

Conflict Resolution Strategies Of Madurese Ethnic Groups In Malang To Solve The Marital Problems

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Abstract

Divorce is a never ending phenomenon, always appears and tends to be rather difficult to deal with. The statistics reports that divorce cases in many region increase every year. Some strategies and attempts have been taken but have not generated maximum solution. This study attempts to figure out effective model to deal with the case. The data were taken through interview with Madurese ethnic groups graduated from pesantren who live in Malang. The finding demonstrates an effective self-completion conflict by returning all matters back to almighty God, increasing the intensity of worships, self-introspection, being forgive-full, making kyai as a role model, and considering the kids when making a decision in and for the family. It offers self-completion conflict and completion-sparing as the alternative strategy and solution in that they are not bounded with finance, space, and time. The finding, moreover, needs to be massively informed, spread, and disseminated to all society and stakeholders to create a collective awareness.

Keywords: Madurese, Conflict Resolution, Pesantren, Marital Problem, Divorce, Family.

1. INTRODUCTION

Although Islam hates divorce and the Islamic teaching discourages Muslims from divorce, divorce cases remain high in Indonesia with Muslim majority population. The case reached 306.688 per august 2020. Compared to marriage statistics, the number of divorce case is about a quarter from 2 million in a year. To respond to such a growing divorce cases, the Ministry implements two main programs, a) the empowerment of family by cooperating with Board of advisor, development, and Advisor Agency of Marital Conservation and

Founding (BP4), and b) the effective supervision of marriage counseling (Merdeka.com, 2020). On the other hand, the divorce does not only seriously affect the husband and wife, but also children's future (Yusuf, 2014; Widiastuti, 2015). Therefore, it is of an important attempt to understand and find effective way to solve the problem.

Some extant studies often portray the normative aspects of divorce cases for instance, by focusing on the regulation (Afandi, 2014; Amaliah, et al. (2019; Steidl and 2015), the court consideration in making a decision, the victim of divorce beyond the court (Nur et al., 2019), social impact in relation with religion (Matondang, (2014), factors that contribute to the divorce, consequences, divorce cases in some communities (Junaedi, 2018), the comparison of divorce initiated by male and female (Riswan, 2018), early marriage (Alfa, 2019), perception on the way to solve marriage cases (Gradianti and Suprapti, 2014), effectiveness of mediation (Marya and Yusuf, 2020), and some others that may not necessarily offer solutions to the case (Siahaan, 2019). To that end, it is important to investigate and view the case from different angle in order to pretend the divorce.

This paper aims to investigate the strategy of conflict resolution focusing on Madurese ethnic residing in Malang, East Java Indonesia, on how they resolve or maintain the marriage in order to avoid divorce. It will first shed light on how Madurese involve and base on religion when dealing with problem solving. Second, it will capture how Madurese refer to religious public figure as a role model for their life. Third, it will attempt to understand how the presence of the kids means in their marriage. As the preventive action to avoid divorce, testimonies from Madurese people who have strong pesantren (Islamic education institution) background. They are well-known as to hold strong obedience towards religious teachings, kyai (Islamic public figure or cleric), and high pride of kids' presence in the family. These three factors are important tenets to maintain the harmony and sustainability of the family.

All family may have experienced conflicts, disputes, and problems that often lead into divorce. Misunderstanding, triggered by internal or external factor is of dominant reason. However, there seems to be limited attention from stakeholders, government, social community, or society in general. For that very reason, it is important to further investigate and understand how divorce case, and how to avoid divorce, from family who have strong obedience towards religious teachings and to kyai, and who have high pride of kids' presence in the family. This research uniqueness is to examine the

family conflict for Madurese in Malang related to marital problems. The novelty is the examination of marital problems of Madurese Family. This research results are important for society to solve the marital problems.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Marital Conflicts

Marital conflicts are often triggered by disputes or dissatisfaction and thus may lead to the divorce (Lindahl et al., 2020: 2; Koodoh, Ahimsa Putra, Setiadi, 2018). This very case is closely related to the individualism and ego-centrism (Ostenson & Zhang, 2014: 229). Besides, financial problems are reported to be the dominant factors of divorce (Schwebel et al., 2012: 31). Marital conflicts can be categorized into constructive and deconstructive model. The former refers to the conflict that welcomes discussion and problem solving with love, while the latter invites aggressive strategies, threats, and never-ending debates and disputes (Hosokawa & Katsura, 2019: 2; Mardent, 2017). Martin et al., (2015: 386) argue that marital conflict is multidimensional. It consists of hidden and public conflict. Public conflicts are exemplified as to express anger or to use physical abuse. On the other hand, hidden conflicts are where the dispute is merely expressed through for example avoiding talking with partners.

Parents who are involved in the conflicts tend to ignore their children and often make the kids become the affected victim (Li & Liu, 2020: 6). They have to manage their emotion and behavior to avoid serious effects (Koss et al., 2011: 336). It is because conflicts easily raise the tensions among family members (Sotomayor-Peterson et al., 2011: 106). A marital conflict study in Taiwan reports that it affects physical health and mental health such as depression (Kubricht et al., 2017: 94). Cheng, (2010: 355) argues that divorce or marital conflict in Taiwan is influenced by the patriarchal system. On the contrary, early marriage becomes the dominant factors of divorce (Widyastari et al., 2020: 3). Marital conflict gives more harm than good so that it should be avoided or solved immediately (Ostenson & Zhang, 2014: 229).

2.2 Conflict Resolution in the Family

Conflict resolution is very important to maintain the quality of the marriage by looking at gender, attribute, and belief (Wheeler et al., 2010: 993-994). Aligned to what Scheeren et al., (2014: 184) have

argued, it is difficult to understand the conflict between husband and wife from conflict perspective because men tend to be more rational while women are prone to be emotional (Kuncewicz, 2011: 103). Umubyeyi & Mtapuri, (2019: 1082) argue that mediation, negotiation, and communication are the keys to solve the conflict. To be open more communication can help avoid disputes or conflicts (Islami, 2017: 69). In addition, an effective communication and stress management can be very helpful as well (Yoo et al., 2013: 33). Umubyeyi & Mtapuri, (2019: 1082) and Marddent (2017) further add that in dealing with such a problem, the participating party can seek the favor from Islamic clerics as the mediator in that they can offer perspectives from religious background.

The marital conflict resolution in Sulawesi is embraced through local wisdom of *torang semua basudara* (we are all the family). It thus opens rooms for discussion and communication and helps avoid crystalized problems (Rajafi, 2016: 2). Indonesians are well-known as people who uphold and prioritize discussion and mediation in dealing with problem resolution. These values are also incorporated in Indonesian court system to solve marital conflicts (Syukur & Bagshaw, 2013: 272). It also happens in Christian that embraces peace, harmony, love, and affection to deal with marital conflicts. When one has a conflict, other should sincerely give apology (Joseph, 2018: 45). Though there some forms of conflict resolution in the society, they have the similar goals as to guide human behavior, minimize, and solve the problems to avoid bad impacts for surroundings (Ubinger et al., 2013: 50).

2.3 Divorce

The unsolved marital conflict can ends with a divorce. The divorce can stimulate people to be stressful and depressed (Margaroli et al., 2017: 843). It can also give traumatic effect and need quite long time to readjust to the situation and environment. Teenagers whose parents get divorced often involve in juvenile delinquency (Colen & Pereira, 2019: 2). Divorce can be defined as a triumph and lose. It is a triumph because one can get away from disputes and conflicts. Meanwhile, it is a lose because it affects physical and mental health for them and their children (Määttä, 2011: 418).

Different culture may view divorce in different way. Arab people for instance, regard divorce as a deviation and violence. Even many Arab woman aim to get divorce because of sexual harassment and abuse (Buchbinder & Abu Tanha, 2019: 2-3). Buddhism on the other hand

discourages the divorce because when they get married, they have declared to be husband and wife before the parents, ancestors, gods, and teachers (Creese, 2016: 93). The divorce in Indonesia is regulated under the constitutions year 1974 and compilation of Islamic law that the divorce should be granted by Islamic court. A husband should secure a permission to declare divorce and so should the wife that needs to go the court to proceed the divorce (Nurlaelawati, 2013: 242). The ease access to divorce is reported to contribute to the high number of divorce case in Indonesia, the highest in the Asia Pacific region (Panatagama et al., 2018: 92).

3. METHOD

The case of divorce has received much attention. It is important therefore to be discussed in some religious forums and empirically studied. Some studies report normative findings with quantitative data. However, some studies show that the divorce cases are increasing. This study therefore investigates the case of conflict resolution to avoid divorce by taking the testimonies and experiences of Madurese ethnic who have studied in the pesantren, have strong attachment to the religion and commitment to keep the harmony in the family. The research site is in Malang, one of regions with highest divorces case (Christiyaningsih, 2016).

The primary data are testimonies of pesantren alumni who have married more than five years, of Madurese ethnic residing in Malang (Gunawan, 2013). The informants are

1. DAN, 38 years old, 10 years of marriage, a teacher.
2. KS, 41 years old, 20 years of marriage, a teacher.
3. HAR, 34 years old, 8 years of marriage, a teacher.
4. MD, 34 years old, 8 years of marriage, a trader
5. BI, 30 years, 5 years of marriage, entrepreneur

The secondary data were taken from some literature, books, and journals relevant to this study. They include texts about marriage and divorce and responses from the informants related to their experiences. Data were collected through interview.

Data from interviews were described, explained, observed, compared, and interpreted. The focus was given as to how informants narrated the way they keep the stability and harmony in the family when facing the problems. The data were analyzed using the axiology of marriage, realizing harmonious family and happy family.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Conflict resolution based on religious teaching

Religion or religious teaching functions a guide for human life that is to worship to the almighty God. This in line with the elaboration of Imam Shatibi when understanding the verses of Allah in the Quran. There are five goals the almighty God wants human being to do in relation to the Maqasid al Shariah, first, related to the human needs to worship (hifdl al Din), second, the facilities to survive (hifdl al Nasf), third, the brain to understand the greatness of God (hifdl al Aql), fourth, maintenance of generation through marriage (hifdl al Nasl), and the fifth, access to economy to meet the needs (hifdl al Mal wa al Irdh) (Auda, 2008).

The implementation level, the first aspect, hifdl al Din, deals with religious ritual activities such as pray, zakat, and hajj. Hifdl al Nafs encourages people to always get the notorious foods and other daily needs through halal way. The third aspect, hifdl al Aql, is the dignity of human kind that makes them differ from other creatures. Hifdl al Nasl deals with biological needs facilitated through the legal marriage. Hifdl al Mal wa al Irdh means that they have rights for the protections of their beings, welfare, goods, and other belongings.

The family is not a static way but dynamic. Some challenges often make family members vulnerable to divorce. Some of those factors are different background, ages, race, education, and others. Some external factors may also overwhelm the conflict. It is even going to be more serious if the they have the kids or if the case happens in public because it may open access for other parties to get involved.

DAN and his wife explained that they based their marriage on openness and trust, doing shalat jamaah (prayer done together) as to empower their commitment to maintain their family. This way, they can shake hand one another which enables to neutralize the conflict: “tradisi shalat jamaah waktu mondok dulu, tetep saya lanjutkan di rumah bersama keluarga dan mengakhirinya dengan saling bersalaman, rasanya menjadi damai dan tenteram – “the tradition of shalat jamaah since I was in pesantren is kept until now, ended with shaking hands, it gives peace and harmony” (November 27, 2020).

While KS stated that he used confirmation (tabayyun) and self-introspection (muhasabah):

“jika saya melihat perangai atau mendengan ucapan sinis istri saya, segera saya menangkapnya sebagai sesuatu hal yang membutuhkan

perhatian, maka segera saya mengajaknya untuk dialog untuk memastikan ada atau tidaknya sesuatu yang menjadikannya tersinggung atau salah paham mungkin dari ucapan atau sikap saya yang tidak sengaja. Dan begitu juga sebaliknya. Serta biasa saya akhiri permintaan maaf serta introspeksi diri masing-masing agar tidak terulang lagi-

“When I suspect potentials cynical words from my wife, I immediately ask her to have a dialogue, asking her what might make her doing so. And I always ask an apology and self-introspection” (November 20, 2020).

It is important to have some strategies and initiatives to solve the potentially emerging problems in the family. For HAR, MD, and BI, a family matter is a privacy so that it should be kept away from public (November 27, 2020).

All informants agree that each partner should understand about rights and responsibility. KS, particularly, view that a husband is responsible for securing financial needs, while the wife should take care of house chores. These all efforts are important to keep the harmony of the family, followed by religious activities:

“Sewaktu bertandang ke calon mertua dan mengetahui kalau saya belum bekerja, tampak beliau ragu dan keberatan, maka saya tegaskan segera mencari pekerjaan dan memenuhi nafkah keluarga. Setelah mengetahui keseriusan saya, akhirnya beliaupun mengizinkan saya untuk menikahi putrinya. Setelah perkawinan berlangsung, istripun tidak saya perkenankan untuk bekerja, tetapi saya minta riyadhah untuk membantu usaha-usaha saya dalam menjaga keberlangsungan dan keutuhan keluarga-

“When I visited my prospective parents-in law, they were doubt because I didn’t work at that time. I emphasized that I would look for a job. Then they granted me to marry with their daughter. Even after I got married, I didn’t allow my wife to wok, but I asked her to pray for our success and the harmony of the family” (November 20, 2020).

For HAR, he understands that house chores are very hard so that he imitatively help her wife doing domestics jobs. He does not want to let the burden be kept by her wife alone:

“saya ikut merasakan bagaimana lelahnya ibu saya melakukan tugas kerumah tanggaan waktu itu, oleh karenanya ketika saya berkeluarga saya mencoba ikut membantu pekerjaan-pekerjaan rutin istri saya, saya merasakan tidak saja beban istri berkurang, tetapi saya berubah sikap menjadi tidak mentang-mentang (ego) kepada istri, sehingga istripun saya merasa semakin saying-

“I also feel how tired my mother was with all house chores activities. Therefore I help my wife. By doing so, my wife will not be burdensome and she loves me more” (Friday, November 27, 2020).

4.2. Kyai as the role model in maintaining the harmony of the family and problem solving

Prophet Muhammad offered the interpretations of texts from the God to be implemented by people that live in his era (sahabat). The sahabat has moral responsibility reiterate what has been practiced and taught by the prophet to the next generation (tabi'in) and the following generations (tabi'it-tabi'in). It includes religious teaching, interactions among people, trade, marriage, law, and regulations that have been very sufficiently discussed in the Islamic literature (Hidayat, 2015).

These insights have been used as the reference by Muslims after Islamic clerics explained them in details. Such a practice may occur in formal classes, forums, institutions, or mosques. These activities have institutionalized and internalized the Islamic teaching until today. For marriage, on how the relations, rights, and responsibility of each member, has been discussed and practiced by Islamic public figure, be it in daily life, before the marriage, during or after marriage.

DAN was inspired by his kyai (Islamic public figure or cleric) to deals his family, his wife, and to minimize potential conflicts. When DAN faced problems, he or his wife reminded about the kyai's way in maintaining the marriage (November 27, 2020). DAN said:

“kebetulan almamater pondok saya dan istri sama, tiap hari kami semua para santri termasuk saya dan istri, tahu persis kehidupan kyai dan keluarganya. Hal ini tidak saja karena tempat kami mondok menyatu dengan rumah kyai, kami semua para santri diperlakukan layaknya putra putrinya, kami semua memanggil beliau sama dengan putra putri kandungnya sendiri memanggilnya, sehingga kami semua merasa dekat. Hal itulah karenanya, kami semua tahu bagaimana kyai membangun relasi antar putra putrinya termasuk teman kami yang setiap hari membantu untuk urusan-urusan logistik. Kami semua diharuskan melaksanakan shalat dengan berjamaah dan berdzikir bersama beliau serta saling bersalaman, perasaan saya teduh dan adem setelah usai melakukannya, kami lega, seolah tidak punya beban masalah dengan sesama teman. Indah sekali melihatnya, karena itu saya berkomitmen untuk terus melembagakan dalam kehidupan berkeluarga, pikir saya waktu itu”

“ I and my wife were from the same pesantren. We knew exactly how the family life of our kyai. It is not only because the place we lived was located at the same area as the kyai’s, but also because he treated us like his own kids. He called us similarly to the way he called his own kids. We felt close then. We all knew then how to establish relationship among family members and with our friends how help for logistics matters. We were obliged to do praying together – shalat jamaah, dizkir and shake hands. I personally feel peace after doing it, felt relaxed as if we didn’t have any problems. Very beautiful. So that I am committed to keep this good traditions”

KS said that his wife must be the students of his kyai. He believed that his prospective wife might have received good knowledge and experience of his kyai, that he thought would be helpful for his marriage (November 20, 2020).

“Perempuan yang saya nikahi adalah alumni pesantren yang diasuh oleh seorang kyai yang saya idolakan, karena kediaman orang tua yang bertetangga desa dengan sang kyai tersebut, maka saya mengenalnya dengan baik termasuk pola kepengasuhan putra-putrinya yang menurut saya dan banyak orang mampu diantarkan menjadi sukses studi dan keluarga. Maka saya yakin istri saya, sedikit banyak mewarisi ilmu dan pengalamannya”.

“I married with a girls who graduated from the pesantren of my idolized kyai. I live in just in the neighbor village with the pesantren. So I know him very well including the way how he nurtures his kids which I think can lead into successful family and successful kids in the future. So I believe my wife may have known how to do so from kyai’s experience and teaching”

MD also shared the same opinion. He was glad that his wife was committed to take her kyai as the role model to be a pious wife:

“di awal perkawinan, sering istri saya bercerita tentang bu nyai (istri kyai) nya sebagai sosok istri dan ibu yang ideal. Dia minta dukungan agar bisa seperti beliau”

“My wife told about kyai’s wife as a pious wife in the early of our marriage. She asked me to support to be a pious wife”.

BI also shared the similar notion. In the declaration of the marriage, his parent in-law asked the kyai to do it by the hope that the marriage will always be blessed and able to make him as the role model (November 27, 2020).

“sungguh saya sangat tersanjung, saat akad nikah, mertua saya mewakili kepada seorang kyai yang saya idolakan dan berkenan berdoa untuk kami berdua. Saya sangat berharap mendapat keberkahan dan menjaga kebahagiaan serta keutuhan keluarga”

“I was very impressed that my parent in law asked the kyai whom I admired to be the representative and pray for us. I wish I could get blessing and happiness in the family”

4.3. The Kid as an Important Factor in Solving the Problem

Al-Quran pays attention to the kid and regards the kid as an investment for the parents. Kids should be taught and be given education, ethics, and moral stories. On the other hand, Al Qur’an also reminds us that the kids may be the source of problems and blessing. The prophet argues that the kids, with a good education and teachings, can be good investment for here after. They can do prayer for us after we die.

The kids have some rights for example, to be given a good name, religious education, and get married. Sociologically, parents may feel ecstatic with the presence of the kids in the family that even motivate them to work hard. In the future, the kids can help the parents when they get old. The kids can also continue good deeds from parents, knowledge, and be able to upgrade the quality of the family.

DAN told that the kids can balance and normalize the problems in the family. HAR was very convinced that he should utilize his leisure time with his kids. The love and affections that parents build together with the partner in raising the kids are important factors in maintaining the harmony on the family. It also hindered DAN to even think of get married again because it would hurt his wife:

“ya biasalah namanya juga laki-laki, kalo merasa tidak nyaman dengan pasangan, kadang-kadang terbersit pengen poligami, tetapi setiap menatap anak, mendadak pikiran itu berubah, seolah itu akan sangat menyakitinya”

“Yeah you know, it is normal as a man, if we feel not happy with the partner, we plan to do a polygamy. But after looking at the kid, such a thought disappeared, as if it would hurt my wife”

For KS, the kid is a part of him. He realized of his responsibility as a father and the head of the family. He hoped that in the future, his kid can continue a good thing for the society. MD, BI, and HAR also shared the same hope. They argued that the kid became the main consideration when some problems affect the family (November 27, 2020).

5. DISCUSSION

Marriage is a medium that the almighty God gives human to continue and sustain the generation. As the nature, marriage combines two

people into one plate through which different background, understanding, and other factors often become source of disputes. It is important that the person who decides to get married has a strong commitment to keep the family harmonious. This commitment is very important. In doing so, they can do worship to almighty God, take kyai as the role model, and consider the kids is an investment that can give them benefits here and here after.

What make the conflict resolution implemented by Madurese ethnic group differ compared to others? The motivation to keep and maintain the harmony and peace in the family can be applied and implemented by any other people. Having a belief in a marriage as holy obligation may enable us to refer to almighty God for all problems we face, to praise for all blessings we have, do self-introspection, and get closer to the God. In addition, we can make kyai as the role model in maintaining the harmony in the family. The kids should be prioritized in making a decision. These strategies can be more effective because in drives from internal motive. The external mediation is often unsuccessful (Mustika, 2015), because of the ego-centrism (Ulfiah, 2019; Trisya, et. al., 2019).

Andri Wahyudi emphasizes that the different understanding and perspective in viewing the problem can stimulate conflict. It is often the case that one side will think he or she is the right position while another was in the wrong position. Conflict should not be avoided but viewed as a part of dynamic life in the family and catalyst for a harmony (Wahyudi, 2015). Sri Lestari explains about the relations between husband and wife and among family members, how parents should teach about good deeds, good characters for the children (Lestari, 2016). This paper offers an alternative solution by touching the emotion of religion, relation of patron-client between religious elites and their followers and people hopes as investment for their parents.

This paper generally strengthens the argument that the strategy of conflict resolution implemented by Madurese ethnic groups in Malang is effective. There are studies that demonstrate the positive correlation between divorce and satisfaction in the family. Other studies conflict resolution strategies affect the satisfaction of the marriage relationship. In particular, it gives positive stereotype towards Madurese ethnic groups (Wiyata, 2013) and deter generalization in personal or social live.

This study also illustrates the importance of referring to the almighty god when we encounter some problems, to make kyai as the

role model, and consider the kids in making a decision for and in the family. Besides the fact that it is more effective than mediation (Soemartono, 2006), it also gives some more benefits. To deal with marital conflict often complicates with personal, internal, and external factors. It depends how each individual views the problem. This finding offers an alternative that should be massively disseminated to all stakeholders so that the divorce cases can be minimized.

6. CONCLUSION

This study has offered an alternative solution to problem solving for marital conflict. On the basis of the findings, three strategies of conflict resolution can be applied. First is to rely on the almighty God by increasing the quality and quantity of worship and be forgiving. Second is referring to Islamic cleric as a role model for sustaining harmonious family. Third, regard the presence of kids as important factors in solving the problem. In addition, each partner should have an initiative to solve the problem. It is a good attempt in that it is going to keep the family issue as privacy. These strategies are affordable and theologically can enable individual to be more pious.

This study practically has contributed to the conflict resolution that potentially decreases the divorce cases. By doing so, it will limit psychological, social, and financial burden that may come with when divorce happens. Academically, it offers self-completion conflict adoptable to everyone who wishes to solve the problem in his or her marital conflict. Best practice, because this study is a living experience using testimony from a group of Madres who experienced such a conflict and theme under scrutiny,

The findings do not intend to offer generalization in conflict resolution given that the focus on the study is limited to Madurese ethnic group with the aforementioned criteria. Moreover, the research site, Malang, consist of several ethnic groups which enable contact among them. Therefore, further studies may consider studying Madurese ethnic group in different regions.

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