

## The Role of Village Apparatus to Prevent Early Marriage in Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

Village officials (village heads, hamlet heads, village secretaries, village staff) have a strategic role to prevent early marriage in Indonesia. This study uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques, namely structured interviews based on a question guide. The research subjects involved 9 people consisting of 4 village heads, 4 hamlet heads and 1 village staff. Data analysis techniques using thematic approach (thematic approach) and by using the concept of Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. The results of the study can be concluded that they as village officials can take practical steps, namely; socializing law number 16 of 2019 concerning the minimum age for marriage is 19 years, preventing (forbidding, hindering or hindering) marriage before reaching the age of 19 years, encouraging citizens to participate in compulsory 12 years of education,. Furthermore, after doing these things, it was also found that the village community has the awareness to marry at least 19 years old, the community has the awareness to improve education, and, the community has the awareness to avoid promiscuity.

**Keywords:** Village Apparatus, Preventing Early Marriage.

## **A. Introduction**

Early marriage is a marriage performed by those who are not yet 19 years old (Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage), or before 18 years of age (Law No. 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection). This means that those who marry at an early age are considered to have not met the minimum age standards set by law (Melandriani, 2018). Indonesia is one of the countries that has a high rate of early marriage in the Asian continent. Many early marriages are carried out by those who live in villages (Benedicta, 2017). There are various factors that cause early marriage, namely economic factors (poverty), traditions, customs and culture, perceptions of old virgins or old virgins, pre-marital pregnancy (Fatimah, 2009; Yulianti, 2010; Djamilah&Kartikawati, 2014; Bastomi , 2016; Fitrianiingsih, 2015; Sari, 2016; Utami, 2015; Yousriatin, 2018). Early marriage has a negative impact, one of which is divorce (Benedicta, 2017; Melandriani, 2018), because those who marry at a young age usually do not have physiological, psychological or economic readiness (Bastomi, 2016; Melandriani, 2018). Therefore, it is necessary to make concrete efforts to prevent early marriage (Eleanora & Sari, 2020).

Although Law No. 1 of 1974 concerning marriage has mandated the rule regarding the minimum age to get married is 19 years, but if these rules are not implemented (applied) in the field, then the statutory rules are useless. Therefore, government officials from the center to the regions are obliged to enforce these rules seriously so that every citizen can comply with the law properly. The lowest regional apparatus in the context of the government of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) which acts to enforce laws and regulations number 1 of 1974 is the village apparatus. Moreover, according to law number 6 of 2014 that a village head can play the role of a judiciary who is authorized to make decisions related to socio-juridical issues in the village community.

What is meant by village apparatus is a set of villages consisting of the village head, village secretary, hamlet head, other village staff who have the authority, duties and responsibilities in realizing the social welfare of the village community (Law Number 32 of 2004 concerning Village Administration). ). They have an important role that is obliged to carry out their duties and responsibilities to enforce the minimum age of marriage for members of the village community. If they do not care or do not apply the legislation properly, then the existence of the law is in vain. Because often village officials are not able to carry out their duties and responsibilities as village officials properly, due to the minimal amount of salary they receive, so they do side jobs that take up a lot of their time and energy (Fajarwati, 2019; Ngaga, Riady&Burhanudin, 2019) .

Therefore, awareness and sincerity from the village apparatus are needed to carry out their duties and responsibilities as community servants (Kamal, 2020). In addition, village officials need to apply statutory rules number 1 of 1974 concerning marriage, so that every member of the village community understands and is willing to obey not to marry before the age of 19. In connection with this statement, the problem is formulated, how is the role of the village apparatus in an effort to prevent early marriage in Indonesia? . Furthermore, what are the results of the efforts to prevent early marriage from the village apparatus on the behavior of the village community?

The previous research conducted by Sabariman (2019) stated that a klebun Babine (female village head) has an important role in preventing early marriage. The research was conducted in Ponteh village, Galis sub-district, Pamekasan regency, Madura. According to Sabariman, female village heads are able to carry out their duties properly, so that the community obeys to prevent early marriage. Based on this, the researchers are interested in expanding the scope of the research area by using 5 villages in Indonesia. The research locations include Wonocolo

village (Kedewan, Bojonegoro, East Java), West Srabi village (Modung, Pamekasan, Madura, East Java), Poncowarno village (Kalirejo, Central Lampung, Lampung), Bukit Bayung village (Bengkinang, Riau), Securai (Babalan, Langkat, North Sumatra). The reason for collecting data in these villages is that these areas have a relatively high number of early marriages. The theoretical concepts used in using the environmental psychology approach, especially the theoretical concept of Urie Broffnenbrunner which states that human behavior is strongly influenced by their environment (Sarwono, 1999; Harkonnen, 2007).

The research method used in this study is a qualitative research method. The data collection technique used in-depth interviews based on interview guides (Young & Hren, 2013; Khan, 2014). The general guidelines for the interview include the description of village conditions, cases of early marriage, the factors that cause early marriage, practical efforts to prevent early marriage, and how the results of efforts to prevent early marriage are achieved. Interviews were conducted with village heads, hamlet heads and village staff who were considered to be the most knowledgeable about the condition of the problems in their respective villages (See table 1 Overview of research subjects). In addition to interviews, data collection was also carried out by observing rural areas, as well as viewing documentation records stored at the village office.

The data analysis uses a thematic approach, an analysis that focuses on specific themes according to the theme or research topic (Young & Hren, 2013). The theme approach in this research is the role of village officials to prevent early marriage in their village. If there are data items that are not in accordance with the theme, then the data is not used as data analysis material.

**Table 1. Subject Description**

No	Subject	Age	Religion	Sex	Education	Jabatan	Status	Province
1	N	49	Moslem	Female	Bachelor	village head	Married	North Sumatera
2	S	27	Moslem	Male	Bachelor	Hamlet head	Single	North Sumatera
3	K	42	Moslem	Male	Bachelor	village head concurrently hamlet head	Married	Riau
4	I	43	Moslem	Male	Bachelor	Hamlet head	Married	Riau
5	H	40	Moslem	Male	Bachelor	Village secretary	Married	Riau
6	E	47	Moslem	Male	High School	village head	Married	Lampung
7	W	29	Moslem	Male	Bachelor	Hamlet head	Single	Lampung
8	J	49	Moslem	Male	High School	Village head	Married	East Java
9	MR	32	Moslem	Male	High school	Village head	Married	Madura, East Java

## B. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Early marriage has become a crucial problem for a country like Indonesia, because most of those who have married at an early age are unable to maintain their marriage certificate, and end up in divorce (Benedicta, 2017). The consequences of divorce for married couples who marry young are felt by children, namely they experience school drop-outs, low education, unemployment, poverty, crime (Ahlaoma, 2013; Eyo, 2018). This of course causes social unrest in the community. On this basis, through various interviews with village officials (N, S, K, I, H, E, W, J and MR) various practical efforts were found by them to prevent early marriage, including:

## 1. Socialization of law number 16 of 2019 concerning marriage

One of the best ways to prevent early marriage is to make village officials more effective in carrying out their duties and responsibilities in implementing Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning marriage, especially regarding the minimum age for marriage is 19 years. The practical steps that can be taken by the village apparatus in implementing the statutory rules are by conducting socialization. Socialization is an effort to convey important information regarding law number 16 of 2019 concerning marriage (Jaffar, Mardiah, & Rahman, 2018). Another form of socialization is counseling (guidance) which can be carried out by extension workers in social activities such as PKK activities, youth organizations, or even through religious activities (Mulyawati, 2014). The socialization is carried out individually or in group socialization.

Village officials such as (Subjects N, S, K, I, H, E, W, J and MR) conducted socialization of Law number 16 of 2019 concerning marriage to community members, but carried out individually or in groups. This is a statement by subject N, a female village head in Securai village, Babalan, Langkat, North Sumatra. "Yes, I do socialization. Dissemination of marriage rules. Marriage law. Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning marriage. Yes, at that time, the law had not been changed. The minimum age for marriage is 16 years for women and 19 years for men. Yes, I told the residents when they came to the village office. But I also say it in meetings with the community in the village hall or in other groups".

What has been stated by subject N, of course, is supported by subject S, because subject S is the head of a hamlet under the command of subject N. Meanwhile, subject K is the village head, subject I is the hamlet head and subject H is the secretary of Bukit Payung Village, Bengkinang, Riau did the same thing as subject N. Even subject E as village head and W as head of hamlet 1 in Poncowarno village, Kalirejo, Central Lampung, Lampung; and MR as the village head of West Srabi, Modung, Pamekasan,

Madura – East Java. They do the same. They socialize individually to villagers, but they also do group socialization. They are all male village officials. So, both female and male village officials carry out socialization of the marriage law both individually and in groups.

## **2. Increase participation in the 12-year compulsory education program**

A practical way that a village head can do to prevent early marriage is to motivate every citizen to join the 12-year compulsory education program. The Government of the Republic of Indonesia has a special program to increase the participation rate of citizens to receive a minimum of 12 years of education, namely SD, SMP, and SMA or SMK (Khairunnisa, 2018; Sabariman, 2019). The program needs to be supported by all elements of society, including the leaders of all government institutions that oversee the community (Kusuma, 2015). The village head is the highest leader in the village community. He still has a charisma that is respected, respected and obeyed by every citizen (Setyadiharja, Suherry&Dachroni, 2018). Therefore, village heads have a very strategic role in inviting their citizens to join the 12-year compulsory education program.

All village heads and hamlet heads and village staff (Subjects N, S, K, I, H, E, W, J and MR) mobilized their citizens to be actively involved in the 12-year compulsory education program. This is one of the statements of the village head N who leads the village of Securai, Babalan, Langkat, North Sumatra. "I'm a teacher. Before being elected as village head, I was a teacher who taught at a vocational school. Therefore, I implemented compulsory education for all villagers. This method is appropriate to prevent early marriage. If they go to school for 12 years, then they don't think about getting married. What they think is learning."

### 3. Postponement of marriage before the age of 19

Preventing early marriage can be done by delaying marriage so that people do not get married before turning 19 years old. Villagers, especially teenagers who have not yet reached the age of 19, are informed about the minimum age for marriage. One of the statements of subject E was a village head in Poncowarno, Kalirejo, Central Lampung, Lampung who revealed efforts to prevent or delay marriage to members of the community.

“I talk to teenagers. If they want to take care of their ID cards, I say don’t get married if they are not yet 19 years old. If you are not yet 19 years old, I am told to postpone marriage. Even though they have graduated from high school or vocational school, they are not allowed to marry, if they are not yet 19 years old. I also convey it in other group meetings”

What was stated by subject E was approved and supported by subject W, because subject W was subordinate to subject E. Subject W was the head of hamlet 1 who was still under direct command and coordination by subject E. What was done by subject E was also done by MR the village head West Srabi, Modung, Pamekasan, Madura.

“Yes, I did outreach to the community. If anyone wants to take care of an ID card, I tell them not to marry young. You can marry if you are old enough. It means that if you are not yet 19 years old, don’t get married yet.”

The provisions of law number 16 of 2019 concerning marriage stipulates that the minimum age for marriage is 19 years. For those who have not reached the age of 19 years, then they can apply for a letter of dispensation, namely a letter of relief that allows them to get married. They can apply for a letter of dispensation through the religious court for various reasons



such as avoiding adultery, matchmaking between parents, not going to school anymore and already working, pregnant before marriage (Niami, 2011; Purnadewi, 2016; Mahri, 2019). Often by considering various things and maintaining social harmony in the community, the religious court can grant the request, so that those who apply for a marriage dispensation can carry out their marriage properly (Purnadewi, 2016; Hakim, 2017; Norhasanah, 2017).

Meanwhile, the village apparatus as the protector of the community pays attention to the interests of its citizens who apply for a marriage dispensation. They weigh the advantages (positive things) rather than the disadvantages (negative things). This is as stated by subject E, the village head of Poncowarno, Kalirejo, Central Lampung, Lampung.

“However, as a village head, I need to pay attention to my people. If they apply for a marriage dispensation letter, I need to support them. I take note of their considerations. If the considerations are good things, I immediately acc (accepted = agree). I agree. I gave a letter of introduction to the resident, so that they could take it to the KUA and the religious court. In this case, I also need to consider the harmony of the village community”.

In principle, the village heads (subjects N, K, J, WR) and the hamlet heads (S, I, H and W) agree with the thoughts of subject E. The main consideration is to maintain and maintain social harmony in the community. If there are community members who violate social rules and norms, often the community cannot accept it and they can play judge by themselves. Therefore, the village head as the leader of the local community needs to make the right decisions in order to realize a harmonious social life of the community (Saleh & Hariati, 2016).

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the right decisions in order to realize a harmonious social life of the community (Saleh & Hariati, 2016).

#### **4. Impact of efforts to prevent village officials from getting married at an early age**

All subjects with backgrounds as village heads (N, K, E, J and MR) as well as hamlet heads (S, I and W) and village secretaries (H) acknowledged that what they had done so far had a positive impact on the residents. Villagers. In general, they acknowledged that there was an increase in the awareness of villagers to marry at least 19 years old, awareness to improve education, and awareness to avoid promiscuity.

In general, the 5 village heads (N, K, H, J and MR), the hamlet head (S, I and W) and the village secretary (H) stated that the efforts of the village apparatus were quite encouraging, because the villagers began to have awareness in marry. Previously, villagers did not care about the age of marriage. Many citizens are married before the age of 19. Now that the village apparatus has continuously conveyed the rules for the age of marriage, the villagers also understand that the minimum age for marriage is 19 years. As, Law No. 1 of 1974 concerning marriage has clearly stipulated the minimum age of marriage is 19 years. Both boys and girls are the same, 19 years old. In general, according to the statements of the village heads (N, K, H, J and MR) they stated that the villagers had the awareness to get married at the age of 19. If they have not yet reached the age of 19, then they are not married.

Efforts to prevent village officials related to preventing early marriage can be felt. According to the village heads (N, K, H, J and MR), the hamlet heads (S, I and W) and the village secretary (H) that at least the villagers are starting to think about their future. They are open minded. They begin to receive education, at least at the high school or vocational level.

Previously, many villagers who graduated from elementary or junior high school immediately got married, even though they were still in their twenties or were still teenagers. Now, those who often get directions from village officials, they are aware of going to school. They attend high school or vocational education, after that they work and get married. This means that the villagers have the awareness to increase the level of education and try to delay early marriage.

As stated by subject J, a village head in Wonocolo, Kedewan, Bojonegoro, East Java, namely: "Children need to be guided. They need direction. They are built for high school. Minimum high school or high school. If they graduate from high school or vocational school, they can get a decent job. Especially when you graduate from college. University. That's good. Today, many children have graduated from high school or vocational school, even university."

One of the factors causing early marriage is pregnancy before marriage. This is closely related to promiscuity among teenagers who are dating. They are not able to control themselves, as a result they have a relationship like husband and wife and cause pregnancy before marriage. From these problems, the village head (N, K, H, J and MR), the hamlet head (S, I and W) and the village secretary (H) intensively conveyed the importance of avoiding promiscuity. The results are not in vain and can be felt by the community themselves. Community members began to realize that promiscuity is contrary to religious teachings. Many village youths began to limit themselves in socializing. They get along well. They still maintain social and religious norms in their association.

A subject K statement from a village head in Bukit Payung, Bengkinang, Riau stated: "Often marrying young is caused by getting pregnant before marriage. Because of that, as the village head and hamlet head, I never get tired of talking to the villagers.

Please, if you can't afford it, don't be adventurous. No need to date first. Especially when it comes to promiscuity. Don't go yet!"

**Table 3. Results after the efforts of village officials to prevent early marriage**

No	Location	Awareness of marriage at least 19 years old	Awareness of education improvement	Consciousness avoids free conversation
1	Desa Securai, Babalan, Sumut	V	V	V
2	Desa Bukit Payung, Bengkinang, Riau	V	V	V
3	Desa Poncowarno. Lampung Tengah, Lampung	V	V	V
4	Desa Wonocolo, Kedewan Bojonegoro, Jawa Timur	V	V	V
5	Desa Srabi Barat, Modung, Pamekasan, Madura	V	V	V

## 5. Discussion

In his concept of ecological system theory, Urie Broffebrenner (in Sarwono, 1999; Harkonen, 2007) states that human behavior is influenced by their environment. Each neighborhood is led by a community leader who has special authority to manage the area. According to law number 6 of 2014 that a village area is led by a village head who is democratically elected directly by the community. Therefore, the village head has strong authority in managing his village government. Because they are a direct

choice by the community, they have a charisma that is obeyed by the villagers (Sariyono, 2017). One of the important roles of a village head is to suppress or prevent early marriage (Sabariman, 2019). Likewise, this is also done by other village officials such as the hamlet head, village secretary or other village staff (Saleh & Hariati, 2016).

One of the easiest ways for village officials to prevent, reduce or eliminate early marriage is by socializing law number 1 of 1974 on marriage to members of the community. Every time the community members take care of important correspondence such as Identity Cards, or other important documents, the village apparatus can convey information regarding the minimum age for marriage, which is 19 years. Both men and women are the same and there is no difference. Those who have not reached the age of 19 years, are required to postpone until they are 19 years old. When they reach the age of 19, they are allowed to marry.

However, one of the administrative requirements that residents need to fulfill is a certificate from the village head. A village head understands the residents' wishes, so he can also give a letter of introduction to the residents so that the residents' affairs run smoothly, and he can also take care of it in the religious court. The issue of approval or rejection of a dispensation letter is in the hands of a religious court judge (Purnadewi, 2016; Samsukadi & Sabrianto, 2017; Mahri, 2019). Although the decision to approve or reject the marriage dispensation letter is in the hands of the religious court judge, the approval of the cover letter from the village head still plays an important role for the success of the dispensation letter submission.

Often, a religious court judge still pays attention to administrative matters, namely a certificate or introduction from the village head. If there is no cover letter from the village head, then a judge will reject the application for dispensation (Samsukadi & Sabrianto, 2017). The reason is simple, however, a citizen must respect the authority of the village head who

is responsible for managing the government in his village, including providing a cover letter for applying for a marriage dispensation. In this case, the refusal is also intended for residents to re-administer the completeness of the documents needed in an effort to arrange the dispensation letter and manage it in their village.

Law number 6 of 2014 mandates that a village head can play a judicial role in the community. The village head can make legal decisions in his village environment. When a villager who is not yet 19 years old wants to apply for marriage on the grounds that she was pregnant before marriage, the village head can immediately decide to approve it. The decision of the village head is absolute and binding and can be followed up with a wedding ceremony. The consideration is to provide peace of mind and legal certainty for the community. If not immediately married, then who is responsible for the baby to be born from these residents. Therefore, by providing a policy for citizens to marry, it will provide certainty that the baby has parents who are responsible for the maintenance of his life in the future (Sari, 2011).

What has become the village head's decision can be understood by various circles of the wider community, because the decision is human and is considered wise. This means that a village head prioritizes the humanitarian element in making a decision regarding the policy of allowing marriage for those who are pregnant before getting married. This is in accordance with the decision of the religious court that the religious court can grant dispensation for them to be able to get married even though they are not yet 19 years old (Bastomi, 2017; Purnadewi, 2016; Mubarok, 2017). One of the reasons the religious courts allow them to get married immediately is that they were already pregnant during their courtship before they entered the marriage stage (Sari, 2017; Aisyah, 2017; Hidayatullah & Jannah, 2020; Mubarok, 2017; Nurhasanah, 2017; Samsukadi & Sabrianto, 2017).

After all, a village head has an important role in determining the atmosphere of the social life of the village community he leads (Rohmah, 2013). The village head needs to take a policy that can protect all members of the community (Saleh & Hariati, 2016). Therefore, what has become the village head's decision is the best decision for all members of the community. The village head has a vision (vision) for the future to be realized in an effort to build the social welfare of his village community (Kushandyani, 2016; Saleh & Hariati, 2016; Sariyono, 2017). Likewise, a village head who has decided or taken a special policy to allow early marriage for certain residents, does not mean that the village head supports all his residents to marry at an early age. The village head looked at case by case. If residents can be fostered and directed by the head not to marry at an early age, then it is considered better. However, if the residents are already pregnant before getting married, the village head will allow them to get married immediately with the intention of keeping the fetus they are carrying and having biological parents who can be responsible for the fetus (prospective baby).

The efforts of the village apparatus in preventing early marriage provide results that can be felt by the villagers. Village communities began to have awareness to marry at least 19 years old, awareness to improve education, and avoid promiscuity among teenagers. Law number 1 of 1974 concerning marriage stipulates that the minimum age for marriage is 19 years. This rule forms the basis for village officials to convey information to their village residents. Previously, many villagers were married before the age of 19, but now many villagers are aware that marriage is only allowed at the age of 19. So citizens have the awareness to follow the rules in carrying out their marriage. They will marry if they are at least 19 years old.

If they don't marry before the age of 19, then they flock to improve their education. Moreover, the government has set a 12-year compulsory education. This means that every citizen



is required to attend education at the level of elementary school (SD, 6 years), Junior High School (SMP, 3 years) and High School (SMA, 3 years) (Putri, 2018; Sabariman, 2019). Villagers who take part in the 12-year compulsory education program will be able to focus on thinking about the future and delaying not getting married at an early age. This 12-year compulsory education is felt to provide positive benefits for village officials and villagers. Villagers prioritize completing their education in order to achieve a better future, after that, they can get married.

In addition, the efforts of village officials in preventing early marriage by providing insight into the importance of avoiding promiscuity. Promiscuity is an association that is marked by a violation of social values, norms or rules. Free association has a negative impact, namely the emergence of pregnancy before marriage. Pregnancy before marriage is one of the factors causing the high rate of early marriage (Bastomi, 2016). If this is allowed to drag on, then many teenagers have a bleak future. They cannot continue their education. They will experience school drop-outs and they take care of the household, because they were already pregnant before marriage and were forced to marry (or start a family). Therefore, this condition needs to be addressed immediately by socializing the importance of avoiding promiscuity among teenagers. The result was not in vain. Many villagers who are still teenagers are starting to realize to avoid promiscuity. The practical way is that they focus on education and don't date before they graduate from high school or vocational school.

### **C. Conclusion**

Village officials have a strategic role in educating citizens to prevent early marriage in Indonesia. They can take practical steps that can be carried out by every citizen. They can socialize law number 16 of 2019 concerning the minimum

age for marriage is 19 years, prevent (forbid, hinder or hinder) marriage before reaching the age of 19 years, encourage residents to participate in compulsory 12 years of education, serve the provision of certificates for residents who taking care of the marriage dispensation letter, providing a special policy for young marriage. The results of efforts to prevent early marriage carried out by village officials have a positive impact among village communities, namely the growing awareness to marry at least 19 years of age, awareness to improve education, and awareness to avoid promiscuity.

It is recommended that village officials maintain the practical steps used to prevent or delay their citizens from getting married at an early age. The village head can coordinate with the junior high school or high school within his authority to socialize law number 16 of 2019, namely the importance of preventing early marriage. Village heads can also work together to provide opportunities for universities to carry out community service, the importance of prevent divorce for families who are still teenagers or young.

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