

# Value Identification of Under-age Marriage among Sasak People: A Literature Review

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the further concept of under-age marriage among the Sasak people. This is important considering that early marriage is a social phenomenon that still occurs in many parts of Indonesia, including on the Lombok island, Indonesia. This high rate of marriage occurs in both urban and rural areas with a variety of social, economic and cultural backgrounds. This study uses a qualitative approach with literature study methods. The data collection technique was carried out by reviewing the official website of Google Scholar, Research Gate, Science Direct, and trusted online media sites. The results of this study indicate that early marriage is marriage under the proper age and not physically and mentally ready to carry out marriage. Early marriages occur due to the encouragement of various factors including social, economic, educational and cultural factors. The impact of early marriage, among others, causes children to drop out of school, instability in building a family, the occurrence of domestic violence (KDRT), and women's subordination which is then summarized based on the economic, social, health and psychological impacts both in the short and long term.

**Keywords:** Literature review, Under-age marriage, Sasaknese

## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan konsep lebih lanjut tentang pernikahan dini di kalangan masyarakat Suku Sasak. Hal ini penting mengingat pernikahan dini merupakan salah satu fenomena sosial yang masih banyak terjadi di berbagai wilayah Indonesia, termasuk di Pulau Lombok. Tingkat pernikahan yang tinggi ini terjadi baik di perkotaan maupun pedesaan dengan beragam latar belakang sosial, ekonomi, dan budaya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi pustaka. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan meninjau situs web resmi Google Scholar, Research Gate, Science Direct, dan situs media online terpercaya. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan pernikahan dini adalah pernikahan di bawah usia yang seharusnya dan belum siap secara fisik maupun mental untuk melaksanakan pernikahan. Pernikahan dini terjadi karena dorongan berbagai faktor yang meliputi faktor sosial, ekonomi, pendidikan, dan budaya. Dampak pernikahan dini antara lain menyebabkan anak menjadi putus sekolah, instabilitas di dalam membangun keluarga, terjadinya kekerasan dalam rumah tangga (KDRT), serta subordinasi perempuan yang kemudian dirangkum berdasarkan dampak ekonomi, sosial, kesehatan, dan dampak psikologi baik dalam jangka pendek maupun jangka panjang.

**Kata Kunci:** Tinjauan literatur, Pernikahan dini, Suku Sasak

## INTRODUCTION

Under-age marriage, or sometimes referred as early marriage, is a social phenomenon that still occurs in

many parts of Indonesia. Research from the Department of Economics and Social Affairs conducted by the United Nations revealed that Indonesia ranks

37th among countries with a high percentage of early marriage and is the second highest in Southeast Asia after Cambodia [1]. There are about 2 million of the 7.3% of youth under the age of 15 are married and have dropped out of school. This number is expected to increase to 3 million people by 2030 [2].

Legally, marriage in Indonesia is legitimized by the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage. The law, as stated in Article 7 paragraph 1, states that marriage is only permitted if the man has reached 19 years and the woman has reached 16 years. If referring to the concept of development, the provisions on the minimum age limit for marriage in the law are categorized as not yet mature enough to provide opportunities for anyone to perform underage marriages.

On the other hand, the phenomenon of early marriage in Indonesia, which tends to experience an increase, is sometimes associated with various social, economic, and cultural backgrounds or customs that occur in an area. Even though the provisions have been regulated in the law as mentioned above, its implementation is still ineffective and is often hampered by customs and traditions that regulate social norms of a community group [3].

A UNICEF literacy study found that there are interactions of various factors that put children at risk for early marriage. It is widely known that child marriage is related to tradition and culture, so it is difficult to change. The norms prevailing in society often encourage individual motivation to behave and make decisions. In addition, for economic reasons, the hope of achieving social and financial well-being after marriage causes many parents to approve of early marriage. The reason

why parents approve of child marriage is often based on the fear of pregnancy out of wedlock due to promiscuity or to strengthen family ties [3].

The phenomenon of early marriage needs serious attention because it indirectly affects other aspects of life which results in the loss of children's rights such as education, play, protection, security, and so on, including the impact on reproductive health and social welfare. Some of the impacts of early marriage include causing children to drop out of school, instability in building a family, the occurrence of domestic violence (KDRT), and the subordination of women which are then summarized based on economic, social, health, and psychological impacts both in the short and long term. long term [4]. The same thing was also revealed by the study of Field et al (2004) which stated that several consequences of early marriage include the high dropout rate, marital instability, subordination in the family, the risk of domestic violence, low reproductive health status, high chances of death in mothers and children, to inequality in the status of women and children [5].

Lombok is famous for its people who are thick with culture and customs. A number of community traditions inherited by the ancestors are still applied today. One of these traditions is elopement or known as merariq. This elopement tradition is considered common and is still preserved by the Sasak people because it is believed that running away or stealing the girl from the supervision of her guardian will become a means of proving for the Bajang or Sasak youth. In addition, a young man is considered to have courage, seriousness, and responsibility in marriage and later in family life [6]. However, the perpetrators of

elopement tend to be underage so this has an impact on increasing cases of early marriage.

There are several reasons behind the Sasak people marrying through the merariq tradition. The first reason is because merariq is a tradition that already exists and is entrenched in society and this is done by most of the people in Sasak. The second reason was due to the conflict that was obtained from parents regarding the relationship between the two lovebirds, so the merariq method was chosen as the solution. The next reason is the ignorance on the part of the woman that she was taken away by her partner [6].

Based on data from the BPS NTB in 2012, it was found that 24.5% of women were married at the age of 18 years. In this case 5.8% of NTB women were married at the age of less than 15 years [7]. Especially in West Lombok Regency the percentage of women by age at first marriage has increased in the last three years. A fairly high percentage occurred at the age of less than 16-19 years of 42.11% in 2013 increasing to 45.88% in 2014 and 51.49% in 2015 [8]. In addition, according to Makrifudin at the Regional Coordination Meeting of the NTB BKKBN in 2016, it was recorded that around 51% of early marriages occurred in the NTB area. The rate of early marriage in NTB is quite high in Indonesia, even NTB is second only to West Java [9].

Related to this, the governor of NTB has issued a policy through the Circular Letter of the Governor of NTB number 180/1153/Kum/2014 regarding the maturation of the age of marriage which aims to minimize the perpetrators of early marriage, especially in the province of NTB. In the circular there are several points raised as

well as criticisms of the Marriage Law no. 1/1974 in article 7 paragraph 1 that ideally a person should marry both a man and a woman at the age of 21 years [10].

This literature review was written to understand further the concept of early marriage as a whole based on the specific questions formulated by the researcher, which include 1) early marriage as a concept; 2) factors that encourage early marriage; 3) the impact of early marriage. This is important to study in order to analyze social phenomena, especially in the context of early marriage that occurs among the Sasak people. So that this literature review is expected to provide an overview of how the phenomenon of early marriage occurs among the Sasak people and provide recommendations or references and encourage further progressive research.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This article was written based on a review of several literatures and journals obtained from various sources. The data was collected by reviewing the official websites of Google Scholar, Research Gate, Science Direct, and trusted online media sites. Each article is selected as the first step in understanding early marriage as a concept. Information related to the concept of early marriage was collected for further reading. Then the next step is to identify the main topics presented by the literature. The data collected from each article was then sorted according to the researcher's specific questions and the contents were analyzed to see their suitability. Less related topics are temporarily separated and not included as part of the analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Under-age Marriage as A Concept

There is no standard concept of early marriage. Several experts from previous research define early marriage in various ways. However, in general, early marriage can be defined as marriages carried out under the age of 18 years, before a person is physically and mentally mature to be ready to take on the responsibility of building a household [11]. In line with this, UNICEF also defines early marriage as marriage performed under the age of 18 [12].

The concept of age of marriage first emerged when Bogue [13] introduced the first grouping of marriageable age into four classifications; 1) Age at first marriage under 18 years which is called child marriage; 2) Age at first marriage is 18-19 years which is called early marriage; 3) Age at first marriage is 20-21 years which is called adult marriage; 4) Age at first marriage above 22 years which is called late marriage.

In some jurisdictions, especially in the case of girls, the legal minimum age for marriage is 18 years. However, not a few jurisdictions allow early marriage with parental consent or certain circumstances such as teen pregnancy out of wedlock. Even in certain countries, although the minimum legal marriage age has been set at 18 years, cultural traditions take precedence over applicable laws or regulations [14].

In Indonesia, the age limit permitted in a marriage according to the Marriage Law is regulated in article 7 paragraph 1, namely, marriage can be carried out if the man has reached the age of 19 years and the woman has reached the age of 16 years. However, in the provisions of the law there are also dispensation facilities that can be

submitted to the court or related officials if there are deviations from the provisions on the age of marriage. This will clearly provide an opportunity to legalize the practice of early marriage if the marriage dispensation is requested by both parties who will carry out the marriage [15].

A marriage ideally takes place when a person is over 20 years old or mature enough to start a family. This is because teenagers who get married under the age of 20 do not have sufficient views and knowledge about how the role of a mother and a wife should be or the role of a man as father and head of the household. This kind of situation will have an impact on domestic life because marriage at a young age invites many unexpected problems because from a psychological point of view it is not yet mature, especially for women [16].

Therefore, to form a family, comprehensive preparation must be made, among which the couple who will form a family must meet the maturity requirements, both biologically and pedagogically or responsibly. For men, they must be ready to assume responsibility as the head of the family, so they are obliged to provide a living for their family members. As for women, she must be ready to be a housewife with all her duties to take care of household affairs to giving birth, educating, and raising children.

### Factors Contributing to Under-age Marriage in Sasak Ethnic Group

In general, the decision to have an early marriage is influenced by several factors including social, economic, educational, and cultural factors. From an economic perspective, one of the reasons that encourage parents to marry off their children at a

young age in most developing countries is poverty. Early marriage is more common in poor families [17]. Poverty is symbolized as a cause and consequence of early marriage. Parents assume that daughters are an economic burden and marriage is an effort to maintain their economic situation. In rural communities, early marriage occurs mainly in low and middle income families [18].

Then in terms of education, the level of education greatly affects the mindset of a society. Meltem et al. (2009) argues that the higher a person's preference for learning, the more mature he or she gets married. People who have a high level of education will definitely think and prepare everything carefully before deciding to get married. The higher a person's education, the more knowledge he gets and understands, including all information about reproductive health, the best age for marriage, and the effect of early marriage. On the other hand, the lower a person's education, the less knowledge and information will occur, as well as less youth activity [19]. On the other hand, the level of parental education is also associated with early marriage. Someone with highly educated parents will start their first marriage at an older age than someone with relatively less educated parents [20]. The role of parents in the continuity of early marriage is basically inseparable from their knowledge related to their educational attainment. In addition, the education level of parents will affect their understanding of family life better. Parents who do not understand family life will prioritize marriage because it will create a better relationship, so they think that the earlier marriage is better.

Next is the cultural factor, the norms that apply in society often encourage individual motivation to behave and make decisions. Regarding early marriage, Jackson and Smith [21] revealed that interrelated beliefs, namely group norms and values lead to early marriage behavior. Pujiastuti in Hanum [22] explains that the custom of early marriage in Javanese society is built by the strong influence of parents. This is related to the culture that exists in society where parents will marry off their children immediately after getting their first menstruation. The delay in marrying their daughters can cause disgrace to parents and relatives .

Furthermore, it is the social environment factor, as we know that the environment has an important role in individual development. In the social environment or community environment, interactions occur between individuals with other individuals, so that the state of society will have a certain influence on individual development. An unhealthy social environment can plunge a person into promiscuity. Without parental guidance and supervision, promiscuity can lead to behaviors that violate the norms, one of which is free sex which causes pregnancy outside the marriage bond. If this happens, then inevitably the parents will give permission to their children who are still underage to get married.

In addition, factors that support the occurrence of early marriage are internal encouragement, both the desire of the individual and the family. There are several reasons for parents to marry off their children early, among others, because they are worried that their children will fall into promiscuity and have negative consequences, because they want to strengthen

relationships with their relationships by matching their children with their relatives or their children, and so on.

Child marriage or often also called early marriage is a traditional practice that has long been known and is widespread in all parts of the world. The literature study noted two patterns of child marriage, namely marrying girls to adult men and matching boys with girls which was carried out by the parents of the two children concerned. A study conducted by Choe et al. (2001) revealed that the majority of women in Indonesia who married before the age of 18 thought that they were getting married too early. Most admitted that they married because of the wishes of their parents [23].

The high age of early marriage or adolescence in West Nusa Tenggara Province, especially on the island of Lombok, is caused by several factors, namely social and cultural factors, as well as economic factors. The Sasak tribe itself has a merariq or elopement culture, where a man who wants to marry a woman he chooses on a consensual basis can do so by running away from the girl with the consent or without the consent of the woman's family. In addition, there are also cases of merariq carried out by young couples who plan to marry either with/without the blessing of their parents. If the daughter has been taken, the consequence is that the woman and her family must agree to the couple getting married. This is one of the factors causing the high percentage of teenage marriages aged 10-19 years, which is 56% [24].

Furthermore, Khaerani [25] in his research found several factors that led to early marriage in the people of Lombok Island, including social, educational, and economic factors.

Social factors in this case are environmental influences, such as environmental conditions with low education and also the influence of associates who do a lot of early marriage. Then the next factor that causes early marriage is education. In this case, the perpetrators of early marriage married because they dropped out of school. As a result, the absence of activities or work causes them to choose to get married. In addition, some people also said that their parents did not give their views on the school. This happens a lot, especially if the parents are also low-educated and with a poor economy. The next factor is the economic factor. Low economic conditions make early marriage actors decide to get married. The expectation of a better economic change by getting married is the reason for early marriage. Early marriage occurs because the economic conditions in the family are classified as less or in the poverty line. In order to ease the burden on their parents, their daughters are married off to men who are considered capable. Parents assume that if their daughter proposes and asks for marriage, at least she will be independent and no longer dependent on her parents, because there is already a husband who is ready to provide for her. However, it is not uncommon for them to marry with similar economic statuses, thus creating new poverty and new problems.

### **Impacts of Under-age Marriage in Sasak Ethnic Group**

The results of research conducted by Plan Indonesia in collaboration with the Center for Population and Policy Studies (PSKK) UGM in 2011 on the Practice of Early Marriage in Indonesia in eight locations in Indonesia, namely Indramayu,

Grobogan, Rembang, Tabanan, Dompu, Sikka, Lembata, and Timur Central South (TTS), explained that the average age of marriage in the region is 16 years old. The impacts of early marriage are varied, including those related to reproductive health. In almost all of these areas, girls who marry early are at risk of having a high-risk pregnancy. Another impact is on mental health, the impact is felt by girls, it is very fatal because girls who marry at an early age cannot bear a very heavy burden and even girls can experience stress because it is not time to bear a very heavy burden. the weight. This is especially true when a daughter is separated from her family and is responsible for her own family. Another thing that is a bad impact of early marriage is the vulnerability of domestic violence (KDRT). According to the findings made by Plan, a total of 44% of girls who marry early experience cases of domestic violence in a high frequency. And the remaining 56% who did not marry early experienced domestic violence in a low frequency [4].

Basically, the perpetrators of early marriage, both men and women, do not fully understand the impact of early marriage. According to Khaerani [25], some of the impacts due to early marriage on the Sasak people are dropping out of school, an unfavorable future and not being able to take care of the household, reproductive health problems, and poverty. Meanwhile, research by Rosdiana et al. [6] says that there are so many impacts that this merariq can have, especially on women. The possible impact is the high number of early marriage ages, this is due to the assumption that the number of Sasak women who marry early will not cause problems in terms of health and social life. Meanwhile, in terms of health,

women's early marriage age will cause many problems, which can be caused by physical or mental unpreparedness. Physical unpreparedness will cause the mother's health status to decline because at a very young age the uterus is not ready to be fertilized. Then in terms of mental unpreparedness, of course it will cause conflict because the emotional level is not yet stable.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the explanation above, it can be seen that early marriage among the Sasak people is closely related to the merariq culture or elopement. The merariq tradition is considered common and is still preserved by the Sasak people to this day. However, the perpetrators of elopement tend to be underage so this has an impact on increasing cases of early marriage. There are several factors that encourage early marriage in the Sasak people, including social factors, cultural factors, economic factors, and educational factors. The impact of getting married at an early age among the Sasak people include dropping out of school, an unfavorable future and not being able to take care of the household, reproductive health disorders, mental health, and poverty.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Further research needs to be done with various settings to strengthen the concept of early marriage. Early marriage has a multidimensional concept that continues to grow rapidly because of the diverse views according to the many research results on the concept. Cultural differences and other demographic factors are important to study more deeply to get a comprehensive picture of why the practice of early marriage is still prevalent in an area. Adolescents,

especially girls, are more vulnerable to early marriage, this will then have a direct impact on other aspects of life resulting in the loss of children's rights such as education, play, protection, security, and so on including the impact on reproductive health and welfare. social. Therefore, efforts are needed to develop strategies and methods to suppress the practice of early marriage and protect children in the face of unfavorable situations of early marriage.

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