

# The Pattern of Early Marriage for Girls

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**Abstract**— The practice of early marriage has been banned in international agreements because of the many negative impacts in terms of health, economy and psychology for mothers and children. But the practice of early marriage is still going on with different patterns between one region and another. The focus of this paper is to explain the marriage patterns of girls who are still in school. This phenomenological research rests on the perspective of the phenomenological theory of Alfred Schutz as a knife of analysis. Data were collected by participatory observation and in-depth interviews. This study shows that the practice of early marriage in the village of Randukerto was first carried out with the Sirri marriage contract. As for the couple's relationship after the marriage contract, Sirri is not entirely like a husband and wife, girls can still go to school, they live separately with their husbands, and do not have to do the duties of a wife like taking care of her husband and home. Only after they have held a wedding reception, the girl must do her duties to take care of her husband and home.

**Keyword**- *early marriage patterns, daughter's marriage, wife's obligations.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Girls who undergo early marriage have lost their teenage years and children's rights to enjoy [1]. Society means that early marriage is not limited to age [2], [3]. Early marriage in children is still widely practiced, namely at the age before 18 years [4]–[6]. As happened in Ethiopia, losses and trauma have been experienced by girls who marry too early. Some of the girls who were married before the age of 15 years and never attended school had experienced sexual initiation before their first menstruation, which was experiencing coercion in marriage [7].

Some factors that cause child marriage on socio-economic aspects are lower education, rural residence, poverty [3], [8], [9], lack of Unjust livelihood opportunities and gender norms [10]. Structural factors like that can cause a marriage to children. The average woman has a lower education has been married at the age of children [11], [12]. Whereas poverty is a trigger for child marriage [3] because, for female families, it is economically beneficial in the short term, but it does not improve the household's economic status in the long run or financial security for the future, because married girls will tend not to work [13]. Women tend to be non-working and women's wages are smaller than men [5]. From this perspective, child marriage tends to be maintained and exacerbates poverty. Universally, unmarried women (ages 15 to 24) have an attitude of refusing child marriage and prefer to enter into partnerships as adults. This

shows that the practice of child marriage must be stopped [14].

Forced child marriage has been considered as a form of child trafficking and is prohibited globally [15]. Child marriage is widely recognized in international treaties as violations of children's rights both in the fields of health, education, equality, non-discrimination, and living free from violence and exploitation [16]. Thus countries in the world must amend or adopt laws that regulate the minimum age for marriage at the age of 18 [17], [18].

A hard ban on the practice of early marriage is not without reason. There are many negative effects that impact mainly on mothers and future generations on an ongoing basis. The negative effects of early marriage reach various aspects of maternal and child life, both health, economy, and social [19]. Negative effects of early marriage on health aspects include causing stunting in children [20], the risk of preterm birth [21], the risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth [22], as well as the dangers of physical and mental health in mothers [23], [24]. Early marriage will also have a negative impact on long-term generations. The existence of poor conditions at the beginning of life not only affects the physical growth of children but also their brain development and abilities, with long-term consequences to adulthood [25]. The results showed that marriage with age resulted in much better child health and education outcomes compared to underage marriages [26].

While the negative effects of early marriage on social and economic aspects include the emergence of discriminatory attitudes and lack of employment opportunities for women, forced sexual relations, unplanned pregnancy, domestic violence [27], dropping out of school [28], [29], and low education in the next generation [30].

Early marriage often sacrifices women, among others, the opportunity to get a lower education, poverty in the countryside, resignation to gender-based domination, violence against women [31]. After marriage, women's opportunities for mobility, both social and physical, are severely restricted, which hinders their self-development and autonomy. The loss of opportunity to complete post-marriage education is due to the many household duties and stigmatization in pursuing further post-marriage education [29], [32]. Therefore, it is important for the government to strive to end the practice of early marriage. The advantage of preventing early marriage is to reduce population growth substantially, so as to reduce state spending on public facilities [33].

Various countries in the world have launched several programs to minimize the number of early marriages, including in the form of laws prohibiting the practice of underage marriages [34]. But often the regulations are not enforced due to religious excuses and others so that it is not effective for the elimination of child marriage [35]. One of the hardest challenges is to eradicate the practice of early marriage, namely the existence of culturally embedded expectations, child marriage preferences derived from norms and culture about a woman's adherence to marriage, and sexual purity in marriage so that men can have a wife who younger [36].

Apart from the legal aspect, several countries have implemented several indirect programs aimed at the practice of early marriage, among others, efforts to prevent early marriage practices by improving maternal education [37]. Because there is a positive relationship between maternal early marriage to children's cognitive and non-cognitive growth [38]. There is also a conditional and unconditional cash assistance, school uniform assistance, life skills curriculum, school voucher program, etc. These programs have shown results in decreasing rates of early marriage [5]. As happened in Kenya, it has provided cash assistance to orphans and underprivileged children, although it did not provide significant results in reducing the number of early marriages [39]. In Jordan, in contrast, the expansion of education can increase the age of marriage in some women, but not in men. In addition to education, increasing opportunities in the labor market and the quality of work can also increase the age of marriage even though not all [40].

Early marriage practices tend to survive in remote and rural, backward and poor areas [7]. That was the case in Randukerto village, Rebalas village, Pasuruan Regency. Uniquely, in this area, it is not taboo if a girl is married when they are still in school and still doing activities as usual. Whereas in previous studies it was found that the opportunity to complete education was lost after marriage because of the many household duties and stigmatization in post-marital advanced education in Indonesia [29], [32]. It turned out that the research did not occur in this area, the girls actually continued school until they graduated even though they were married. Because this article discusses the Marriage Pattern of Girls Who Are Still Schooling in Randukerto Hamlet, Rebalas Village, Grati Sub-district, Pasuruan Regency.

The paradigm used in this study is the phenomenology paradigm by using the theory of Alfred Schutz. As Alfred argues about the intersubjective world that human action becomes a social relationship if a human gives a certain meaning or meaning to his actions, and another human being understands his actions as meaningful [41].

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative approach with phenomenological research design. The informants in this study were female students who experienced early marriage practices and religious leaders in the village of Randukerto, Rebalas village, Grati district, Pasuruan district. Data collection techniques in this study were in-depth interviews and participatory observation. Data analysis techniques consisting of six stages, namely 1) Reading and re-reading; 2) Initial noting; 3) Developing Emergent themes; 4) Searching connections across emergent themes; 5) Moving the next, and 6) Looking for patterns across cases [42].

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. *Young Girls are the ideal people to Get Married*

The age pattern of the couple between the bridegroom and the bride in the child marriage case which took place in the Randukerto hamlet consisted of three types of pairs.

1) *A husband and wife are still children*: a child is a child whose age is less than 18 years of age as stated in the Child Protection Act Article 1 states that what is meant by a child is someone who is not yet 18 years old. As stated by Azizah Silviah, "... I am 15 years old ... Inul is one year older than me ...". That means the age of a married couple is still categorized as children. At that age, they should still be in high school.

2) *Husband is an adult, the wife is still a child*: As stated by Siti Erni Astutik, "I am 15 years old ... Dulloh's age, at least 5 years above me ...". That means that the bride is still categorized as a child because she is considered not ready to get pregnant so that it can threaten the health of the mother and child, and the husband is more mature.

3) *Middle-Aged Husband, the wife is still a child*: Middle-aged husband means husband's age 36-50 years while the wife is less than 18 years old. As Putri said: "I am 15 years old. ... I used to be married to parents. At first, I didn't know the person. But after I know, I don't want to. Finally canceled. Until then I met my girlfriend ... She's 19 ...". That means having been matched with a middle-aged person. But he refused after knowing the matchmaker. But after their arranged marriage is canceled, Putri is married to someone else who is younger. His age is classified as an adult. While the woman is still a child.

Saidah said differently, "... When I married I was 14 years old. ... *Cak* It's only 35 years old ...". That means the age of women is still classified as children, while the age of her husband is already middle-aged. But their marriage still continues and they already have children. The general tradition of society considers that the age difference between husband and wife is very far (more than 10 years) is considered not fair in the community.

Based on the three age patterns of the above couple, it appears that regardless of the age of the male partner, the bride's age is all under 18 years old. It is considered as an ideal thing for local people to marry their children as soon as possible, as said by Pak Sanan, a local religious figure, "... in this village if their children are quickly proposed, people are happy because they feel their daughters are selling fast ..." . Quickly, I mean people are asking for it quickly.

Based on Alfred Schutz's theory of the intersubjective world, that people create social reality and are forced by existing social life and by the cultural structure of their ancestral creations. So, without realizing it, the girls' parents were forced to accept applications even though their daughters were underage, forced by social life around those who believed that what was better for women was to marry at an early age, and less well if they married too late. because there are no men who want to apply (*melamar*). As said by Sana, "... if a girl does not get married soon it is considered unsold ..."

In addition, there is a belief that being a taboo to reject a man's application because it can result in the girl becoming a spinster. It is belief and myths that compel parents unconsciously to accept every man who applies for their daughter.

### B. *Between the Desire of Children and the Force of Parents*

As for the pattern of choosing a partner or the way a man has an affair with a woman, based on data in the field, there are 3 types of patterns, namely:

1) *forced marriage*: Forced marriage, that is, a man betrothed to a girl at the choice of a parent or family, while the girl in question refuses the match, but the marriage is still held by the family regardless of the opinion of the girl. As I said, "... I don't want to be arranged, *Ning*. I still want to go to school. But you still force it. If you don't want me to be told to stop school ..."

Anyone cannot force children to get married, let alone block the right to go to school. Before an 18-year-old child has the right to get the rights as a child, and other people, including parents, are prohibited from claiming the right. This was stated in the Child Protection Act.

2) *Coercive marriage*: Coercion without coercion means, a daughter is arranged by a parent or family with a man, and the daughter does not object to the arranged marriage. As Azizah Silfiah said, "... what do I say parents ... I just resigned ..." The same opinion from Siti Erni Astuti, "... I was matched up. Mak, I ask home. And my parents agreed. I think what parents say ... ". Both girls tend to resign what parents say and don't mind at all with marriage.

3) *No matchmaking (choosing their own partner)*: In choosing a partner, a girl is not always matched by a parent or family, they choose their partner, or they can say they are married to their own boyfriend. As Putri said "... I met my girlfriend after being separated from my first match ...". Saidah said, "... I am not matched up. I got a letter from Cak Tinggal. Then I reply if I also like him ..."

Based on the statements of the two daughters, that marriage is based on one's own choice with a boyfriend and not because of marriage. This shows that young marriage is preferred rather than continuing school. Based on interviews with local leaders, Mr. Guru Sanan, "... Education awareness here is still very low. Children and parents are the same. Instead, they feel happy because they think their daughter is selling ... ". This shows that the social conditions of local people are still less aware of education, with a low economic level. Parents tend to like having girls quickly get a mate.

### C. *Tradition Before Marriage*

The tradition before marriage here means some traditions carried out by the local community before marrying off their child. If in general there is a tradition of applications from men to female families, then there are some differences in traditions before marriage in this village.

1) *Masang angin*: *Masang angin* tradition is the effort of the men to spread the word to the crowd by word of mouth that the man intended to propose to the girl. The goal is for the girl to hear the news that the girl is about to be proposed by the man. Based on Alfred Schutz's (1972) theory of projection of an action should have two sides of character; that is something of the past and something of a

future nature: the past because all the characteristics of meaning are showing or depicting, while the future because of what is involved is estimation, prediction, or anticipation. then the young man's actions are based on projections of past actions, namely the young man glanced at the actions of the previous youth who did the same thing if they wanted to *melamar* for a girl. Whereas based on projections of future actions, the aim of the young man to spread the word to the crowd was for the girl to hear the intentions of the young man.

2) *Begusi*: *Begusi* tradition is the process by which a representative of a male family proposes to a woman's family home to be willing to marry the man in question. In this case, involving a few people, that is usually two people who convey the intent of the man to propose to the woman. As explained by Putri, "... First, the representatives of the male family went to the woman's family home. This is usually called by the name of the accomplice. After that, the female family gave a reply that they agreed ..."

The tradition may be almost the same as other communities in Indonesia, it's just that the terms may be different. In the view of the local community, if a man brings a family to propose to the girl, that means that the man respects the girl's family. It shows seriousness, responsibility and not only wants to date or play with girls.

3) *Lamaran*: *Lamaran* is a tradition in which male families bring a group of their neighbors with gifts as a sign that their relationship has been formalized and known to many people. As explained by Putri, "... After that the male family brought their neighbor's group with gifts of cakes, clothes, and jewelry to the women's family home. This is an *lamaran* ..."

*Lamaran* Traditions are carried out if the two families have agreed to each other and show that they are moving to a more serious process. In this tradition there is a process of using rings or necklaces from parents or families of men to prospective brides. This tradition seeks to show the public that the man and woman in question have been officially related so that no other man or woman can interfere with the couple.

4) *Balesan*: is a tradition of returning applications from male families by way of a female family carrying a group of their neighbors while carrying many gifts like people applying (*lamaran*) as a form of retaliation from male family applications.

As explained by Putri, "... After that the next day the female family gave a reply application. They also brought a group of their neighbors carrying souvenirs and clothes to the men's family home. ...". This is a tradition that is quite unique here. Usually some people in Indonesia, applications are only carried out by male families and there is no reply application term from female families. But here there is a requirement that after the male family brings the application group, then the next day or a few days later the female family must also bring a group of applications with lots of souvenirs.

5) *Bakalan*: Bakalan is a term that male and female couples have been officially engaged. As explained by Putri, "... After the process they both have been declared ... Although no application has been made, as long as it has been requested by the male family and approved by the female family, they are also called *bakalan*...."

A pair of men and women are called 'going to' if the male family has applied for a female family and is approved. If a pair of men and women have been declared going, they are considered serious to continue on to the marriage level, unlike the concept of courtship, it seems only exploration and not serious.

6) *Burung*: *Burung* are the term if male and female couples who were engaged in deciding or canceling their relationship for a reason. As explained by Putri, "... If in the middle of the road there is a problem, either from the side of the man or woman and they declare canceling the relationship then it is called the term *burung* ... ". The term *burung* or cancellation usually occurs if one of the partners refuses or disagrees with the family arranged marriage. Or it could be because one partner likes someone else.

Based on the processes taken by men and women before going to the marriage level in accordance with Alfred Schutz's theory of world reality that is intersubjective in the sense that members of society share basic perceptions of the world that they internalize through socialization and enable them to interact or communicate [41]. Whereas between men and women in conducting interaction and communication before reaching the level of marriage is based on basic perceptions internalized in the local community. So that at the level of the intersubjective world, one does not interpret their actions on the basis of personal experience, but is based on interaction with the local community.

#### *D. Not Getting Marriage Certificate, Marriage Sirri The Way Out*

To validate the relationship of male and female partners as husband and wife to children is usually done with the Sirri marriage contract. Sirri marriage is a marriage contract process that only applies terms and conditions based on Islamic religious law, without recording at the Religious Affairs Office (called KUA, the Office that deals with marriages in Islam). The reason for the Sirri marriage contract is because the couple of minors obviously will not get a marriage certificate from KUA. Therefore all underage couples are always carried out by way of the Sirri marriage contract.

As Alfred Schutz's theory of the social world must be seen historically, namely that social action is an action that is oriented towards the behavior of people or others in the past, present and future. Based on this theory, the actions of Sirri's marriage were based on the current condition, namely the girl who was being married was still classified as less aged. While based on historical aspects in the past, there are already regulations stipulating that underage marriages will not get a marriage certificate from KUA. Based on historical aspects in the future, the purpose of Sirri's marriage is that after the couple of pegantin are married, they are considered

to be legitimate as a married couple according to Islam even though the State is not recognized.

The execution time of the marriage contract also varies, namely:

1) *A marriage contract is made at the time of application*: The usual marriage contract is done at the time of application, which is when a family group of prospective grooms comes to the house of the prospective bride. After the group of family brides returned to their homes. The bride stays in the groom's family home to get married in the evening. In this case the status of a girl is a wife, no longer a girl even though she is still going to school.

2) *A marriage contract is held simultaneously with a wedding reception*: The pattern of marriage contracting is also commonly carried out during the wedding reception at the bride's house. After the application, only as a male fiancée. because he wasn't accredited at the time of application.

#### *E. Forge Age or Postpone Marriage Certificate*

Because the status of the bride and groom is still underage, they cannot automatically register at KUA. Therefore there are two KUA recording patterns that are commonly done in the case of child marriages in Rebalas village, namely:

1) *Faking the age of a girl*: In order for KUA officials to be willing to provide marriage certificates to underage couples, the usual shortcuts made by female parents is to change the year of birth of their child to reach the age of 16. As Mr. Sanan said, "... people here usually pay to be able to age their daughters ..." The practice of age forgery has been banned by the state, but forgery can pass on the KUA by paying a sum of money.

2) *Postponing marriage registration to sufficient age*: Deferring the recording of marriages until the age of 16 years of age does not receive a marriage certificate until it is sufficient for the requirements to arrange a marriage certificate at KUA. Marriage certificates from KUA are very important especially for women. The wife can be left behind by an irresponsible husband if only Sirri's marriage is done. Having a child will also be harmed because you cannot get your father's status in the birth certificate. However, some parents are still unaware of the dangers of child marriage and still continue today.

Based on the two recording patterns above, historically the motive of faking the age of the bride is that she immediately get legal recognition as a married couple so that she can avoid the actions of her husband who is not responsible. As Schutz's view in interpreting human actions sees meaning in two frameworks; the meaning that is done because, and the meaning that is done so that the order [41]. On the other hand, for those who choose to postpone getting a marriage certificate from KUA until they are old enough, it is due to the habits of others before, namely that many people who marry before they are old enough often

postpone recording at the KUA, and it is considered not problematic.

#### *F. Problem in Making Child Birth Certificates*

Seeing the pattern of delays in recording marriage certificates in KUA, the problem is in making a child birth certificate. Because there are several cases of husband and wife already have children before they get a marriage certificate. In the child's birth certificate, it will appear that the age of the child is older than the age of the parent's marriage. The date in the Marriage Certificate must be at least 9 months rather than the date of birth of the child.

#### *G. Wife Free from House Tasks*

After marriage, the status of a woman turns into a wife. Of course it will change their responsibility, namely focusing on serving the husband and taking care of the household. But this is not the case in the practice of child marriage here. The daughter who has been married to Sirri is not shackled by household duties. Activities as usual including going to school can be done. Therefore, despite being married, the wife's right to attend school is not deprived. Marriage ties are only a tool to justify them walking together according to Islamic law.

As Alfred Schutz's theory of world reality is intersubjective in the sense that community members share basic perceptions of the world that are internalized through socialization and enable the community to interact or communicate. In this case, the reality of a wife who is still in school and already tied up in the sirri marriage is not entirely the right of the husband. The wife still has the right to school and do their activities freely as usual. It must be accepted by men. The perception of child marriage in rebalas is that a woman is not fully a wife in terms of responsibility, but she is only a wife in status.

#### *H. Improper Living*

Generally after a man is married, he is obliged to provide a living for the daily needs of the family. But this is different from the practice of marriage to children who are still in school. In the practice of marriage to children who are still in school, even though Sirri has already been admitted, the man does not have to provide a living every day. But only give the money to women.

#### *I. Husband and Wife Live in Two different roofs*

If in general a married couple, after marriage they immediately live in one house. But that is different from the case here. As said by Putri, "... we remain in our homes until the wedding reception ..."

That is certainly different in adult marriages. Even though they are married to Sirri they usually live in one house. But because here the status of marriage is just as a way to justify them when they are alone, then the activities and everything in their daily lives nothing changes until the wedding reception takes place.

#### *J. A Wife Can Still Go to School*

Generally school activities will stop after someone is married. But the girls after Sirri's marriage was still able to go to school. However, when they have held a wedding reception, they automatically stop school. When the

marriage contract is made at the time of application, the wedding reception is postponed until before the graduation exam. There was also the aftermath of Sirri's marriage ceremony which was conducted simultaneously with the application.

School activities after a married girl is different from each other. it depends on their condition. Usually if the marriage contract is only done when the marriage proposal and reception are postponed until graduation, the girl will continue to attend school. However, if the marriage contract is accompanied or immediately accompanied by a wedding reception, usually girls will drop out of school.

In carrying out routines, obligations, and rights as a wife and husband, both must submit to the agreement created by the traditions of the local community, namely that the wife does not have to be 100% husband's possession, in the sense of not having to carry out the wife's duties to take care of her husband and households, as well as husbands do not have to provide a living every day to their wives, it can be once a week or more. As Alfred Schutz argues that in the intersubjective world people create social reality and are forced by existing social life and by the cultural structure of their ancestral creations.

Alfred Schutz's view of the reality of the world is intersubjective in the sense that community members share basic perceptions of the world that they internalize through socialization and enable them to interact or communicate. In this case, the interaction between husband and wife bound in the bond of sirri marriage and the status of the wife is still in school, then the reality of a wife is not entirely the right of the husband. Likewise the reality of a husband does not have to carry out his duties one hundred percent. This condition lasted until the couple held a reception or wedding party. After that, they become fully married couples, both in status and in carrying out their rights and obligations.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

Marriage of girls who are still in school is common in the Randukerto hamlet. Even after being married to Sirri's marriage status, they still continue their education until graduation. This is because marriage is considered only as a tool to justify a couple when walking together. Couple patterns in child marriages vary, there are couples who are both children, adult men and women are still children, and there are also middle-aged men with girls still children. In choosing a partner there is a match that is forced or voluntary. There is also something that is not matched, namely to marry a boyfriend. Before undergoing the marriage process there are several stages that become the traditions of the local community, namely, the tradition of iring-iring mantu, lamaran, and balesan. At that time a pair of female men were declared to be going out or engaged. If one day there is a problem between the two parties, their relationship will break up, called the burung. After the deed of Sirri marriage, a girl who is still in school does not live with her husband and does not carry out household duties as a wife. Tasks as wives are carried out after the wedding reception is held. Reception is usually done when a girl has not gone to school or has graduated.

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