

Early Marriage in Muslim Family Life: A Study on Divorce Factors in Bongor Hamlet, Taman Ayu Village, Gerung District

Muh. Wakidillaisi

UIN Mataram

E-mail Correspondent: 240602150.mhs@uinmataram.ac.id

Article Information	Abstract
Keywords: <i>Early Marriage, Muslim Family Life, Study Divorce Factors</i> Sub. 7th, Jan. 2026 Rev. 10th, Feb. 2026 Pub. 5rd, May. 2026 Vol. 01, No. 02, May 2026 DOI: JIISR 	This study aims to examine the phenomenon of divorce experienced by couples who marry at a young age in Bongor Hamlet, Taman Ayu Village, Gerung District, West Lombok Regency. Early marriage is a fairly complicated social problem, especially in rural areas of Indonesia, and West Nusa Tenggara is an area with a relatively high incidence rate. This study uses a family sociology approach with a descriptive qualitative method. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with ten informants, consisting of divorced former couples, local community leaders, religious leaders, and officers of the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) of Gerung District. The results of the study identified five main factors that encourage divorce in early marriage in the region, namely: (1) psychological and emotional unpreparedness of young couples in managing conflicts arising in married life; (2) heavy economic burden due to low educational background and limited employment opportunities; (3) excessive interference in household affairs; (4) infidelity triggered by emotional immaturity; and (5) domestic violence (domestic violence). Analysis using the framework of Parsons' structural functionalism theory and conflict theory in the family shows that the instability of the division of roles in young families is the root of divorce problems. This study recommends the importance of a more structured pre-marriage assistance program, as well as a more assertive early marriage prevention policy from local governments.

1. Introduction

Early marriage is still a serious social problem in Indonesia, especially in rural areas where education levels and economic conditions are relatively lagging behind. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2022, Indonesia is ranked seventh globally in terms of early marriage rates. West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) is consistently among the provinces with a high rate of child marriage, reaching 22.17 percent for children under 18 years old in 2021. This condition produces various significant social impacts, one of which is the increase in divorce rates among young couples.

Bongor Hamlet, Taman Ayu Village, Gerung District, West Lombok Regency is one of the rural

communities that is clearly facing this problem. Based on data from the Gerung District Religious Affairs Office (KUA), in the last three years (2021-2023) there were 47 cases of divorce involving married couples under the age of 20. Of that number, 31 cases came from Taman Ayu Village, including Bongor Hamlet. This data shows that there is a strong relationship between early marriage and the high risk of divorce in the community.

The phenomenon of divorce in the context of early marriage is not solely a personal problem between husband and wife, but is the impact of a complex social system. The socio-economic conditions of the family, applicable cultural norms, education level, and the role of social institutions such as the extended family, community, and state greatly affect the robustness of young couples' marriages. The people in Bongor Hamlet are still attached to patriarchal culture and social norms that encourage marriage as a way out of various social problems, including poverty, parents' concerns about children's promiscuity, and pressure from the surrounding environment.

The long-term impact of divorce in early marriage is widespread, felt not only by the divorced couple, but also by the children born from the marriage, the extended family, and society as a whole. Children from early marriages that end in divorce are at high risk of psychological developmental disorders, lack of attention and affection, and dropping out of school. In addition, the cycle of poverty tends to repeat itself because parents who divorce at a young age generally do not have adequate economic ability to support themselves and their children.

The study of the sociology of the family provides a comprehensive framework for understanding this phenomenon. Family sociology not only views the family as the smallest social unit in society, but also examines how the family interacts with the broader social system, encompassing economic, political, religious, and cultural institutions. From a sociological point of view, divorce is not simply the failure of an individual marriage, but a reflection of structural tensions in a society that is going through a period of social and economic transition.

A number of previous studies on early marriage and divorce in Indonesia have been conducted by various academics. Mubasyaroh (2016) found that economic, cultural, and educational factors are the three main pillars behind the occurrence of early marriage in rural communities in Java. Meanwhile, Nurmala (2019) through her study in Lombok revealed that the traditional tradition of merariq (elopement) contributes to the high rate of early marriage among the Sasak tribe. However, studies that specifically link early marriage to divorce in the context of certain communities such as Bongor

Hamlet are still very limited.

This research is here to fill this gap by conducting an in-depth and contextual study of the factors that cause divorce in couples who marry early in Bongor Hamlet. Using a family sociology approach and qualitative methods, this study seeks to unravel the social dynamics that take place in the married life of young couples in this rural community. A comprehensive understanding of the root of this problem is expected to be the basis for the formulation of more effective policies in dealing with the problem of early marriage and divorce in the community.

In more detail, this study aims to: (1) identify the factors that cause divorce in couples who marry early in Bongor Hamlet; (2) analyze the social dynamics in young families that lead to divorce; and (3) describe the impact of divorce on individuals, families, and local communities. This research is expected to make an academic contribution to the study of family sociology, especially in the context of rural communities in NTB, as well as present practical recommendations for policymakers in efforts to prevent early marriage and divorce.

2. Resarch Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-phenomenological method. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to deeply understand the subjective experiences of individuals involved in the phenomenon of divorce due to early marriage, as well as to reveal the social meaning behind this phenomenon. The phenomenological method was specifically chosen because this study seeks to understand the 'lifeworld' of the informants, namely how they live, interpret, and respond to the experience of early marriage and divorce in their daily lives.

The location of the study is Bongor Hamlet, Taman Ayu Village, Gerung District, West Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province. The selection of this location was based on several considerations: (1) the high rate of early marriage and divorce in the area according to KUA data from Gerung District; (2) the characteristics of the rural community with traditional values and Sasak culture that is still strong; (3) the ease of access for researchers to the location; and (4) the willingness of the community to participate in the research. The research was carried out for four months, from February to May 2024.

The research informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques with the following criteria: (1) have been married early, namely married before reaching the age of 20; (2) have been divorced or are in the process of divorce; and (3) are willing to share their experiences openly. In

addition, the researcher also interviewed key informants consisting of community leaders, religious leaders (teachers and ustadz), KUA officers of Gerung District, and village midwives. The total number of informants was ten people, consisting of seven divorced ex-spouses (four women and three men) and three key informants. In order to protect the privacy of the informants, the names were replaced with initials.

The data collection technique includes three ways: (1) in-depth interviews conducted in a semi-structured manner to comprehensively explore the experiences, perspectives, and reflections of informants; (2) observation of participants in the Bongor Hamlet environment to understand the social and cultural context of the community directly; and (3) documentation studies in the form of divorce records from the Gerung District KUA and population data from the Taman Ayu Village Office. The validity of the data is guaranteed through source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking.

Data analysis follows the model of Miles and Huberman (1994) which includes three stages: (1) data reduction, which is the sorting and simplification of raw data from interviews and field notes; (2) data presentation, which is the organization of data into a format that facilitates the drawing of conclusions; and (3) conclusion drawing and verification, which is the interpretation of data to find meanings, patterns, and relationships between variables. Thematic analysis is applied to identify the main themes that emerge from the data, which are then interpreted within the theoretical framework of family sociology.

This study pays full attention to the ethical aspects of the research. All informants are given a full explanation of the objectives and procedures of the research before giving informed consent. Their participation is voluntary and their identities are kept confidential using initials. The data collected is only used for academic purposes and is not disseminated to non-interested parties.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Social Profile of Bongor Hamlet and the Phenomenon of Early Marriage

Bongor Hamlet is one of six hamlets located in Taman Ayu Village, Gerung District, West Lombok Regency. Based on population data in 2023, this hamlet is inhabited by around 287 families with a total population of approximately 1,142 people. Most of the residents are Sasak who embrace Islam, with their main livelihood as farmers, farm laborers, and small traders. The level of education of the residents of Bongor Hamlet is relatively low; most of the adult population only completes education up to the elementary or junior high school level. This condition directly affects their limited

understanding of reproductive rights, family planning, and the importance of education before marriage.

The phenomenon of early marriage in Bongor Hamlet cannot be separated from the context of Sasak culture which historically viewed marriage as a social obligation that must be fulfilled as early as possible, especially for women. The tradition of *merariq* (elopement) that is still practiced in some families creates a situation where marriage can take place without careful preparation. In addition to cultural factors, economic pressure also plays an important role: for underprivileged families, marrying girls early is considered a way to ease the burden of life. Gerung District KUA data notes that between 2021 and 2023, there were 63 applications for marriage dispensation from Taman Ayu Village, and 41 of them were granted by the Religious Court

3.2. Psychological and Emotional Unpreparedness Factors

One of the main factors that encourage divorce in couples who marry early in Bongor Hamlet is psychological and emotional unpreparedness. Based on interviews with seven informants who have been divorced, all of them admitted that they did not have adequate emotional maturity when entering marriage. SA informant (23 years old, divorced after two years of marriage at the age of 17) revealed that he did not know how to resolve conflicts with his partner without emotionally exploding. The inability to manage emotions and communicate healthily in conflict situations is a trigger for disputes that continue to escalate until they finally lead to divorce.

Psychological unpreparedness can also be seen in the inability of young couples to adjust to their new roles as husbands or wives. In the perspective of Duvall's Family Development Theory, couples who marry early are often still in the stage of adolescent development, characterized by the search for self-identity, dependence on peers, and a tendency to think egocentrically. When entering married life, they are suddenly required to assume the responsibility of an adult responsible for themselves, their spouse, and their children. This tension between the developmental needs of adolescence and the demands of the role of an adult creates severe psychological pressure, especially in the absence of adequate guidance.

3.3. Economic Pressures as a Structural Factor

Economic pressure is the most dominant structural factor in the divorce case of young couples in Bongor Hamlet. Couples who marry early generally do not have enough education to access jobs with a decent income, thus creating chronic financial stress in the household. Informant MH (25 years old, divorced after three years of marriage at the age of 18) said that he and his wife constantly

quarreled about finances, because their income as a daily laborer could not meet the needs of their small family. The recurring disputes over money slowly eroded the love and trust between the two.

Within the framework of conflict theory, poverty and limited economic resources create conditions in which conflicts in young families become almost inevitable. When the available resources are insufficient to meet the needs of all family members, conflicts of interest between the nuclear family members and the extended family become sharper. This study found that economic problems are often the trigger that triggers other conflicts, such as quarrels over child rearing, dissatisfaction with the division of gender roles, and social jealousy. The inability of young husbands to carry out the role of the backbone of the family, which is highly emphasized in the patriarchal Sasak culture, is also a significant source of conflict.

3.4. Big Family Intervention and Power Dynamics

One of the most striking findings in this study is how strong the influence of extended family intervention is in exacerbating the domestic conflicts of young couples. In Bongor Hamlet, a strong patrilineal kinship system causes the husband's family to have dominant authority over the home life of young couples. For couples who still live with their husband's parents—which is a common pattern due to economic limitations, conflicts between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law are one of the main sources of tension.

Informant RL (21 years old, divorced after 18 months of marriage at the age of 16) revealed that her mother-in-law always interfered in her household affairs, from how to cook, to how to educate children, to how to dress. Her husband, who was still very emotionally and financially dependent on his parents, often sided with his mother in every dispute. This intervention of the extended family, which in the perspective of Parsons functionalism is a threat to the boundaries of the core family subsystem, causes serious dysfunction in the home life of young couples. The inability of the young husband to separate loyalty to the family of origin from commitment to his new family becomes a paradox that is difficult to solve.

3.5. Domestic Violence (KDRT)

This study also found cases of domestic violence (KDRT) which are the direct cause of divorce in a number of cases. Of the seven informants interviewed, four of them admitted to having experienced physical violence from their partners, while all female informants stated that they had experienced verbal and psychological violence. This violence is often triggered by the inability of young husbands to manage frustration due to economic pressure, jealousy, and the influence of alcohol.

Patriarchal culture that places women in subordinate positions also plays a role in normalizing domestic violence in rural communities.

These findings are in line with the results of a study by Hayati et al. (2021) which showed that women who married at an early age had a much higher risk of becoming victims of domestic violence than women who married in adulthood. The economic powerlessness and social dependence of young married women make it difficult for them to report the violence they experienced or leave abusive relationships. In Bongor Hamlet, the social stigma attached to divorced women is also an obstacle for victims of domestic violence to make decisions to separate, even though their marital conditions are already very unsuitable. This situation reflects how entrenched gender inequality in society exacerbates the vulnerability of women who marry early.

3.6. The Impact of Divorce on Individuals and Families

The impact of divorce on the individuals involved, especially women, is enormous, both psychologically, socially, and economically. Psychologically, divorced female informants reported feelings of failure, shame, and deep concern about their future. The social stigma of being a 'young widow' in a conservative community such as Bongor Hamlet added to the psychological pressure they endured. The SA informant admitted that she had been depressed for several months after the divorce, feeling worthless and overwhelmed in taking care of her infant child.

The economic impact of divorce is also enormous, especially for women who do not have adequate skills and education. Many young widows in Bongor Hamlet are forced to return to their parents' homes and become dependents of their families of origin, while others are forced to work as labourers or domestic helpers with very low wages. Their rights to iddah, mut'ah, and child custody are often not fulfilled because both ex-husbands do not have sufficient financial means. This condition perpetuates a cycle of poverty and vulnerability that is difficult to break without planned intervention from the government and social institutions.

3.7. The Impact of Divorce on Children and Reproduction Social Problems

The most worrying impact of divorce is its impact on children born from early marriages that end in divorce. In Bongor Hamlet, children of divorced couples are often cared for by their maternal grandmothers, either because the mother has to work or because of the inability of both young parents to take care of the child optimally. This non-ideal parenting pattern has an impact on the psychological development of children, who are prone to insecure attachments, behavioral disorders, and difficulties in attending school. This kind of condition has the potential to create the reproduction of

intergenerational social problems, where children who grow up in unstable families due to divorce have a higher risk of repeating the same pattern later in life.

4. Conclusion

This study succeeded in uncovering the complexity of the phenomenon of divorce in the context of early marriage in Bongor Hamlet, Taman Ayu Village, Gerung District. The findings of the study show that divorce in couples who marry early is not a stand-alone event, but is the result of a complex interaction between individual, relational, and structural factors. At the individual level, the psychological and emotional unpreparedness of young couples is a key factor that undermines the foundation of marriage. At the relational level, the inability to manage conflicts, excessive intervention from extended families, and entrenched gender inequality further exacerbate tensions in the household. At the structural level, poverty, low levels of education, and weak social protection systems create a climate that is not conducive to the sustainability of young couples' marriages.

Analysis using the framework of family sociology shows that structural dysfunction in young families as described in Parsons' theory of structural functionalism is the root of the problem that needs to be addressed systematically. Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach emphasizes that effective interventions must be carried out in layers, not only at the level of the nuclear family, but also at the level of communities, social institutions, and public policies. Strong social capital has proven to be a protective factor that can mitigate these pressures, so strengthening the social network of the community is an important part of the solutions that need to be pursued. Based on the findings of the research, several recommendations need to be seriously considered. The Regional Government of West Lombok Regency needs to emphasize the implementation of early marriage prevention policies through more effective education, socialization, and law enforcement programs. The Office of Religious Affairs needs to develop a more comprehensive pre-marriage guidance program, not only administrative, but also covering aspects of psychology, household financial management, and conflict management. Educational institutions and civil society organizations need to be more active in empowering women and girls, especially in the areas of reproductive health education, life skills, and awareness of their legal rights.

This study has limitations in terms of the number of informants and the coverage of the area limited to one hamlet, so the generalization of the findings needs to be done carefully. Follow-up research with a wider scope and using mixed methods is highly recommended to provide a more comprehensive picture of this phenomenon at the district and provincial levels.

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