

PAS 'nikah gantung' idea unworkable
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The All Women's Action Society (Awam) is disturbed to learn of Dewan Pemuda Pas Pusat's proposals to curb the social problems caused by the 'mingling of the sexes' and 'free sex' such as baby dumping, through encouraging the practice of nikah gantung among youth.

Other proposals include aid to young couples for marriage, incentives to encourage marriage, lessening bureaucracy, and free marital courses.

Marriage does not - and will not - solve problems such as unwanted pregnancies and baby dumping. Encouraging marriage - even 'suspended' or otherwise - among young persons in this way is purely a means to legitimise relationships, sexual or otherwise, regardless of whether these relationships are healthy and responsible.

This would have disastrous consequences for youth who lack the maturity, knowledge and skills to cope with adult responsibilities required for marriage.

Furthermore, marriages are legally binding and as such, partners have legal responsibilities that they are required to fulfill such as maintenance. Are young persons capable enough to fulfill all these obligations?

Our opinion is that 'mingling of the sexes' are not problems in an of itself, but the problem is the woeful lack of awareness of rights and responsibilities related to sexuality among young people.

Young people are having sex, and many of them are having unprotected sex with alarming regularity. That is the cause of many unwanted pregnancies.

Until everyone including religious parties such as PAS takes a cold hard look at reality and propose practical, sensible, and immediate solutions free of value judgments, the serious problems related the unwanted pregnancies and baby dumping, will continue.

The writer is president, All Women's Action Society (Awam).

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