

Poverty Triggers Early Marriage

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To prevent early marriage, character building is required for teenagers. Hence, it is important for family to give good education to their children.


"The media for character building is family, school and society or Three Education Centres (Tri Pusat Pendidikan)," said Secretary of Yogyakarta branch of Indonesian Ulemas Council (MUI), KRT. Drs. H. Ahmad Muhsin Kamaludiningrat, in a Seminar titled *Early Marriage in Indonesia*, held in the auditorium of Masri Singarimbun, Centre for Demography and Policy (PSKK) UGM on Tuesday (8/3).

To anticipate against early marriage, said Ahmad Muhsin, teachers (teachers of religion or study areas), need to give character building by integrating aspects of cognitive, affective and psychomotoric. He viewed that the adoption of information technology without guidance will lead to free sex.

"Due to that development, many teenagers fall victims to free sex that leads to out-of-marriage pregnancy. Then, they are forced to marry early, abandoning school whilst not being prepared for anything," he said.

This Seminar is held to celebrate the International Women's Day 2016 by Fatayat NU and Mitra Wacana, PKBI, and PSKK UGM, presenting speakers H. Ahmad Muhsin K. (MUI), Anita Triaswati (PKBI DIY), Khotimatul Husna (Fatayat NU), and Prof. Dr. Muhadjir Darwin, M.P.A (PSKK UGM).

Prof. Dr. Muhadjir M. Darwin, MPA, senior researcher, said early marriage often happened in



impoverished countries such as Sub-Saharan Africa, South East Asia and South Central Asia, Middle East and North Africa, and Latin America. According to Muhadjir, a number of international conventions have already banned early marriage, most countries even have minimum age for marriage.

"The problem is that these laws are ineffective due to the presence of tolerance related to cultural, social and customary norms," said Muhadjir.

Khotimatul Husna added researches showed that in a number of areas the main factor for early marriage is poverty and poor access to education. On the other hand, patriarchal culture makes daughters not having autonomy to make their own future, education or freedom to choose their own husbands.

"Early marriage happens because daughters are not considered important, so the relation of power is imbalanced," said Khotimatul Husna.

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