

The Phenomenon of Child Marriage: Between Socioreligious Problem and The Impact of Digitalization

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ABSTRACT

Child marriage is a social problem that needs to be resolved. West Java is one region with the highest rate of child marriage. In 2020, Based on the data of Women's Empowerment and Protection of West Java Province, there were 9,821 child marriages. Child marriage on Basically, it still occurs in all villages in Bogor Regency. During the pandemic Covid, the rate of child marriage has increased, and post-pandemic these conditions have not changed much. The phenomenon of child marriage in the village of Pagelaran, South Cianjur happen in three changing periods is interesting to capture in this study. This research uses a qualitative approach with methods Participatory Action Research (PAR) a method that involves subject research since the beginning of this research activity. The subject of this research is a young mother aged 15 to 25 years who lives in the village of Pagelaran, South Cianjur. The number of informants was determined using the Snowball method. Data collection uses field observation, PAR, in-depth interviews, and studies literature. This research found that several factors cause child marriage, but religion is one of the main factors in child marriage in Pagelaran Village. Apart from that, there are push factors and pull factors that cause child marriage to continue to occur. Apart from that, digitalization is also an important cause of child marriage today. One of them is caused by the influence of globalization and lack of parental supervision which causes the potential for child marriage due to unwanted pregnancies.

Keywords: Child Marriage, Gender Analysis, Young Women, Socioreligious, Participatory Action Research

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a relationship between a man and a woman which aims to produce offspring and various roles between husband and wife. The definition of marriage in Undang Undang No. 1 of 1974 in Chapter 1 is explained as an inner bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife to form a happy and eternal family (household) based on the belief in the Almighty God (Umah, 2020). Marriage can be explained as an emotional and legal bond and commitment between a man and a woman that exists over a long period and involves various aspects such as social, economic, responsibility, and even sexual relations (Sekarayu & Nurwati, 2021). In Undang

Undang No. 1 of 1974 also explains the age requirements for someone wishing to marry, namely that men must be at least 19 years old and women must be at least 16 years old. The legal regulations regarding marriage have also been updated in Undang Undang No. 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Marriage which states that marriage is only permitted if the man and woman are at least 19 years old (Article 7 Paragraph 1). Apart from that, there is a note in the rules which explains that if the prospective bride and groom have not yet reached the age of 21 years, they must obtain permission from both parents.

There are various regulations regarding the age limit for marriage, but deviations from these regulations still often occur in the form of marriages of underage children. One of the legalized deviations is by applying for an age-related dispensation from the court. These marriage dispensation provisions give rise to various perceptions of inconsistencies with existing regulations regarding the minimum age limit for marriage. Based on data from the National Socio-Economic Survey (SUSENAS) in 2020, it was found that 8.19% of women in Indonesia married for the first time between the ages of 7 and 15 years. Several regions that have the highest number of marriages between girls in the age range (7-15 years) in 2020 include South Kalimantan (12.52%), West Java (11.48%), East Java (10.85%), West Sulawesi (10.05%), and Central Kalimantan (9.85%). Meanwhile, in West Java (Jabar), the number of child marriages in 2020 reached 9,821 child marriages.

Based on data, child marriage experienced a significant increase during the COVID-19 pandemic period (2019-2021) in Indonesia. This can be seen from data from the Ministry of Empowerment, Protection of Women and Children (Kemen PPPA) regarding applications for marriage dispensation which has increased to 64,000 thousand people. The research report from the Center for Studies and Advocacy on Child Protection and Quality of Life (Puskapa) together with UNICEF, BPS, and Bappenas found that as many as 1,220,900 children in Indonesia were in early marriage with the largest distribution of child marriages being on the island of Java. The condition of child marriages throughout the world and in Indonesia in particular is predicted by UNICEF to continue to occur with the predicted number reaching 13 million marriages in the 2020-2030 period. The main cause of child marriage is the economic crisis which encourages families to marry off their children (Maudina, 2019).

Economic factors and poverty cause parents to be unable to meet the needs of their family members, including their children. Apart from that, poor families cannot afford to pay for school so the last choice is to marry off one of their family members to reduce the burden on the family. The results of research on child marriage found by (Fitriyani et al., 2010) explain that several factors influence the occurrence of child marriage, including 1) the economic condition of the family is below the poverty line so that the marriage of girls is considered to reduce the burden on the family; 2) The

low level of education means that there is no awareness about the impact of child marriage; 3) The influence of local culture and religion regarding the "disgrace" of having a daughter in a relationship and thus choosing to marry; 4) The influence of information technology which depicts a free lifestyle without understanding the impact of the behavior that occurs so that many pregnancies outside of marriage occur; 5) Society considers spinsterhood if girls are not married off immediately.

Child marriage has various impacts and basically violates the human rights of children (Bastomi, 2016). There are several impacts of child marriage, including 1) The impact on the law where children have rights that are protected by obligations from parents through statutory regulations. This aims to ensure that children can grow, live develop and be protected from various acts of violence, exploitation, and discrimination; 2) Biological and psychological impacts where child marriage causes various problems because biologically children are not ready for marriage or sexual relations and even pregnancy and giving birth. Psychologically, children are also not ready and do not understand sexual relations, which can cause trauma in the future; 3) The social impact and sexual behavior caused by patriarchal culture places men and women in unequal conditions and only as complements to men's lives. Child marriage is a form of patriarchy with sexual disorders in people who like children (pedophilia) having a major impact on the child's life in the future. Child marriage also causes problems because children will drop out of school, children do not have the right to think and express themselves according to their age, children do not have the right to speak and be heard, the right to play, and the right to receive protection.

One of the regions in West Java that has the highest number of child marriages is Cianjur Regency. Cianjur Regency is located around 65 km from the provincial capital. Cianjur Regency has an area of 350,148 hectares which borders Bogor Regency and Purwakarta Regency to the north, and to the south, it borders the Indian Ocean, while to the west it borders Sukabumi Regency and to the east, it borders Bandung and Garut Regencies. In 2015, the population in Cianjur Regency reached 2,243,904 people with an average population density of 621 people per km. The largest population is in Cianjur District, reaching 7.30 percent of the total population in Cianjur Regency (BPS, 2022).

Analyzing socio-economic conditions, in general, the majority of the population living in Cianjur Regency are Muslim. The dominance of Islam in society forms the characteristics of village communities that adhere to religious teachings and adhere to traditions and customs. This condition also has an impact on the culture of child marriage, which often occurs in Cianjur Regency. This research will take place in Pagelaran Village, South Cianjur Regency. This location is important to study in this research as well as building empowerment initiatives in the community to overcome the problem of child marriage. Pagelaran Village is one of the villages in Cianjur Regency, specifically in Cianjur to the south. The population of Pagelaran

Village based on 2020 BPS data reached 70,313 in 2018. Based on its geographical location, Pagelaran Village is not strategic enough from the aspect of the availability of facilities and infrastructure as well as roads connecting it to the Cianjur City area. Most of the people living in Pagelaran Village earn their living as farmers and traders.

Based on BPS data (2022), West Java Province is the second province with the highest rate of child marriage, of which Cianjur Regency is the second region with the highest child marriage data (married children under age). Various factors cause child marriage, especially in South Cianjur Regency. These factors include low levels of education, influence from parents, economic level, and culture where it is believed that women will end up at home and in the kitchen, which is an important factor in the high rate of child marriage. The problems that arise from child marriage in South Cianjur Regency are very diverse, including stunting, infant and parental deaths, high divorce rates, and problems and depression experienced by young families when carrying out child marriages.

Child marriage is an event or phenomenon that is not experienced by everyone, but only by a few people in a society. However, this individual phenomenon has become a habit and is entrenched due to various factors, one of which is poverty and the cultural and religious framework in society. In the people who live in Pagelaran Village, Cianjur Regency, especially the majority of people who are Muslim, there are strong religious values that encourage child marriage intending to avoid adultery. On the other hand, from a cultural aspect, the belief in women's role ending in the household means that girls are not given the freedom to have the choice of either going to school or getting married. In this context, culture can be one of the drivers of high levels of child marriage.

Based on existing conditions, extracting information on the experiences of individual perpetrators of child marriage is important to find out how the process and cycle of child marriage persists to this day. Apart from that, what factors encourage this practice to continue from generation to generation to this day and what is the role of village officials in overcoming this? Various conclusions from initial findings can be an initiation into solutions that can be offered in the context of economic empowerment based on local community potential to reduce the practice of child marriage in Pagelaran Village, Cianjur Regency.

METHOD

The research methodology used is a qualitative research method with descriptive explanations (descriptive qualitative). Qualitative research methods are research used to examine the conditions of natural objects, where the researcher is the key instrument (Sugiyono, 2017). This research uses a qualitative approach with the PAR (participatory action research) method which actively involves all activity

participants not only as research objects but also as research subjects. The research uses several data collection methods apart from the PAR method, namely in-depth interviews, observation, and literature study.

1. Participatory Action Research (PAR)

This research uses a qualitative approach with the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method which aims to explore participatory information from activity participants. This is because the phenomenon of child marriage is a phenomenon that is not experienced by everyone, so the experiences of individuals and families are important in this process. Another approach used is Stakeholder mapping using a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) approach with local governments, religious institutions and educational institutions to map the causes of high levels of child marriage and develop policy initiatives and supervision of the practice of child marriage which often occurs in society in particular. Performance Village. Apart from that, exploring village potential together with related stakeholders also aims to develop economic empowerment with the aim of synergy between reducing the potential for child marriage in rural areas through increasing household economic resources in rural areas.

2. In-depth Interview

Interviews are part of the qualitative method. In this qualitative method, it is known as an in-depth interview technique. In-depth interviews are aimed at obtaining data in more depth using interview guides. In this research, in-depth interviews were conducted with parents of child marriage perpetrators to gather information regarding the causes, processes, and reasons why this practice continues to this day. In-depth interviews were also conducted with relevant village officials and community leaders as well as various parties who have a role in marriage, especially the age of the children.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The causes of child marriage have several causes, one of which is caused by poverty, promiscuity, and the wishes of parents/family. Low public education, living locations far from urban centers, and limited access to potential and information force the environment to indirectly encourage families to marry off their daughters at a young age. One quote from an interview with policymakers at the citizen level stated the following:

When it comes to young marriages here, the local government has tried to inform them, but sometimes we are called late at night and told to be witnesses to the marriage, sometimes the child is already pregnant. If you're not pregnant, sometimes the parents just want their child to get married quickly and that's it, yes, in the past, the mother also married young, so after she got her period, they usually just got married straight away, it's hard to say that.

Child marriage is still a common phenomenon among the people of Pagelaran Village. Low awareness is one of the reasons why child marriage still occurs frequently and has been going on for generations to this day. Knowledge about the age limit for marriage is currently not widely understood by victims of child marriage and even the parents of the victims. Law No. 16 of 2019 explains that the minimum age for marriage for men and women is 19 years, but this is not yet fully known by the people in Pagelaran Village. The public's understanding of the legal age for marriage is 17 years as proven by ownership of a KTP. Based on the results of initial interviews, almost the majority of informants stated that the age of marriage was 17 years and this was considered normal because they already had an ID card. The following is one of the statements from the informant:

When I first got married, I was 17 years old, I was already an adult because I already had an ID card before I got married (Mrs. CT, 23 years old).

Knowledge regarding the minimum age limit for marriage is not widely known to the public. The lack of socialization from the village and related institutions also influences the low level of knowledge. This condition is also exacerbated by socio-cultural factors which are the driving factors for child marriage in Pagelaran Village from time to time. The practice of child marriage in Pagelaran Village can be caused by various internal and external driving factors. The internal driving factor comes from the low understanding and awareness of society and families regarding the age limit for marriage and the impact of child marriage. Meanwhile, external driving factors are caused by the influence of the social environment (society, extended family), the influence of religious doctrine, and various undesirable events such as unplanned pregnancies.

Child marriages that occur in Pagelaran Village generally have relatively the same flow, namely starting from an agreement between two parties (male and female) either on their own accord or based on the family's decision to carry out the marriage. Based on research results, generally, the agreement begins with an initiative from the woman's family who asks her boyfriend (male party) for reassurance with the main reason being to avoid adultery and slander as well as clarity in the relationship between

her child and the male party. After an agreement is reached, marriage can generally occur directly or by planning.

a. Child marriages that occur directly

Child marriages occur directly, if the man has confirmed that he is serious and wants to get married straight away, then the marriage can take place on the same day. In this case, the man does not need to ask his parents' permission first, he only needs agreement, especially from the woman's parents. In some families, some people ask for opinions from their daughters, but most of these decisions do not involve the daughters. After an agreement is reached, generally the woman's parents will call a religious figure (Ustad/Pak Haji) to help with the marriage process. This was also known by the RT head and RW head as village figures who acted as witnesses to the marriage. Generally, direct marriage aims to ensure that there is a legal relationship and is no longer a question, especially in society. Unwanted pregnancies have also become one of the causes of child marriage occurring directly. The choice of whether to hold a wedding party or not is given to the man whether the marriage will be lively or whether a religious marriage will suffice.

b. Child marriages that do not occur directly

Child marriages do not occur immediately, namely if after an agreement has been reached between the woman's family and the man's family, the marriage process is postponed until a certain time or to hold a wedding party. So both the contract and party processes generally do not take place immediately. Even in the indirect marriage process, decisions are generally only agreed upon by the parents of the woman and the man without involving the daughter in the process.

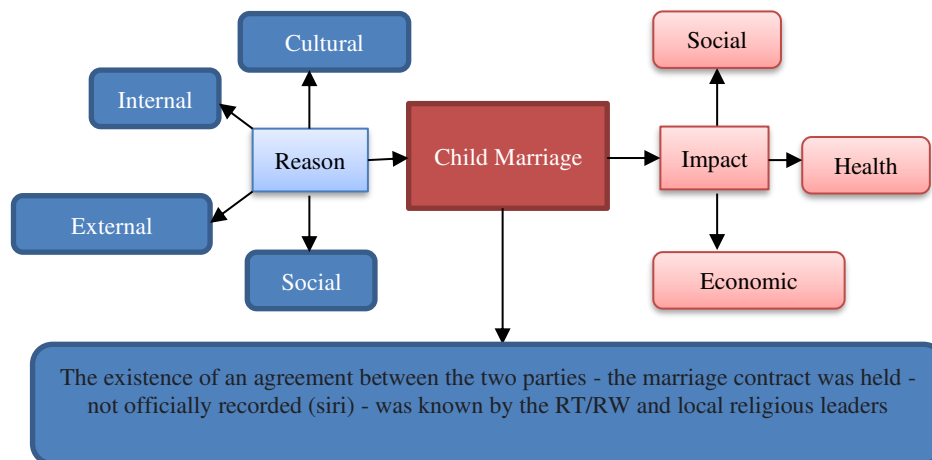


Figure 1. Flow chart of the causes and impacts of child marriage

The process of child marriage that occurs is generally caused by several main factors, namely internal, external and social and cultural factors. The following are the causes of child marriage in general, including:

a. Hanging Marriage / Arranged Marriage Culture

Hanging marriage culture is a culture that exists in Cianjur society where women and men are generally married before puberty but are not allowed to have husband and wife-relations until puberty arrives. In Cianjur culture, hanging marriage can mean two things, namely 1) a marriage that is legal but the husband and wife are not allowed to live in the same house (they still live in their respective families); 2) the marriage is not yet fully official, where the formalization of the marriage is generally postponed until adulthood. In Cianjur itself, the meaning of hanging marriage is mostly explained in terms of a marriage that is not yet fully official regardless of whether you live in the same house or not after the hanging marriage process is carried out.

The hanging wedding carried out in Pagelaran Village is more about choosing the prospective bride first (marked as belonging to A) until a certain age limit has been agreed upon, then the marriage will take place and during the waiting process, the groom (future husband) gives responsibility for sending the child to school. up to the specified age limit. The following is Mr. MM's (49th) statement:

There are still early marriages in this village, but compared to before, the number has now greatly decreased. The reasons for child marriage are also quite varied, but most of the reasons are to avoid undesirable things happening, such as getting pregnant first, because many people in this village get married because they are already pregnant, their families are embarrassed, so before they get pregnant, they start dating, so they just get married. Some usually have parents who can't afford it, then the child is beautiful but still small, then the person who likes the child will come to the parents to marry them first, then until a certain age they can be married off, with the rich person, everything will be paid for. "The term here is that it is marked or what it is called, hang-up marriage, if you haven't married yet, you have marked it first, that is, the future wife, A, usually waits until you finish school, if you're not in junior high school, it's the same, but many who graduate from junior high school are already married (Pak MM, 49 years).

b. Unregistered Marriage (*Nikah Siri*)

Unregistered marriages due to religious beliefs are one of the causes of the high rate of child marriage. This is caused by various factors, including the view that marriage registration is not ordered by religion; the view that the practice of mut'ah marriage is permitted by religion; prioritizing religion over government regulations; the existence of religious figures as actors who have an important role in carrying out

couples' marriages without administrative registration and the existence of an administrative system that requires very large costs and is complicated.

1. The view that recording is not ordered by religion;
2. The view that the practice of mut'ah marriage is permitted by religion;
3. Prioritize religion compared to government regulations;
4. The existence of religious figures as actors who play an important role in marrying couples without being recorded;
5. Difficult administration system which requires large costs.

Apart from various issues related to religion and culture, underage marriage as explained by the marriage law is a marriage event that occurs between couples who have not reached the age required in Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning marriage. Underage marriages are also generally synonymous with women as victims because underage marriages usually occur in women compared to men.

c. Stigma / Presumption

Stigma or perceptions and assumptions about women who never marry are also one of the causes of the high rate of child marriage. There are several views about women, including 1) the view that spinsterhood (single virgins) is taboo, this is also supported by the proverb that says "kawin ayeuna isuk pepegatan" (married today, divorced) is much better than being single (Marzali, 1997); 2) Parents' pride if their child has proposed marriage since childhood, even since elementary school, but if no one has liked their daughter since childhood, the child feels embarrassed and inferior if they are not married while their partner is married; 3) It is a natural assumption regarding underage marriage because their mothers and grandmothers were also married underage; 4) The perception that education is not important so that even if there is a school nearby, they will not go to school; 5) lack of knowledge about the minimum age limit for marriage; and 6) the assumption that daughters who marry quickly can reduce the burden on their parents because responsibility shifts to their husbands.

In general, the three causes explained above are various causal factors including social and cultural factors such as environmental conditions and religion which indirectly perpetuate the process of child marriage to avoid adultery. However, no significant action has been taken to overcome the occurrence of adultery without having to carry out child marriages. On the other hand, internal factors in the family where family traditions indirectly encourage the habit of marrying at a young age. Apart from that, external factors such as talk from neighbors and the community are significant motivating factors. Based on interviews and discussion results, neighbors' talk or external factors outside the individual and family are the main causes of child

marriage. Because society's opinion regarding the relationship between men and women without marriage will have a negative impact. This encourages child marriage and continues to this day.

Nowadays many child marriages also occur due to unwanted pregnancies. Based on the results of interviews with resource persons, the limitations of parents in being able to control their children, especially teenagers, in accessing information is one of the things that parents worry about. In Pagelaran Village, although the number is not very large, the cause of child marriage nowadays is often caused by unwanted pregnancies so children are forced to marry because they are already pregnant. Quantitatively, the limitation of this research is that there is no data regarding the number of children who have had sex outside of marriage and its impact on marriage. However, the impact of digitalization can be material for further research related to the increase in child marriage amidst the lingering socio-religious issues that shackle the phenomenon of child marriage.

Analysis

Soerjono Soekanto (2013) explains that value is an abstract conception in humans about the choice between good and bad. Koentjaraningrat (1985) explains that values are part of cultural values which consist of various concepts that exist in the mind about various things that are considered very noble. A value system is a guideline that underlies a person's actions which is influenced by the cultural values they have and their influence in determining various other options to achieve goals. Social values in the Pagelaran Village community are still well maintained amidst the changes and modernization that emerged as part of the changes, the Pagelaran Village community still holds social and cultural values and applies them in daily life as a basis for values. The social values that exist in society cannot be separated from the underlying religious values regarding good or bad choices. Religious is a character that is described as an attitude and behavior that is obedient in implementing religious teachings, tolerant towards the implementation of religious worship and living in harmony with followers of other religions. Religion is one of the basic views of life which is reflected in more concrete ideals, life attitudes, and beliefs.

A socioreligious approach to analyzing child marriage practices is important. This is because the practice of child marriage does not only occur due to individual factors (certain conditions) but is also caused by social factors (society) and religious factors (beliefs and religious values. Research findings show that society's perception of the causes of child marriage starts from individual causes. to social causes. It is not much different from other areas where the problem of child marriage is influenced by religious values to avoid adultery and slander. And the choice of marriage is the main choice to avoid this. On the other hand, the public's low knowledge regarding the

impact of child marriage is also causing this problem to become a social problem that needs to be studied further in the future.

CONCLUSION

Changes in community conditions, and improvements in access to infrastructure, both roads and educational and health facilities, have a significant impact on reducing the practice of child marriage. This is important to note that although the socio-religious conditions with characteristics inherent in society mean that child marriage is a solution to avoid adultery, open access and opportunities for wider sources of livelihood are also the main driving aspects of the decline in the rate of child marriage in Pagelaran Village. This condition is interesting in Pagelaran Village because the socio-religious nature of the community is not strongly attached but sticks when there is no other choice. Limited information and access are the main driving factors for the increase in child marriage, not the socio-religious aspect. When there is openness of information and economic opportunities, this indirectly influences changes in people's mindsets and also opportunities to obtain higher education and access to better economic resource.

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