



## **Honing, Loving, and Nurturing: A Study of Mothers' Role in Family**

**Noer Aziza**

*Badan Kependudukan dan Keluarga Berencana Nasional (BKKBN)*

[noeraziza@bkkbn.go.id](mailto:noeraziza@bkkbn.go.id)

**Abstract:** Parents, both mother and fathers have significant roles in a family, starting from nurturing the chores, until caring for and educating children. Although those roles are parents' responsibility, however, practically, mothers have dominant action in educating the children. Mothers do not only nurture their children, they also hone the children's characters, and educate them lovely. Some matters which then raise are, not all mothers take those three roles at once. Their role as educator at home, frequently is not done properly due to some factors. That case then obstructs the children's growth and development. The current study aims to explain the important role of mothers in household, beginning from honing, loving and and nurturing children. Furthermore, the recent study also makes a serious effort in finding the inhibitor factors of mothers' role as an educator, which then is expected to be parents' knowledge to prepare themselves as educators in their family. This research applies qualitative approach, by design content analysis where the documents are taken from accredited and relevant articles of reputable journal. The data collection method is documentation which then reported descriptively. The result of this research shows that the mothers' presence in honing, loving and nurturing children is

very crucial because it influences through children's character building. Besides, there are three factors which are needed to fulfill by mothers to play their role properly in a family, they are physically factor, mentality, and knowledge.

*Keywords: children, family, education, mothers' role.*

## INTRODUCTION

Education is one of human means which is used to develop their natural potential. Education itself operates as a medium for introducing children about the differences through the characters of each individual, by the aim to make them ready in facing the differences peacefully (Mulyana, 2001). By education, humans will be encouraged to improve their quality in various forms of competences, both cognitive, affective and psychomotor (Disas t.t.). Education nationally also functions to shape the characters and develop the abilities or potentials of children, to create them as good believers, knowledgeable, competent and skilled, creative and able to become citizens who have responsibility and uphold democracy.

On a macro scale, the urban public space plays a noteworthy role in forming the character of its citizens (Hantono 2017). Whereas for a micro scale, home is a place to construct the children's character, accompanied by the role of parents, especially mothers as the earliest educators (Makhmudah 2018). In educating children, the required aspects are not only maternal instincts but also should possess knowledge and skills. Mothers play an urgent role as educator in family environment. One of its roles in education is monitoring by great love and care to protect the children from the effects of times transformation, especially for negative impacts of technological advances (Rohman 2018).

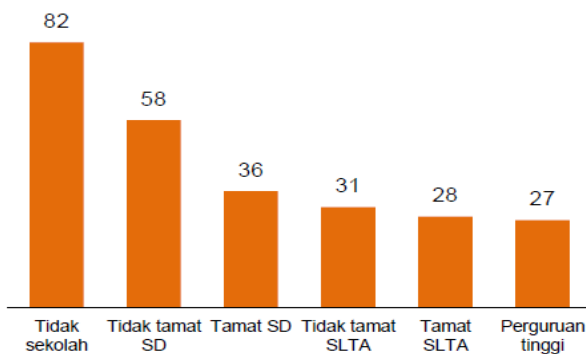
The women's act today has indeed progressed quite significantly in almost all fields. Women are quite potential in almost all professions and

occupations, even in fields that have always been worked on by men. Although then the role of women in the public space is still a controversy which is quite a dilemma (Muzakka 2019), the potential to fill various sectors is still being expanded. In addition, women are also known to be able to participate in children's education programs, besides being teachers in schools. Women, in this case a mother, have a duty and responsibility to lay a strong foundation for children's provisions in facing challenges in the future. The form of this big responsibility is the children's education since an early age. This is because the character and uniqueness of each child is easier for a mother to understand (Triatmanto, Prihantono, dan Warsi 2017).

However, while implementing those roles, the reality sometimes is not the same as what is expected. The existence of mothers and the responsibilities they have are not carried out properly, because in Indonesia there are still many mothers who have not finished minimum education, that is nine year compulsory education program (Zuhriyah 2018) which means that these women got married on too young age. In fact, to educate a child, an educator must also be equipped with a proper education.

This unfavorable condition is even more severe by the existence of Law Number 16 year 2019 concerning about the Amendments to Law Number 1 year 1974 about Marriage, which states that the minimum age for married women in Indonesia is 19 years. The consequences of this rule will be even more burdensome considering to the realization of Law No.1 year 1974 about, which limits the age of marriage for women to the age 16 years is quite difficult to follow. So that there are still many Indonesian women who are married under the age of 16 and experience school dropouts (Djamilah and Kartikawati 2014).

Marriage under young age or more familiar mentioned as early marriage has various negative effects, such as robbing the women's rights to their education and reproductive health. Besides, marriage at an early age can also impact negatively on human development and population (Arimurti and Nurmala 2017). If this case undercontrolled, the average number of women of reproductive age in 2015-2017 stops at 2.4 and is likely to be difficult to reduce. The high number of births then will also hamper the state in efforts to improve the quality of the population. This condition certainly also hinders Indonesia's chances of jumping to become a developed country because the requirements for obtaining a demographic bonus are high quality population and the presence of women in the labor market (Heryanah 2015).



**Figure 1**  
**Comparison of the under-five mortality rate based on the mothers' education level**  
**Source: SDKI 2017**

Indonesian Demographic and Health Survey (IDHS) in 2017 shows that the Age Specific Fertility Rate (ASFR) is 36 per 1000 women among aged 15-19 years (Tisen 2019). This means that for every 1,000 young women there are 36 people who have given birth at the age of 15-19 years. The impact of this case is the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) which is still very high, that is 305 mothers per 100,000 deliveries (Indonesian Health

Profile Ministry of Health, 2015). The cause of high MMR is bleeding case which is caused by pregnancy at a young age and the pregnancy spacing is too close.

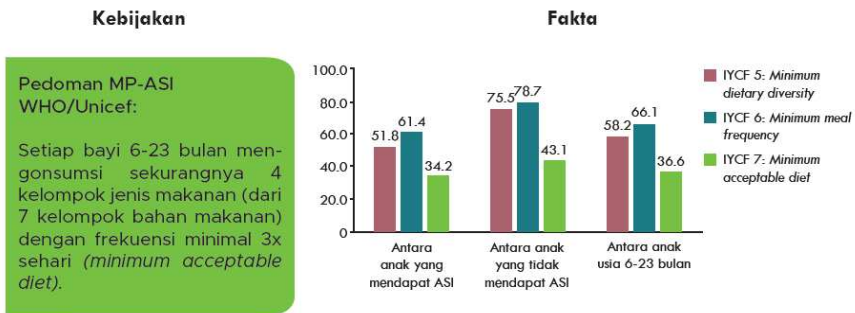
This also has an impact on the infant mortality rate (IMR) which is quite high, that is 24 babies per 1000 live births (IDHS, 2017). The majority of young mothers in Indonesia do not have the ability to provide adequate nutrition for the fetus they are carrying and nutritional intake for their babies (Syari, Serudji, dan Mariati 2015). The existence of high MMR and IMR is an indication of the ability and quality of health services, education, environmental health, socio-culture, and low accessibility to health services (Helmizar 2014).

The condition above can be more burdensome when the dual nutrition is not immediately addressed. Dual nutrition is a condition where the person gets malnutrition, that is why s/he has a wasting and stunting physical condition through toddler, anemia or less eritrosit for teenagers and pregnant mothers, also excess nutrition, which is indicated by obesity since baby till adult (Astuti, Huriyati, dan Susetyowati 2020). Stunting is a growth case of children which is abnormal due to chronic malnutrition as the impact of less nutrition or less health standard they have to fulfill the body needs and health for long period.

Commonly, those conditions can be monitored for the toddlers under five year-old (Hardani and Zuraida 2019). This condition begins since the fetus is in the womb, and seen when the kids are two year-old. Malnutrition in early childhood can effect in increasing infant and child mortality, getting sick easily, and have an unideal posture when growing adult. In addition, sufferers may experience decreased cognitive abilities in the future.

Stunting can also be caused or influenced by wrong parenting styles for children. The prevention strategies include monitoring after

breastfeeding counselor training at the village or sub-district level, increasing campaigns regarding breastfeeding, and breastfeeding counseling for pregnant women who come to Ante Natal Care (ANC) during the first four weeks of pregnancy to prepare for breastfeeding (Atmarita 2018).



**Figure 2**  
**Parenting Policy Gaps**  
**Source: SDKI 2017**

Truly, stunting in Indonesia does not only occur in poor families, but it also occurs in families who are sufficient enough or have a level of socio-economic welfare which is above 40%. Besides, the sufferer experiencing a short body condition, stunting also has other effects, both short and long term. The short-term effects on dual nutrition that occur at the age of children are stunted growth, decreased cognitive function and immunity, and impaired combustion systems. In the long term, there is a risk of degenerative diseases in adulthood, such as diabetes mellitus, high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, and obesity. Stunting also impacts in decreasing intelligence and low productivity of children as adults. The condition of stunting can be identified by looking at the child's development curve through the use of several methods, one of which is by using nutritional anthropometry with various measurements of body dimensions and composition from various ages by taking into account weight and height,

upper arm circumference, and thickness of fat under the skin. (Laksono dan Megatsari 2020).

The bad conditions in children as mentioned above prove that parents do not have sufficient knowledge regarding reproductive health and how to provide nutrition to their children. The lack of knowledge of mothers in honing, loving and caring for children in the family is also a problem for mothers. This case then needs to be instilled in women who have decided to marry at a young age, so that they realize their important role in the family. This paper specifically discusses and outlines the importance of the role of mothers in the household related to honing, loving and caring for their children and the factors that must be fulfilled in order to be able to provide the earliest education of children in the family environment.

## **METHOD**

The current research implements qualitative approach by content analysis technique, and using some related literatures. To complete this study, the researchers conducted inventory literature, descriptive literature and comparing literature (Hantono 2019). By the facts found, the researchers constructed some general patterns to understand some symphons holistically and tried to describe and appreciate social environment which influences it (Raco 2010).

By implementing documentation, the researchers also gained secondary data which is sourced from scientific articles or data/statistics from official institutions which have a high competence on their study. Then, from those data, the researchers did some filter and data processing to analyze. In the end of the study, there could be found some conclusion to answer the research questions.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Urgency of Mothers' Role in Family

In family, mothers have a crucial role. They also have the most significant influence on children's achievement, both in growth and development and also for their education. Within husbands, mothers play a major role in finding the children's educational needs, even when the children have already been in the school environment. Although fathers also have the same role as mothers, in today's society, the role of providing education in the family environment is mostly taken over by mothers. Mothers do not only provide the fulfillment of children's needs from an early age, but also provide role models, and stimulate in developing children's potential (Safarudin dan Jumanto, 2016).

A mother has a chance to prepare herself in order to educate her children properly, understand her children's growth and development well, fulfill their nutritional needs, give birth and breastfeed her children until 2 years. Women who work at home will have more time to be with children so that the role of mothers in this position is really broad in educating children. In another position, career women also have the same role in children's education even though the time they have and give is not the same or not as much as women who work at home. The role of the mother as the first learner will help the children to shape the character of the children by noble character, so that it can be said that the mother has a function in laying the first foundation for her children's future (Rohmah 2019).

While preparing mothers as the earliest educators, it is better to be done early since the starting of reproduction. Reproductive health is a condition when social, mental, and physical are in good condition, thus it does not only mean being free from disease in all matters related to reproductive functions, systems and processes. Reproductive health



education is given by paying attention according to the age by proper sex education methods that are appropriate for the age of the children.

Therefore, it is better for women who want to get married following the pre-marital education held by the government. Premarital education is very important where prospective parents will be taught various things about the household, one of which is how to educate children (Rokhanawati and Nawangsih 2017). Children's education must follow a pattern appropriate to the children's age stage (Hadhari 2016). The patterns used are in accordance with the following age stages:

1. Age 0-7 year, children are as the kings or queens. The children have not been able to fulfill their own needs.
2. Age 7-14 year, children as students. The children need some knowledge and have a high curiosity.
3. Age 15-21 year, children as friends. The growing children try to ask and find out who they are, and what they need to be led by parents as the closest persons they have and give some solutive solutions to overcome through their matters among society.

Before getting married, it is also necessary to pay attention to the age of the married couple. It is better if the ideal age for marriage for women is at least 21 years old, while for men it is better if they are 25 years old. The age of 21 years in women is quite ideal because at that age women can be said to have mature attitudes and thoughts. Meanwhile, the age of 25 years is considered quite ideal for men, because at that age men can be said to have maturity. For a woman physically at that age the biological condition of the woman's uterus has reached maturity. If the condition of the uterus is not yet ripe, it is possible for the baby to be conceived to experience defects at birth because the mother has not been able to provide good nutrition for the fetus (Isnaini 2015).

Accordingly, if women marry at very young age, it will also cause population problems. The younger women are at the time of their first marriage can have an effect on a long reproductive period and they can produce more children (Normalasari, Gani, dan Amalia 2018). The impact of marriage at a young age can affect the following points: high divorce rates, malnourished babies, and uncontrolled births. Therefore, many parties involved, both from the government and the private sectors, always try to provide information about the impact of marriage at a young age and prepare for finding an ideal household, and also to gain knowledge about reproductive health.

On nowadays policy, reproductive health (*kespro*) is under the spotlight by the world since the issue of *kespro* was raised on International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994, exactly in Cairo-Egypt. The urgent thing that was summed up in the ICPD was an agreement to change the paradigm of population management and development, which is from an approach in controlling population and reducing fertility into an approach to keep reproductive health and take some efforts to fulfill reproductive rights. This means that population control has become broader, which includes fulfilling the needs for reproductive health throughout the life cycle (male and female), gender equality, empowering women and eradicating violence based on gender, and also men's responsibility for reproductive health.

This changing paradigm has had a major impact through the rights and roles of women as subjects for family planning, handling maternal and children's health, reproductive health in adolescents, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), as well as reproductive health in elderly couples studied in the context of health and reproductive rights. By knowing and understanding the condition of their reproductive health, women, especially

those who have the status of mothers, can fulfill their body rights and provide care to their children with the new knowledge they have. Considering that the influence and contribution of mothers in a family is very important, it is also important to provide knowledge to every woman and also mothers about all things related to themselves as individuals, as women and as mothers. Even in any changes that occur in the environment around the family, including to how to manage children's growth and development.

### **Honing, Loving and Nurturing**

While nurturing for children, besides requiring mental and physical preparation, a mother should also have childcare preparation. This also works for the needs of children's development and nutrition. The process of children's development can be obtained inside and outside the house, especially in open spaces or parks or the surrounding environment that specifically provides space to develop children's potential. BKKBN is well aware of this role as a government agency that handles the welfare of the Indonesian population by distributing open space for its offices every Saturday and Sunday for use by parents and children.

The role of mothers, as mentioned earlier, is not just providing the children's needs, but it is more complex in terms of efforts to nurture children's potential from an early age. The first thousand days of fetal life are very important times in their whole life. From the time of conception, the growth of the fetus in the womb, to the age of the baby at the age of two, is a part of life that determines their intelligence and health (Meihartati et al. 2018). The act of forcing a child to consume a healthy diet is less significant than the intake of food at the gestational age of a mother. Food intake during pregnancy can affect the level of concentration, memory function,

mood, decision making, intelligence, and emotional level of a child in the future.

At least 50 substances have been found that can affect brain intelligence from food intake and micronutrients during the first thousand days of a baby's life. Lack of intake of essential nutrients during this golden period can have long-term effects and are difficult to reverse. The fulfillment of balanced nutrition during this golden period gives a child the opportunity to live longer, healthier and more productive life. In addition, it reduces the risk of degenerate diseases, such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and stroke. By striving to improve the quality of health for pregnant women and children from the time of their womb, it is expected that the next generation will grow more productive and quality young generations. Finally, there can be taken some wisdom messages from a thousand days of first life, they are:

1. Consuming various meals when pregnant.
2. Check the pregnancy at least four times.
3. Consuming blood booster tablets for new mothers.
4. Early Initiation of Breastfeeding (IMD).
5. Breastfeeding exclusively since early six months for baby.
6. Regularly checking the baby's weight each month.
7. Give basic immunization for baby.
8. Breastfeeding is continuing until the baby age is two years.
9. Provide breastmilk substitutes gradually starting from 6 months of age without leaving breastmilk.

The first thousand days the children's life in the womb until the age of two years is a critical period of children's brain development. At the age of 5 years the children's brain has formed approximately 80 percent where the brain circuits are almost completely formed and have absorbed the information well received from the environment. Until adolescents, parents,

especially mothers, still carry out their responsibility to monitor their children. Here the whole process of children's development needs to be known by the mother so that in the next period the mother can love and raise the child to become a more independent, confident, talented, and tough person to face the competition in life.

Accordingly, it is only physical and mental matters that need to prepare while being a mom, but to know and understand some knowledge before and during own a baby must be understood by every mother. The urgency of the mothers' role in honing, loving and nurturing for children will ultimately encourage and determine the level of learning received by children while at home. Even the mother figure can determine the main character of the child (Zubaedi, 2019).

## **CONCLUSION**

There are several aspects that need to be prepared by women regarding their role as mother at once as an educator in honing, loving and nurturing for children. Those are health physically and mentally starting at the beginning of marriage and possessing sufficient knowledge, especially in providing the children's first education. The physical factor of the mothers does not only affect themselves but the children they are carrying and raising. Meanwhile, mental factors are closely related to adult attitudes and mothers' responsibility in providing children with good education. These two factors should also be supported by the knowledge of mothers in children's education, especially at an early age, because at this age, the quality and character of the children are formed.

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