

UGM Students Research into Female Circumcision in Gorontalo

Tuesday, 02 July 2019 WIB, By: Marwati



Controversies emerged among society with regard to female genital circumcision. One groups says its inhuman, the other says it is cultural and religious. Indonesia is among the countries that came under the spotlight on this matter. Data from the UNICEF in 2013 ranked Gorontalo, Bangka Belitung, and Banten areas in the top list where female circumcision occurs with percentage respectively at 83.7, 83.2 and 79.2.

"Gorontalo upholds strongly the Islamic teachings which are embodied in customary events, such as female circumcision or *Mongubingo* tradition," said Yulia Rosdiana Putri at UGM on Monday (1/7) explaining her research.

Yulia Rosdiana said this tradition in Gorontalo tradition had produced a problem because the tradition was seen as harassment to women and children.

Together with fellow students Rajwa Naajiyah and Moch. Zihad Islami were conducting the research into *Mongubingo* tradition in Gorontalo with the guidance of lecturer Sri Yulita Pramulia Panani, S.Fil., M.Phil.,. This was research for Student Creativity Programme.

"We want to know if the tradition of Gorontalo people is really dangerous for health," said Yulia.

Moch. Zihad Islami added the Mongubingo tradition was interpreted as genital circumcision of female babies aged 1-3 years old. *Mongubingo* consists of two events, *lihu lo limo* and *mo polihu lo limu*.

"*Lihu lo limo* is the intention expressed to the female child for such tradition, while *mo polihu lo limu* is giving lemon bath to the child for consecrating her," said Moch Zihad.

The student team did the research in Tapa district, Gorontalo. They carried out interviews with customary chief of Limboto, Health agency, Child and Woman Protection agency, lecturers, as well as local people who had performed such tradition.

"The results showed there were few incidents of severe health risk happening due to the tradition, merely on matters of psychology and temporary fever," said Rajwa Naajiyah.

Fona Karlina, parent of a circumcised daughter, said the lemon bath was the duty of the parents as it embraced religious and social values.


Olan, Gorontalo Health Representative, said so far there had been no reports of incidents. The midwives that did the ritual also witnessed that there had been no mutilation being performed on the child.

"It actually is removing smegma, or the buildup of oil and dead skin cells from the genitals. So, we think female circumcision in Gorontalo is not the FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)," said Olan.

Interesting findings in the research ought to be informed to the wider public so they would not judge the female circumcision tradition. Other ethical values are also found which is teaching the children so they would become civilised human beings one day. Besides, the tools used in the tradition have symbolic meaning, too.

Related News

- [To Alleviate Underdevelopment, North Gorontalo Cooperates with UGM](#)
- [UGM Received Visit of Fukuoka Women's University](#)
- [UGM and University of Gorontalo Establish Cooperation](#)

- 
- [Behind Tepung Tawar Ritual of Malay Natuna Community](#)
 - [Humour Recreation Reduces Depression Level in Female Workers](#)