



Social Interaction on Children's Marriages in Rajek Dusun, Berang Village, Simpang Teritip District, West Bangka District

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DOI: [10.59631/sijosi.v1i2.241](https://doi.org/10.59631/sijosi.v1i2.241)

Abstract

This descriptive qualitative research explores the social interactions and underlying factors contributing to child marriage in Rajek Dusun, Berang Village, Simpang Teritip District. Child marriage, defined as marriage involving individuals under 16 for women and 19 for men, remains prevalent despite legal prohibitions. The study employs interviews and observations to gather data from individuals, objects, and entities that provide relevant information. Findings indicate that child marriage is driven by socio-economic pressures, cultural customs, and lack of awareness about legal and health implications. The research highlights the adverse outcomes of early marriage, particularly for young women who face increased risks to their reproductive and mental health. Community perspectives reveal that traditional norms often override legal measures, perpetuating the practice. The study underscores the need for comprehensive community education programs focusing on the legal, health, and social implications of early marriage. Collaborative efforts between local government and community leaders are essential to raise awareness and support young individuals in their transition to adulthood. By prioritizing education, health services, and vocational training, the community can work towards reducing the incidence of child marriage and promoting healthier, more prosperous futures for its members.

Keywords : Child marriage, cultural customs, socio-economic pressures, social interaction, legal implications.

1. Introduction

Marriage, according to the General Dictionary of Indonesian, is a bond or contract carried out in accordance with legal provisions and religious teachings. The definition of child marriage, as stated by law, is a marriage that occurs at an age that violates the Marriage Law, specifically for women under 16 years old and men under 19 years old. Legal provisions governing marriage, including age limits, are found in Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage. This law specifies that the minimum age for marriage for Indonesian citizens is 16 years for women and 19 years for men. Marriages performed below these age limits are considered early marriages (Salmah, 2016).

Child marriage occurs in various regions across Indonesia (Wibowo, Ratnaningsih, Goodwin, Ulum, & Minnick, 2021), leading to the loss of adolescence for many

teenagers and resulting in social problems. Despite numerous efforts to address this issue, child marriage remains prevalent in developing regions such as West Java, Kalimantan, East Java, Central Java, and Sumatra, including Bangka Belitung (Tresiana & Duadji, 2021). Strong cultural customs and socio-economic pressures often drive early marriages, and traditional norms frequently override the effectiveness of legal measures (Parsons et al., 2015).

Statistical data from 2021 and various studies indicate that child marriage continues to be a significant social problem in Indonesia. Data from BAPENAS shows that 34.5% of Indonesian children marry early, a figure supported by PLAN International research, which reveals that 33.5% of children aged 13-18 years marry between the ages of 15-16 (Suadi & Candra, 2022). Factors contributing to child marriage include low family income, limited education, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, and entrenched cultural and religious values. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated this issue, leading to an increase in child marriage cases (Rahiem, 2021), especially in the Bangka Belitung province (Hasudungan, 2022). According to Asyraf Suryadin, Head of the Bangka Belitung Child Empowerment Office for Population Control and Family Planning (DP3ASCKB), Bangka Belitung reported the highest number of child marriages among the 34 provinces in Indonesia, with 2,348 students dropping out of school between 2019 and 2021, ranking eighth highest in the country (Pratama, 2021).

In Rajek Hamlet, child marriage is prevalent among teenagers, affecting both boys and girls. Many teenagers marry while still in their early teens, often dropping out of school to do so. This phenomenon involves children aged 14-18, who are thereby deprived of their right to education and a normal adolescence. There is an urgent need for targeted interventions to reduce the incidence of child marriage in Rajek Hamlet, where over ten couples marry each year, posing a significant social concern. While previous studies have addressed this issue, there are variations in study locations. Thus, this research aims to explore the factors contributing to child marriage in Rajek Hamlet and to understand community perspectives on this issue in Rajek Hamlet, Berang Village, Simpang Teritip District.

2. Research Method

This descriptive qualitative research aims to detail the various symptoms and conditions present during the study period. Accordingly, the study employs descriptive qualitative methods. Data were collected through interviews and observations. The sources of data in this research include individuals, objects, and entities that can provide relevant information, data, facts, and realities pertaining to the subject under investigation (Ibrahim, 2015).

The study focuses on understanding the social interactions that occur during children's weddings in Rajek Dusun, Berang Village. Through in-depth interviews with local residents and direct observation of wedding events, the research aims to capture the cultural nuances and social dynamics at play. By analyzing these interactions, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive picture of the community's customs and practices related to children's weddings.

Furthermore, the research will explore the role of traditional customs in shaping social interactions and the impact of modern influences on these traditions. The findings are expected to contribute to the broader understanding of cultural practices in rural Indonesian communities and their evolution over time.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 The Causes of Child Marriage in Rajek Hamlet, Berang Village, Simpang Teritip District

Child marriage is a social phenomenon often occurring in society, especially in many low- and middle-income countries, including Indonesia (Wibowo et al., 2021). Child marriage generally occurs between the ages of 14 and 18. Lack of knowledge about child marriage is one of the factors that causes child marriage to continue to occur. Child marriages that occur always have an unfavorable impact on women because women who are the perpetrators always experience more vulnerability than men (Islami, 2023). During pregnancy and often occurs at the age of children, this also has an impact on reproductive health and mental health in mothers who are not yet ready to have children.

Child marriages in Rajek Hamlet are generally common at ages 14 to 18 years. Marriage Law Number 16 Article 7 Paragraph 1 of 2019 states that marriage is legal according to religion and state if each individual is 19 years old. This right in a marriage relationship is too early because, at the age of 14 to 19 years, the child is still in the process of transitioning mentally, and it is still dangerous for their reproductive health. The results of interviews conducted by researchers show that age data is an essential part of the marriage process to form a happy and prosperous family.

Marriage can be carried out well if people have knowledge about the age limit for entering into a marriage in relation to the Marriage Law Number 16 Article 7 Paragraph 1 of 2019, which states that marriage is legal according to religion and the state if each individual is 19 years old (Widyawati, 2024).

This is in line with the importance of the goal of a good marriage so that divorce is minimized. The aim of the age limit for women and men in entering into marriage is to be mentally and mentally prepared to minimize the occurrence of undesirable things in marriage, as well as create a good marriage without ending in divorce and getting good and healthy offspring.

3.2 Community Views on Child Marriage in Rajek Hamlet, Barang Village, Simpang Teritip

In the view of Symbolic Interactionism theory, humans are creatures who create or produce symbols, a thought that reminds us of the German philosopher from the neo-Kantian camp, Ernst Cassirer, who believes that humans are "Animals symbolism." Another community's view of child marriage, which often occurs in Rajek Hamlet, is that the view of child marriage is seen from the conditions around the neighborhood where the couple carrying out the marriage lives.

Siti Suriski's view as a student is that child marriages that occur in Rajek Hamlet have become a regular thing because these child marriages have been happening for a long time. Child marriage is undoubtedly very worrying because the parent's lack of knowledge causes child marriage to continue to occur. This child marriage can be called a tradition where the parents of the children compete to get their children married. This aligns with findings from research in Nepal and Bangladesh, highlighting how societal norms, poverty, and limited education play significant roles in driving child marriages (Akter et al., 2022; Seta, 2023).

This public view is a positive or negative assessment that society directs at the individual or couple who enters into a child marriage so that it can worsen the image of the couple. Couples who get a bad image from society cannot escape it because it is visible. Society's view of the prevalence of child marriage is that sometimes, there is prejudice attached to couples who marry under the age of 19. Prejudice is in the form of society's assumptions, which make individuals despicable and tend to have an emotional attitude that disrupts relationships in that society. The prejudices that exist in this society only talk about individuals only from a negative side. According to the author's research results, there are differences in thinking between village officials and local community leaders.

According to research results in the village, the government considers religious marriages valid. However, they disagree with underage marriages in Rajek Hamlet, Barang Village, which can reduce the quality of natural resources and hinder the government's efforts to create a quality generation. The meaning of the phenomenon of child marriage that occurs in society must be interpreted correctly by the people of Rajek Hamlet. This minimizes the high divorce rate due to factors such as low education, economics, promiscuity, and parental factors, which occur in Rajek Hamlet.

The process of communication and interaction through the type of social interaction between individuals and community groups. The communication has meaning in a symbolic movement and does not necessarily require a response. Therefore, the meaning of the communication that occurs must be interpreted. This

relates to the views and behavior of humans interacting and communicating in society.

4. Conclusion

The research highlights that child marriage in Rajek Dusun, Berang Village, Simpang Teritip District, is a deeply rooted social phenomenon, primarily occurring between the ages of 14 and 18. The continuation of this practice is largely attributed to a lack of awareness about the legal and health implications of early marriage. Despite the Marriage Law Number 16 Article 7 Paragraph 1 of 2019 stipulating that the legal age for marriage is 19, many community members continue to engage in child marriages. These early marriages often lead to adverse outcomes, particularly for young women who face increased risks to their reproductive and mental health. The findings emphasize the critical need for education and awareness programs to inform the community about the dangers of child marriage and the importance of adhering to the legal age requirements to ensure the well-being of the youth.

To address the issue of child marriage in Rajek Dusun, it is essential to implement comprehensive community education programs that focus on the legal, health, and social implications of early marriage. Local government and community leaders should collaborate to create awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of adhering to the legal marriage age of 19 as per Marriage Law Number 16 Article 7 Paragraph 1 of 2019. Additionally, initiatives should be introduced to support young women and men in their transition to adulthood, providing them with access to education, health services, and vocational training. By fostering an environment that prioritizes the well-being and development of young individuals, the community can work towards reducing the incidence of child marriage and promoting healthier, more prosperous futures for its members.

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