction of the road, which certainly requires labor and costs, during 1905-1906 the Dutch Colonial Government implemented a compulsory system and to meet the cost of construction, through collecting excise tax, war booty, and others. The road, which was built along 101 km employing more than 2000 people at a cost of 1.5 million guilders. Left a dark history for the people of Aceh in general, because the construction of the road by splitting the steep cliffs claimed many lives. Most of them died due to fatigue, hunger, illness and accidents. The road had now become the main road connecting Takengon with other areas of Aceh.

The determination of Takengon as *Onderafdeling* by placing Infantry Captain P.H. Soetents as a civilian ruler, made the Dutch began to design an area for both the Dutch government and settlement. If previously there were only simple bivouacs but after 1908, they had begun to turn into the center of Dutch government and

settlement. The construction of the first office was *Civielgezaghebber*, which was not far from the present pavilion of the regent, while other offices were only built after the completion of the Bireuen-Takengon road in 1914. The Dutch settlement area at that time was centered on the river bank, besides there were also Chinese, Minang, and also the Dutch army. Not far from the center of government, the Dutch also built a hotel in Takengon. Currently there were not many remnants of the building, only a part of it, such as some Dutch settlement, Chinese villages, and hotel buildings.

The completion of the Bireuen-Takengon road also had an impact on the presence of migrants from outside, such as the Chinese, the Minangs and the Acehnese. They came on a trade mission, which had triggered the emergence of trade transactions in the form of markets. At first, the market conditions were very simple. The market building was only made of wood with a roof covered with *serule* and most of them were only stalls in the field. However, due to the arrival of Javanese contracts that worked on coffee and pine plantations made the complexity of trade increasingly crowded, therefore the Dutch Colonial began to establish two market areas and build it bigger with better buildings. The market was currently the most central market in the middle of Takengon City, namely Baleatu Market and Pasar Bawah.

The construction of schools became very important for the Dutch at that time, because with the education of native people they would get the opportunity to work with the Dutch, because of that western education became an attraction for native people regardless of their origin. Takengon people, generally, before the arrival of the Dutch, embraced Islam and in terms of their education emphasized Islamic education based on the Qur'an. But since the arrival of the Dutch, a western education system emerged that was synonymous with secular education. In Takengon, the secular school was also built by the Dutch, with the purpose of which was to educate the children in order to work with the Dutch and to separate the teachings of Islam from them. The school that was once built was the *Volk School*, which spent three years. This school was first established in 1914 in

the center of Takengon, but over time, the school spreaded to several other villages such as Bebesen, Kebayakan, Nosar, Ketol, Isaq, and Tingkem. Because the *Volk School* was an elementary school and was supposed to continue to *Vervolgschool*, the Dutch rebuilt the two *Vervolgschool*, each of which was a *Vervolgschool*/Takengon in 1928 and followed by *Vervolgschool* Kebayakan in 1939. The school building was not much left, only from the community's story and the Dutch documents showed that *Vervolgschool* in the center of Takengon was a school similar to Chinese buildings, while *Vervolgschool* Kebayakan was indeed similar to school buildings in general, because it was deliberately built for schools.

The development of Western education has given the impact for people's live, it was not only for Takengon's people, but it also for Aceh as a whole. The highest of people's interest for going to school has prompted the Government and private sector to establish the educational institutions in various regions. The school was also built as a form of government's awareness about existence of the next school from the previous school, it was *Bumiputera*. The students who studied in these institutions have also encouraged the Islamic school that adopt the Western system. In the end, these students would be the educated and movement figures in Japanese colonial period.

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