

The Causing Factors of Early Marriage in Samarengga Village, Menui Island District, Morowali Regency, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Getting married is important because it is part of the human's life cycle. Nowadays, the phenomenon of getting married at an early age (or underage) often occurs in South-east Sulawesi. The early marriage category for men is less than 19 years old while for women less than 16. This research aims to explain the factors that cause such marriage, and to describe their impacts for both sexes. This is a qualitative and descriptive research, with a phenomenological approach. Data collection techniques were carried out using interviews, observation, and documentation and there were seven informants involved. Data analysis techniques were carried out by data presentation, data reduction, data interpretation, and conclusion (verification). The results show that there were four causing factors, such as, self-will, pregnancy before marriage, culture/customs of the local community, and low economic condition of parents. There were positive and negative impacts of early marriage; the first was related to their willingness that they would quickly become independent

and bear their responsibilities. The negative impacts referred to their frequent quarrels and their inability to continue education and such impacts could be caused by economic condition, health, and domestic violence.

Keywords: Marriage, early age, Samarengga village, Menui island

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a very sacred condition to unite physically and spiritually between man and woman by a legal bond. Moreover, a marriage also unites the man's family and the woman's one. Early marriage is carried out under the age of 18 (UNICEF)^[1] and a bond by two sexes who are still in puberty is called a minor marriage.^[2] Furthermore, early marriage (or underage) refers to the one taking place during adolescence, and, in this case, teenagers who are between the ages of 10 to 18 years.^[3]

The Article 7 paragraph (1) of the Law Number 1 of 1974 states about the age requirements in which a marriage is only permitted if a man has reached the age of nineteen years. A marriage could build a safe, peaceful, prosperous, and happy family

so that the growth and development of the next generation would be reliably qualified, be able to compete among the residents in Indonesia.^[4] In line with this, marriage is generally carried out by adults regardless of profession, religion, ethnicity, poverty or richness, living in the village or city.^[5] However, quite a few people who already have both physical and mental abilities will look for a partner according to what they want. In human life, marriage is not temporary, but for life; but, unfortunately, not everyone can fully understand the essence and purpose of marriage, namely achieving true happiness in marriage. The age limit for marriage is very important because marriage requires psychological maturity, and a marriage age that is too young can result in cases of divorce due to a lack of awareness of responsibility in a marriage life for husband and wife.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In principle, the purpose of marriage is to form an eternally happy family, but the opposite often happens. This is due to several factors, both originating from within the husband and wife, and from outside. In this reality, society often causes family disharmony; this is due to the lack of personal mental preparation of both parties (husband and wife) and the age factor, namely young age, so they cannot maintain the integrity of their household as a happy and eternal family. This lack of mental preparation is influenced by a relatively young age and not being well-established in dealing with problems in family life. A survey recorded that 21.5% of Indonesian women got their first marriage under the age of 16 years; in rural and urban it is recorded between 16.1%-24.4%. The largest percentage of early marriages was found in East Java (40.3%), in West Java (39.6%), and in South Kalimantan (37.5%).^[6]

Marriage at an early age is caused by four factors, namely, self-will, local culture/custom, parents' economy situation, and out-of-wedlock pregnancy which are triggered by the individual's desire to get

married because they feel mature and able to raise a family. The parents' economy caused arranged marriages for their children and economic situation are caused by limitations to meet family financial needs, so parents marry their underage children to reduce family responsibilities because teenagers are very vulnerable to sexual behavior. Local culture or local customs create a pride for parents if their children quickly find a mate so that they are respected by the community. Three factors exist, for example, the desire to marry at an early age to avoid slander and adultery, parents' low economic constraints, and woman's pregnancy.^[7] There are five factors of early marriage, namely, individual, educational and science, promiscuous sexual behavior, parents' socio-economic condition, and family culture, in which the P value of approximately is 0.05.^[8] The socio-economic factors become the most dominantly related to early marriage. Likewise, the research conducted by Elisabet shows that the personal factor of parents and child themselves have quite an influence on early marriage because of the child's own wishes were approved by parents.^[14]

The negative impact of early marriage that many children under school-age, because they are pregnant, get marriage. This is in line with the view of Judiasih that marriage does not only occur because of unwanted pregnancies in teenagers, but also because of several factors that influence it and one of them is the influence of social customs which legalize the early marriage for children.^[9] In a number of areas, religious and customary laws are often combined as a theological and sociological basis for legalizing such marriage.

Early marriage has a negative impact on the health of the teen mother and her baby because she is not ready to conceive at an early age due to the mother's reproductive organs not being mature enough. Early marriage brings impact on social and economic aspects, namely income that is not

sufficient for daily needs so that arguments often occur in the household. The harmony of households where such marriages often occur between couples is a result of the selfishness among the households. Such disputes are also caused by difficulties in adjusting which can end in divorce. If such marriage is not handled seriously, the number of divorce shows an increase in Samarengga Village.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The research is descriptive and qualitative by phenomenological approach and was carried out in Samarengga Village, Menui Island District, Morowali Regency, Central Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The village was chosen with consideration that, in the village, early marriages often occurred, which were supported by parents due to economic pressures and habits as well as a lack of attention from other parties towards promiscuity among teenagers.

The informants in this research included one head village, one religious leader, one traditional leader, parents of children who married at an early age, and seven married couples who married at an early age. This research was conducted to provide information about the factors that caused early marriage and about the impact of such marriage. The technique for determining informants was carried out by using purposive sampling. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation (conducting direct observations and initial data collection), interviews (researchers conducted direct interviews with informants about the driving factors or causes of early marriage and the impacts of such marriage to teen mothers related to the issues of children's and parents' own will), promiscuity or dating girlfriends even though they were still underage, and parents' economic condition was low. Meanwhile, the data analysis techniques included data reduction, data presentation, data interpretation, and drawing conclusions or verification.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Causing Factors of Early Marriage

Early marriage is a phenomenon in Indonesia. According to Law number 16 of 2019 (article 1), "marriage is a physical and spiritual bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife with the aim of forming an eternally happy family based on God Almighty."^[10] In accordance with the Law number 16 of 2019, article 7 paragraph 1 states that "marriage is permitted if the age limit for men and women reaches 19 years."^[10] Likewise, marriage is not an easy thing to do; here it requires readiness for the couple doing it. With marriage, a family will be formed which will become a new life. The reality is that this process is not easy, it requires awareness and patience."^[11] About early marriage people often respond positively or negatively; the reason someone gets married early can be influenced by his desire, mature, and readiness which are usually called intention, that is, a person's tendency to get married at an early age. Early marriage among children in Samarengga village are caused by four factors.

A. Low economic condition of parents

RK (informant, 56 years old) said that, when a daughter gets married early, parents' burdens would be slightly decreasing because her husband would be fully responsible for supporting his wife. He also added, with four children and the average family income is Rp. 1,000,000/month (around USD 61,37), then this income cannot meet the family's living needs. Early marriage is due to the parents' weak economies.^[12] Parents who marry their children off at an early age assume that the family's economic burden will reduce; in fact, they hope that their daughter's husband will take full responsibility for various aspects of life. If necessary, they will reduce the burden on us as a family. Parents hope that if their children, especially their daughters, marry quickly, they will be able to help the family. Based on various

opinions, they do not even know about early marriage and normal marriage. What is important is that, if a man and a woman get already dating, parents quickly marry them off like parents had ever experienced before. From various data, it is supported by logical thinking that the cause of early marriage is due to the parents' economic weakness; their parents also support him in getting his child married even at an early age.

B. One's own will

From the results of interviews with research informant HB (18 years), they stated that they got married early because of their own desires. According to him, my girlfriend and I did not experience any problems of coercion from anyone and this was our right to agree. So, everyone has the right to determine a partner regarding the future of the two of us, then after confirming with parents and family, we stated that our family quickly agreed to their marriage even though they were still underage because we didn't want undesirable things to happen, for example disrupting grades. and our family's traditional norms, because they have been dating based on their own will based on mutual agreement, we as a family agreed based on this data, they do early marriage because of one's own desires.^[13] This is because they already love each other, they feel compatible so they are ready and have the confidence to get married regardless of age. In the condition that they already have a partner and have the same desires without thinking about what problems they will face in the future, they get married at an early age.

C. Out-of-wedlock pregnancies

Based on an interview with informant KD (18 years old), usually promiscuity in male and female children occurs in their daily life behavior, and they have free sex relationship until the woman becomes pregnant and the man should be responsible by force due to the pregnancy, so early marriage occurs. Sometimes, early marriage occurs as a solution to pregnancies. Another

informant argued early marriage may happen due to promiscuity, lack of parental control and parental attention, resulting in wrong acts and, as a solution, they must be married. The cause of early marriage may come from several sexual behavior.^[8]

D. Local customs/culture

Informant PH (47 years old) said that usually children violated social norms, for example, they made a date and committed adultery when pregnancy; parents marry them by force. Usually, there is a request from the male child to the female family that they should marry, and this request is abstinence.

2. Impact of Early Marriage

Early marriage brings positive and negative impacts among children as described in the followings.

A. Early marriage and its positive impacts

Each act, like early marriage, a person takes will definitely have impacts, either positive or negative. From an interview with PL (informant, 18 years old), the reason why they, especially parents, married their children at an early age was to lessen their economic burdens, or, at least, to reduce the living cost, so the early marriage couples take full responsibility to their family. The main reasons for early marriage was based on the parents' economic problems.^[14] Usually after marriage, the female daughter became his husband's full responsibility. Parents from the female and male sides think that marrying off their children at an early age is the best way to lighten the burden of their family life. By early marriage, their children's life would be secure and not be neglected because they are married. The parents' burdens, little by little, reduced because their daughter was taken by a man who ought to be responsible. Economy became the issues to survive the household. In short, most parents in Samarengga Village married off their children for the reason of lightening their economic burdens, because their daughter

should be under her husband's care. Other parents married their children at an early age for the reason that their children already have lovers; since they are afraid that their children would do undesirable acts, such as committing adultery, they soon marry them. Since a marriage is basically to unite a man and a woman physically and psychologically, the couples who would learn each other to maintain their marriage commitment.

B. Early marriage and its negative impact

In reality, early marriage has a negative impact on a pregnant woman under 16 years old because the growth of her reproductive organs is not yet perfect. The risk of death for mother and her baby during birth always happens. If her baby is alive, he/she will also have both mental and physical disabilities such as seizures, blindness, and deafness. Early marriage might bring impacts on her reproductive organs which are not well-matured, so they are not ready to have sex, especially if she gets pregnant and then gives birth.^[15,16] If forced, trauma would occur because of extensive tearing of the genitals; it is feared that infection would occur which harms the reproductive organs and even endangers life. There will also be social impacts, in which she is marginalized and is faced in the lowest positions, and she is only considered complements to man's sex. This is completely contrary to the teachings of any religion. Usually, early marriage can reduce family harmony; this is caused by emotions that are still unstable, by the excitement of young blood, and by immature way of thinking.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the discussion, it can be concluded that early marriage among children under 16 years of age for females and under 19 years for males is dangerous as found in Samarengga Village. The causing factors of early marriage are the parents' weak economic condition, the young male and female's willingness in which they feel that they are compatible for

their future, the factor of out-of-wedlock pregnancies due to promiscuity which ultimately results in pregnancy and being married off at an early age, and the cultural factors/local customs. Early marriage brings positive impact since parents will have low burden on economic problems, and will be able to avoid immoral acts, adultery, and responsibility. Meanwhile, there are also negative impacts on psychology, biology, and teen's mother health, and serious problems of reproduction organs.

Declaration by Authors

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