

Community Perceptions on the Dynamics of Marriage Dispensation Permit Decisions in the Pacitan Religious Court, Indonesia

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Abstract: The decisions rendered by the Religious Court in Pacitan, Indonesia, regarding marriage dispensation permits pertain to requests submitted by families seeking permission to marry individuals whose age falls below the legally prescribed threshold. This provision aims to ensure that newly formed families are adequately prepared and mature, both physically and mentally, and shielded from the adverse consequences of early marriage. Despite the existence of this regulatory framework, there persists a significant number of permit applications, with trends indicating an upward trajectory. Regrettably, early marriage, with its attendant dangers and risks, has yet to be recognized as a pressing societal concern. From August 2023 to the present, an intriguing phenomenon has emerged, characterized by fluctuating decision dynamics. Previously, the overwhelming majority of permit requests were granted, but this has shifted, with only 59% now receiving approval, while 41% are being rejected. This dynamic shift has captured public attention, compelling a more serious consideration of marriage matters. Employing phenomenological techniques, this research has unveiled a notable evolution in societal perceptions of early marriage. What was once viewed as a commonplace occurrence is now recognized as a collective challenge demanding concerted action and resolution.

Keywords: community perception, early marriage, decision dynamics, marriage dispensation permits.

1. Introduction

A. Background

The decision of the Religious Court of Pacitan, Indonesia, regarding marriage dispensation permits relates to applications for dispensation permits submitted by families who wish to marry family members whose age does not meet the requirements as required in Law Number 16 of 2019, concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage. In article 7 it is stated "Marriage is only permitted if the man and woman have reached the age of 19 (nineteen) years".

These provisions are intended to prevent early marriages in society, so that new families that are formed are truly prepared and mature, both physically and mentally. If marriage takes place before the age of maturity, it will result in many undesirable things. Adolescent girls who marry early have a

risk to reproductive health and mental health, namely when they give birth they experience complications or die during childbirth, around 35-55%. Other risks experienced by premature babies and low birth weight babies [8]. Based on research by [15], early marriage in teenagers can experience gynecological problems and is followed by depression problems (45.5%) and miscarriages (17.1%). Women who marry early have a 3 times greater chance of experiencing gynecological problems, miscarriage/stillbirth, and depression. Early marriage causes severe depression, early divorce, interrupted education, domestic violence, abandoned children and economic problems that result in underage workers, which can have an impact on HIV, increased child mortality and deviant sexual behavior [1].

From a health perspective, women who have sexual relations under the age of 20 are at risk of developing cervical cancer because the cervical cells have not yet grown maturely. Sexual intercourse during adolescence increases the risk of exposure to the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), the virus that causes cervical cancer. Currently, cervical cancer is the first cancer that attacks Indonesian women, the incidence rate is currently 23% among other cancers [17].

Early marriage also stops a teenager's opportunity to obtain higher education, so that he does not get the opportunity for broader knowledge and insight, coupled with limited employment opportunities, making it difficult to improve his standard of living [22].

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), a person is considered mature, both physically and mentally, if he is 18 years old [40]. Meanwhile, the National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN) states that the ideal age for a person to have their first marriage is 21 years for women and 25 years for men taking into account the maturity of a person's biological and psychological condition at that age [11].

In reality, many couples marry under the age of 19 (early marriage) for one reason or another. The results of the 2020 National Socio-Economic Survey (SUSENAS) showed that 8.19% of women in Indonesia had their first marriage at the age of 7-15 years [29]. Global rates of early marriage are highest in

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Saharan Africa, young women marry before the age of 18. Indonesia is one of the countries with the highest practice of early marriage in the world. This practice increases every year. In 2018, the practice of early marriage reached 1,220,900 with this figure, Indonesia being one of the highest countries in the world that practices early marriage [30]. The percentage of early marriage in Indonesia is 4.89% at the age of 15-19 years [33]. A total of 1,396 Indonesian women under the age of 20 have given birth to BKKBN (2010). Most of the young women who practice early marriage experience pregnancy in aged 17 years (38.90%), 16 years (17.53%), and 15 years (4.70%) [33].

The results of the 2020 population census (SP) long form from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) show that the average rate of child marriage experienced by adolescent girls aged 10-14 years in Indonesia reached 0.50% of the total national adolescent girls. East Java is the province with the highest percentage of early marriage experienced by female teenagers in 2022, namely 1.43% [7].

Starting in 2020 in East Java there has been a continuous increase. The increase in child marriages is calculated based on court dispensation but does not include those in unregistered marriages. And, according to data from the 2020 National Socio-Economic Survey (SUSENAS), East Java ranks third in terms of the highest rate of early marriage in Indonesia with a percentage of 10.85 percent of the total 64,211 cases [19].

In Pacitan Regency, the results of Siswanto's research [24] reported that in Pacitan Regency in 2017 there were 52 cases of early marriage out of 2851 marriage events (1.35%), and in 2018 there were 61 cases of early marriage out of 4513 marriage events (1.35%). Starting in 2019, when Law Number 16 of 2019 came into effect, there was a significant spike. From January to October there were 47 cases of early marriage out of 4233 marriages (1.11%) but in November to December there were 47 cases of early marriage out of 637 (7.38%), respectively in 2020 there were 258 early marriages out of 3812 marriage events (6.77%), in 2021 there were 288 cases of early marriage from 4228 marriage events (6.81%), and in 2022 there were 249 cases of early marriage from 3869 marriage events (0.64%) [34].

Even though the negative impacts of early marriage, both medically and mentally, are so severe, the wider community does not yet consider cases of early marriage as a serious problem. Procedures for requesting dispensation to the Religious Court for couples who have not fulfilled the provisions as regulated in Law Number 16 of 2019, in addition to the normal additional administrative prerequisites, by calling them parents (as per the results of [12]), bearing in mind that almost all applications Dispensation for early marriage entered at the Pacitan Regency Religious Court, granted.

Commencing in August 2023, a notable development emerged wherein numerous requests for early marriage dispensation remained unapproved. This intriguing trend warrants investigation from a social engineering standpoint, with the objective of curbing the escalating volume of early marriage dispensation applications. The study aims to scrutinize how society reacts to the fluctuating decisions concerning marriage dispensation permits. By delving into

these dynamics, researchers seek to identify strategies to effectively address and mitigate the proliferation of such requests, thereby fostering a more informed and responsible approach to marriage decisions within the community.

B. Main Problem

The main problem to be researched is: What is the public's perception of the dynamics of the marriage dispensation permit decision of the Pacitan Regency Religious Court?

2. Theoretical Study

A. Marriage in the Family

Marriage is a sacred agreement between a man and a woman to form a family. Marriage is not something that is considered trivial or can be played with, but is something that is very important and a complementary part of human life. Marriage is one of the things that is mandatory in a relationship between husband and wife. Marriage is a physical and spiritual bond between a woman and a man, which shows the existence of a relationship as husband and wife. In the Islamic religion, marriage is a matter that is highly recommended in order to avoid cruel and evil acts such as adultery.

One of the purposes of marriage is to legitimize sexual relations between men and women in order to continue procreation. To achieve a happy marriage, it must be carried out in accordance with the rules and guidelines of marriage such as the conditions and principles. If the conditions and principles of marriage are implemented properly, then it will be a marriage that is always recognized as valid in religion and government law. A marriage can become invalid if one of its conditions and pillars is not implemented [2].

Marriage is not something that is considered trivial or can be played with, but is something that is very important and a complementary part of human life. Every person wants to have a life partner who is loyal until the end of their life. However, we need to underline that there is someone who regulates soul mate, death and fortune, He is the creator of the universe and everything in it. Between a soul mate and death, humans will never know which will come first, we may want marriage first but the Almighty wants death to come first or vice versa. A marriage is a sacred agreement between a man and a woman to form a family. The agreement contained in it is the rights and obligations of husband and wife in building a household, both regarding their satisfaction and needs and regarding their future offspring. Marital satisfaction is related to marital happiness which is measured by how far the couple feels their marriage is running stably and satisfactorily [9].

According to marriage law, marriage is defined as a physical and spiritual vow between a woman and a man as a relationship between husband and wife that is eternal in nature [2]. Our understanding of marriage can be seen from several points of view, namely:

- a. From a religious perspective, marriage is seen as a marriage that occurs because of a soul mate or a marriage that is based on natural law.
- b. From an emotional point of view, marriage is seen as a

marriage based only on the desire to have and love.

- c. From the perspective of ratio or reason, marriage is seen as a mutual need or a sense of mutual need for each other as living creatures [34].

Marriage will produce a family consisting of father, mother and children. Thus, someone who enters family life must be ready to lead a life full of responsibility. Marriage in the eyes of religion is a noble thing. Marriage has enormous benefits for humans and behind that the purpose of marriage is to form an eternal and happy family, so for this reason husband and wife must help and complement each other so that each can develop their personality and achieve spiritual and material prosperity [39].

Ahmad Azhar Basyir stated that the purpose of marriage in Islam is to fulfill the demands of human life instincts, to relate to men and women, in order to realize family happiness according to the teachings of Allah and His Messenger [38]. The purpose of marriage in article 3 of the compilation of Islamic Law is to create a domestic life that is *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* (a peaceful family full of love). These goals cannot always be realized according to expectations, sometimes in domestic life there are misunderstandings. Disputes, quarrels, which are prolonged, trigger the breakdown of the relationship between husband and wife. Fraud committed by one of the parties before the marriage takes place and at a later date after the marriage takes place is discovered by the other party can be used as a reason to apply for an annulment of the marriage.

B. Child Marriage or Early Marriage

In general, early marriage is a great institution to bind two people of the opposite sex who are still teenagers into one family bond. Adolescents themselves are children who are in the transition period between childhood and adulthood, where children experience rapid changes in all fields. They are no longer children, in terms of body shape, attitude, and way of thinking and acting, but they are not mature adults either (Zakiah, 2004 in [37]).

According to WHO, early marriage is a marriage carried out by a couple or one of the partners is still categorized as a child or teenager under the age of 19 years. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), early marriage is a marriage carried out officially or unofficially before the age of 18.

C. Factors in Early Marriage

According to [19], early marriage in Indonesia is influenced by various factors, categorized into individual and family aspects.

Individual Factors: Physical, mental, and social development play a significant role in the timing of marriage. Accelerated development tends to lead to earlier marriages, driven by a desire to enter into marital bonds swiftly. Similarly, the level of education is inversely correlated with the age of marriage; lower educational attainment often correlates with younger ages at marriage. Moreover, the dynamics of the relationship between teenagers and their parents contribute to

early marriages. Compliance or defiance of parental wishes can influence the timing of marriage, with some adolescents seeking matrimony as a means of breaking away from parental influence. Economic struggles also serve as a catalyst for early marriage, as some teenagers perceive marriage as an avenue to escape financial hardships and attain a higher economic standing.

Family Factors: Parental influence is significant in determining the marriage of their children and is shaped by various factors. Economic status heavily influences parental decisions regarding their children's marriages. Financial strain may prompt parents to hasten their daughters' marriages, viewing it as a means to transfer responsibility to the husband's family and alleviate economic burdens. Additionally, the level of parental education correlates with the incidence of early marriages within families, with lower education levels often associated with younger ages at marriage. Moreover, cultural beliefs and customs within families exert considerable influence. Some families marry off their children at a young age to enhance social status, forge alliances between families, and perpetuate family lineage.

Additionally, the family's ability to address adolescent issues is crucial. In instances where families lack effective means to deal with teenage problems, such as instances of moral transgressions like adultery, marriage may be seen as a way to mitigate shame or guilt associated with such incidents.

D. Society's Perception of Early Marriage

Perception in a narrow sense can be interpreted as a vision of how someone sees something, while in a broad sense it can mean a view or understanding of how someone sees or interprets something. According to DeVito, perception is the process by which we become aware of the many stimuli that influence our senses. Yusuf defines perception as meaning the results of observations, while Gulo defines perception as the process of a person becoming aware of everything in their environment through their senses. Rakhmat [26] explained that perception is an experience about objects, events, or relationships which is obtained by deducing information and interpreting it. In general, Atkinson concluded that perception is a process when we organize and interpret stimulus patterns in the environment (in [26]).

Psychologically, a person's behavior is a function of the way he perceives. Therefore, to change a person's behavior, it must start from changing his perception, which has the following three components: First, selection; namely the process of filtering by the senses against external stimuli. Second, interpretation; namely the process of organizing information so that it has meaning for someone which is influenced by, among other things, past experience, the value system adopted, motivation, personality and intelligence. Third, rounding off the components of perception and translating them into reactions (in [26]).

Regarding early marriage, each person may have different perceptions depending on their educational background, social and cultural beliefs and values. Likewise with the perception of the people of Pacitan Regency regarding early marriage. As

time goes by, society's perception or perspective regarding early marriage is gradually changing. Social change can then be interpreted as a process of change that occurs in society. Changes that occur in society can cover several parts, including behavior patterns, social values, layers in society, organizations, the structure of social institutions, authority and power and social interactions. The social changes that occur will influence social values, behavioral patterns or interactions in society itself.

Research conducted by [19] in Jember Regency reveals that early marriage is not perceived as a societal issue and is still regarded as a norm or even a source of pride. Similarly, findings from Kushidayati's study [12] in Grobogan Regency, Central Java, affirm that the community does not view early marriage as problematic for families. Instead, the process of obtaining a dispensation permit from the local Religious Court is seen as a logical step but is also considered an additional burden, labeled as an "age checkpoint." This perception of an "age checkpoint" is prevalent among the majority of individuals in Pacitan Regency as well. Unfortunately, this mindset has not led to a decrease in the number of applications for early marriage permits. On the contrary, there are indications that requests for dispensation permits continue to rise over time.

E. Legal Products as Social Engineering Instruments

Roscoe Pound is a scholar who put forward ideas regarding the use of law as a means or tool for carrying out social engineering, by putting forward the concept of "Law as a tool of social engineering". Pound stated that law cannot only be used to perpetuate power, but law can function as a tool of social engineering (law as a tool of social engineering). Pound, as a follower of the Sociological Jurisprudence school, believes that the law should be an instrument/tool to direct society towards the targets to be achieved, even, if necessary, the law can be used to eliminate various negative habits of society [18].

Satjipto Rahardjo, citing Pound, highlights a significant feature of law in contemporary society, emphasizing its deliberate utilization by the community. In this context, law serves not only to validate existing patterns of conduct and behavior but also guides them towards desired objectives. It works to eradicate outdated habits, instill new behavioral norms, and shape societal conduct accordingly. This perspective characterizes a modern understanding of law, wherein it functions as an instrument of social engineering, facilitating the progression and evolution of societal norms and values [18].

Mochtar Kusumaatmadja put forward the main ideas that form the basis for using statutory regulations as a means of reform or a means of development, stating that [5]:

"... law which is a means of community development is based on the assumption that order or order in development efforts or legal reform is something that is desired or considered (absolutely) necessary. Another assumption contained in the concept of law as a means of reform is "that law in the sense of legal rules or regulations indeed functions as a tool (regulator) or means of development in the sense of channeling the direction of human activity in the direction desired by

development or renewal. It is hoped that these two functions can be carried out by law in addition to its traditional function, namely ensuring certainty and order."

F. Journal Review

The study delved into various research reports exploring public perceptions surrounding early marriage, offering insights into the multifaceted aspects influencing this phenomenon.

In Susanto's study titled "Community Perceptions of Early Marriage Practices in Sukabumi, West Java," qualitative methodology was employed, drawing upon the perspectives of Islamic law (Fiqh) and culture. The findings revealed that early marriages in Sukabumi were encouraged due to several perceived benefits, including the belief that puberty signifies readiness for marriage, the notion that marriage brings good fortune, and the idea that marrying girls off early can alleviate the family's economic burdens. However, there was a noted shift in mindset over time, with the preference now leaning towards directing children to work rather than opting for early marriage as a means of improving living standards.

Sandra and San's study [21], "Community Perceptions About Early Marriage Seen from Cultural Background (Batak and Javanese)," utilized a quantitative approach with a comparative descriptive type, employing ANAVA analysis techniques. Their findings highlighted the significant influence of cultural backgrounds on society's perceptions of early marriage.

Erwinsyah et al., in their research [9], focusing on "Community Perceptions of Early Marriage in Jebres Village, Jebres District, Surakarta City," adopted a descriptive qualitative approach. Their findings indicated that perceptions of early marriage were shaped by factors such as education, reproductive health, and economic conditions within the community.

Lestari and Arifin's [14], exploring "Community Perceptions About Early Marriage in North Rahong District, Manggarai Regency," employed qualitative research with a descriptive approach. Their findings revealed a nuanced perspective among the community, where individuals expressed happiness with early marriage but also regret for the hindrance it posed to continuing their education.

Lastly, Afriani and Anita conducted a phenomenological study titled "Phenomenological Study of Community Perceptions of Early Marriage in the Gernas Environment, Madatte Village." Their findings highlighted economic motives, low levels of education, and community culture as key factors contributing to early marriage within the studied environment.

Of the several articles in journals that discuss public perceptions regarding early marriage, most revolve around public perceptions regarding the factors that cause early marriage. One research report that discusses community perceptions regarding dispensation permits by the Religious Courts is [36] research in Grobogan Regency, which confirms that the community does not yet view early marriage as a problem for the family, and the process of obtaining dispensation permits from the local Religious Court is

considered a logical consequence, is considered an additional burden, and is perceived as a "tuku umur".

3. Methodology

In this study, we employ a qualitative research methodology utilizing a phenomenological approach. This approach delves into the subjective experiences of individuals, seeking to understand the phenomenon of early marriage from their perspectives. As noted by Lexy J. Moleong, phenomenology underscores an emphasis on human subjective experiences, narratives, and interpretations of action implementation. Through this lens, our research aims to unveil diverse insights, emotions, and aspirations of the stakeholders involved in early marriage. Phenomenology provides a rich framework for exploring the multifaceted dimensions of this complex social issue, allowing for a nuanced understanding of its implications and contributing to informed decision-making and policy formulation [16].

The phenomenological method is a research approach aimed at comprehending the phenomena experienced by research subjects, such as behaviors, perceptions, motivations, and actions, in a holistic manner [16]. It involves a series of reductions to grasp the essence of objects. The first reduction entails shedding all subjective elements, while the second reduction eliminates any preconceived knowledge about the object obtained from external sources. Finally, the third reduction involves temporarily setting aside all prior knowledge [25]. Generally, qualitative methods are conducted through descriptive means, utilizing language and words within a natural context and employing various organic methodologies [16].

The primary instrument in the research is in-depth interviews, namely a qualitative data collection method used to gain an in-depth understanding of a person's views, experiences and perceptions of a topic or phenomenon being studied [10]. The main aim of in-depth interviews is to obtain rich and in-depth information, as well as allowing the researcher to explore deeper layers of the respondent's views and experiences.

Apart from that, secondary instruments are used, namely observation and documentation in the context of verification and validation as well as information enrichment.

This research was conducted in Pacitan Regency. The population in this study were all families who applied for a marriage dispensation permit in August - December 2023. The

sampling technique was carried out using purposive sampling, namely selecting samples based on certain considerations according to the research objectives (Mantra and Kasto in [23]). The subjects in this research include: Parents who have children who marry early, and community leaders (village officials). Sampling is based more on the aspect of accessibility (accessible population) [35].

Credibility testing is carried out by triangulation, discussion with colleagues and case analysis. Analysis uses Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis with stages: 1) reading and re-reading; 2) initial noting; 3) developing emergent themes; 4) searching for connecting across emergent themes; 5) moving the next case; and 6) looking for patterns across cases [25].

4. Results and Discussion

A. Dynamics of Marriage Dispensation Permit Decisions at the Pacitan Religious Court in 2023

The dynamics of marriage dispensation permit decisions at the Pacitan Regency Religious Court in 2023 are depicted in the Table 1.

From table 1 above, it can be seen that up to July 2023, no marriage dispensation permit applications had been rejected, and only in August 2023 did a significant change occur, namely of the remaining applications (27), 16 applications (59%) were granted and 11 applications (41%) were rejected. Rejections also appeared in November and December 2023, two requests each.

This change has significant implications for the rate of early marriage in Pacitan Regency. According to data from the Pacitan Regency Family Planning and Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Population Control Service (PPKB and PPPA), in 2020 there were 364 cases of child marriage recorded, in 2021 this rose and reached 370 cases, then decreased sharply to 308 cases in 2022 (Times Indonesia, Monday, September 18 2023), and in 2023, it will decrease sharply again until there are only 171 cases.

The reduction in the rate of early marriage in 2022 is the result of the efforts of the Pacitan Regency Family Planning and Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Population Control Service (PPKB and PPPA), which mobilized all stakeholders to work together to reduce the rate of early marriage through various work programs, such as outreach in the environment. Village PKK and in schools (Interview with Head of PPKB and PPPA Services).

Table 1
Recapitulation of marriage dispensation in 2023

No.	Months	The Rest of Last Month	Accepted	Amount	Revoked	Granted	Rejected
1	Jan		30	30		23	
2	Feb	7	18	25	1	19	
3	Mar	5	13	18	1	11	
4	Apr	6	14	20		13	
5	May	7	17	24	2	17	
6	Jun	5	31	36		17	
7	Jul	19	18	37	1	28	
8	Aug	8	26	34	7	16	11
9	Sep	0	10	10	1	0	
10	Oct	3	10	13	3	7	
11	Nov	6	7	13		5	2
12	Dec	6	7	13		9	2
TOTAL		72	201	273	13	165	15

B. Public Perception of the Dynamics of Marriage Dispensation Permit Decisions from the Pacitan Religious Court

Before there is a change in decision. When preparing their sons and daughters, people do things that are normal things to do, such as distributing invitations, ordering bridal make-up services, party equipment, and all things related to consumption readiness. When informed that their sons and daughters have not yet reached the required age, the families of the prospective bride and groom simply hand over everything to village officials, the important thing is that the marriage contract of their sons and daughters can be carried out according to the agreed schedule. The families of the prospective bride and groom and village officials are still preparing for the wedding in a reasonable manner considering their experience so far in obtaining a marriage dispensation permit which will almost certainly be granted. The families of the prospective bride and groom understand that the process of applying for a marriage dispensation permit at the Religious Court based on the recommendation of the Population Control, Family Planning and Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Services (PPKB and PPPA) is "age ancestry", as a logical consequence of their sons and daughters not being old enough. The community does not at all consider that the marriage of sons and daughters who are not old enough (early marriage) is a problem that must be avoided (Interview with the Head of Ketepung Village, Kebonagung District and Gendaran Village, Donorojo District).

If we understand the above reality from the perspective of Talcott Parsons' theory of action (in [32]), society only tries to adapt (adaptation) to the provisions for applying for a marriage dispensation permit to the Religious Court, without trying to explore the purpose of the provisions. Society still views this as something normal, and has not changed its view that early marriage has the potential to give rise to serious health and social problems. This may be because their goal of getting their sons and daughters married will still be achieved (goals attainment), even though they have to go through tortuous procedures and additional costs which are not cheap. After all, in the end, their sons and daughters can still get married and be officially registered.

When you find out that your request for a marriage dispensation permit has been rejected? The community, especially the parents of the prospective bride and groom who applied for a marriage dispensation to the Religious Court, were shocked and confused when their request was not granted. Here are some excerpts from the interview:

I was really surprised, I didn't expect that our request would not be granted. We were all confused too, because we had prepared everything so it couldn't be cancelled. We felt confused, what path should we take, so that our children could still get married. (Interview with Mr. Jumin, Cemeng Village, Donorojo District).

Our family was shocked and confused, why not? we have everything prepared. On the other hand, we are also worried about our in-laws' views, thinking that we won't try seriously. (Interview with Mr. Suyatno, Ketepung Village, Kebonagung

District).

I was really shocked, wanted to be angry, mixed with anxiety and confusion, especially since my daughter was already approximately five months pregnant. What will be the views of society and the environment? (Interview with Mr. Samino, Ketepung Village, Kebonagung District).

The shock of the community, especially the Catin family's early marriage, did not only stop with the Catin family, but quickly spread to all rural areas, through traditional communication networks (read more [27]). The communication pattern is face-to-face, verbal, in-depth, and uses familiar methods to disseminate information to wider segments of society.

This shock can be shock therapy in order to shake society's conventional views so that they can then absorb new information and views that are healthier and more forward-looking. What happens and is experienced by one or more members of the community can be a shared lesson for a better future life.

The intensity of information dissemination so quickly can be used to change society's view of early marriage, from not making it a common problem to becoming a common problem in order to create families that are physically and spiritually healthy, have physical and emotional resilience, and can participate positively in activities. environment and society.

The road ahead and impressions of the experience. The Catin family, whose request for dispensation permission was not granted, is still trying to get their son and daughter married. To realize this aim, they tried to ask for help from village officials, in this case the Hamlet Head and/or Village Head. The family's confusion spread to confusion among the village officials because none of the Marriage Registrar or Penghulu employees had the courage and were willing to serve their marriage wishes. On the other hand, the wedding schedule has been agreed upon by two families, namely one male Catin's family and one female Catin's family.

Catin's family was panicked because failure to consummate the marriage could harm the honor and soul of the family concerned. This panic is illustrated in excerpts from interviews with Hamlet Heads and Village Heads as follows [41]:

... Catin's father came to my house more than three times, sir. Request that their sons and daughters can still carry out the marriage ceremony, no matter what. They also contacted parties they thought could help, so that their son and daughter's marriage would not fail. (Interview with Mr Sumarno, Head of Tosono Village, Ketepung Village).

Similar information was also conveyed by Mr. Hadi Wiyono, Head of Ketepung Village, Kebonagung District, he added [41]:

... we are confused too, sir. After all, they are our people. They cry for help, but how? Hopefully this incident can be a lesson for all parties.

The prayers of the Head of Cemeng Village above are accepted by all parties, especially the officials and the Village Head, especially the families whose requests for marriage dispensation permits were not granted.

Even though in the end they still carried out the marriage contract using sirri marriage services, for the people of Pacitan

who on average have obedience and obedience to good formal leaders, not having their marriage wishes fulfilled by the Marriage Registrar or Official or called Penghulu, was a moral blow, heavy one.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The shifting dynamics of marriage dispensation permit decisions, transitioning from predominantly granted approvals to a significant 41% rejection rate, have delivered a profound shock to the community. This shift signals a crucial message that early marriage ought to be acknowledged as a pressing societal concern. While this transformation may not entirely alter society's perceptions regarding the gravity of the issues associated with early marriage practices, it has effectively catalyzed widespread awareness and concern among all stakeholders, prompting a collective recognition of early marriage as a shared societal challenge.

In response, it is imperative to initiate immediate and intensive preventive measures, leveraging outreach initiatives and community education programs. These efforts should aim to foster a deeper understanding of the detrimental implications of early marriage, promote alternative pathways to personal and societal development, and empower individuals with the knowledge and resources to make informed decisions about their futures. By proactively engaging with communities and instilling a culture of awareness and empowerment, we can work towards mitigating the prevalence of early marriage and fostering a more equitable and sustainable society.

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