

Political Constraint on Financing Child Marriage Prevention: A Case Study in Wiralaga, Mesuji

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ABSTRACT

The Government has formulated a series of policies to reduce child marriage as an effort to promote adolescent (sexual and) reproductive health. One of them is the Child Protection Act No: 35, 2014. The high prevalence of child marriage demonstrates that the system did not work as expected. One of the suspected issues is the political obstruction that causes problematic financing systems in child marriage prevention. This qualitative study was aimed at identifying the political constraint in financing child marriage prevention Mesuji. This study found informal political challenges in financing Child Marriage Prevention. The child marriage policy packaged in conjunction with financial support, disclose not gratified results in Wiralaga experiences. Slight female participation was driven by patriarchy consuetude. These challenges made the need for a policy scheme is not only done in a formal by affirmative policy but also the informal approach. For gender mainstreaming, issues on village budgetary policy, especially early marriage, should be enacted for conducting the informal strategy. Encouraging the existing women entity, such as *Ibu-ibu pengajian* (women religious group), *Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga* (PKK – Family Welfare Empowerment) to take a role in village political budgeting process.

Keywords: *child marriage, informal politic, gender mainstreaming budget*

1. INTRODUCTION

The government has made efforts in the form of policies to reduce child marriage rates. From the Child Protection Act No. 35 of 2014 to the most recent is a revision of the Marriage law which states that the minimum age for marriage is 19 years for both men and women. The logic of the policy is minimum age of restriction are known as the best means to prevent child marriage [1]. Moreover, various policies that have been issued by the government, it gives evidence that the government does not stand idly by. However, the results of the policies that have been issued did not meet satisfying results. Formal efforts through the policy issued by the government, in fact, are still not directly proportional to the encouraging results of child marriage rates in Indonesia. Child marriage rates in Indonesia are still quite alarming. There are at least 17% of women who marry before the age of 182. Marriage is caused by various social aspects in society that are still permissive to child marriage [3][4].

This condition raises questions about whether the policies that have been issued by the government have been running optimally or are constrained in their implementation. In some empirical experiences, ethnographic research indeed shows that efforts to prevent child marriages do not stop at the level of

problems that can be solved by formal policy alone. The strong socio-cultural spectrum is a challenge for the implementation of formal government policies [5].

In the village of wiralaga cases, mesuji. Restriction policy for child marriage do not meet the best result. The nuances of the socio-cultural aspects in preventing child marriage are quite pronounced became though hindrance. The formal policy still has a gap to legalize child marriage and assisted by traditional rite called gubalan. Gubalan enable young people under age in Wiralaga propose their girlfriend even without blessing from their parents via traditional rite [4].

The conditions in wiralaga were reflecting the lack of participation and awareness of the issue of child marriage prevention. It has shown by the small budget of the village fund used for health programs in general and empowerment in particular. Besides, the budget is indeed able to reflect the commitment of an institution in realizing its support for public welfare issues [2][6][7]. In the Wiralaga context, the management of village funds is an indication of the village government in addressing the issue of community empowerment to be able to prevent child marriage.

Many issues that could explain why the village funds for health sector empowerment, mainly focusing on child marriage is so inappropriate³. In Wiralaga case,

elaboration about the social-cultural context takes a central role. This paper will explain how government policy efforts, both directly and indirectly, to prevent child marriages meet quite severe challenges through the pattern of budget management in the village. Especially in budgeting patterns that show a minimal portion of empowering women to prevent child marriages hooked up with social-cultural aspects. Tracing the causes of the marginalization of welfare issues in the regions that still requires a quite severe handling.

2. METHOD

This qualitative study conducted in two villages, Wiralaga I and Wiralaga II, Mesuji sub-district. Data obtained through focus group discussions, observations, and interviews involving Wiralaga people, village officials, government officials, religious leaders, and Wiralaga respectable figures. A thematic analysis was carried out on the collected data following the study objectives. Triangulations were also conducted to confirm the themes arisen in the analysis, followed by a conclusion formulation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social Context of Wiralaga Community

Wiralaga is an area that was built with a thick cultural influence a-la monarchy and patriarchy with the influence of Palembang culture. A prince who initially occupied and built Wiralaga became an area because he was interested in fertility and abundant natural resources. Throughout the history of leadership in wiralaga in the colonial period, the reins of village leadership were passed on to direct descendants. After the colonial era changed, the leadership in the village continued to change to the oligarchic circle that was established since the inception of the Wiralaga village since named the Dusun Kabung.

As a region with a long history and is having a pretty strong cultural root, Wiralaga is presenting the phenomenon of informal actors who influence society. The presence of the state, through the village government or district, does not necessarily erode the influence of the power and power of informal actors such as figures. Some of these informal actors do indeed belong to formal leaders in the community, for example, the village head. The village head of Wiralaga indeed has a family tree that cannot be separated from the descendants of informal village leaders. History shows the change of power in wiralaga dominant oligarchs pattern practiced in village administration management.

On the contemporary political map, the strong influence of the oligarchy work in the recent regional head elections and legislative elections. Local elections show, local elite Wiralaga Wiralaga I and II were able to resist the strong influence of incumbent candidates. Almost in most of the Mesuji regency areas, incumbents were able to win absolutely except in Wiralaga, which incidentally is under

the influence of local elites who support their political opponents.

The Marginal Role of Women in Development

Women in Wiralaga village are indeed placed in quite special positions in daily life, especially after marriage life⁸. This feature has even existed for a long time, stated in the customary law of Mesuji. The customary law contained in Mesuji's community in article [9], women are very protected even when a bachelor/man who touches or nudges a girl or widow will be fined.

At the same time, women in the culture of society about Pi-il or values that are used to hold in interacting with others.

Raja Pi-il is a woman, gentle towards relatives.
Balanced Pi-ilnya girl, always trying to get love.
Mrs. Pi-il's food ingredients and meal costs.
His daughter Pi-il is guarding his behavior and honor

Even though these values are somewhat acculturated and assimilated by the values of the Islamic religion. The realization of Pi-il is still a little felt in the daily life of society⁴. Examples of daily life that can be seen from this special treatment are the provision of larger allowances⁴. In social order structures such as marriages, special child girls are therefore highly guarded. Having a daughter is likened to a priceless treasure, especially when it will be traced to the level of marriage. Daughters in the marriage arrangement will receive the rights given the term *uang jujur*. The amount of *uang jujur* is quite large as capital to hold a lively marriage that increases the pride of the family.

This special treatment does not, however, fully place women in having a significant influence in society. Women are still considered to only have domestic roles, such as caring for children, cooking and other homework [4]. Women who have jobs by trading or *ngedolok* (looking for wood in the forest) are only considered to help the family economy. Yet in fact, the work of husbands such as nocking, *ngehume* (gardening) and electrocution is also not a permanent job that generates fixed income as well.

Domestication of the role of women in society can also be seen from their minimal role in village governance. The lack of this role is seen in terms of quality and quantity. In terms of quantity, women's membership in the village office and BPD (Village Representative Body) is quite minimal. Noted more than 20% of BPD membership and village officials. The lack of representation of women shows that formally their participation is seen as a minority compared to the dominant role of men.

On the quality side, women's involvement in the formulation and management of the budget can also be said to be not too significant. The inclusion of community elements in the deliberative management of allocations in the use of village funds becomes very biased when the number of women's representation is very lame. The involvement of the PKK and community elements

representing women politically lacked a strong influence in determining the management and allocation of village funds because they lacked a bargaining position.

Infrastructure Development Bias

In the management of village funds issued by the Ministry of Villages, from year to year, the Priority of Village Funds from 2015 to 2020 has a shift. Changes to the regulation regarding the prioritization of village funds have indeed been seen that there has been a shift over the focus on the use of village funds. Village funds are no longer merely used for physical development, the Regulation from year to year opens the use of village funds that can be used for human resource development. The effort is open to various problems and needs in the village concerned. However, in its implementation, it cannot be denied that the dominance of the use of the budget for physical development funds or infrastructure is still quite dominant [9].

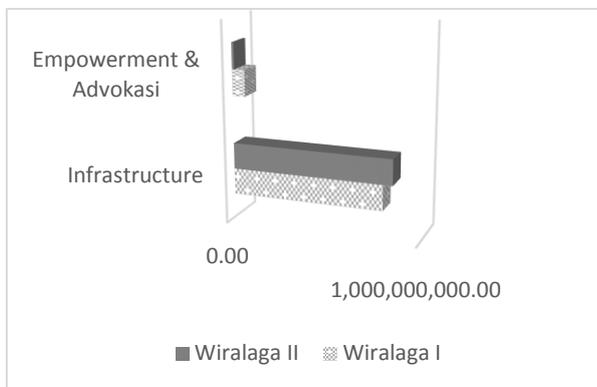


Figure 1 Dana Desa (Village funds) Expend

This is what happened in Mesuji Regency in general, and in particular in the villages of Wiralaga I and Wiralaga II. As a relatively new Regency, the regions in Mesuji can indeed be said to still require a lot of physical infrastructure development to support community activities and traffic. However, after several years of existence, the focus of development is still focused on physical development alone. The issue of human resource development is marginalized with the issue of the need for roads and other public service infrastructure.

This development pattern then indeed remains the breath of budget management even though with the existence of village funds, the village can manage a relatively large budget to meet the needs of the village. In the experience of Wiralaga I and Wiralaga II, the pattern of village fund management has a similarity to the pattern carried out by the Mesuji district government. Infrastructure development is still very dominant carried out using village funds. This is seen in the example of budget use in 2017 (figure 1). The disparity in budget allocations in managing village funds between infrastructure and community empowerment is very far away. The portion of the budget allocation for empowerment is quite small

compared to the total amount of budget that the village has.

The tendency of physical development patterns in the use of village funds is indeed driven by the role of the Mesuji regency government in directing the use of village funds through the agency that oversees village affairs. This directive is very strong because it determines the disbursement of the village funds themselves. Even though in fact, the procedure for proposing the use of the village should be a consultation and decision of the village apparatus.

In addition to the dominance of infrastructure issues in the management of the budget owned, the regional governments resulting from the post-reform division still tend to be ineffective and inefficient in managing the budget. The large portion of the budgeting for administrative and operational expenses marginalizes budget allocations for public services¹⁰. Even if there is budgeting for public services such as health, the government faces very serious challenges in providing budgets for promotive and preventive programs [11].

The Hindrance on Financing Child Marriage Prevention

To prevent child marriages, the government has indeed made formal policy efforts issued by the relevant ministries. From the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Child and Women's Protection have issued policies related to efforts to prevent child marriages. In practice in the field, these efforts are hindered by political matters. In the experience of Wiralaga I and Wiralaga II, efforts to prevent child marriages have indeed been made, but often constrained by funding problems. Programs and efforts to prevent child marriages that take place are often more based on and run by agencies concerned with health issues alone. The condition develops in the health budget is still less proportionally so that financing on the prevention of child marriage to be quite small [12][13].

The potential for budgeting to encourage more rapid prevention of child marriage through financing outside the health sector budget, namely village funds, is in practice impeded by budgeting patterns that are not sensitive to health problems in general and child marriage issues due to the dominance of patriarchy. The dominance of men in the formulation of village fund management policies makes the portion given is quite small for community empowerment programs. Empowerment Programs can be an indirect or direct effort to prevent child marriage. The empowerment that is directly related to the prevention of child marriage can be in the form of socialization and increasing public knowledge of the dangers of child marriage. Indirectly, efforts to provide training and skills to the community, especially from children to adolescents can encourage to not conduct child marriage.

The potential of village funds is quite large indeed, and then often only used infrastructure alone [14]. This tendency is because such budgeting patterns are easily able to be seen and the results are seen. Budgeting that is more aimed at community empowerment programs is less

likely to produce good political incentives for actors holding the authority to manage the budget. It is undeniable that the use of village funds with infrastructure financing will be easier to bring political incentives that are instant and measurable in their impact [15][16].

On the other hand, the conditions that underpinned the pattern with the pattern of decentralization is not running optimally and underdeveloped control and management system in village officials [17]. Instead of strengthening participation, the patterns that emerge from decentralization are strengthening oligarchies [18]. Then, oligarchy hijack public participation because the process of governance dominated by the elite alone [19]. Whereas, empowerment becomes one of the keys to improving the quality of life of women themselves [20].

4. CONCLUSION

The strong role of village officials dominated by men and supported by a pattern of budgeting that is not sensitive to gender representation substantively provides less space for the budget to support child marriage prevention. Village funds are still not maximally used to improve the standard of living of the community. The management pattern is still too strong based on the physical development efforts of the village. The budgeting pattern has indeed shown the result of access to transportation, especially roads being built. Human development efforts are still trapped in the logic of physical infrastructure.

The use of budget which is quite minimal in the field of community empowerment shows that especially for women and prevention of child marriage shows that human development efforts have not proceeded as expected. This condition is inseparable from the dominant role of patriarchal patterns in some aspects of village fund budget management. The problem of women's representation and involvement is still too minimal. Women self-employed are still partially complacent with their domestic roles wrapped up in the "privilege" of their position in the family but do not have too much influence in decision making, both at the family and community level.

These challenges made the need for a policy scheme are not only done in a formal but also informal approach. For gender mainstreaming, issues on village budgetary policy, especially early marriage, should be acted on for conducting the informal strategy. Encouraging the existing women entity, such as women's religious groups, Family Welfare Empowerment (PKK) to take a role in the village's political budgeting process. Two examples of this group have the potential to be directly involved in managing village budget funds. It is because this group has limited efforts to empower themselves and has existed in society [21].

Formal strategy, encouraging clear and firm affirmation policy for women's representation. Especially in the aspect of women's representation of village officials and village representative bodies. These two things aside from

the amount of confirmation are also expected to be able to be representative of women's interests in budgeting management. Formal and informal strategies in encouraging women's participation to be able to carry out gender mainstreaming in the management of village funds will lead to the opening of a budget for the prevention of child marriage.

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