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SOCIAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY ON UNDER-AGE MARRIAGE (MERARIQ KODEK) PREVENTION IN LOMBOK

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West Nusa Tenggara Province is referred to as an emergency zone of under-age marriages cases, and is the highest in Indonesia. According to the data taken from the National Population and Family Planning (BKKBN) West Nusa Tenggara, the two areas have a relatively high number of early marriages, Central Lombok (Kabupaten Lombok Tengah) and East Lombok (Kabupaten Lombok Timur). BKKBN NTB has promote several programs to reduce the number of early marriage, through the launching Generation Plan or (GenRe). This paper analyzes the communication programs conducted by BKKBN West Nusa Tenggara province and suggest strategy of social communication can be carried forward as an alternative solution to the prevention of early marriage cases in Lombok. From the analysis conducted revealed that the communication strategy that has been done BKKBN NTB in the period in 2015 mostly in the form of direct socialization, counseling and skills training to schools that are in a zone prone to early marriage. Meanwhile other social communication strategy that is worth trying, among others, socializing through social networking, near peer role modeling, youth creativity camp, and cooperation with the mass media.

Keywords: Communication Strategy, Under-age Marriage, Near-peer Role Model, Social Media

1. INTRODUCTION

Marriage for the people righteously regarded as the momentum of happiness, which is the beginning of a long journey of shaping a family. However, the phenomenon of under-age marriage gives a different face, especially for the people of West Nusa Tenggara which still keeps it as a social problem along with the impacts of this practice, as the dropout rates remain high, as well as the divorce cases, maternal and infant death, as well as the number of cases of domestic violence emerged as problems derived from the under-age marriage. West Nusa Tenggara, Lombok specifically referred to as one of the areas with the number of under-age marriages as the highest in Indonesia. According to the National Population and Family Planning (BKKBN) Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB) is Central Lombok and East Lombok were included in the red zone areas prone to under-age marriages. The results of the National Socioeconomic Survey (Susenas) Survey Data Population Indonesia (IDHS) who conducted the Central Bureau of Statistics in 2013, the two counties this entry alert area under-age marriages.

Head of the Protection of Women and Family Planning (BPPKB) East Lombok, H Suroto mention the data from January to July 2015 shows 27.6 percent of marriages in East Lombok categorized as under-age marriage. Official figures, of 2,360 marriages were registered,
562 of them carried out by women under 19 years old. Even for some districts, the figure is more sadly to be obtained, as Jerowaru which reached 38.21 percent.

Pre-marital sex is only one of the cause. Another reason is because of tradition confirms merariq or running the bride away from her family still happened until today. Lack of knowledge related to reproductive health, parental awareness, social, economic, geographic and less in making law enforcement practices carried-off or “kidnapping” the bride and inevitably forced to marry still happen. Not a few cases, the bride "were taken" when still at school.(Lombok Post23/09/2015)

Merariq according to Sasak tribe’s tradition is an act of “kidnapping” a girl from her parents before a marriage process held. With this act, a Sasak’s man considered have more dignity because he is already taking a risk of running a girl away from her parents. Merariq also considered as a symbol of masculinity for man. (Aniq, 2012).

M Nur Yasin as quoted by Jasmansyah (2014), highlight at least there are four principles within merarik or running away the bride from her family in Lombok. First, as a prestige for the woman side as an honor for them because their daughters considered has more value and special so they can achieved higher bargaining position; second, superiority of a manhood and inferiority of a woman; third egalitarianism, this marriage method grows a feeling as a big family for the bride side, therefore they will arrange a family meeting to discuss about this matter; fourth bargaining power for the bride side, since there will be negotiation between family to discuss about the dowry and everything.

NTB, especially Lombok itself yet have exact data about the number of early marriage occurs. Because the couples under 16 years of practical marriage will not be registered legally because it will necessarily be rejected as contrary to the law, but only legal according to the religion. It is mentioned by the Division Head of Data and Information Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN) NTB Wahyu Hidayat Yusuf, S.Si, M.Sc, in an interview conducted January 14, 2016.

According to him, a number of factors considered to play role in the emergence of the practice of early marriage, or at least perpetuate the occurrence of this practice in the community, among others, low education levels, particularly in rural areas, access to continuing education hard to obtained tend to make the parents do not mind marrying children at a young age. A further factor is the economic needs of the survey that was done BKKBN province, parents are willing to let their daughters to immediately proposed by men in the region in the hope that their needs can be guaranteed, while for parents certainly would ease the burden on its economy. In addition, cultural factors in Lombok is still very strong is the customary sanctions or awiq-awiq are generally valid for couples in rural areas that were found to be out of the house on top at 22:00 at night, then it is appropriate in marriage in order to avoid family disgrace. While the next is pre-marital sex behavior which is still a social problem in society, both rural and urban areas.

In terms of impacts, under-age marriages also leaving not a few social problems. Especially for Central Lombok region are included in the red zone of early marriage cases, according to the Chairman of the Religious Central Lombok Taufiqurohman divorce rate in the region was triggered by the practice of early marriage. By 2015, the region recorded 600 cases of divorce that is caused by early marriage or merariq kodek. However, the figure is still lower when compared divorce rates in 2014, which reached 915 cases. (Lombok Post, January 18th, 2016).

Early marriage is associated with a number of poor social and physical outcomes for young women and their offspring. They attain lower schooling, lower social status in their husbands’
families, have less reproductive control, and suffer higher rates of maternal mortality and domestic violence. They are often forced out of school without an education, their health is affected because their bodies are too immature to give birth. (Erica Field, 2004 p 9).

According to the Marriage Law No 1 of 1974, the minimum age of marriage for girls is 16 years, while for men it is 19 years. As of this writing, judicial review to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years have not been approved by the Constitutional Court. While according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1989, a person under the age of 18 were categorized as children in need of protection. Imposing the regulation itself still facing many challenges as people still able to find a pass through this law. According to article 7 (2) of Marriage Law No 1 of 1974:

“In the event of deviation from paragraph (1) of this section may ask for a dispensation to a court or other officials appointed by the parents of the man and the woman”

This provision giving a legal excuse for the occurrence of underage marriage. However it really be aware of is that the dispensation only provided that if the irregularities occur, for instance pregnancies as the impact of premarital sex. (Tamam, 2015)

According to Duncan & Moriarty, undoubtedly, communication proves to be of the most significant tools in social life and business management. It also plays a pivotal role in collaborating all human activities that link people together and create relationships (Kulvasichaena, 2001). Communication strategies can be formulated to assess Lasswell profound theory that includes: Who? Says what? In which channel? toWhom? With what effect? To communicate appropriately in accordance with the existing media, can be used communication face-to-face communication or through media. Face to face communication plays important role in changing behavior, while mediated communication rather in informative stage (Muhammad 2004). In response to the issue, the tool needed to reach behavior change is through public communication campaign.

Rice and Atkin adapted from Rogers and Storey 1987 said, public communication campaign are purposive attempts to inform, persuade, or motivate behavior change in a relatively and large audience, generally for non-commercial benefit to individuals and/or society at large, typically within a given time period, by means of organized communication activities involving mass media and often complemented by interpersonal support.(Windahl and Signitzer with Olson,1995).

Looking at the communication strategy that has been done, it appears that the design of the program is done from the theoretical side by Puska et al 1985, as quoted from Windahlletal (1995, p116), include the following: A behavioral change approach, based on the large extent on social learning theory, especially Bandura’s work on the learning process (Bandura 1977, see also Bandura 1986). Program objective include helping people to identify risk factors, educating them about the relationship between behaviour and impacts, motivating people to adopt proper behavior, increasing self-management skills, offering social support, and changing the environment in order to facilitate proper behaviors. While the persuasive model were following these steps: attention, motivation, comprehension, learning information, attitude change, health skills learning, health skills performance, and maintenance performance.

The strength of this strategy is the communication not only at the level of information dissemination, but also provides social support and even mediates the public to be able to improve their standard of living. While the weakness of the strategy of using traditional media such as brochures, leaflets, public service advertisements on outdoor media is when the audience is passive, then the information is packaged in brochures, leaflets and media other campaigns will only be
granted, while the communicator program sheer will become a regular routine program. McQuail (1984) as quoted by Windahl et al (1995, p.46), presents a comprehensive categorization of sender-receiver communication relationship. Here, sender and receiver are characterized as active and passive (figure 1)

![Figure 1](Image)

Surely the most expected both sender and receiver are equally active in communicating, forming interaction and exchange of information leading to the destination communication program from the beginning.

The following factors contributing to campaign success and have been drawn from literature reviews by Rice and Atkin (1989) and Rogers and Storey (1987):

1. The role of the mass media. The mass media are important for creating awareness and knowledge and stimulating others to participate in the campaign process; more ambitious effects such as behavioral changes are unlikely.

2. The role of interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication, particularly through peer groups and social network, is instrumental for behavior change and maintenance such change. (Social Learning Theory (Bandura 1977), which emphasize learning through observing and modeling, is one source of theoretical support for the generalization.)

3. Characteristic of source and medium. Qualities such as credibility can influence the outcome of the campaign.

4. Formative evaluation. Both campaign objective and messages need to be evaluated to make sure they fit media habit, audience, predisposition and sheer availability of resources.

5. Campaign appeal. Campaign must be specific rather than general in order to appeal the value of individuals.

6. Preventive behavior. Long term preventive goals are difficult to achieve because rewards often delayed and uncertain.
7. Timeliness, compatibility, and accessibility. Communication message must be timely and culturally acceptable, and the channel over which they are transmitted must be available to the audience.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper explores the most common methods of data collection used in qualitative research: interviews. Interviews conducted in semi-structure type which giving brief preliminary information about the issues. The reason why we use interviews as a main data collection method, mainly based on the need to know of how the government officers experiences while doing their programs, as well as their opinion and perspectives upon this issues. This provided the interviewees freedom in expressing their feeling from their own points of view. In this study, nine interviews were conducted. Of those, were from one BKKBN top officials, four woman of whom experience early marriage on various reason from two different district, two junior high school student and two high school student who were asked about government program about reducing underage marriage, selected randomly through doorstop interview at their school, SMPN 1 Praya, SMAN 3 Praya, central Lombok.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Of the various problems that arise, the National Population and Family Planning (BKKBN) West Nusa Tenggara Province implicated number of programs that aim to minimize the number of early marriage in the region. Program conducted by the BKKBN NTB today include the dissemination postponement of marriage, as well as the promotion of Generation Plan (Genre) through traditional media such as brochures, leaflets, and public service announcements, advocacy to local government, family empowerment, collaboration with university student on Kuliah Kerja Nyata (KKN) program, similar to university student’s social work projects KKN to disseminate information related to delay early marriage and to establish an information center and counseling adolescents (ICRS) at schools and university level, as shown in Figure 1.

![Diagram showing causes and impacts of early marriage](image-url)

Figure 2
Being asked about whether under 16 years old student aware about the issue, Tata, 13 years old junior high school student, said that she knows the terminology of merariq kodek refer to underage marriage but didn’t have enough knowledge about government program against it.

“We know that sometime people from the city came to our school talking about it, giving us a piece of paper about family planning program but we don’t understand entirely about what they’re talking about. They said it’s not good, but people in my village do so (under-age marriage) even before they graduated from school,”

Asking about how she felt about it, Tata said she didn’t know what to say. Everything depends on her parent decision. She would rather continue go to school than doing it. But she admitted that she would not have any choice if her parents told her to do so.

It seems that, communication strategy that has been done by BKKBN NTB still needs more variation. The use of traditional media still needs to be altered with the use of the mass media which has a wide range of up to the corners. This is certainly related to the selection medium that needs to be designed from the outset. The media convergence era is also makes easier for communicators to reach a wider audience.

If the target audiences of the campaign program of under-age prevention are those who are under the ageof 16 years, of course, the uses of media that can reach out to teens at that age should be considered as an option. The main target of the program is of course those who have the highest risk factors, namely children aged under 16 years are generally still in elementary school or junior high. To reach the audience at that age, social media including but not limited to LINE, Path and Facebook could be an alternative, considering the numbers of users in the region are also quite high. These findings obtained from interviews conducted with a number of students of SMPN1 and SMA 3 Central Lombok taken samples in this study.

Moreover, from the interviews also found that one of the factors that make adolescents in Central Lombok and East Lombok have no objection to early marriage is, because they do not have a clue what to do after leaving elementary school, the lack of role model also become a factor, As disclosed by Nur Hayati, she performed her first marriage at age 13, or after elementary school. Her desire to continue pursuing higher education disappeared because her parents can not . afford it.

"I saw my friends also got married after graduating from elementary school, so I think it's okay if you get married at that time. No one forced me to get married, it all happened so spontaneously. Someone ask me to merariq, I replied yes and then we runaway,"

The absence of role modeling in the minds of teenagers also need to be considered as another factor for the early marriage occurrence. A social campaigns strategy by taking a near-peer role models or peer to peer role model should be considered as a way out. It is because near-peer role models are not much different from the target audience from the cultural side.

Murphey and Arao, 2001 in (Orem, 2015), peer is not higher in status, able to facilitate the self-disclosure of ignorance and misconception, younger peer sees the older peers achievement as reachable and easy to replicate, shared experience and interpersonal interaction can reduce anxiety.

Furthermore BKKBN only conceptualize the recruitment process in accordance with the purpose of communication and provide information that is readily accepted by near-peer role models to the next can be transmitted to their peers. Besides competitive programs for adolescents also need to be considered to be done, it is for teenagers boost creativity and give them plenty of time to think about other things and abandon the desire to settle down too early with ease.
4. CONCLUSION

In general the communication strategy undertaken by BKKBN West Nusa Tenggara Province is correct, but it should be developed and require a variety of approaches in order to reach the target audience with a better and communication program conducted effective. For further research, should be lead to measure effectiveness upon the program assigned.

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