



THE TRADITION OF EARLY MARRIAGE IN RURAL AND MOUNTAINOUS AREAS: A CASE STUDY IN BETEK VILLAGE, KRUCIL DISTRICT, PROBOLINGGO REGENCY

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Abstract :

This study examines the persistence of early marriage as a socio-religious tradition in Betek Village, Krucil District, Probolinggo Regency, Indonesia. Despite the enactment of Law No. 16 of 2019, which sets the minimum marriage age at 19, early marriage continues to be practiced as part of local cultural identity. Employing a qualitative field research approach with a socio-legal perspective, this study explores how Islamic legal norms intersect with local customs and socio-economic realities. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving religious leaders, community elders, young couples, and local authorities. The findings reveal that early marriage is perceived by villagers as a moral and social obligation to preserve family honor and prevent social deviance. However, the practice often leads to economic vulnerability, limited educational attainment, and psychological strain among young couples. From the perspective of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, early marriage tends to generate more harm than benefit, undermining the principles of welfare, intellect, and lineage protection. The study concludes that a contextual reinterpretation of Islamic law, combined with education and community engagement, is essential to transform early marriage traditions toward more just and welfare-oriented practices in accordance with Islamic family ideals.

Keywords : Early Marriage, Islamic Law, Local Tradition

INTRODUCTION

Early marriage remains one of the most prevalent social phenomena in many rural and mountainous regions of Indonesia . Despite the government's legal reform through Law No. 16 of 2019, which amended Law No. 1 of 1974 to set the minimum age of marriage at 19 years for both men and women, child marriage practices persist in various communities. This reality indicates that early marriage is not merely a legal issue but a deeply rooted social phenomenon intertwined with local traditions and cultural norms. Within this context, the practice of early marriage is often regarded as part of a community's social identity and a mechanism for transmitting cultural values across generations, especially in rural and highland areas (Setiadi, 2021).

From a sociological perspective, the persistence of early marriage in rural communities is driven by multiple interrelated factors, including economic hardship, low levels of education, social pressure, and conservative religious views. At the same time, local communities tend to perceive early marriage as a form of parental responsibility to "preserve a daughter's honor" and to prevent behaviors considered socially deviant. This reflects the complex moral and social dimensions of the phenomenon, in which early marriage functions not simply as



an individual decision but as a collectively legitimized cultural practice (Scott et al., 2021).

In the framework of Islamic law, early marriage finds its justification in flexible *fiqh* interpretations. Classical jurists generally allowed marriage at a young age as long as the individuals had reached puberty (*baligh*), while contemporary scholars emphasize the importance of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*—the higher objectives of Islamic law—which prioritize the protection of life, intellect, lineage, and wealth. The tension between religious norms and social realities makes early marriage among rural Muslim communities a compelling subject of study. This phenomenon reveals not only the dynamic relationship between *'urf* (local custom) and *sharī'ah* (religious law) but also the adaptive process through which religious norms are interpreted within traditional social structures (Kurniawan, Handesman, Rahmadi, & Najib, 2020).

Betek Village, located in Krucil District of Probolinggo Regency, represents one of the mountainous regions that continue to uphold early marriage as part of its social order. In this community, marrying at a young age is considered normal and even desirable, especially for girls deemed “physically mature.” Economic constraints, limited access to education, and the strong influence of religious and customary leaders are among the main driving forces behind this practice. However, social transformations brought about by education, media exposure, and government policies have gradually begun to shift the community’s perception of the appropriate age for marriage.

Although numerous studies have addressed the issue of early marriage across Indonesia, research focusing on the intersection of local tradition and socio-religious legitimacy in mountainous regions such as Betek Village remains scarce. Most previous studies emphasize the negative consequences of early marriage—particularly its impacts on education and reproductive health—while its cultural and symbolic dimensions as a heritage tradition have received little scholarly attention. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by exploring in depth how the tradition of early marriage is constructed, maintained, and interpreted by the local community (Wibowo, Ratnaningsih, Goodwin, Ulum, & Minnick, 2021).

Based on this background, this research aims to describe early marriage as a socio-cultural legacy of the Betek Village community and to analyze the social, economic, and religious factors influencing its persistence. The study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between customary traditions and Islamic values in shaping early marriage practices, as well as to offer a critical reflection on the formulation of legal and policy frameworks that are both effective and sensitive to local cultural contexts in rural communities.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative field research approach that integrates sociological and Islamic legal perspectives (*socio-legal approach*). This approach is chosen because the phenomenon of early marriage in Betek Village, Krucil

District, Probolinggo Regency is not merely related to the normative dimensions of Islamic or state law, but is also a living social practice deeply embedded in local culture. Through this method, the researcher seeks to understand the reciprocal relationship between legal norms and social realities, while also analyzing how Islamic teachings are understood, interpreted, and practiced within the framework of local traditions (Fauzan, 2021).

The research was conducted in Betek Village, Krucil District, Probolinggo Regency an upland area in eastern East Java characterized by agrarian livelihoods and traditional social structures. The local community is known for maintaining strong adherence to inherited cultural and religious values, including the practice of early marriage. The site was chosen based on the persistence of underage marriage, which is still regarded by many residents as normal and even as part of the community's social identity.

The sources of data consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation involving informants directly connected to early marriage practices, including religious leaders (*kyai*, *ustadz*, or *modin nikah*), community elders, village officials, parents, young married couples, and staff from the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Krucil District. Secondary data were collected from literature sources such as books, academic journals, previous studies, and legal documents—especially Law No. 16 of 2019 on Marriage—as well as classical and contemporary Islamic legal references relevant to the issue of marriageable age (Deterding & Waters, 2021).

Data collection was conducted through three primary techniques: semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore the community's perceptions, motivations, and interpretations regarding early marriage. Observation focused on daily social life, particularly marriage ceremonies, community interactions, and the role of religious and traditional figures in marital decision-making. Documentation was employed to obtain supporting evidence, such as marriage records from the KUA, village archives, and other relevant administrative documents.

Data analysis followed the descriptive qualitative method, encompassing three stages as proposed by Miles and Huberman: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During data reduction, the researcher selected and focused on information relevant to the research objectives. The data were then organized into thematic narratives to identify social patterns, religious viewpoints, and cultural factors influencing early marriage practices. The final stage involved interpreting the empirical findings in light of sociological and Islamic legal theories to draw meaningful conclusions (Asipi, Rosalina, & Nopiyadi, 2022).

Within the framework of Islamic legal analysis, this study applies the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* approach the higher objectives of Islamic law which encompass the protection of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*). This approach is used to assess the extent to which early marriage practices in Betek Village align with the

principles of *maslahah* (public benefit) as prescribed by Islamic law. Hence, the analysis does not merely focus on legal formalities but also incorporates moral, social, and humanitarian considerations that reflect the broader purposes of the *shari'ah* (Norman & Ruhullah, 2024).

To ensure the validity and reliability of findings, the study employs source and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from various informants, including religious leaders, community members, and village officials. Methodological triangulation, on the other hand, was achieved by cross-verifying data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. This strategy ensures that the research findings are consistent, credible, and scientifically verifiable.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Social and Cultural Realities of Early Marriage Practices in Betek Village

Early marriage in Betek Village, Krucil District, Probolinggo Regency, represents a persistent social phenomenon that has become an integral part of the community's cultural identity. This tradition has been passed down through generations and is regarded as a normal practice within daily social life. For most residents, marrying off children at a young age is not considered a violation of social or religious norms, but rather a moral responsibility of parents to protect family honor. From their perspective, early marriage is viewed as a preventive measure against immoral behavior and as a way to maintain the family's good reputation within the community (Alwi & Munir, 2023).

Culturally, the people of Betek Village regard marriage as a crucial milestone in the social life cycle. Girls who are deemed physically mature are often considered ready for marriage, even if they lack psychological and economic preparedness. This perception stems from traditional values that emphasize the role of women as guardians of family honor and continuers of lineage. Within this cultural framework, delaying marriage is often seen as a social disgrace, especially for women. Consequently, strong social pressure is placed on parents to marry off their daughters early to avoid gossip or negative stigma within the village (Kaplan & Carlebach, 2025).

In addition to cultural factors, the economic condition of Betek's residents is a significant driving force behind the persistence of early marriage. Most villagers work as farmers or agricultural laborers with unstable incomes. Under such financial constraints, marrying off a daughter is perceived as a way to reduce the family's economic burden, as the responsibility of livelihood shifts to the husband. This pragmatic perspective often outweighs rational considerations regarding the couple's mental and financial readiness. In some cases, families even hope that marriage will improve their social or economic standing if the groom comes from a more prosperous family (Maina, 2020).

Early marriage also functions as a socio-economic strategy to strengthen interfamily relations. In a rural community that values communal solidarity, marriage often serves as a means to reinforce kinship ties between extended families. This demonstrates that early marriage is not merely a personal decision

but also a social and economic institution rooted in agrarian traditions, where marriage plays a vital role in maintaining social harmony and household stability.

Religious and traditional leaders play an essential role in legitimizing the practice. In Betek Village, *kyai*, *ustadz*, and *modin* hold considerable influence in shaping religious perceptions. Many religious figures do not explicitly oppose early marriage, provided that the couple has reached puberty (*baligh*) and fulfills the legal conditions (*rukun nikah*) of an Islamic marriage. Such views reinforce the community's belief that early marriage does not contradict Islamic teachings. Meanwhile, customary elders and village leaders provide social endorsement through unwritten norms that govern marital behavior within the community.

The involvement of religious leaders in marriage ceremonies further strengthens the perception that early marriage aligns with Islamic guidance. Many parents believe that as long as the marriage contract (*akad nikah*) is valid and performed with sincere intentions, age is not an issue. This belief reflects the deep integration between religious values and local culture. However, from the perspective of contemporary Islamic law, this understanding requires critical reassessment through the lens of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, which emphasizes the protection of life, intellect, and progeny. In modern contexts, early marriage often risks producing harm (*mudarat*) to family welfare and child development, contradicting the objectives of Islamic law (Amzat, 2020).

Another factor sustaining the tradition is the low level of education among residents. Most villagers have completed only primary school, and many girls drop out before reaching secondary education due to economic hardship or prioritization of domestic roles. This lack of education limits awareness of the social, psychological, and legal risks associated with early marriage. Consequently, marriage is often viewed as a greater social achievement than education, as it is believed to provide social security and a respected status for young women.

Moreover, the community's legal awareness remains limited. Many residents are unaware of the minimum marriage age stipulated in Law No. 16 of 2019, and several marriages are conducted through traditional or religious mechanisms without clear legal registration. This situation reveals a gap between state law and prevailing social systems. For villagers in Betek, social and religious legitimacy often carries more weight than formal legal provisions, indicating that state law has yet to fully function as the primary reference for regulating everyday life.

The tradition of early marriage also serves as a mechanism of social control that preserves moral order within the community. Customary norms define marriage as the moral boundary within which relationships between men and women are considered lawful. These norms are collectively enforced through strong public opinion and social pressure. Unmarried girls of a certain age often become subjects of gossip or ridicule, making early marriage a socially acceptable means of avoiding shame and preserving family dignity (Abera, Nega, Tefera, & Gelagay, 2020).

Nevertheless, social change is gradually influencing the mindset of Betek's residents. Increased access to information through digital media, government campaigns against child marriage, and outreach programs led by religious organizations have begun to raise awareness about the importance of education and psychological readiness for marriage. Some families have started delaying marriage until their children complete secondary school. Although this trend is still limited, it signals a gradual shift in social values within this previously conservative mountain community.

This phenomenon reflects an ongoing tension between traditional values and modernity. On one hand, the community seeks to preserve its cultural heritage and customary identity; on the other, modernization introduces new values such as gender equality, child rights, and the importance of education. This tension positions early marriage as a site of social negotiation among custom, religion, and state policy. Within Islamic legal discourse, this can be understood as a form of *living law*—a dynamic expression of religious norms adapting to local social realities.

Overall, it can be concluded that early marriage in Betek Village is the product of a complex social construction shaped by the interplay of tradition, religion, and economic necessity. The phenomenon cannot simply be categorized as a legal violation; rather, it must be understood as a value system that governs social behavior within rural society. Therefore, efforts to reduce early marriage rates in such areas must go beyond legal enforcement, incorporating socio-cultural approaches that respect local traditions while promoting greater awareness of *maslahah* (social welfare), education, and youth protection within the framework of Islamic values.

Religious Legitimacy and the Islamic Legal Interpretation of Early Marriage

In the context of Betek Village, Islam serves as the dominant moral and social foundation regulating everyday life, including matters of marriage. The community's view on early marriage is largely rooted in a traditional understanding that a marriage is considered valid (*ṣaḥīḥ*) once the essential pillars (*arkān al-nikāḥ*) are fulfilled and both parties have reached puberty (*baligh*). Consequently, as long as an individual is deemed biologically mature and capable of performing religious obligations, he or she is regarded as ready for marriage. This understanding forms the religious legitimacy upon which the community practices early marriage without necessarily considering the psychological or socioeconomic readiness of the couple (Said, Hukmiah, Nur, Wahyuni, & Akbar, 2024).

The community's conception of maturity (*baligh*) is based on classical *fiqh* interpretations, in which biological signs such as menstruation for girls and nocturnal emission for boys are viewed as primary indicators of marital readiness. Religious leaders in Betek Village often emphasize that as long as the legal requirements and conditions of marriage are met, there is no explicit prohibition in Islam against marrying young. This literal interpretation of *fiqh* texts reinforces the continuation of early marriage, as it is perceived not to contradict Islamic teachings. In the community's perspective, Islamic law

primarily concerns the validity of the marriage contract, rather than broader considerations of social welfare or psychological maturity (Sodiqin & Al-Robin, 2021).

However, this view reflects the interpretation of certain classical jurists (*fuqahā'*) that developed within the sociocultural context of the medieval Islamic world. In classical *fiqh* manuals, it is indeed found that marriage at a young age was permitted as long as it did not result in harm (*mafsadah*). For instance, Imam al-Shāfi'ī held that marrying off a girl who had reached puberty was permissible, and even that a guardian (*wali*) could arrange her marriage before puberty if it was deemed beneficial. Such opinions arose within societies where marriage was regarded as a means of protecting women, rather than merely a domestic partnership between husband and wife.

In contrast, contemporary Muslim scholars address the issue of early marriage through a broader lens, emphasizing the principle of *maslahah mursalah* (public welfare). From this perspective, maturity is not solely measured by biological indicators but also by mental, spiritual, and social readiness to assume marital responsibilities. Modern Islamic thinkers such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Wahbah al-Zuhayli assert that the ultimate purpose of marriage is to achieve tranquility (*sakinah*), affection (*mawaddah*), and compassion (*rahmah*). Therefore, when early marriage leads to suffering, conflict, or family breakdown, such a practice contradicts the higher objectives of Islamic law.

Viewed through the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (the higher objectives of Islamic law), early marriage practices in Betek Village warrant critical examination. The five fundamental objectives of Islamic law – protection of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) – serve as benchmarks for determining *maslahah* (benefit) and *mafsadah* (harm). In this context, early marriage can be seen as potentially threatening *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (protection of life), as young couples often face psychological pressure and reproductive health risks. It may also undermine *ḥifẓ al-'aql* (protection of intellect), given that many young brides are forced to leave school after marriage, thereby diminishing educational attainment and human development.

Similarly, *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (protection of lineage) may be compromised, as young parents are often unprepared to nurture children emotionally or financially. From a *maqāṣid*-based analysis, early marriage thus produces more harm than benefit. Islam, in essence, does not evaluate the legality of an act solely from a formalistic standpoint but from its moral, social, and humanitarian consequences. Hence, the reinterpretation of marriage laws within modern social contexts becomes essential so that religious teachings do not inadvertently legitimize practices detrimental to younger generations.

Nevertheless, the people of Betek Village do not regard early marriage as a deviation from Islamic teachings, but rather as a fulfillment of religious duty to marry. This understanding is supported by strong moral narratives emphasizing chastity and the avoidance of *zinā* (fornication). For the local community, marrying young is preferable to allowing unsupervised social interactions that

might lead to immorality. Such reasoning forms a religiously grounded moral argument that sustains the practice of early marriage, positioning Islamic teachings as instruments of social control to uphold communal morality (Dikuraisyin & Fatwa, 2024).

However, there exists a gap between the community's religious understanding and the universal principles of Islamic law. Islam is inherently dynamic and contextual; its interpretation must take into account evolving social realities. In this regard, literal interpretations of puberty as the sole indicator of maturity must be reoriented toward a more substantial understanding – one that encompasses mental, spiritual, and social dimensions of adulthood. Such a shift is necessary for Islamic law to remain relevant and to preserve its central value of *maslahah* (public good).

The phenomenon of early marriage in Betek Village also illustrates the ongoing dialectic between *'urf* (custom) and *sharī'ah* (Islamic law). As a local value system, *'urf* functions to complement religious teachings in shaping the community's social order. In practice, custom and religion often reinforce each other: custom provides social legitimacy, while religion offers moral and spiritual justification. However, when custom becomes overly dominant, it can obscure the essence of Islamic teachings that prioritize welfare and justice. This dialectical relationship demonstrates how Islamic law functions as a *living law* – a dynamic system that adapts to the cultural and social context of its adherents.

As a *living law*, Islamic jurisprudence within Betek Village is not merely a set of normative texts but a lived social practice subject to continuous reinterpretation. The community interprets Islamic teachings through their lived experiences, including in matters of marriage. Early marriage, in this sense, exemplifies the adaptive relationship between religious norms and the socioeconomic realities of rural life. Although this interpretation may differ from contemporary scholarly views, it reflects the community's creative engagement with Islamic principles amidst ongoing social change.

Therefore, early marriage in Betek Village should not be understood as a form of disobedience to Islamic law but rather as a process of social adaptation to traditionally understood religious teachings. For the community, early marriage represents an effort to maintain morality and social stability. Nonetheless, from the broader perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, the practice requires re-evaluation to prevent potential harm. This study reveals that the relationship between religion and culture is neither static nor oppositional but instead involves constant negotiation and reinterpretation according to the dynamics of social life.

In summary, the religious legitimacy of early marriage in Betek Village is rooted in classical *fiqh* interpretations that emphasize formal validity over substantive welfare. However, from the standpoint of contemporary Islamic law and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, the practice necessitates critical reassessment, as it poses greater risks than benefits. Accordingly, the promotion of contextual religious education and inclusive legal awareness is crucial to cultivating a renewed understanding among rural Muslim communities – one that perceives Islamic

law not merely as textual doctrine, but as a living ethical system oriented toward *maslahah*, justice, and social well-being.

Social Impacts and the Relevance of Early Marriage Traditions to the Development of an Islamic Family

The enduring tradition of early marriage in Betek Village, Krucil District, Probolinggo Regency, has generated a range of complex social consequences for family structures and overall well-being. Within the rural context, this practice is not merely viewed as a religious phenomenon but also as a social mechanism intended to preserve community honor and moral stability. However, beyond its cultural and religious legitimacy, early marriage carries significant consequences for the quality of life of young couples, particularly in economic, educational, and psychological dimensions.

From an economic perspective, young married couples generally lack sufficient financial independence. Most of them work in informal sectors such as agriculture, day labor, or small family enterprises. Limited income often leads to continued financial dependence on parents or extended families, meaning that the husband cannot fully fulfill his role as the main provider. This economic vulnerability contributes to instability in young households, which can later affect the sustainability of family life (Utkarsh, Pandey, Ashta, Spiegelman, & Sutan, 2020).

In terms of education, early marriage restricts access to learning opportunities, especially for women. Many adolescent girls drop out of school after marriage due to domestic responsibilities or early motherhood. This situation not only lowers the community's overall educational attainment but also limits women's opportunities to improve their capacity and contribute actively to social development. In the long term, this perpetuates a cycle of structural poverty, as low education correlates with low family income.

Psychologically, marrying at a young age often brings significant emotional burdens for both partners. The lack of mental readiness to face marital responsibilities can lead to conflict, stress, and even domestic violence. Interviews with several informants in Betek Village revealed that many young couples struggle to adapt to their new roles as husband and wife. Emotional tension is often compounded by social and economic pressures, resulting in strained relationships and reduced family quality of life (Pincus, 2023).

Nevertheless, not all consequences of early marriage are perceived negatively. In some cases, early marriage is seen as a means to strengthen social solidarity and maintain family cohesion. For many in Betek Village, marrying off their children at a young age is considered a moral responsibility to safeguard their children's virtue and prevent immoral behavior. This perspective illustrates that early marriage still carries a functional role within the rural social system, particularly in communities that highly value modesty and family honor.

However, such social functionality cannot justify practices that bring about social and health risks. From the standpoint of Islamic family development, the primary purpose of marriage is not merely to protect honor but to establish a family characterized by *sakinah* (tranquility), *mawaddah* (affection), and *rahmah*

(compassion). When early marriage instead results in economic hardship, emotional distress, and limited educational opportunities, it contradicts the principle of *maslahah* (public welfare) – the core objective of Islamic teachings. Therefore, any assessment of this tradition must adopt a comprehensive perspective encompassing religious, social, and humanitarian dimensions.

Various responses to this phenomenon have begun to emerge from different stakeholders, including the village government, religious leaders, and educational institutions. The Betek Village government, for instance, has collaborated with religious organizations and local health centers (*puskesmas*) to provide outreach programs on the dangers of early marriage, reproductive health, and the importance of education for girls. Religious leaders have also started to promote more contextual interpretations of Islamic teachings, emphasizing mental and financial readiness as integral components of moral responsibility in marriage (Albats, Alexander, Mahdad, Miller, & Post, 2020).

Educational institutions play a crucial role in fostering new awareness among youth and parents. Schools not only serve as centers for knowledge transfer but also as spaces for shaping social values that challenge traditional practices with potentially harmful consequences. Educational programs addressing children's rights, reproductive health, and moderate Islamic understanding have become essential components in preventing early marriage. In this context, Islamic education can play a vital role in instilling the belief that preserving one's dignity is achieved not solely through marriage but through moral integrity, knowledge, and self-reliance.

From the perspective of Islamic law, moral and social responsibility in building a *sakinah* family extends beyond individuals to include the community and the state. Islam emphasizes *maslahah* (public welfare) and *ta'āwun* (social cooperation) as foundational principles for establishing a just and prosperous society. Consequently, the government bears a moral duty to design policies that protect children from harmful marital practices while remaining sensitive to the community's living religious values. A humanistic and educational approach is therefore essential to harmonize *sharī'ah*, local customs, and state law (Said et al., 2024).

In light of the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, the development of an Islamic family aims to protect religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*). When early marriage undermines these five essential objectives, it must be re-evaluated to ensure alignment with the aims of Islamic law. Family development grounded in justice should strive for a balance between spiritual values and the demands of modern social realities. Revisiting traditional practices, therefore, does not mean rejecting religion but revitalizing its substantive and contextual essence.

On a broader social level, the reflection on early marriage traditions in Betek Village serves as a mirror for the wider Muslim community in Indonesia. The phenomenon underscores the need for synergy between religion, custom, and state policy to foster morally, economically, and spiritually resilient families. Efforts to build an Islamic family cannot be separated from advancing education,

empowering women, and protecting children as integral components of Islam's social mission (Pakasi, Hidayana, Van Der Kwaak, & Benedicta, 2024).

Ultimately, this discussion reaffirms that while early marriage traditions are rooted in both religious and cultural values, they must be critically reassessed in light of the pursuit of a just and beneficial family system. Islam emphasizes not only the formal validity of marriage but also the realization of welfare, justice, and compassion within it. Through an integrative approach that combines Islamic law, social education, and public policy, communities like Betek Village can transform toward more enlightened religious practices that align with the ideals of the Islamic family and universal humanitarian values.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the practice of early marriage in Betek Village represents a socio-religious phenomenon deeply rooted in local traditions and classical religious interpretations. The local community does not perceive early marriage as a legal violation, but rather as part of a value system aimed at preserving family honor, maintaining social stability, and safeguarding the moral integrity of younger generations. However, the social realities observed in the field reveal that this practice has complex consequences, particularly concerning the economic, educational, and psychological dimensions of young families. Financial insecurity, limited educational attainment, and heavy emotional burdens have become major obstacles to achieving the ideals of a *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* family as envisioned in Islamic teachings.

From the perspective of Islamic law, early marriage in Betek Village can be understood as a form of *living law* – a manifestation of the interaction between local customs (*adat*), religious doctrine, and socio-economic conditions. Although it receives religious legitimacy through classical *fiqh* interpretations regarding maturity and the validity of marriage contracts, in substance this practice does not fully align with the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, which emphasize the protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and the general welfare (*maṣlaḥah*) of the community. Therefore, a reinterpretation of Islamic law is necessary so that the community's understanding of marriage extends beyond formal legality to include ethical and social dimensions centered on welfare, justice, and human dignity.

Furthermore, efforts to foster Islamic family development in rural communities such as Betek Village require an integrative approach that combines education, legal awareness, and religious guidance. The role of village authorities, religious leaders, and educational institutions is crucial in cultivating a new understanding that mental, spiritual, and economic preparedness are integral components of moral responsibility in marriage. Consequently, the transformation of early marriage traditions toward more equitable and beneficial practices should not be viewed as a rejection of local values or religious teachings. Instead, it represents an affirmation of Islam's spirit as a religion that upholds welfare, compassion, and humanity.

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