



## Early Marriage and its Prevention Solutions in West Kutai Regency

Frans Kris Tiwow<sup>1\*</sup>, Yohanes R. Suprandono<sup>2</sup>, Ferry Simanjuntak<sup>3</sup>

Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Kharisma Bandung

**Corresponding Author:** Frans Kris Tiwow [frans.kris.tiwow2@gmail.com](mailto:frans.kris.tiwow2@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

The research method used by the author is qualitative research. Primary data was obtained through literature research, while secondary data was obtained from journals, articles, and other relevant sources. This writing stage begins with determining the problem from the formulation of existing problems, then evaluating these sources, and finally making a literature review. Factors for early marriage such as economy, education, parental factors, mass media, customs, religion, and unwed pregnancy. The impact of this early marriage can be seen biologically, psychologically, socially, on their children, and even on each family which is very influential in the lives of young couples who do this early marriage. Through this event, it is necessary to prevent early marriage at a young age by providing counseling to parents, the community, young people, schools, and churches.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Marriage is Allah's mandate to humans to be able to reproduce through a marriage relationship, so every individual when the age has reached maturity, humans must establish relationships with the opposite sex until they enter the level of marriage. Early marriage is a marriage carried out by minors. According to data released by UNICEF, about 21% of women and 4% of men in the world are married before the age of 18. From this data, around 650 million women who get married while still in the category of children with 12 million under 18 who get married per year.

From a medical point of view, early marriage has a negative impact on both the mother and the child who is born. According to sociologists, from a social perspective, early marriage can reduce family harmony. This is caused by unstable emotions, young blood turmoil and immature thinking. Looking at early marriage from its various aspects does have many negative impacts. Therefore, the government only tolerates marriage over the age of 19 for men and 16 years for women.

Based on the records of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of East Kalimantan, there were 1,159 cases of child marriage, consisting of 254 men and 905 women. Meanwhile, in West Kutai there are as many as 35 thousand couples who have not been registered in the administration or can be said to be serial marriages. So that maturity in marriage always has conflicts that are difficult to solve. Mental maturity in a household greatly affects a good relationship between husband and wife.

The purpose of this paper is as follows: First, to examine the influence of early marriage that occurred in West Kutai reviewed in the Christian faith. Second, to be able to educate young people in West Kutai about the causes of early marriage and its prevention solutions

## **METHODS**

The research method used by the author is qualitative research. Lexy J. Moleong explained that qualitative research methods are research that intends to understand the phenomena of what the research subject experiences, for example, behavior, perception, motivation, action, holistic and by way of description in the form of words and language, in a special context that is natural and utilizes as a natural method. Primary data is obtained through literature research, while secondary data is obtained from journals, articles, and other relevant sources. This writing stage begins with determining the problem from the formulation of existing problems, then evaluating these sources, and finally making a literature review.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Wedding***

Marriage in Christianity is not just the desire of man himself. But marriage in the Christian perspective is God's will. In the great dictionary of the Indonesian language (KBBI), the word "nikah" is written, which is a marriage bond (akad) that is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the law and religious teachings. Jaliaman also said in his book that Marriage is the oldest institution created by God in this world. It was God who planned marriage, He who united Adam and Eve as one family. In a marriage there is an agreement, where the agreement is not just a promise between humans that changes frequently. The promise in marriage is canceled and becomes a lifelong bond. Therefore, Christian marriage must involve God and even make him the head so that communication in the family is not only a dialogue but a trilogy in it.

If Allah is made the head in the family, then Allah will continue to intervene so that married couples continue to survive in one whole family ark even though in the journey of the ark of their household they experience various kinds of challenges faced. But on the other hand, if marriage is only seen as a mere human desire, then the marriage bond will be very fragile and easily broken. This event is what happens a lot in marriage at this time, especially among young people who have just gotten married at a very young age.

Marriage is not an idea of man but an initiative of God, and God made marriage a reflection of Christ's relationship with the Church (Ephesians 5:22). When people act outside of God's plan, sin enters human life which causes marriages to be damaged. Therefore, God took the initiative to make a covenant with man through Christ, so that we as a church would receive restoration and nourishment in His grace. Only through the blood of Christ does it receive the forgiveness of sins and new life (2 Corinthians 5:17).

### ***Early Marriage***

Early marriage is underage marriage, in this case the preparation of a child or adolescent is not fully optimal, both in mental, psychological, and even material preparation. UNICEF restricts early marriage, which is marriage under the age of 19. So marriage is said to be an early marriage if one of the marriage couples is still under 19 (nineteen) years old. Hajihasani and Sim's research in 2019 showed evidence that satisfaction in marriage can be related to emotional intelligence. Couples who have emotional intelligence: empathy, the ability to control emotions and others, have a correlation with satisfaction in marriage. Marital satisfaction is the impact of education level, social class, economy, love, commitment in marriage, conflict, gender, the existence of children, sexual relations, and the division of duties.

### ***Causes of Early Marriage***

The phenomenon of marriage at the age of children has become a culture of some Indonesian people who still position girls as second-class citizens. Parents want to accelerate marriage for various economic and social reasons, the assumption that education for girls is not important and there is a negative stigma about the status of old virgins. There are also several factors that affect the occurrence of marriage at a young age, as follows: First, Economy. Marriage at a young age occurs because of the circumstances of families living on the poverty line, to ease the burden of their parents, their daughters are married to people who are considered capable. Second, education. The low level of education and knowledge of parents, children and the community,

causes a tendency to marry their children who are minors.

### ***The Biological Impact of Early Marriage***

Young couples whose biologically reproduction is still in the process of reaching maturity so they are not ready to have sex with the opposite sex, especially if they get pregnant and then give birth. If forced, trauma, extensive tears and infections will occur that will endanger the reproductive organs to the point of endangering the child's life. It is questionable whether such sexual relations are based on equality in reproductive rights between wife and husband or the existence of sexual violence and coercion (coercion) against a child. The Indonesian Cancer Foundation (YKI) also recorded new cases. As many as 40-45 people per day are affected by cancer. With the risk of death reaching more than half. Or every hour, a woman dies from cervical ingestion.

Many cases of early marriage occur in West Kutai with various backgrounds. Given the risks that arise from forced marriage, sexual intercourse at an early age, pregnancy at a young age, and sexually transmitted disease infections. And poverty is not one of the important factors that play a role in early marriage. However, there is another thing that needs to be considered, namely the risk of complications that can occur during pregnancy and during childbirth at a young age, so that it plays a role in increasing maternal and infant mortality. In addition, early marriage can also cause personality disorders and put children born at great risk of violence and neglect.

### ***The Psychological Impact of Early Marriage***

When viewed from psychology, a child's psyche is also not ready and understands sex, so it will cause prolonged psychological trauma in the child's soul that will be difficult to heal. A child will become moody and regret his life ending in a marriage that he himself does not understand for his chosen life decisions. In addition, the marriage bond will eliminate the child's right to education, the right to play and enjoy his free time and other rights inherent in the child.

Dariyo said that marriage can have an impact on anxiety, stress and depression. Anxiety is the embodiment of various mixed emotions, which occurs when a person is experiencing stress or tension and inner conflict. So the anxiety experienced by family couples who experience early marriage can be interpreted as feelings that are mixed with fear and worry in dealing with various problems that arise in their family.

Lazarus and Folkman explained that psychological stress is a relationship between an individual and the environment that is judged by the individual as burdensome or greatly beyond a person's ability and endangers his or her well-being. In fact, according to Feldman, stress is a process that assesses an event as threatening, challenging, or dangerous and individuals respond to the event at the physiological, emotional, cognitive and behavioral levels. These stressful events can be positive (e.g., planning a marriage) or negative (e.g., family deaths).

Early marriage can also cause depressive neuritis due to a protracted process of disappointment and excessive feelings of depression. Therefore, social and economic maturity in marriage is very necessary because it is a support in turning the wheels of family life as a result of marriage. Because in general, people who are still very young do not have a handle in social and economic matters. As the individual is required to meet the needs of the family.

### ***The Social Impact of Early Marriage***

This social phenomenon of early marriage is related to socio-cultural factors in a patriarchal society that is biased in gender understanding, which places women in a low position and is only considered a complement to the male sex. This condition will only preserve a gender-biased patriarchal culture that will give birth to violence against women. In this modern era, dating is normal, but actually in this dating activity it is not easy for us to refrain from desires that can violate norms and morals. Dating is prone to promiscuous sex, infectious diseases and out-of-wedlock births.

According to sociologists, from a social perspective, early marriage can reduce family harmony. This is caused by unstable emotions, young blood turmoil and immature thinking. Looking at early marriage from its various aspects does have many negative impacts. Therefore, the government only tolerates marriage over the age of 19 for men and 16 years for women.

### ***The Impact of Early Marriage on Each Family***

Early marriage will not only have an impact on the couple and their children, but early marriage will also have an impact on each family. If the marriage between their children is delayed, it will certainly provide benefits to their respective parents. However, it will be the opposite, their domestic situation will become unhappy and eventually divorce will arise. This event will result in an increase in their living costs and will worsen the family ties between the two parties.

### ***Early Marriage Prevention Solutions Early Marriage Prevention Program***

There are several things that can be done to prevent early marriage, according to Maholtra there are many early marriage handling programs that have been implemented in various countries, but here are some of the marriage prevention programs that are presented:

First, empowering children with information, skills, and other support networks. With early childhood empowered to participate in positive activities, they can develop themselves with various useful knowledge and skills so as to avoid the influence of negative and unconstructive associations.

Second, educate and mobilize parents and community members. One of the communities that is quite important and influential in the lives of indigenous peoples in West Kutai Regency according to the author is the Customary Institution. It is important to cooperate with Customary Institutions because through this Institution, education about the negative impact of early marriage can be conveyed to the community more effectively, efficiently and massively considering that Customary Institutions are located in each

Village led by a Village Customary Head, in this case there are 16 Villages and 1 Regency Customary Institution called the Big Customary Head.

Third, improving access and quality of formal education for children. By participating in a quality formal education, children will focus on filling their lives with learning and achievement so as to avoid negative activities or promiscuity that allows for various juvenile delinquency including early marriage.

Fourth, offering economic support and providing incentives to children and their families. With economic support and the provision of incentives, it can improve the standard of living and the family economy so that it can avoid debt bondage which can eventually have the potential for exploitation of minors in the form of marriage.

#### ***Government Policy Support***

One of the Government's roles to reduce the rate of early marriage is by making certain policies, one of which is in West Kutai Regency, namely by making a Memorandum of Understanding or MoU between the West Kutai Health Office and the Sendawar Religious Court which aims to ensure the implementation of health services for children related to marriage dispensation applications and reduce the rate of early marriage in West Kutai Regency.

#### ***Premarital Counseling Methods***

In an effort to reduce the high rate of early marriage, the role of the church also contributes to educating its congregation who want to get married with the pre-marriage counseling method. Just as everyone who gets married expects happiness and harmony to exist in their family, many marriages do not last because married couples do not have the correct concept of marriage.

In understanding more deeply about premarital counseling, experts distinguish four methods of marriage counseling, namely concurrent marital counseling, collaborative marital counseling, conjoint marital counseling, and couples group counseling.

First, Concurrent Marital Counseling. The same counselor conducts counseling separately with each partner. This method is used when one partner has certain psychological problems to solve on their own, in addition to overcoming problems related to their partner. The method in this approach, counselors study each other's lives which are used as material in solving personal problems and problems related to their marriage.

Second, Collaborative Marital Counseling. Each partner individually encounters a different counselor. This method of counseling occurs when a partner over 38 likes to solve problems in his marital relationship, while the other counselor solves other problems that are also of concern to his client. Counselors then work with each other, comparing the results of their counseling and planning an appropriate intervention strategy.

Third, Conjoint Marital Counseling. Husband and wife together come to one or more counselors. This method of counseling is used when two partners are motivated to work in the relationship, with an emphasis on understanding and modifying the relationship. Conjoint Counseling counselors simultaneously counsel both partners.

Fourth, Couples Group Counseling. Some couples come together to one or more counselors. This approach method is used as a complement to conjoint counseling. This method can reduce the depth of the emotional situation between the couples, further they learn and maintain more rational behavior in the group.

#### ***The Benefits of Premarital Counseling***

The purpose of counseling in premarital guidance is useful to help the premarital couple achieve their life goals in their relationship and responsibility to God. Premarital counseling has an important role in creating a happy family. Therefore, in pre-marriage counseling, it must achieve the goals of pre-marriage counseling that are to be achieved. The benefits of such therapy can be used to help couples understand each other, be able to solve problems and conflicts in a healthy way, respect each other's differences, and can improve good

communication. So it can be said that premarital counseling guidance is a process of providing assistance to every couple who is about to get married, so that they are more stable in making the decision to get married.

## CONCLUSION

Marriage is Allah's mandate to humans to be able to reproduce through a marriage relationship, so every individual when the age has reached maturity, humans must establish relationships with the opposite sex until they enter the level of marriage. Based on the records of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of East Kalimantan, child marriages are 1,159 people and are always increasing every year. Judging from the causes, there are several factors that affect the occurrence of early marriage. There are several factors that occur in marriage at a young age such as economy, education, parental factors, mass media, customs, religion, and pregnancy outside of marriage.

The impact of early marriage can be seen biologically, psychologically, socially, on the children, and even on each family which is very influential in the lives of young couples who do this early marriage.

Through this event, there is a need to make efforts to prevent early marriage at a young age by providing counseling to parents, the community, young people, schools, and churches. Through this, it can work with the government in reducing the rate of early marriage at a young age.

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