



The Impact of Early Marriage Traditions

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the forms of impact of early marriage and the factors behind its sustainability in society. The method used is qualitative research with a literature study approach, through analysis of books, journal articles, research reports, and relevant policy documents. The results show that early marriage has the potential to hinder access to education, increase reproductive health risks, trigger psychological unpreparedness in marriage, and strengthen the cycle of poverty and gender inequality. In addition, the practice of early marriage also has an impact on the high divorce rate and the weak quality of childcare. This study concludes that the tradition of early marriage requires comprehensive handling through educational, social, and legal policy approaches oriented to the protection of children's rights and the improvement of family welfare.

Keywords: Impact; Tradition; Early Marriage

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bentuk-bentuk dampak pernikahan dini serta faktor-faktor yang melatarbelakangi keberlangsungannya dalam masyarakat. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi literatur, melalui analisis terhadap buku, artikel jurnal, laporan penelitian, dan dokumen kebijakan yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pernikahan dini berpotensi menghambat akses pendidikan, meningkatkan risiko kesehatan reproduksi, memicu ketidaksiapan psikologis dalam berumah tangga, serta memperkuat siklus kemiskinan dan ketimpangan gender. Selain itu, praktik pernikahan dini juga berdampak pada tingginya angka perceraian dan lemahnya kualitas pengasuhan anak. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa tradisi pernikahan dini memerlukan penanganan komprehensif melalui pendekatan edukatif, sosial, dan kebijakan hukum yang berorientasi pada perlindungan hak anak dan peningkatan kesejahteraan keluarga.

Kata Kunci: Dampak; Tradisi; Pernikahan Dini

Introduction

In the social reality of society, the tradition of early marriage is still ongoing and considered a reasonable practice, even legitimized by certain cultural, economic, and religious interpretation reasons.¹ In various regions, early marriage is often seen as a

¹ Bernard O. Itebiye, "Forced and early marriages: Moral failures vs religious nuances," *European Scientific Journal* 12, no. 17 (2016), <https://www.academia.edu/download/92971303/7364.pdf>.

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solution to maintain family honor, avoid promiscuity, or reduce the economic burden on parents.² This view leads to low public awareness of the risks and long-term impacts of early marriage, especially for girls, who are often the most vulnerable parties to this practice.³ In the field, early marriage poses serious problems in the aspect of education, where many children are forced to drop out of school because they enter domestic life before completing primary or secondary education.⁴ This condition has a direct impact on the low quality of human resources and limited access to decent work. In addition, early marriage also triggers reproductive health problems, such as increased risk of pregnancy at child's age, complications of childbirth, and maternal and child health disorders due to biological unpreparedness and lack of health knowledge.

From a psychological and social perspective, couples who marry at an early age generally do not have the emotional maturity to deal with domestic conflicts.⁵ This contributes to the high rates of arguments, domestic violence, and divorce at a young age. The further impact of these conditions is the weak parenting pattern and the reproduction of the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Although the government has set a minimum age limit for marriage through legal regulations, implementation in the field still faces challenges in the form of marriage dispensation, weak supervision, and cultural resistance from the community.⁶ This reality shows that there is a gap between legal norms, child protection policies, and social practices, thus requiring an in-depth academic study of the impact of early marriage traditions as the basis for the formulation of more effective and contextual prevention strategies.

Various studies have examined the phenomenon of early marriage from various perspectives, such as sociology, health, education, law, and Islamic studies.⁷ These studies show that early marriage is a multidimensional problem that has a wide impact on the lives of individuals and society. Research in the fields of sociology and anthropology highlights

² Khurul Anam, "Prevention of Early Marriage in Building a Problem Family," *al-Afkar, Journal For Islamic Studies* 7, no. 3 (2024): 1097–110, https://mail.al-afkar.com/index.php/Afkar_Journal/article/view/1565.

³ Javad Yoosefi Lebni dkk., "Exploring the Consequences of Early Marriage: A Conventional Content Analysis," *INQUIRY: The Journal of Health Care Organization, Provision, and Financing* 60 (Januari 2023): 00469580231159963, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00469580231159963>.

⁴ Jeannette Bayisenge, "Early marriage as a barrier to girl's education," *Retrieved on 1*, no. 10 (2010): 2010, https://www.academia.edu/download/53741928/marriage_in_Africa.pdf.

⁵ Laura L. Carstensen dkk., "Affect in intimate relationships: The developmental course of marriage," dalam *Handbook of emotion, adult development, and aging* (Elsevier, 1996), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780124649958500145>.

⁶ Mochammad Arifin, "Tradition vs. Administration: Challenging the Cultural Barriers to Marriage Registration in Indonesia," *Sakina: Journal of Family Studies* 9, no. 2 (2025): 213–25, <https://urj.uin-malang.ac.id/index.php/jfs/article/view/15343>.

⁷ Fatima Ahmad Garba dan Aliyu Muhammad Mudi, *Perspectives on Early Marriage of Females in Northern Nigeria: A Comparative Study of Islamic and Contemporary Views*, 2025, <https://ukrpublisher.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/UKRJAHS-104-2025.pdf>.

early marriage as a practice influenced by cultural traditions, social values, and the economic structure of society.⁸ These studies found that customary norms and social pressures, such as maintaining family honor or avoiding social stigma, were the dominant factors driving early marriage. However, the study generally places more emphasis on causal factors, while in-depth analysis of the long-term effects of early marriage is still limited. Research in the field of education shows a strong correlation between early marriage and low levels of education. Some studies have concluded that children who marry at an early age are more likely to drop out of school and lose opportunities to develop academic potential and job skills.⁹ However, part of this study only focuses on the impact of education without linking it to psychological and social aspects in an integrated manner.

In the field of public health, a number of studies confirm that early marriage poses a high risk to reproductive health, especially for women. The findings of the study show an increased risk of pregnancy at the age of the child, complications of childbirth, and a high maternal and infant mortality rate.¹⁰ However, health studies are often statistical and lack the socio-cultural background that perpetuates the practice of early marriage. Research from a legal and public policy perspective examines early marriage in relation to the regulation of the age limit for marriage and the protection of children's rights. These studies highlight the gap between legal norms and practice on the ground, particularly through marriage dispensation mechanisms. However, the legal research tends to be normative and has not integrated much empirical findings regarding the social and psychological impacts of early marriage.¹¹ Meanwhile, research in Islamic studies discusses early marriage from the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence and ethics, emphasizing the principles of benefit, mental readiness, and responsibility in marriage. Some contemporary studies have criticized the practice of early marriage as contrary to the purpose of marriage in Islam.¹² However, these studies are often conceptual and have not comprehensively linked Islamic values to modern social realities.

⁸ Md Emaj Uddin, "Family socio-cultural values affecting early marriage between Muslim and Santal communities in rural Bangladesh," *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 35, no. 3/4 (2015): 141–64, <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/ijssp-06-2014-0046/full/html>.

⁹ Jenny Birchall, *Early marriage, pregnancy and girl child school dropout*, The Institute of Development Studies and Partner Organisations, 2018, <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/articles>.

¹⁰ Barbara Luke dan Morton B. Brown, "Elevated risks of pregnancy complications and adverse outcomes with increasing maternal age," *Human reproduction* 22, no. 5 (2007): 1264–72, <https://academic.oup.com/humrep/article-abstract/22/5/1264/2914098>.

¹¹ Elizabeth S. Scott, "Social norms and the legal regulation of marriage," *Virginia law review*, JSTOR, 2000, 1901–70, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1073833>.

¹² Nikmatullah Nikmatullah, "The Controversy of the Hadith Interpretation of Early Marriage among Muslim Communities," *International Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Society* 14, no. 3 (2024), <https://search.ebscohost.com>.

The novelty of this research lies in an analytical approach that places the tradition of early marriage as a socio-cultural phenomenon that has a multidimensional and interrelated impact, not just a matter of marital age. In contrast to previous studies that generally examined early marriage in a sectoral manner separated between educational, health, legal, or economic aspects, this study presents a comprehensive synthesis that connects the impact of early marriage on education, reproductive health, psychological, family relations, and socio-economic sustainability in one integrated analytical framework. Another novelty lies in the emphasis on early marriage as a traditional practice that interacts with social and policy changes in the state. This research not only identifies the negative impacts it causes, but also uncovers the gap between cultural norms, public awareness, and legal regulations aimed at protecting children's rights. Thus, this study offers a new perspective in understanding why the practice of early marriage persists despite regulatory updates.

Method

The approach used in this study is a sociological and normative approach. A sociological approach is used to analyze early marriage as a social practice influenced by culture, economic structure, and social relations in society.¹³ Meanwhile, a normative approach is used to examine early marriage from a legal and policy perspective, especially regulations related to the age limit for marriage and the protection of children's rights. The source of research data consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data is in the form of laws and regulations related to marriage and child protection, as well as official reports from government agencies and international organizations that discuss early marriage. Secondary data includes books, scientific journal articles, previous research results, and other supporting documents relevant to the topic of early marriage and its impact.

The data collection technique is carried out through documentation studies, namely by identifying, inventorying, and classifying relevant literature according to the focus of the research.¹⁴ The data that has been collected is then analyzed using a descriptive-analytical analysis method. Descriptive analysis is used to describe the forms of impact of early marriage, while analytical analysis is used to examine the relationship between traditions, driving factors, and the impact it has on social life. To maintain the validity of the data and the objectivity of the research, the researcher triangulates the sources by

¹³ Faisal Ananda Arfa dan Watni Marpaung, *Metodologi Penelitian Hukum Islam: Edisi Revisi* (Prenada Media, 2018), <https://books.google.com/books>.

¹⁴ Kornelius Benuf dan Muhamad Azhar, "Metodologi penelitian hukum sebagai instrumen mengurai permasalahan hukum kontemporer," *Gema Keadilan* 7, no. 1 (2020): 20–33, <https://ejournal2.undip.ac.id/index.php/gk/article/view/7504>.

comparing various findings and views from different literature.¹⁵ The results of the analysis were then synthesized to draw conclusions about the impact of the early marriage tradition and its implications for human development and social policy.

Results and Discussion

Early Marriage

Early marriage is a marriage that occurs before adulthood. There are various definitions of adulthood, depending on the source and context. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), early marriage is a marriage involving a couple under the age of 19. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), early marriage is a marriage that takes place before the age of 18, either officially or not. According to Indonesian law, marriage is only valid if the man is at least 19 years old and the woman is at least 16 years old. If the age is below that, then it is called early marriage.¹⁶ According to Law (UU) Number 16 of 2019 concerning amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning marriage In article 7 it is explained that marriage is only allowed when a man and woman have reached the age of 19 (nineteen) years. In this case, the minimum age limit for women is equal to the minimum age of marriage for men, which is the same as 19 years. The age limit is considered to be mature in the body and soul to be able to carry out the marriage in order to realize the purpose of marriage properly and without ending in divorce and getting healthy and quality offspring. It is also hoped that an increase in the age limit higher than 16 (sixteen) years for women to marry will result in a lower birth rate and reduce the risk of maternal and child death. In addition, it can also fulfill children's rights so as to optimize children's growth and development, including parental assistance and provide children with access to the highest possible education.¹⁷

Early marriage refers to marriages that occur at an age below the threshold that is considered physically, emotionally, and socially mature to lead a married life. Typically, these marriages involve young individuals, often under the age of 18, who are not yet sufficiently prepared psychologically and physically to face the responsibilities of marriage. At that age, many individuals do not yet have the ability to manage relationships, raise children, or meet the family's economic needs.¹⁸ Emotional maturity is the ability of a teenager to express his or her emotions in a way that is appropriate to the situation, to have responsibility for himself, and to have a strong sense of self-confidence. With good

¹⁵ Qadriani Arifuddin dkk., *Metodologi Penelitian Hukum* (PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia, 2025), <https://books.google.com/books>.

¹⁶ Arifin, I., Nurhidayat, A., & Panji, M, "The Influence of Early Marriage in Family Harmony," *Journal of Social Education Diversity*; Vol.8 No.2.

¹⁷ Law of the Republic of Indonesia. Number 16 of 2019 concerning "Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage", p. 2

¹⁸ Husnul Fatimah et al., *Early Marriage and Its Prevention Efforts* (Bantul: ev. Mine, 2021),p.2.

emotional maturity, a person can maintain his marriage because he can solve the problems that exist in the household. Marriage is not only based on love or sexual attraction, but must be based on a commitment not to fall into adultery who only wants to follow the sunnah of the Prophet and hope for the pleasure of Allah SWT.

Pernikahan adalah sebuah tantangan yang membutuhkan pengetahuan untuk menghadapi berbagai hal dalam rumah tangga. Ada hak dan kewajiban dalam pernikahan yang mengharuskan kita untuk mempelajarinya. Untuk itu, orang yang berumah tangga perlu memiliki bekal ilmu untuk mencegah keretakan rumah tangga. Kemampuan dalam Pernikahan adalah sebuah komitmen yang membutuhkan tanggung jawab dari kedua belah pihak. Seorang suami harus bertanggung jawab untuk memenuhi kebutuhan istri dan keluarga, seperti sandang, pangan, dan papan. Seorang istri harus bertanggung jawab untuk melayani suami dan mengurus rumah tangga dengan baik, dan masih banyak lagi tanggung jawab yang harus diemban oleh pasangan suami istri. Untuk itu, sebelum menikah, pasangan harus siap dengan segala tanggung jawab yang akan dihadapi agar rumah tangga dapat berlangsung dengan harmonis. Pernikahan adalah sebuah ikatan yang tidak hanya menuntut kesiapan menikah, tetapi juga kesiapan membentuk keluarga, yang terdiri dari suami, istri, dan anak. Suami istri harus siap menerima anak sebagai anugerah dan tanggung jawab dalam hidupnya.¹⁹

Factors Causing Early Marriage

Based on the results of the data analysis technique used by the researcher, namely purposive sampling using interview, observation and documentation methods, it can be known about the factors that cause early marriage in adolescents in the indigenous people of Aek Banir Village has been going on for generations and has received strong support from the community and traditional leaders. The practice of early marriage has taken place decades ago and is maintained to this day. On the other hand, these cultural traditions receive a positive response from the community and there is no negative response to early marriage perpetrators so that it can influence decision-making to get married early. Cultural tradition factors are the main cause of early marriage, namely for the reason that in the area where they live, the practice of early marriage still occurs which is a habit, with the practice of early marriage that occurs from generation to generation can affect a person's decision to marry early. As the results of the interview presented by Sdri. Sri Devi: "The age of 15 years has been considered an adult by parents. Physically I was considered capable of getting married. So I was immediately married". (Interview December 8, 2024). The same thing was also conveyed by Sdri. Nisya Lubis stated that: "Parents think that the age of 15

¹⁹ Nur Rohmah Mutiah, Ishmatul Zulfa, Widodo Hami, "Analisis Penyebab dan Dampak Pernikahan Dini (Studi Kasus di Rojosari, Kecamatan Bojong", *MYSIKAT AL-ANWAR Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Masyarakat* vo.7 No.1 (2024), hal.32-33.

is right for marriage. So they will definitely approve if someone proposes to me. And I was pushed to get married."

The perspective inherent in the Indigenous People of Aek Banir Village is the cause of young marriage. People consider that marital status indicates maturity in their children. So they support if their child wants to get married or proposed to and they also try to marry their child, even though he is still young. As Sdri. Susi Nasution stated that: "The age of 15 has been considered mature by parents. So I was immediately married. I was immediately accepted". Law Number 16 of 2019 regulates the minimum age of marriage at 19 years for both men and women. In this case, the consequence is that ideally, each prospective married couple must meet the requirements of the marriage. The marriage law that limits the age of marriage ideologies, to prevent the practice of young marriage from being socialized evenly in the Aek Banir Village Community. So that many people do not understand it, including the young marriage perpetrators themselves, many do not understand it. Sdri. Nurliani Batubara stated that: "I don't know if there is a rule of the age of marriage. I don't understand early marriage or early marriage. You know how to get married".

Parents have considered their children to be physically and mentally capable of carrying out the marriage even at a young age. In addition, the child's social development is also believed by parents to be established, because they already have a girlfriend or have found their soul mate. The people of Aek Banir Village carry out young marriages on average between the ages of 12 years and 18 years, namely from they are adults and still in elementary school (SD) until they are in high school (MA) mostly for women. Low education levels further encourage an increase in cases of young marriage. From the results of the study's observations, young marriage actors are on average poorly educated, namely some who are not educated and some who are only elementary school. So that a person who drops out of school at a young age will tend to quickly get married or be married by his parents because he is unemployed at home, especially since the child already has a girlfriend. Sdri. Erni stated that: "many of my students get married when they are adults even though they are still in elementary school (SD) and it is approved by the families of both couples". Adolescents who have an obedient attitude or oppose their parents become the cause of young marriage. A poor relationship between parents and children is the cause of early marriage, because children want to escape from their parents.

Marriage at a very young age tends to be seen as a way out of the economic difficulties faced, so many adolescents get married because they expect an increase in economic status. Girls who are known to have had biological relations with the opposite sex tend to be quickly married off by their parents, even though they are still young, because they are worried that they will get pregnant out of wedlock or be abandoned by their boyfriend. Pregnancy out of wedlock is a driver for families to make decisions to carry out a marriage quickly for their child, because parents avoid embarrassment or as a family disgrace. So that the marriage decision was taken, without thinking long about the impact. Low family

education is a factor causing young marriage in the Aek Banir Village Community. The results of the research observation show that the average parental education of young marriage actors is low-educated. Some even did not graduate from elementary school, some never went to school, and some were only elementary school graduates. Families with low education tend to marry their children more often at a young age, because there are mistakes in understanding married life.

The lack of family ability to deal with adolescent problems is the factor causing the high practice of young marriage in the Indigenous Peoples of Aek Banir Village, Young marriage is the main alternative choice for families who have a minimal understanding of problems in adolescents. Especially to cover up the act of free sex and promiscuity in adolescents, because the family is not able to deal with feelings of shame/shame due to these acts. There is no understanding of parents about the consequences of early marriage for adolescents themselves, so that adolescents feel that marriage is the solution to all life problems. Statements from four elementary school teachers in Aek Banir Village are factors that encourage teenagers to marry early, one of which is the education factor.²⁰ Based on the results of the research obtained by the researcher from interviews and observations at the Aek Banir village Elementary School, it is true that one of the driving factors for early marriage in adolescents in the village is due to the lack of education in this village.

The Impact Of Early Marriage

By marrying their children at an early age, parents assume that all their children's needs will be met by their husbands and even parents hope that their economic burden will also be helped. The statements of the four perpetrators of early marriage in Aek Banir Village had a positive impact on teenagers after early marriage, one of which was to ease the burden on parents or the family economy. Based on the results of the research obtained from interviews and observations in Aek Banir village, it is true that one of the positive impacts felt by adolescents after early marriage in the village is to ease the burden on parents or the family economy. Keeping away from acts that are forbidden by Allah SWT such as: preventing disobedience, such as adultery or gathering among teenagers, by marrying the child's parents will feel calm, because adultery or even pregnancy outside of marriage among teenagers will not occur. The statement from the perpetrator of early marriage in Aek Banir Village has a positive impact that teenagers feel after early marriage, one of which is to stay away from acts that are forbidden by Allah SWT. Based on the results of the research obtained by the researcher from interviews and observations in Aek Banir village, it is true that one of the positive impacts felt by teenagers after early marriage in the village is to stay away from acts that are prohibited by Allah SWT.²¹

²⁰ Interview: Mrs. *Erni*, Elementary School Teacher of Aek Banir Village, (Sunday, 08 December) 2024

²¹ Interview: Mr. Head of Aek Banir Village, (Sunday, 08 December) 2024

Divorce is the breaking of the bond in the relationship between husband and wife which means the breakdown of the marriage law so that the two are no longer in a position as husband and wife and no longer live together in a household. An immature mindset in solving problems can lead to repeated arguments. As a result, divorce is inevitable. This makes the rate of household divorce in Indonesia increasing. In fact, it is not uncommon for parents to intervene a lot when their children who get married at an early age experience problems in the household, which has a bad impact on the continuity of the child's marriage. The statement from the four perpetrators of early marriage in Aek Banir Village has a negative impact on teenagers after early marriage, one of which is divorce. Based on the results of the research that the researcher obtained from interviews and observations in Aek Banir village, it is true that one of the negative impacts felt by teenagers after early marriage in the village is divorce.

Domestic violence (KDRT) is any act against a person, especially a woman, which results in physical, sexual, psychological misery or suffering and domestic neglect including threats to commit acts, coercion or unlawful deprivation of independence in the household. This happens because emotions that are still labile make children under the age of 17 easily angry and try to find an outlet by committing violence against children and wives. Not infrequently, things in the house are slammed when emotional. So, it can be said that marriage for children under can be a trigger for domestic violence. Because their emotions are not stable and are still easily shaky. There is no firm grip that can control anger yet). Statements from early marriage perpetrators in Aek Banir Village the negative impact that teenagers feel after early marriage, one of which is domestic violence (KDRT). Based on the results of the research obtained by the researcher from the results of interviews and observations in Rukti Basuki village, it is true that one of the negative impacts felt by adolescents after early marriage in the village is domestic violence (KDRT).

Basically, teenagers who are still under 21 years old should still be looking for an identity with a mindset that is still free with their will. But many are married at an early age. As a result, with the mindset that they should still enjoy having fun at their age, now they have to be forced to think as adults to live a married life. The statement of the two perpetrators of early marriage in Aek Banir Village was the negative impact that teenagers felt after early marriage, one of which was premature adulthood (premature adulthood).²² Based on the results of the research obtained from interviews and observations in Aek Banir village, it is true that one of the negative impacts felt by adolescents after early marriage in the village is premature adulthood (premature adulthood).

Education is a need of every human being that provides many important results. Education is not only in school but parental education is the main thing for every child. Education in school alone is not enough, because parents also have a great influence on

²² Interview: Mr . , Traditional Leader of Aek Banir Village, (Sunday, 08 December) 2024

children's education. Socialization is very important in the formation of children's personalities. Through good socialization, children feel cared for by their parents so that they have a motivation in forming a good personality from the journal Statements from the four elementary school teachers who are teachers of early marriage in Aek Banir Village, the negative impact that adolescents feel after early marriage, one of which is that the quality of education decreases because after marriage they do not continue their education anymore.²³ Based on the results of the research that the researcher obtained from the results of interviews and observations in Aek Banir village, it is true that one of the negative impacts felt by teenagers after early marriage in the village is that the quality of education decreases.

Conclusion

Based on the results of a study of various literature and regulations related to the tradition of early marriage, this study concludes that early marriage is a socio-cultural practice that still persists in society and has a multidimensional impact. This tradition is not only influenced by cultural and economic factors, but also by the low level of education, the lack of understanding of children's rights, and the strong social and normative legitimacy that surrounds it. The impact of early marriage can be seen significantly on educational, health, psychological, and socio-economic aspects. Children who marry at an early age tend to drop out of school, have limited access to decent work, and increase reproductive health risks and mental unpreparedness in living a married life. These conditions contribute to the high rate of domestic conflicts, divorce at a young age, and the poor quality of childcare, which ultimately strengthens the cycle of intergenerational poverty. This study also found that there is a gap between legal regulations that set the age limit for marriage and practices in the field, especially through the mechanism of marriage dispensation and the cultural resistance of the community. Therefore, this study emphasizes that efforts to prevent early marriage are not enough only through a legal approach, but must be carried out comprehensively through education, strengthening the role of the family, transforming cultural values, and social policies that are oriented towards protecting children's rights and improving the quality of family life.

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²³ Interview: Mrs. Nur Halimah Lubis, Elementary School Teacher of Aek Banir Village, (Monday, 09 December) 2024

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