

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Marriage Dispensation in Indonesia: A Juridical-Sociological Analysis of The Legality and Social Reality of Early Marriage

Siti Zurbaniyah¹, Rifqi Qowiyul Iman^{2*}

¹ Religious High Court of Bandar Lampung, Lampung

² Religious Court of Tais, Bengkulu

*Correspondence: e-mail: rifqi1914@gmail.com

Abstract

This study analyzes the phenomenon of marriage dispensation in Indonesia through a juridical-sociological approach using a qualitative-normative method. Data reveal a high number of marriage dispensation cases, reaching 63,382 in 2020, despite the enactment of Law No. 16 of 2019 which sets the minimum legal age for marriage at 19. The study identifies five main factors contributing to early marriage: (1) poverty (34.5% of cases), (2) low education levels, (3) geographical factors (rural areas), (4) tradition and religion, and (5) unintended pregnancies. The resulting impacts include reproductive health risks, school dropouts, psychological issues, and structural poverty. Legal analysis reveals a gap between Supreme Court Regulation (PERMA) No. 5 of 2019—which emphasizes child protection—and court practices, where 44.5% of dispensation requests are granted based on "urgent" reasons such as pregnancy. The study recommends integrated solutions: (1) reproductive health education, (2) family economic empowerment, (3) data-driven policy reform, and (4) multisectoral synergy through the Child Marriage Prevention Program (PPA). These findings highlight the urgency of a holistic approach that integrates legal, social, and economic aspects to reduce the prevalence of early marriage in Indonesia.

Keyword: Marriage Dispensation, Early Marriage, Law No. 16/2019, Child Protection, Juridical-Sociological Analysis

How to cite this article:

Zurbaniyah, S., Iman, R.Q. (2025). Marriage Dispensation In Indonesia: A Juridical-Sociological Analysis Of The Legality And Social Reality Of Early Marriage. *Fundamentum: Journal of Legal and Judicial Reform*. 1 (1). 01-14.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70992/00efpp29>

Received, 18 Mei 2025; Accepted, 29 Mei 2025; Published, Juni 2025

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INTRODUCTION

As social entities, human interdependence is an unavoidable phenomenon in which social interactions—including marriage—play a vital role. In the context of Islamic teachings, marriage is not only recommended for those who are capable of fulfilling its responsibilities, but it is also regarded as an act of worship that brings spiritual rewards and completes half of one's religious faith.

According to Islamic doctrine, marriage is the exclusive mechanism for procreation and the establishment of a family, intended to create an atmosphere of peace, love, and compassion. Therefore, the marriage process must be conducted in a proper and lawful manner. Normatively, the right to marry is recognized as a fundamental human right guaranteed to every Indonesian citizen, as enshrined in Article 28B, Paragraph (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.

The article states: “Every person shall have the right to establish a family and to procreate based upon lawful marriage”. This fundamental provision is embodied in Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage (UUP). In principle, every individual has the right to enter into marriage, including those who are still legally categorized as minors.

According to the definition provided by the World Health Organization (WHO), child marriage is defined as a marital union in which one or both parties are still within the category of children or adolescents, namely under the age of 19. Meanwhile, the National Population and Family Planning Agency of Indonesia (BKKBN) defines child marriage as a marriage that occurs when one or both parties have not yet reached reproductive age—under 20 years for females and under 25 years for males (Mujiburrahman et al., 2021, p. 37).

However, considering that marriage at a young age can hinder a child’s development and growth and potentially violate fundamental child rights—such as the right to protection from violence and discrimination, civil rights, the right to health, education, and social rights—the government has revised the legal age of marriage through Law No. 16 of 2019. Under this law, the minimum age for marriage is set at 19 years for both males and females. If there is a desire to marry below this age, the parents of the male and/or female party may submit a request for a marriage dispensation to the court by providing urgent and compelling reasons along with sufficient supporting evidence (Septarina et al., 2024, p. 180).

The Government of the Republic of Indonesia has actively and consistently implemented various efforts to reduce the incidence of child marriage. In the context of national policy, the Medium-Term National Development Plan (RPJMN) for the 2020–2024 period has been established, as outlined in Presidential Regulation No. 18 of 2020. Through the national strategy for the Prevention of Child Marriage (PPA), the government specifically aims to reduce the prevalence of child marriage from 11.21% in 2018 to 8.74% by the end of 2024 (Sugiarti & Tridewiyanti, 2021, p. 88).

The court now serves as the exclusive juridical entity authorized to grant permission for deviations from the legally established minimum age for marriage. For citizens of the Islamic faith, applications for marriage dispensation must be submitted to the Religious Court. Meanwhile, for adherents of other religions, such applications must be filed with the District Court.

Despite various efforts to address the issue, the rate of early marriage in Indonesia remains high. The Religious Judiciary Agency reported 63,382 marriage dispensation cases in 2020—more than double the 23,145 cases recorded in 2019. The 2020 figure was approximately seven times higher than the number of cases in 2016. The number of dispensations was lower in 2021 and 2022 compared to the previous year. According to the Religious Judiciary Agency (2022), the number of marriage dispensation applications decreased from 61,449 in 2021 to 50,673 in 2022. However, the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) noted that this figure remains considerably high, despite the decline (Wahyudi & Prastiwi, 2022, p. 218).

This paper discusses the issue of marriage dispensation from the perspectives of legality and on-the-ground reality. It is hoped that this study will provide a critical evaluation and response to the high number of marriage dispensation applications currently being submitted to the courts. A comprehensive understanding of this issue is urgently needed in order to formulate effective solutions aimed at reducing the current rate of early marriage.

METHODS

The research methodology employed in this paper is qualitative-normative with a juridical-sociological approach, combining doctrinal analysis of regulations (such as Law No. 16 of 2019 and Supreme Court Regulation No. 5 of 2019) with empirical study based on secondary data from the Religious Judiciary Agency, Statistics Indonesia (BPS), UNICEF, and relevant literature. The authors examine marriage dispensation comprehensively by exploring both the legal aspects (positive law and the Compilation of Islamic Law) and social realities (causal factors, impacts, and trends in child marriage), and subsequently formulate solutions based on policy evaluation and the principles of child rights protection. Data sources include statutory regulations, official statistics, academic journals, and reports from national and international institutions, all analyzed through a descriptive-critical method to map the gap between legal norms and societal practice.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Marriage Dispensation

In legal terminology, a dispensation refers to an exception from a general rule, allowing a deviation from a specific legal provision by permitting something that is otherwise prohibited. Indarti, as cited by Shoim, explains that a dispensation norm is a provision that allows certain individuals to refrain from performing an act that is generally mandated by law. The phrase commonly used in such norms is “exempted from the obligation,” indicating that the general rule no longer applies in the specific context covered by the dispensation (Shoim, 2024, p. 42). A dispensation can also be understood as a form of exemption or leniency granted in relation to a prohibition regulated by statutory law (Mardi Candra et al., 2023, p. 37).

Conceptually, marriage dispensation can be defined as an exception to the stipulated minimum age requirement for entering into marriage. In the terminology used by Law No. 16 of 2019 concerning the Amendment of the Marriage Age, a marriage dispensation is a mechanism that allows for a “deviation” from the minimum age provision as stated in Article 7 paragraph (1) of the amended law. The granting of a marriage dispensation is an absolute requirement for prospective brides and/or grooms who are under the age of 19 (Nusabahari & Amin, 2021, p. 49).

The aforementioned definition aligns with the provision found in Article 1 point 5 of Supreme Court Regulation (PERMA) No. 5 of 2019 concerning Guidelines for Adjudicating Marriage Dispensation Cases, which states that a marriage dispensation is the granting of permission by the court for a prospective husband or wife who has not yet reached the age of 19 to enter into marriage.

Legality of Marriage Dispensation

The adjudication of marriage dispensation applications by the court is mandated by Law No. 16 of 2019 concerning the Amendment to Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage. This is regulated in Article 7, paragraphs (1) to (4), which state:

Article 7

- (1) *A marriage is only permitted if the man and woman have reached the age of 19 (nineteen) years.*
- (2) *In the event of a deviation from the age requirement as referred to in paragraph (1), the parents of the male and/or female party may request a dispensation from the Court on very urgent grounds, accompanied by sufficient supporting evidence.*

- (3) *The granting of a dispensation by the Court as referred to in paragraph (2) must be preceded by hearing the opinions of both prospective spouses.*
- (4) *The provisions regarding the condition of one or both parents of the prospective spouses as referred to in Article 6 paragraphs (3) and (4) shall also apply to the request for dispensation as referred to in paragraph (2), without prejudice to the provisions of Article 6 paragraph (6).*

The provision regarding the minimum age for marriage is further reinforced by Article 15 paragraph (1) of the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI), which states that, for the welfare of the family and household, marriage may only be conducted by prospective spouses who have reached the age specified in Article 7 of the Marriage Law. This implies that if the prospective spouses do not meet the minimum age requirement, a marriage dispensation must be obtained through the court, as referred to in the aforementioned provision.

With regard to the procedure for examining marriage dispensation cases, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia has issued Supreme Court Regulation (PERMA) No. 5 of 2019 concerning Guidelines for Adjudicating Marriage Dispensation Cases. This regulation provides detailed guidance on the essential principles in handling such cases, including the requirements that must be fulfilled by the applicant and the criteria for individuals eligible to submit a marriage dispensation request to the court. Furthermore, the regulation outlines comprehensive guidelines on the factors that judges must consider during the adjudication process in marriage dispensation cases.

The State of Child Marriage in Indonesia

Sociologically, underage marriage appears to be a widespread phenomenon across several countries. For comparison, the rates of child marriage in Africa and South Asia are the highest among all regions in the world. According to UNICEF, the United Nations agency responsible for children's welfare, an estimated 12 million girls under the age of 18 are married each year. Of this number, 38% of cases occur in sub-Saharan Africa—a decline from the previous rate of approximately 49% (Mardi Candra et al., 2023, pp. 38–39).

In Indonesia, data released by the National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS) indicates that approximately 34.5% of children have been involved in early marriage. This finding is supported by research from PLAN International, which revealed that 33.5% of children aged 13–18 had married between the ages of 15 and 16 (R. M. Sari et al., 2020, p. 52).

According to the Marriage Report 2020 published by Statistics Indonesia (BPS), one in nine Indonesian women aged 20–24 had married before the age of 18, totaling approximately 1,220,900 women. The report also indicates that one in every one hundred men in the same age group had married before turning 18. These figures place Indonesia as the country with the eighth highest number of child marriages in the world. Furthermore, according to 2023 data from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Indonesia currently ranks fourth globally in child marriage prevalence, with a total of 25.53 million cases (Mubarok & Mushthofa, 2024, p. 154).

Despite various efforts, the rate of early marriage in Indonesia remains high. The Religious Judiciary Agency reported 63,382 marriage dispensation cases in 2020—more than double the 23,145 cases recorded in 2019. The 2020 figure was approximately seven times higher than that in 2016. The number of dispensations declined in 2021 and 2022 compared to the previous year. According to the Religious Judiciary Agency (2022), the number of marriage dispensation applications decreased from 61,449 in 2021 to 50,673 in 2022. However, the National Commission

on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) noted that this figure remains considerably high, even with 50,673 applications filed (Wahyudi & Prastiwi, 2022, p. 218).

These data indicate that there were at least around 60,000 prospective couples—many of whom were underage—intending to marry in 2021. This figure excludes unofficial marriages and those submitted to district (civil) courts. Marriage dispensation applications accounted for approximately 44.5% of the total number of petitions filed in that same year. Both data from the National Socioeconomic Survey (SUSENAS) and findings from other literature reveal that girls are significantly more vulnerable to child marriage than boys (Mardi Candra et al., 2023, pp. 39–40).

Factors Leading to Child Marriage

In general, there are several factors contributing to child marriage in Indonesia, including:

1. Economic factors

One of the contributing factors to underage marriage is related to economic conditions. This is evidenced by the 2018 National Socioeconomic Survey (SUSENAS) conducted by Statistics Indonesia (BPS), which showed that girls are more vulnerable to child marriage, particularly those living in poor households in rural areas and with low levels of education. (Tim Penyusun Badan Pusat Statistik dan Bappenas, 2020, p. xi). This indicates that one of the root causes of child marriage is poverty. Furthermore, there exists a prevailing belief in certain communities that girls are considered economic assets for the family. As a result, when a daughter receives a marriage proposal, parents often hope not only to ease the family's financial burden but also to improve their socioeconomic status through the marriage (Wulandari & Sarwoprasodjo, 2014, p. 58).

2. Educational factors

Data from the 2018 National Socioeconomic Survey (SUSENAS) also indicate that education is another significant factor contributing to underage marriage (Tim Penyusun Badan Pusat Statistik dan Bappenas, 2020, p. xi). Low levels of parental knowledge result in limited access to information. Knowledge levels are influenced by several factors, including education, socio-cultural and economic conditions, environment, mass media, experience, and age. Low educational attainment is one of the key factors contributing to child marriage. A study conducted in 2013 found that children with lower levels of education are more likely to be married off by their parents compared to those with higher educational backgrounds (Rofika & Hariastuti, 2020, p. 15).

3. Residential factors

Another frequently identified factor contributing to child marriage is related to place of residence. As explained in the 2018 National Socioeconomic Survey (SUSENAS), girls living in rural areas are twice as likely to marry underage compared to their counterparts in urban areas (Tim Penyusun Badan Pusat Statistik dan Bappenas, 2020, p. 44).

4. Traditional and religious factors

Several studies have indicated that one of the driving factors behind child marriage is related to tradition and religion. One such tradition deeply rooted in certain communities is the practice of arranged marriage. In some regions of Indonesia, it is still common for families to arrange the marriage of their daughters from a very young age. These girls are often married off as soon as they begin menstruating, meaning they are wed while still legally and biologically underage (Nurseha & Pertiwi, 2019, p. 33).

In addition to tradition, child marriage can also occur due to misinterpretations of religious teachings. Some segments of society believe that when a child begins a relationship with a member of the opposite sex and has reached puberty (typically between the ages of 9 and 15), parents are religiously obligated to protect them and prevent any behavior deemed inappropriate under religious norms—often by arranging for the children to be married immediately (Nurseha & Pertiwi, 2019, p. 33).

5. Unwanted pregnancy factors

Another factor associated with child marriage is related to premarital relationships that lead to unintended pregnancies. As highlighted in a study conducted by Hermambang, such relationships often result in pregnancies outside of marriage, which significantly contribute to the rise in underage marriages. Parents and communities may respond to these situations by arranging early marriages in an effort to preserve family honor and social acceptance (Hermambang et al., 2021, pp. 9–11). The decision to marry off a child is often perceived as a solution to problems arising from the child's actions, particularly as a means to avoid bringing shame or dishonor upon the family (Yulindawati et al., 2021, p. 15).

Impacts of Early Marriage

In developing countries, including Indonesia, early marriage among girls—often under the age of 18—remains prevalent. In many cultures, women who are not married by a certain age are considered undesirable. Additionally, due to poverty, some parents hastily marry off their daughters in order to relieve themselves of responsibility, transferring it to the husband. This practice places young women at high risk during childbirth. Moreover, the maternal mortality rate for girls who marry young is twice as high as that of women who marry in their twenties. Other consequences include school dropout, which often leads to dependency on the husband, both financially and in decision-making (Husnul Fatimah et al., 2021, p. 20).

The risks associated with early marriage vary depending on geographic location. The impacts are more pronounced for adolescent girls than for boys. Early marriage often leads to early pregnancy and premature childbirth, which are linked to high maternal and neonatal mortality rates and suboptimal health outcomes for mothers, as their reproductive organs are not yet fully developed. Maternal and neonatal mortality, along with pregnancy-related complications, are among the most direct consequences of child marriage. Furthermore, early marriage contributes to an increase in the Total Fertility Rate (TFR), which can have long-term implications for economic development and overall societal well-being (Meitria Syahadatina Noor et al., 2020, pp. 144–145).

Marriage at a young age can disrupt personality development and significantly increase the risk of children born into such unions experiencing violence, neglect, developmental delays, learning difficulties, and behavioral disorders. It often leads to a cycle in which these children themselves become young parents. Early marriage imposes adult responsibilities on girls, expecting them to take on the roles of wife, sexual partner, and mother—roles that are ideally assumed by mature adults, but which these young girls are not yet prepared to fulfill. Additionally, such marriages frequently result in significant psychological and emotional burdens for the girls involved (Nurjanah et al., 2013). Early marriage is often a major contributing factor to the rising number of divorce cases, primarily due to the psychological immaturity of young couples, who tend to be emotionally unstable when facing marital challenges. From a socio-economic perspective, early

marriages are generally not supported by adequate financial preparedness, further exacerbating the vulnerability of these unions (Rizaludin, 2025, p. 54).

Several theories explain the implications of early marriage across various dimensions, particularly in the context of physical and mental health. Field's theory emphasizes that early marriage can lead to adverse social and physical consequences for young women who are still undergoing developmental growth. These impacts include lower levels of education, disadvantaged social positions within their husband's family, limited access to reproductive control, and increased risks of maternal mortality and domestic violence. Young women are also often forced to discontinue their education, resulting in negative health outcomes due to their bodies not being fully developed for childbirth (Field, 2004). Falce and Perry state that the issue of early marriage affects various aspects of quality of life, including physical well-being, material well-being, social well-being, development and activity, as well as emotional well-being (Felce & Perry, 1995).

Various harmful consequences may arise from early marriage, posing significant risks across multiple dimensions, including physical and mental health. Marrying at a young age increases the risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Pregnancy-related risks include preeclampsia and obstructed labor due to the baby's head being too large for the underdeveloped pelvis. During delivery, extensive perineal tears may occur, potentially extending from the vagina to the bladder and anus. For the infant, there is a risk of low birth weight or macrosomia (excessively high birth weight). For the mother, one of the most severe risks is maternal death (E. K. Sari et al., 2024, p. 11). Pregnancy among adolescents under the age of 20 has significant reproductive health implications. Teenage pregnancies carry high risks for both the mother and the unborn child. Linear growth, including height, typically concludes between the ages of 16 and 18, followed by pelvic maturation that continues for several years thereafter. Pregnancy during this developmental phase can lead to delivery complications and hinder optimal growth due to inadequate nutritional intake. This deficiency not only affects the still-growing mother but also impairs fetal development. As a result, infants are often born with Low Birth Weight (LBW), Intrauterine Growth Restriction (IUGR), or prematurely (Husnul Fatimah et al., 2021, pp. 23–24).

In addition, marriage at a very young age often leads to unforeseen problems due to psychological immaturity, including heightened levels of anxiety and stress (Surawan, 2019, p. 204). Moreover, disruptions in household harmony are also among the negative consequences of early marriage (Husnul Fatimah et al., 2021, p. 36).

Legal Protection of Children's Rights in Marriage Dispensation Cases

A prominent aspect of handling marriage dispensation cases following the implementation of Supreme Court Regulation (PERMA) No. 5 of 2019 is the emphasis on the principle of protecting children's rights during the judicial process. This regulation aims to ensure that judicial outcomes—particularly court rulings—are of higher quality, offer greater legal certainty, and guarantee the fulfillment of children's rights in accordance with their best interests. This marks a significant step forward, as courts were previously often perceived as institutions that legitimized child marriage, when in fact, the judiciary should serve as the last line of defense in preventing such practices. The implementation of PERMA No. 5 of 2019 seeks to guarantee that children's rights remain a priority throughout the examination of cases, ensuring that any marriage dispensation granted is the result of thorough and comprehensive judicial consideration.

Not all marriage dispensation petitions submitted to the court are automatically approved by the judge responsible for examining the case. This reality underscores that the granting of marriage dispensation by the court is carried out with careful and selective consideration, ensuring that each ruling aligns with the principle of protecting children's rights. A court ruling granting dispensation is issued only when the case meets the established criteria for such protection.

In addition, the granting of permission for child marriage must be based on materially urgent grounds, as stipulated in Article 7 paragraph (2) of Law No. 16 of 2019 concerning the Amendment to Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage. Such urgent grounds refer to situations in which delaying the marriage is deemed unfeasible, considering that the negative consequences of not proceeding with the marriage may outweigh the potential harms of allowing it (Amalia et al., 2022, p. 66).

In adjudicating marriage dispensation petitions that cite urgent grounds, judges are required to apply the paradigm of the best interests of the child (Mansari & Rizkal, 2021, p. 334). During the judicial process, judges are generally confronted with two scenarios: first, granting the dispensation may result in negative consequences; second, denying the dispensation may lead to even greater harm. Judges must assess which of these two outcomes carries a greater negative impact. At this stage, the process of *rechtsvinding*—or judicial legal discovery—becomes critically important in determining whether the petition for marriage dispensation should be granted or denied.

To date, many judges have considered compelling circumstances—such as pregnancy—as part of the urgent grounds in deciding marriage dispensation petitions. In several rulings, judges have stated that the pregnancy of the child is regarded as an urgent factor based on local norms that require pregnant minors to marry, given the potential social consequences if the marriage does not occur (Hidayat et al., 2024, p. 484), such as societal stigmatization and significant psychological impact on the child. In addition, consideration is also given to the protection of the civil rights of the unborn child. Based on these considerations, judges have decided to grant the marriage dispensation request.

Solutions to Address The High Rate of Marriage Dispensation

To address the high rate of marriage dispensation, several measures need to be undertaken, including:

1. Enhancing reproductive health education for adolescents
Efforts to prevent and reduce early marriage can be pursued by increasing adolescents' knowledge of reproductive health through health education programs. Health education is a conscious effort to change health-related behaviors within community and social settings. Such education is essential as a foundation for improving the overall health status of the population—physically, mentally, socially, and economically.
Sustainable reproductive health education for adolescents should address the healthy condition of the reproductive system, its physiological functions, and related processes from physical, mental, and socio-cultural perspectives. As the next generation of the nation, adolescents need to understand the importance of reproductive health and the related biological and social processes to prevent early marriage (Madinah et al., 2017).
2. Combating poverty
Low economic conditions often drive individuals to marry at an early age. Financial limitations prevent them from continuing their education, leading to the decision to marry. Some respondents reported that they married due to the inability to afford school, leaving

them with no alternative activities. Although the desire to remain in school was present, the dire economic conditions of their parents made it impossible to support their education. As a result, parents often chose to have their children assist with work in the fields rather than pursue schooling. In such situations, marriage is perceived as a better solution than remaining in an unfavorable economic condition.

In addition, the inability to continue schooling is not solely due to high costs, but also stems from parents' lack of support for the importance of education. The hope for economic improvement through marriage becomes a strong motivator for many individuals to marry young. Some respondents stated that they chose to marry because they had no other occupation after dropping out of school, hoping that marriage would lead to better economic opportunities and improve their standard of living. Through marriage, they aspire to attain a more stable and prosperous life.

Nevertheless, there is also a belief that inadequate economic conditions can be improved through early marriage, with the hope that such a union will bring better financial prospects. Early marriage often occurs within families experiencing economic hardship or living below the poverty line. To ease the financial burden, daughters are married off to men perceived as financially capable. Parents believe that if someone proposes to their daughter, at the very least, she will become independent and no longer financially dependent on the family, as she will have a husband to provide for her. However, such marriages often involve partners from similarly disadvantaged economic backgrounds, which may in fact lead to new cycles of poverty and exacerbate the family's financial difficulties (Khaerani, 2019, pp. 5–6).

3. Transforming the culture of early marriage

Early marriage remains a prevalent phenomenon in many countries, including Indonesia. Numerous factors influence the decision to marry at a very young age, one of which is cultural pressure. Cultural pressure surrounding early marriage often involves social norms, religious beliefs, and family traditions.

The following are several strategies that can be employed to address cultural pressure surrounding early marriage:

a. Education and awareness

Raising awareness about the rights of children and adolescents—including the right to education and equal opportunities for personal development—must be a central focus in efforts to prevent early marriage. Comprehensive sex education programs that provide accurate information on reproductive health and the consequences of early marriage are also crucial steps in empowering young people to make more informed and responsible decisions regarding marriage.

Increasing awareness, education, and support from families and the broader social environment can play a crucial role in preventing early marriage and providing adolescents with better opportunities to develop their potential and achieve a brighter future (Aseri, 2023, p. 272)

b. Women's empowerment

Promoting independence and empowering women through access to education, skills training, and employment opportunities can help reduce cultural pressure toward early marriage. Through outreach activities, seminars, and educational programs, communities—especially women—are becoming increasingly aware of the negative

impacts of early marriage and the importance of education and female autonomy. These programs provide women with access to the resources and networks they need to take control of their lives, enhance their economic independence, and develop their full potential.

A comprehensive approach has contributed to a decline in early marriage rates in regions participating in such programs, demonstrating that women's empowerment efforts have a positive impact in shifting community mindsets and behaviors regarding child marriage. It is crucial to maintain these programs and ensure their long-term impact. Concrete measures such as skills training, sexual education, access to decent employment, and psychological and social support must continue to be promoted to enable women to resist early marriage and achieve their full potential (Otoluwa et al., 2024, p. 6).

c. Guidance and counseling

Classical-format guidance and counseling have proven effective in preventing early marriage by providing a comprehensive understanding of its negative impacts, fostering critical attitudes among adolescents, and helping them plan for their future through a structured group approach. Research findings indicate that such services have successfully raised awareness among 321 participants to postpone marriage and focus on personal development, making it a potentially effective preventive strategy to reduce the incidence of child marriage (Lase, 2022).

d. Changing community attitudes

Changing societal attitudes toward early marriage through education, social campaigns, and active community participation can help sustainably reduce cultural pressure. Disseminating information about the impacts of child marriage through various media—such as direct campaigns, posters, leaflets, banners, videos, and other formats—can raise awareness about both the physical and psychological consequences of child marriage, emphasize the importance of education, promote children's rights, reproductive health, and related topics.

These campaigns should be accompanied by outreach on the laws regulating underage marriage, including the legal sanctions for violations, and explanations of the potential worst-case consequences of child marriage. Furthermore, interventions should focus on protecting girls aged 15–17, with a particular emphasis on completing secondary education (Lase, 2022, p. 126).

4. Strengthening law enforcement on early marriage

No. 16 of 2019, as the second amendment to Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage, aims primarily to prevent child marriage in Indonesia. Conclusions regarding the effectiveness of this law in curbing early marriage may vary depending on several factors, such as implementation, legal enforcement, and the socio-cultural context influencing the application of the policy.

Although this law has been enacted, its effectiveness in preventing early marriage still requires continuous monitoring and evaluation. Social, economic, and cultural factors may affect its implementation across different regions of Indonesia. Therefore, collaborative efforts among the government, law enforcement agencies, civil society, and advocacy

groups are essential to ensure the law's success in achieving its intended goals (Ainun S Ipetu et al., 2023, p. 302).

The measures proposed above represent long-term strategies aimed at reducing the incidence of early marriage. As for short-term solutions, the author proposes several immediate actions as follows:

1. Interagency collaboration

Establishing multi-stakeholder consultation forums involving government agencies, law enforcement officials, educational institutions, civil society organizations, and advocacy groups aims to facilitate the exchange of information, experiences, and lessons learned related to the prevention of early marriage. Strong synergy among these stakeholders is expected to enhance the effectiveness of efforts to prevent child marriage.

2. Active monitoring and supervision

Establishing a proactive monitoring and supervision system is essential. This includes strengthening the roles of law enforcement authorities and other relevant institutions in overseeing, monitoring, and reporting cases of early marriage, with the primary goal of enabling early prevention.

3. Accurate data and statistical collection

Collecting accurate data and statistics related to early marriage—including the number of cases, locations, contributing factors, and the outcomes of regulatory implementation—is essential. This comprehensive data serves as a solid foundation for analyzing the issue of child marriage and formulating more effective policies in the future.

CONCLUSION

Child marriage in Indonesia remains a serious issue despite legal efforts to prevent it, such as Law No. 16 of 2019, which raised the minimum age of marriage to 19. Although marriage dispensation is intended as an exception for urgent cases, it is often exploited, leading to persistently high rates of early marriage. Contributing factors include poverty, low levels of education, cultural norms, and unintended pregnancies. The consequences are significant, encompassing health risks, school dropouts, economic instability, and psychological problems for the child.

Legal protection through Supreme Court Regulation (PERMA) No. 5 of 2019 has sought to tighten the dispensation process by prioritizing the best interests of the child. However, its implementation continues to face challenges due to strong socio-economic and cultural influences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To reduce the prevalence of early marriage, both short- and long-term comprehensive solutions are required. Short-term measures include interagency collaboration, active monitoring, and accurate data collection. Long-term strategies involve improving reproductive health education, economic empowerment, changing societal mindsets, and strengthening law enforcement. Synergy between the government, educational institutions, communities, and other stakeholders is essential to raise awareness of the negative impacts of child marriage and to provide better life alternatives for adolescents. Through a multidimensional approach, it is hoped that the prevalence of child

marriage can be significantly reduced, ensuring the protection of children's rights and the development of a higher-quality generation.

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