

The Role of Religious Organizations in Child Marriage Prevention and Handling during Pandemic

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Abstrak

Di Indonesia, tokoh agama berada dalam posisi yang strategis. Keberadaan mereka dapat mempengaruhi kehidupan masyarakat dalam berbagai aspek, tidak terkecuali dalam konteks perkawinan. Pada masa Pandemi COVID 19 angka perkawinan anak di Jawa Tengah naik secara tajam. Dari latar belakang tersebut pertanyaan yang muncul adalah bagaimana tokoh agama memandang masalah ini dan peran-peran apa yang dilakukan dalam rangka pencegahan dan penanganannya. Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian lapangan dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Tehnik pengumpulan datanya dilakukan dengan wawancara dan dokumentasi. Adapun informannya adalah para pengurus di dua Organisasi Keagamaan besar di Indonesia yaitu NU dan Muhammadiyah. Penelitian ini menghasilkan beberapa temuan; *Pertama*, keberadaan Organisasi Keagamaan belum memiliki peran signifikan dalam pencegahan dan penanganan kasus perkawinan anak di Jawa Tengah. *Kedua*, Keberadaan Organisasi Keagamaan tidak memiliki relevansi dengan tinggi-rendahnya angka perkawinan anak di Jawa Tengah. *Ketiga*, keberadaan tokoh agama masih dipandang memiliki otoritas di tengah masyarakat guna mendukung kesuksesan program pencegahan dan penanganan perkawinan anak.

Kata Kunci: Perkawinan Anak, Organisasi Keagamaan, Peran, Pencegahan, Penanganan

Abstract

In Indonesia, religious leaders are in a strategic position. Their existence can affect people's lives in various aspects, not least in the context of marriage. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of child marriages in Central Java rose sharply. Based on the background above, the questions are how religious leaders view this problem and what the roles to be performed in the context of prevention and treatment. This type of research is field research with a qualitative approach. The data collection technique is done by interview and documentation. The informants are administrators of two major religious organizations in Indonesia, namely NU and Muhammadiyah. The results showed that; first, the existence of religious organizations did not have a significant role in preventing and handling child marriage cases in Central Java. Secondly, the existence of religious organizations has no relevance to the high and low rate of

child marriage in Central Java. Third, the existence of religious leaders is still seen as having authority in the community to support the success of the prevention and handling of child marriage programs.

Keywords: Child Marriage, Religious Organizations, Role, Prevention, Handling

Abstrak

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Introduction

In the last 5 years, cases of child marriage in Central Java are quite volatile with an increasing trend every year. The Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of Central Java Province released data on child marriage in 2016 as many as 3,068 children, in 2017 as many as 2,774 children, in 2018 as many as 3,206 children, in 2019 as many as 2,049 children and in 2020 it rose sharply to 12,972 children.¹

The Central Java provincial government has actually set various policies and movements, one of which is the marriage prevention movement entitled "Jo Kawin Bocah" initiated by the Central Java Provincial Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection. This movement is claimed to support the implementation of Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage which has mandated the minimum age limit for marriage of 19 years for both men and women. In its socialization, this movement has involved many community stakeholders, such as ulama and/or religious leaders.

In a religious country like Indonesia,² Ulama do have a strategic position and great influence in society. Many religious organizations consist of Ulama. They become a source of reference, both by the government in determining policies, and by the community in behavior. Ulama are considered to have

¹ <https://jateng.kemenag.go.id/>.

²Indonesia's religiosity is at least reflected in our constitution, namely the 1945 Constitution which recognizes that Indonesia's independence is not solely the result of the struggle of the heroes but also because of the grace of Allah SWT.

authority in interpreting religious teachings so that they are used as exemplary figures and are followed. This situation creates obedience from followers to religious leaders and on the other side, it encourages the strengthening of patron-client relationships between religious leaders and the community.

Unfortunately, in the context of child marriage, not all scholars have the same understanding, some of them still allow child marriage. This can be found in various previous studies, for example Mayadina Rohmi Musfiroh's research entitled *Early Marriage and Child Protection Efforts in Indonesia*.³ In her papers, she explains that the limits of marriage readiness in Islam are determined by the criteria of puberty, not age. The concept of puberty (*baligh*) is understood in various ways, for example, Imam Syafi'i argues that *baligh* is starting at the age of 15 years and/or having sex dreams for men and starting at the age of 9 years or already having menstruation for women. Meanwhile, according to Abu Hanifah, the age of puberty for men is 18 years while for women it is 17 years. As for Abu Yusuf and Muhammad bin Hasan, they opine that the sign of puberty is when it is 15 years old for both men and women.

In addition to the fuqaha, commentators also differ in opinion. For example, Ibn Kathir interprets Bulugh al-nikah with a sex dream or the age of 15 years. Al-Alusi mentions the age of 18 for free children and 17 years for slaves. Meanwhile, Abu Hayyan quoted An-Nakha'i and Abu Hanifah as saying the age of 25 years.⁴

The various opinions of the predecessor scholars above certainly have a major influence on the opinions of scholars in Indonesia. For example, among Nahdlatul Ulama, some scholars still allow child marriage. One of the basic arguments used is the marriage of the Prophet with Aisyah who was 6 years old at that time.⁵ This can also be understood because in the field of fiqh, most of the nahdliyyin are followers of Imam Shafi'i. This was stated at the 34th NU Congress in Makassar in 2010.⁶ However, this opinion is contrary to the opinion of the Muhammadiyah Tarjih Council that considers that the Prophet's marriage with Aisha RA cannot be used as an argument for the permissibility of child marriage. The hadith which states that Aisyah married at the age of 6 years is considered odd and requires further research.⁷

³ Mayadina Rohmi Musfiroh, "Pernikahan Dini Dan Upaya Perlindungan Anak Di Indonesia," *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum Dan Syariah* 8, no. 2 (2016): 64–73, <http://ejournal.uin-malang.ac.id/index.php/syariah>.

⁴ A Mukti Ali et al., *Fikih Kawin Anak: Membaca Ulang Teks Keagamaan Perkawinan Usia Anak-Anak* (Jakarta: Rumah Kitab dan Ford Foundation dan Norwegian Centre for Human Rihgt, 2015), 91.

⁵ Muhyiddin al-Nawawi, *Al-Minhaj Syarh Shahih Muslim* (Beirut: Dar al-Ihya' al Turats al-'Arabi, 1392 H), Juz IX, hlm. 206 sebagaimana dikutip im Lembaga Ta'lif Wan Nasyr (LTN) PBNU, *Ahkamul Fuqaha, Solusi Problematika Aktual Hukum Islam, Keputusan Muktamar, Munas Dan Konbes Nahdlatul Ulama (1926 – 2015 M)* (Surabaya: Khalista, 2019), 735.

⁶ Muh Sovil Mubarak, "Analisis Keputusan Muktamar NU Ke-32 Tentang Batas Minimal Usia Menikah" (Semarang: IAIN Walisongo, 2012), <http://eprints.walisongo.ac.id/id/eprint/378/>.

⁷ Mukti Ali et al., *Fikih Kawin Anak: Membaca Ulang Teks Keagamaan Perkawinan Usia Anak-Anak*, 99.

In another study, it was stated that the real consideration in marriage is not only age but also mental and economic readiness. Therefore, child marriage should be avoided because usually children are not mentally and economically ready, moreover this will have an impact on the continuity of the household. This opinion departs from the perspective of *sad ad-dzari'ah* that the lack of mental and economic readiness of prospective partners can encourage divorce.⁸ This opinion was expressed by scholars in Pamekasan, Madura.⁹

In addition, there are also scholars who have more strictly prohibited child marriage, for example, scholars who are members of the Indonesian Women's Ulama Congress (KUPI). In Nur Shofa Ulfiyati's research, for example,¹⁰ explained that KUPI has stated the results of religious deliberations including that child marriage causes various harms (*madharat*), especially for children who are married. This madness can be multi-layered and attached to other aspects of life which ultimately affects human quality. KUPI argue that preventing child marriage is a must in accordance with the commands of the Qur'an (*al-Baqarah*, 2: 195). Even when the child marriage has occurred, the marriage can also be annulled.¹¹ This opinion is based on the thoughts of Ibn Shubrumah, Abu Bakr al-Asham, etc.¹²

Based on the description above, it is very interesting to explore how scholars (*ulama*) and religious leaders who are members of various religious organizations in Central Java respond to child marriage. This is because, on the one hand, until now there has been no firm statement from the *ulama*, while the number of child marriages in Central Java is high. So, what is their attitude? Are there certain efforts they have made to reduce the number of child marriages? or on the contrary do they tolerate child marriage?

Unfortunately, in the context of child marriage, not all *ulama* have the same understanding as to the government. Among the *Nahdlatul Ulama*, for example, although there are dissenting opinions, some still allow child marriage. One of the basic arguments used is the marriage of the Prophet with Aisyah who was 6 years old at that time.¹³

However, there are also scholars (*ulama*) forbid child marriage, for example scholars who are members of the Indonesian Women's Ulama Congress

⁸ Umi Supraptiningsih and Erie Hariyanto, "PERKAWINAN ANAK: Pandangan Ulama Dan Tokoh Masyarakat Pamekasan," *Jurnal Harkat: Media Komunikasi Gender* 15, no. 2 (2019): 100. <https://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/psga/article/view/13466>

⁹ Umi Supraptiningsih and Erie Hariyanto, "PERKAWINAN ANAK: Pandangan Ulama Dan Tokoh Masyarakat Pamekasan," 105.

¹⁰ Nur Shofa Ulfiyati, "Pandangan Dan Peran Tokoh Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI) Dalam Mencegah Perkawinan Anak," *Journal de Jure* 11, no. 1 (2019): 23–35. <https://ejournal.uin-malang.ac.id/index.php/syariah/article/view/6488>

¹¹ "Hasil Musyawarah Keagamaan Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia No. 02/MK-KUPI-1/IV/2017 Tentang Pernikahan Anak, 9-11." (2017).

¹² Hijrah Saputra dkk, *Himpunan Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia Sejak 1975* (Jakarta: Gaorint, 2011), 915.

¹³ Tim Lembaga Ta'lim Wan Nasyr (LTN) PBNU, *Ahkamul Fuqaha, Solusi Problematika Aktual Hukum Islam, Keputusan Mukhtamar, Munas Dan Konbes Nahdlatul Ulama (1926 – 2015 M)*, 230..

(KUPI). According to the results of the KUPI religious deliberation, child marriage causes many harms (madharat), especially for children who are married off. These harms can be multi-layered and attached to other aspects of life which ultimately affects human quality. KUPI argue that preventing child marriage is a must in accordance with the commands of the Qur'an (al-Baqarah, 2: 195). Even when the child marriage has occurred, the marriage can also be annulled.¹⁴ This opinion is based on the thoughts of Ibn Shubrumah, Abu Bakr al-Asham, and others.¹⁵

Research Methods

This research is field research with a qualitative approach. This approach seeks to reveal the invisible meaning, not just draw conclusions in the form of generalizations that depart from an initial data collected into one.¹⁶ This research was conducted in 4 Regencys/cities. two Regencys with the highest child marriage rates in Central Java, namely Cilacap Regency and Brebes Regency and two cities with the lowest child marriage rates in Central Java, namely Magelang City and Salatiga City. All the research proses was conducted for 5 months, starting in June 2021 - October 2021. The technique of the data collection in this study was carried out by means of in-depth interviews and documentation. Informants in this interview are administrators of two religious organizations in Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, whose duties and functions are related to the prevention and handling of child marriage. Within NU, these tasks and functions by the Family Benefits Institute (LKKNU) and another NU Autonomous Body, namely Fatayat. As for Muhammadiyah, the duties and functions are carried out by Nasyiatul Aisiyah (NA). The determination of these two religious organizations is based on the consideration that they represent religious organizations having the largest number of members in Indonesia. In this study, the facts found in the field are constructed into hypotheses inductively. Facts are not necessarily categorized as data because their meaning must be sought first. So, in this study, meaning is actual data, which is a value behind visible facts. In this qualitative research, the depth of meaning is emphasized more than generalization. The data is then analyzed with the Theory of the Role and Authority of Religious Leaders using content analysis by taking an inventory of the data, simplifying it, then generalizing it.¹⁷

Child Marriage Situation in Central Java

Throughout 2016 - 2020, the number of child marriages¹⁸ in Central Java got fluctuations and rose sharply during the pandemic, in 2020. The Regional

¹⁴ "Hasil Musyawarah Keagamaan Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia No. 02/MK-KUPI-1/IV/2017 Tentang Pernikahan Anak," 9-11.

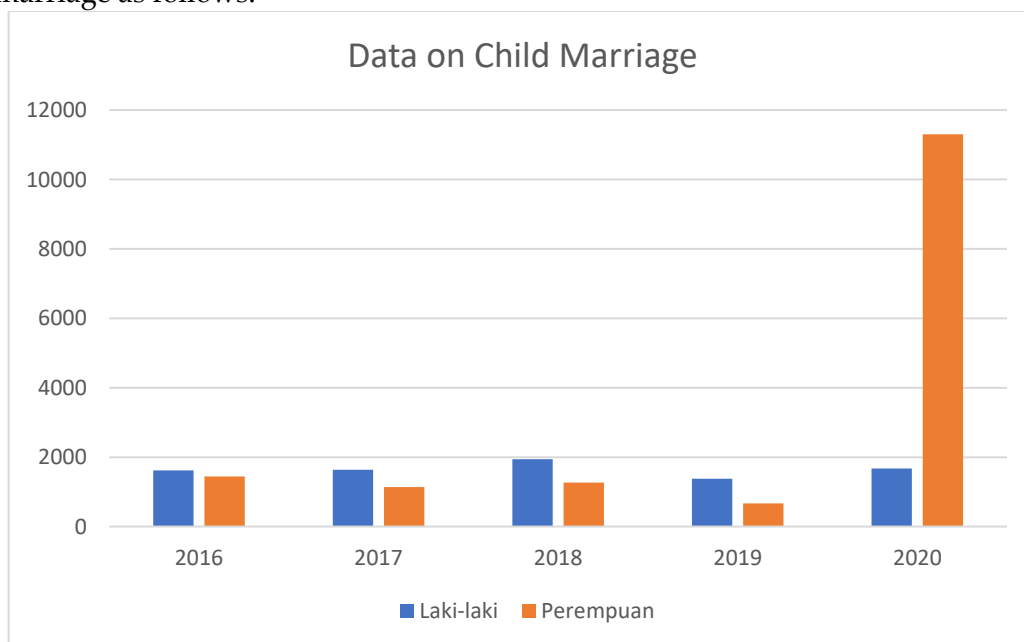
¹⁵ Hijrah Saputra dkk, *Himpunan Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia Sejak 1975* (Jakarta: Gaoorint, 2011), 915.

¹⁶ Nasution, *Metode Penelitian Naturalistik Kualitatif* (Bandung: Tarsito, 2003), 54.

¹⁷ Nasution, *Metode Penelitian Naturalistik Kualitatif*, 48..

¹⁸ Child marriage is a marriage that is carried out when the child is not yet 18 years old. Marriage at this age can hinder the fulfillment of children's rights, cause violence, neglect and neglect

Office of the Ministry of Religion of Central Java Province released data on child marriage as follows:¹⁹



Picture 1. Data on Child Marriage in Central Java in 2016 - 2020

From the table, information is obtained that there was a significant spike in the number of child marriages in 2020 with an increase of 12,972 cases compared to the previous year. One of the factors caused the sharp increase in the number of child marriages in 2020 was the increase in the minimum age limit for prospective brides for women from 17 years to 19 years based on the provisions of the new Marriage Law, namely Law no. 16 of 2019 concerning Marriage which came into force in October 2019.

The change in regulations is also considered to have an effect on the increase in applications for marriage dispensation in Central Java. Based on a report from the Central Java Religious High Court, applications for marriage dispensation in 2020 have doubled compared to 2019, as well as the number of dispensations decided.

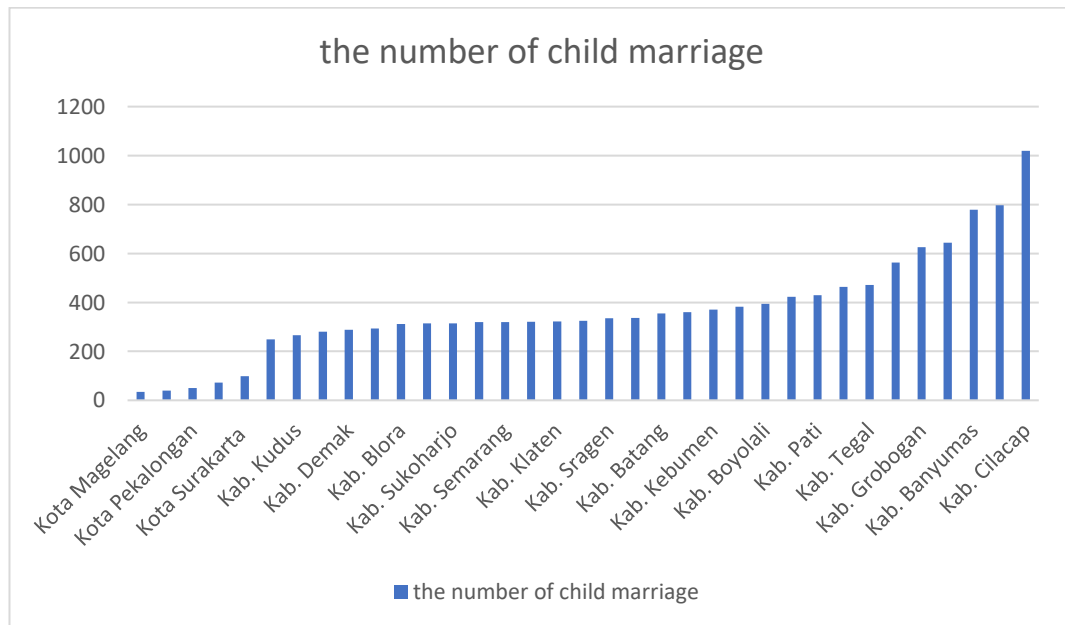
Year	Number of Applications for Dispensation	Number of Dispensations Decided
2016	3128	2912
2017	2972	2703
2018	2995	2776
2019	5471	5007
2020	13684	13398

Picture 2 Data on Application for Marriage Dispensation in Central Java in 2016 – 2020

of children and is a violation of human rights. Juridically we can check it through Law no. 35 of 2014 concerning Amendments to Law No. 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection.

¹⁹ Publikasi Kantor Wilayah Kementerian Agama Provinsi Jawa Tengah Tahun 2020.

Furthermore, the data on child marriage above can be seen closer by knowing the distribution of the numbers in each Regency/city as follows:²⁰



Picture 3 Graph of Child Marriage in Central Java Province in 2020 Per-Regency/City

Based on the graph, Cilacap Regency is the Regency with the highest number of child marriages with 1,019 cases, and Magelang City with the lowest number of 35 cases.

Central Java Provincial Government Policy in Preventing Child Marriage

There is one interesting policy of the Central Java Provincial Government, namely "Jo Kawin Bocah" movement. This movement is intended to reduce the number of child marriages in Central Java socialized through online and offline media. In Online, Jo Kawin Bocah campaign is usually formatted in the form of photos and videos and it is delivered via social media. In offline, Jo Kawin Bocah's message is campaigned in every government activity.²¹

This movement is an adaptation of the Central Java Provincial Government to the national marriage prevention strategy, they are:

- a. optimizing children's capacity
- b. environment that supports the prevention of child marriage
- c. accessibility and service expansion
- d. strengthening regulations and institutions
- e. Strengthening stakeholder coordination.

Then, those steps were adapted by the Central Java Provincial Government to become as follows:

- a. Optimizing children's capacities (life skills education, children's knowledge about child marriage issues, strengthening peer group roles and capacities).

²⁰ Kanwil Kementerian Agama Provinsi Jawa Tengah

²¹ Wawancara Dengan Ilma Patriani, 6 Oktober 2021

- b. To create an environment that supports the prevention of child marriage.
- c. Accessibility and service expansion.
- d. Strengthening regulations and institutions.
- e. Strengthening stakeholder coordination.²²

Profile of Religious Organizations in Central Java

As previously described, the Religious Organizations in this study are two Islamic organizations in Indonesia that both have large mass bases; Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, specifically LKKNU (Nahdlatul Ulama's Family Benefit Institution), Fatayat, and Nasyyatul Aisyiyah because those organizations have a scope of work related to child marriage.

a) LKKNU (Nahdlatul Ulama's Family Benefit Institution)

At Nahdlatul Ulama, LKKNU is one of the organizational tools in charge of implementing Nahdlatul Ulama policies in the fields of family, social, and population welfare. Beside LKKNU, there are several other organizations that have the function of implementing Nahdlatul Ulama policies related to certain community groups and/or that require special handling such as the Nahdlatul Ulama's Da'wah Institute (LDNU) which is in charge of implementing Nahdlatul Ulama policies in the field of developing Islam that adheres to Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah understanding, Nahdlatul Ulama's Educational Institution (LP Maarif NU) in charge of implementing Nahdlatul Ulama policies in the field of formal education and teaching, Rabithah Ma'ahid al Islamiyah Nahdlatul Ulama (RMI NU) in charge of implementing Nahdlatul Ulama policies in the field of Islamic boarding school development and religious education, and so on.

LKKNU was established in 1977. When the 33rd NU Congress was held in 2004, PBNU gave a mandate to LKKNU to implement PBNU policies in the fields of family, social and population welfare. The main task of LKKNU is to carry out productive activities in an effort to empower the community through the family approach as the smallest unit of society.^{23,24}

Based on the programs implemented by LKKNU at the central level at this time, it can be concluded that LKKNU has three main focuses. They are education about population, community quality improvement and poverty reduction. Programs within the scope of population education include adolescent reproductive health education, socialization on family planning (KB), and community outreach to avoid HIV/AIDS and other free sex behaviors, and others.

Programs within the scope of improving the quality of society, such as socializing the concept of the *maslahah* family as the ideal image of the nahdliyyin family. The programs within the scope of poverty alleviation

²² Buku Saku Jo Kawin Bocah, Dinas Perempuan dan Anak Provinsi Jawa Tengah, 2020.

²³ Pepy Marwinata, Implementasi Pembinaan Keluarga Sakinah Oleh Lembaga Kemasyarakatan Keluarga Nahdlatul Ulama (LKKNU) Di Kalangan Warga Nahdliyyin Sleman Yogyakarta (Skripsi) (Yogyakarta: UII, 2020), 35. <https://dspace.uui.ac.id/handle/123456789/30051>

²⁴

include entrepreneurship training for families, family financial management and so on.

Until now, the management of LKKNU has been at various levels, starting from the central level or PBNU (National Leaders of Nahdlatul Ulama), regional level or PWNU (Regional Leaders of Nahdlatul Ulama) to the regional/branch level or PCNU (District Leaders of Nahdlatul Ulama). However, not every level of management exists in every Regency/city in Indonesia, many in various Regencys/cities in Indonesia who's LKKNU has not yet been formed. This is related to various factors, one of which is the human resources (HR) of Nahdlatul Ulama cadres in each of these Regencys/cities.

b) Nasyyatul Aisyiyah

Nasyyatul Aisyiyah (NA) is an autonomous Muhammadiyah organization engaged in women, religion, society and education. Nasyyatul Aisyiyah was founded in Yogyakarta on 28 Dzulhijjah 1349 H to coincide with 16 May 1931 AD in Yogyakarta.

In developing the organization, Nasyyatul Aisyiyah has a mission to carry out Islamic da'wah *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* in fostering Islamic daughters who are meaningful for religion, nation and state towards the realization of a true society, carry out enlightenment and empowerment of women towards a society that upholds dignity and worth. and human values in accordance with Islamic teachings and organize business charities and enhance the role of Nasyyatul Aisyiyah as a pioneer, organizer and perfecter of the Muhammadiyah struggle.

Similar to LKKNU, the management of Nasyyatul Aisyiyah also starts from the central level, the Nasyyatul Aisyiyah Central Leaders (PPNA) at the national level, the Nasyyatul Aisyiyah Regional Leaders (PWNA) at the provincial level, and the Nasyyatul Aisyiyah Regency Manager (PDNA) at the Regency/city level.

The Role of Religious Organizations in Central Java in the Prevention and Handling of Child Marriage

NU and Muhammadiyah as part of religious organizations in Central Java have various religious and community programs. However, until now, NU has not had programs and activities that explicitly or implicitly target the prevention and handling of child marriage. This can be seen in the existing programs at LKKNU Cilacap Regency, LKKNU Brebes Regency, LKKNU Salatiga City and District Leaders (PC) Fatayat Magelang City. Meanwhile in Muhammadiyah through Nasyyatul Aisyiah, there is PASHMINA (Nasyyatul Aisyiah's Healthy Adolescent Service) activity which can implicitly and indirectly be linked to the issue of child marriage by introducing it through the issue of adolescent reproductive health. However, at Nasyyatul Aisyiyah there is also no specific and explicit work program in the form of preventing and handling child marriages. The PASHMINA program in Nasyyatul Aisyiah is a top-down program from the Center continued by the Regions and Regency.

In contrast to the role of *Nasyiatul Aisyiyah*, LKKNU did not play a role in preventing and handling child marriages. This is because organizationally, the position of LKKNU is not an Autonomous Body organization so that its work program only implements programs from PWNU (NU Regional Leaders) or PCNU (NU Regency Leaders). This was emphasized by Sari Hernawati, Chair of the Central Java PWNU LKK. However, the LKK program can actually be adapted to local needs. This means that LKK administrators at the regional level can improvise programs according to the needs in their regions, as well as LKK administrators at the branch level can also initiate programs according to the needs of their branches. However, the program prepared by the LKK must be in accordance with the PWNU or PCNU program because the LKK is not an autonomous body but is part of the NU management. So far, the Central Java PWNU program has not targeted child marriage, so the Central Java PWNU LKK also does not have a special program in order to prevent child marriage.²⁵

LKKNU and/or *Fatayat* have not played a role either due to the age of the organization's founding or the involvement of the management in the organization which is still "very young", some even do not have a Decree on the appointment as an administrator. For example, the newly formed LKKNU of Brebes Regency, even until the interview took place there was already a decree but no inauguration of its management. Farijah, Chairman of the LKKNU of Brebes Regency, stated that the LKK of Brebes Regency is only currently being formed, there is already a decree, but there has been no inauguration of the management.²⁶

The same condition also occurred in the Salatiga City LKKNU which was only formed in 2019. According to Cholida Hanum (Salatiga City LKKNU member), she only joined LKKNU for the first time in 2019 at the same time as the Salatiga City LKKNU was formed. LKKNU has carried out several activities but none of them are directly intended as an effort to prevent child marriage. In the interview she said that when coordinating with PC *Fatayat* NU in Salatiga City, *Fatayat* held activities for school children in the form of fast boarding schools. This program was created to fill the children's school holidays. From this activity, LKKNU then took the initiative to make a similar activity with the participants of mothers waiting for their children. Finally, LKKNU made a kind of lightning boarding school for mothers. The materials for these women's boarding schools vary, including family financial management, entrepreneurship, tips on building a harmonious family from a psychological perspective, parenting, the priority of exclusive breastfeeding, early childhood education, how to choose a school and also a gender-friendly Islamic boarding school. moderate, and so on. In addition, the Salatiga City LKKNU has not held any more activities.²⁷

²⁵ Wawancara dengan Sari Hernawati Ketua PW LKKNU Jawa Tengah, Senin, 9 Agustus 2021, Jam 15.30.

²⁶ Wawancara dengan Farijah Ketua LKKNU Kabupaten Brebes, 28 Juli 2021.

²⁷ Wawancara dengan Chalida Hanum Anggota LKKNU Kota Salatiga, 9 Agustus 2021.

Unlike the LKKNU of Salatiga City, the LKKNU of Magelang City according to Ika Maya (Chairman of Fatayat Magelang City) has not been formed and Fatayat has only just reorganized in 2019, although there has been an inauguration of the board, but has not yet received a decree for its appointment. There has never been a working meeting of the board of directors, so there is no work program that is structured systematically. Activities that have been carried out are limited to completing the Qur'an.²⁸

As for Naswiatul Aisyiyah, the role of this organization has not yet been due to the situation of the increasing number of child marriages during the pandemic along with the end of the Naswiatul Aisyiyah management period which was supposed to reorganize. Due to the pandemic, the management period was extended until 2022.

The maturity of the organization's age and the length of involvement of personnel as organizational administrators do not guarantee that the organization they lead will play a role that has an impact on reducing the number of child marriages. For example, the LKKNU in Cilacap Regency which has been around for a long time and its chairman has been involved for 2 terms in the organization, but the number of child marriages in Cilacap ranks the highest in Central Java. Aziz Muslim admitted that he had served as Chair of the LKKNU for 2 terms and was active in activities related to PUP (Marriage Age Maturation). However, Aziz Muslim's activity did not use the LKKNU "clothes", but on behalf of the Ministry of Religion facilitators in PUP activities. According to Azis, at PUP there was one member of the board who became the facilitator of marriage guidance, one of the materials presented at the guidance was about prospective brides, namely Law no. 19 of 2011 as an amendment to Law No. 1 of 1974 concerning marriage. The team is under the auspices of the Regency Ministry of Religion, the facilitators of the guidance include the Banoms or institutions of PD Muhammadiyah, NU, LKKNU, Extension Officers, KUA and there are penghulu, some from the health office. This PUP program started in 2018. This PUP program is not an official program from the LKKNU mass organization, but from the Ministry of Religion, but actually the mentor at the marriage guidance center is from the central LKKNU, but has not been broken down to the Regency level.²⁹

Likewise, Dwi Rahmawati, Chair of PDNA Cilacap, who has been active in PDNA since 2006-2007. In the interview he stated: "Before we were active in Pekalongan and Solo because we studied there."³⁰

Dwi entered the management in early 2008 during the Naswiatul Aisyiyah Regional Conference. He served as Chairman of PDNA for 2 terms; the period of 2012 to 2016 and the period of 2016 to 2020 which due to the Pandemic was extended until 2022.³¹

The pandemic situation is the main cause of the non-functioning of the Naswiatul Aisyiyah and LKKNU and/or Fatayat organizations in the prevention

²⁸ Wawancara dengan Ika Maya Ketua Fatayat Kota Magelang, Jum'at, 6 Agustus 2021.

²⁹ Wawancara dengan Aziz Muslim, Ketua LKKNU Kab. Cilacap, Senin 2 Agustus 2021.

³⁰ Wawancara dengan Dwi Rahmawati, Ketua PDNA Kab. Cilacap, Selasa, 27 Juli 2021.

³¹ Wawancara dengan Dwi Rahmawati, Ketua PDNA Kab. Cilacap, Selasa, 27 Juli 2021.

and handling of child marriage. The pandemic situation "forced" the organization to completely stop or at least "take a temporary nap" from carrying out its work program activities. Zuhriyah, Chair of the Central Java PWNA said that after the Jo Kawin Bocah program from the PP PA Office of Central Java Province was launched, PWNA held one webinar for PDNA-PDNA (Nasyiatul Aisyiyah administrators in the region). After that, they plan to follow up by holding a meeting to discuss the pasmina program to keep it running during the pandemic and to run effectively and consistently for the prevention of child marriage. However, until the interview was conducted, no plans had been realized due to technical problems such as the number of cadres affected by Covid, self-isolation, and so on.³²

Dwi Rahmawati, Chair of the PDNA of Cilacap Regency, acknowledged that the cessation of activities due to the Pandemic which prevented religious organizations from playing their role. When he was asked whether during this pandemic there was a change in the concept of implementing activities such as making online activities, Dwi admitted that they had not implemented them, but he suspected that Nasyiatul Aisyiyah administrators in other areas had implemented various online programs.³³

The same thing was also acknowledged by Nur Asilah Hidayati (Brebek Regency PDNA Education).³⁴ Asilah said that PASHMINA activities, which are the mainstay of all PDNA programs, seem to stop for 1 year, starting from this pandemic, the branch that wants to carry out will not be implemented. 2019 was our most active time, but in early 2020 there was a pandemic, so we had to stop, Asilah said. Naili Hidayati, Secretary of PDNA Brebek, stated that during the pandemic, activities stopped.³⁵

Analysis of the Role of Religious Organizations in the Prevention and Handling of Child Marriage in Central Java

Regardless of whether or not Religious Organizations (LKKNU and/or Fatayat and Nasyiatul Aisyiyah) have played a role in the prevention and handling of child marriage during the Pandemic, the actions and steps that have been taken by Religious Organizations when viewed from the aspect of Role Theory, conformity has occurred. It is the similarity or conformity between a person's behavior with the behavior of others or someone's behavior with the expectations of others about his behavior.³⁶ For example, Dinas PP PA Cilacap explained the involvement of religious organizations in Cilacap in preventing and handling child marriages. Budi Santoso (Head of the PP PA KB Cilacap Office) said that Religious Organizations were involved in government activities, for example as

³² Wawancara dengan Zuhri Ketua PWNA Provinsi Jawa Tengah, 3 Agustus 2021.

³³ Wawancara dengan Dwi Rahmawati Ketua PDNA Kabupaten Cilacap, 27 Juli 2021.

³⁴ Wawancara dengan Nur Asilah Hidayati Bidang Pendidikan PDNA Kabupaten Brebek, Rabu, 28 Juli 2021.

³⁵ Wawancara dengan Naili Hidayati Sekretaris PDNA Kabupaten Brebek, Rabu, 28 Juli 2021.

³⁶ Sarlito Wirawan, *Teori- Teori Psikologi Sosial* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2008), 230.

resource persons and organizational coaches. Before an activity is carried out, the PP PA KB Office usually builds an understanding with religious leaders, scholars from religious organizations regarding the material and targets achieved in an activity. So far the communication between the government and religious organizations has been quite good, including in responding to the "Jo Kawin Bocah" Movement, it just needs more emphasis so that it is more focused on collaborating.³⁷

Based on Budi Santoso's statement above, the role played by religious organizations in efforts to prevent and handle child marriage, so far there has only been a positive evaluation. Meanwhile, sanctions have not been given to Religious Organizations regarding the role they play. Biddle and Thomas say that between judgments and sanctions are based on people's expectations about norms. Role assessment is a positive or negative impression given by the community based on the norms that apply to a behavior carried out by the actor. While sanctions are efforts made by an actor in maintaining a positive value or so that the embodiment of the role is changed in such a way that what was previously considered negative turns into positive.³⁸

Furthermore, although the role of Religious Organizations in efforts to prevent and handle child marriage has not been seen and measured in real terms, the involvement of these organizations is in line with the expectations of Regional Apparatus Organizations which in role theory are called normative expectations (role expectations). in the form of a hidden hope (convert), that is, the hope is still there even if it is not spoken, and an open hope (overt), which is an expressed hope to be able to approach the community. This type of expectation is called a role demand. Role demands through the internalization process can become the norm for the role concerned.³⁹ This role is very suitable for religious leaders because they have other flexibility, such as being a broker in connecting modern society with traditional values.⁴⁰ Religious leaders have communication skills to influence public awareness so that they can do what they are ordered to do.⁴¹ The role of the kiai as part of religious figures has even been revealed since the 80s. Hiroko Horikosi views that the kiai are agents of social change. Kiai plays a role at the cultural level, he is flexible in maintaining and maintaining social systems that have been running traditionally, not creating new systems that invite turmoil in society.

The amount of authority and influence possessed by religious leaders is actually a big asset that can be utilized in the agenda of preventing child marriage. Through religious organizations, religious leaders have the opportunity to play a

³⁷ Wawancara dengan Budi Santoso (Kepala Dinas PP PA KB Kabupaten Cilacap), 9 Agustus 2021.

³⁸ Sarlito Wirawan, *Teori- Teori Psikologi Sosial*, 220.

³⁹ Sarlito Wirawan, *Teori-Teori Sosial*, 219.

⁴⁰ Hiroko Horikosi, *Kyai Dan Perubahan Sosial* (Jakarta: P3M, 1987), 242.

⁴¹ Sayfa Auliya Achidsti, *Kiai Dan Pembangunan Institusi Sosial* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2015), 54.

role in increasing public awareness of health issues at the local level, for example on reproductive health issues in the case of child marriage.

The magnitude of the authority of religious leaders can also be seen from their role which does not only stop at religious affairs, various social problems are also not infrequently relying on religious leaders to solve them. This is because religious figures are not only placed as teachers outwardly (exoteric) but also inwardly (esoteric) knowledge.

When asked whether so far there have been results from programs related to prevention and handling of children involving religious organizations, Budi Santoso explained that there were no quantitative parameters or indicators. However, he considered the role of the leadership of Religious Organizations to be very contributive, furthermore he hoped that religious leaders would increase their role, because the government is ready to involve and educate them about the issue of child marriage, so that later their role will be more systematic, can be assessed both qualitatively and quantitatively⁴²

Regarding the expectations that the role demands, it can be seen from the similar answer expressed by Eni (Head of PP PA Brebes Regency), she also considered that Fatayat and Naswiatul Aisyiyah had played a very important role so far because they were directly dealt with the community. The large number of organizational memberships is an opportunity for these two organizations to play more roles in preventing child marriage.⁴³

However, the roles played are different. This difference in roles is based on differences in the level of knowledge of Religious Organization administrators (as actors) regarding the minimum age limit for marriage which is a form of behavior in the role (performance). The amendment of Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, especially regarding the change in the minimum age limit for marriage which equalizes between boys and girls, namely the age of 19 years is also not sufficiently understood by new administrators in various Religious Organizations. Even so, they have a fairly good understanding of the boundaries of child marriage. Zuhri (Chairman of PWNA Central Java) when asked about the definition of child marriage answered that marriage is a marriage performed by every person under the age of 18 years.⁴⁴

As for the two Brebes Regency LKKU administrators who were interviewed, each had a different opinion. Faridah (chairman), stated that the law stipulates that marriage must be performed by persons who are over 18 years of age. Meanwhile, according to Yustitia Islami (secretary), when asked about the minimum age for marriage, she answered 19 years.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, Barid Syamsiyah, the Head of PDNA in Salatiga City when asked about the meaning of child marriage/early marriage, answered that early

⁴² Wawancara dengan Budi Santoso (Kepala Dinas PP PA KB Kabupaten Cilacap), 9 Agustus 2021.

⁴³ Wawancara dengan Eni, Kabid PP PA Brebes, 5 Agustus 2021.

⁴⁴ Wawancara dengan Zuhri Ketua PWNA Jawa Tengah, 3 Agustus 2021.

⁴⁵ Wawancara dengan Faridah Ketua LKKNU dan Yustitia Ismai Sekretaris LKKNU Kabupaten Brebes, 28 Juli 2021.

marriage is marriage under the age of children (before the time). For her age is high school or about 17 years.⁴⁶

The same knowledge was conveyed by Naili Hidayati (Secretary of PDNA Brebes) who explained that child marriage is the marriage of minors under the age of 17 years.⁴⁷

Likewise, the view of Dwi Rahmawati, the Chairperson of PDNA Cilacap regarding child marriage, stated that the age limit for children according to this law is different, for boys, children are under 21 years old, while girls are under 19 years old.⁴⁸

Thus, the roles embodied in the behavior of these actors are real and varied, varying from one actor to another. This variation in role theory is considered normal and has no limit. Role theory does not tend to classify its terms according to specific behavior, but rather based on its classification on the nature of the origin of the behavior and its purpose (motivation).⁴⁹

Analysis of the relevance of the existence of religious organizations to the high and low rates of child marriage in Central Java during the pandemic

Based on the analysis of the role of Religious Organizations (LKKNU, Fatayat and Nasyyatul Aisyiyah) in preventing and handling child marriage, the child marriage has not been maximized or has not played a role at all, then the high and low rates of child marriage in 4 Regencies/Cities have no relevance to the existence of these Religious Organizations. The high number of child marriages in Cilacap and Brebes districts is not due to the role played by religious organizations (LKKNU and/or Fatayat and Nasyyatul Aisyiyah), but rather due to several other factors, they are:

- 1) The size of the geographical area;
- 2) The number of residents;
- 3) The low level of education of the population;
- 4) Economic level;
- 5) Social;
- 6) Amendments to the law that increase the minimum age for marriage for girls.

Regarding the increase in the number of child marriages during the Pandemic in Brebes, Eni, the Head of PP PA Brebes explained there are many factors cause it. First, there is a change in the law on the minimum age for marriage, which was 16 years for women and 19 years for men in the old law (Law Number 1 of 1974). While in the new law (Law Number 16 of 2019), both men and women are both 19 years old. This has resulted in an increase in the number of child marriages, especially for women. The second is the educational factor. In a society with a low level of education, the potential for child marriage is also greater. Marriage is an alternative thing to do because they don't go to school. The third is

⁴⁶ Wawancara dengan Barid Syamsiyah Ketua PDNA Kota Salatiga, 7 Agustus 2021.

⁴⁷ Wawancara Dengan Naili Hidayati Sekretaris PDNA Kabupaten Brebes, Rabu, 28 Juli 2021.

⁴⁸ Wawancara dengan Dwi Rahmawati Ketua PDNA Kabupaten Cilacap, 27 Juli 2021.

⁴⁹ Sarlito Wirawan, *Teori- Teori Psikologi Sosial*, 218-219.

the economic factor or poverty, where this factor is also the result of the second factor. Poverty occurs because the level of education is low, and this poverty encourages parents to marry off their children as soon as possible so that they are no longer a burden on the family. Apart from poverty where the child can no longer be borne by the family, in the opposite situation where the child is seen as being able to support his own life, for example children who become fishermen and are still under 19 years old but they already have enough money for living expenses, parents will tend to tell their children to get married soon. Likewise with himself, a boy who is already able to earn a living, he tends not to think about his education but to think about how he will get married soon. The fourth factor is the socio-cultural factor which is very influential in the mindset of the community, so that when a woman is no longer in school, of course she will get married.⁵⁰

Regarding the high number of child marriages in Cilacap, Budi Santoso explained that this figure cannot be viewed solely as a number, but must also be viewed from another side, for example from the geographical view of the Cilacap Regency area. According to him, because the geographical area of Cilacap Regency is very wide, the population is also quite large (the second highest number in Central Java Province), the number of child marriages is also potentially high.⁵¹

Likewise, the low number of child marriages in Magelang City and Salatiga City is not due to the role played by these religious organizations, but because the area of the two cities is smaller than the area of other regencies/cities. The narrowness of the area certainly has an impact on the least number of residents compared to the Regency/City with a wider area. Likewise, the large number of people who are well educated in urban areas compared to rural areas (in general) causes the rate of child marriage in the two cities to be relatively low compared to other areas.

For example, Salatiga City, when its territory covers part of Semarang Regency related to the Salatiga PA jurisdiction, the number of applications for marriage dispensation is relatively high. Khalida Hanum, a member of the LKKNU of Salatiga City, explained that in the past, the Salatiga City Religious Court had jurisdiction over several sub-districts in Semarang Regency, including Getasan District, whose data did contribute to the largest number of child marriages. There is information that starting in 2021 the jurisdiction of the Salatiga City Religious Court has been changed as it should be, only in Salatiga residents. According to Chalida Hanum, this will greatly affect the number of child marriages and requests for dispensation from marriage.⁵²

The low rate of child marriage in urban areas - such as Magelang City and Salatiga City - compared to rural areas in the Regency-Kabupaten area can also be seen from the aspect of urban society which is categorized as modern. According to Adon Nasrullah, the main characteristic of a modern society is that it has a high level of rationality, compared to those that are primordial, ceremonial, or

⁵⁰ Wawancara dengan Eni Kabid PP PA Brebes, 5 Agustus 2021.

⁵¹ Wawancara dengan Budi Santoso (Kepala Dinas PP PA KB Kabupaten Cilacap), 9 Agustus 2021.

⁵² Wawancara dengan Khalida Hanum anggota LKKNU Kota Salatiga, 9 Agustus 2021.

traditional. With this high level of rationality, other characteristics develop in his social actions. In modern society, social action will be more optional. Therefore, one of the most important characteristics of modern society is the ability and right of people to develop choices and take action based on their own choices.⁵³ With the characteristics of having a high level of rationality, urban communities can better consider the negative impact of child marriage so that actions based on their more rational choice are not to engage in child marriage. This is the reason why the number of child marriages in urban areas is lower than in rural areas in districts.

There is no relevance between the existence of the LKKNU and Nasyyiatul Aisyiyah organizations and the high and low rate of child marriage, due to the increasing number of child marriages during the Pandemic more due to changes in the age limit for marriage for girls, which is equal to the age of boys, which is 19 years. This is supported by the fact that data on the number of child marriages that has increased sharply is the number of girls. As the data described in the introduction section, the number of child marriages which rose sharply in 2020 to 12,972 children were girls, namely 11,301 children, while boys only had 1,671 children.⁵⁴ Meanwhile, during the previous three years, starting from 2016 to 2018, the number of child marriages was dominated by boys compared to girls. This could be because the minimum age for marriage for girls is different from the age for boys as regulated in Law no. 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, which is 19 years for men and 16 years for women. In 2019, there was a sharp increase in daughter marriages, which in 2018 amounted to 672 children in 2019 to 11,301 children. This is understandable because the minimum age for women to marry is equal to that of men, namely 19 years in accordance with the new provisions in Law no. 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law No. 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage.

Although the existence of religious organizations has no relevance to the high and low rates of child marriage, the existence of religious leaders is still seen as having authority in the community in supporting the success of government programs, including efforts to prevent and handle child marriage. As evidence, the voices of religious leaders are seen as "effective" in influencing the community. Budi Santoso, the head of the PP PA office in Cilacap said: *"In the activities carried out by the PP PA KB Service, the sources are figures, scholars from the organization. related to activity programs as resource persons and so on, providing information to congregations or targets for which we already have certain segments, for example to students, students, or to the taklim assembly which is indeed a religious organization."*⁵⁵

Conclusion

The existence of religious organizations (LKKNU and/or Fatayat and Nasyyiatul Aisyiyah) has not played a significant role in preventing and handling child marriage cases in Central Java. Some of the contributing factors are: First, the time of the increase in the number of child marriages coincided with the

⁵³ Adon Nasrullah Jamaluddin, *Sosiologi Perkotaan* (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2015), 67.

⁵⁴ Publikasi Kantor Wilayah Kementerian Agama Provinsi Jawa Tengah Tahun 2020.

⁵⁵ Wawancara dengan Budi Santoso (Kepala Dinas PP PA KB Kabupaten Cilacap), Senin, 9 Agustus 2021.

occurrence of the COVID-19 Pandemic which made Religious Organizations vacuum and passive in their activities. In addition, the condition of the organization and its management is still very early, some have just been formed, and the management has not even been appointed, some are people who have just been active in the organization (cases of several LKKNU). Second, religious organizations (the LKKNU and Fatayat cases) do not have an explicit work program in preventing and handling child marriages. Third, Religious Organizations are more passive by waiting to be "coupled", not proactively starting to "cooperate" with Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD) whose main tasks and functions are related to the prevention and handling of child marriages (Department or Agency for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, Family Planning, and Population Control), or similar nomenclature.

The existence of religious organizations (LKKNU and/or Fatayat and Nasyiatul Aisyiyah) has no relevance to the high and low rate of child marriage in Central Java. The high and low number of marriages in Central Java is mainly due to the following factors: First, the size of the area and the minimum number of people in the Regency/City area, and secondly, the level of education of the majority of the population in the Regency/City. Sociologically, the differences in the urban-rural (regency) areas also affect their views on child marriage. Urban communities tend to be more rationalist than rural communities, which are primordial-traditionalist. Rationality encourages the choice not to do child marriage, because of the many negative impacts it contains.

Although the existence of religious organizations has no relevance to the high and low rates of child marriage, the existence of religious leaders is still seen as having authority in the community to support the success of a government program.

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