



## Public Policy As An Effort To Prevent Early Marriage Through Parental Participation

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### Abstrak:

**Background.** The high rate of early marriage in Indonesia is influenced by factors such as tradition, social norms, economy, and low parental education levels. Parents often serve as the final decision-makers in child marriages, making their participation crucial in prevention efforts.

**Aims.** This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of public policies in preventing early marriage through approaches that involve active parental participation.

**Methods.** The method used is sociological juridical with a qualitative approach, conducted through discussion forums, coaching, and legal and health education for parents.

**Conclusion.** The results show that the government has issued various policies, such as Law Number 16 of 2019, as well as programs such as BIMWIN, BRUS, marriage clinics, and women's and children's empowerment. However, these efforts are not yet optimal without improving parental capacity and awareness. The novelty of this research lies in its emphasis on legal and health education for parents as a strategic step in preventing early marriage.

**Implementation.** The implication is the need for integrative policy synergy between the government, society, and families

**Kata Kunci:** Government Policy, Early Marriage, Parental Education, Family Participation



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### INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period of transition from adolescence to adulthood. During this period, individuals experience rapid growth, both physically and mentally. Many teenagers today experience a maturity gap, or differing mental and physical developmental stages. This difference in maturity can pose a risk to adolescents' behavior, leading to negative outcomes (Aprianti, A. et al. 2018).

According to research conducted by the University of Indonesia's Department of Gender and Sexuality Studies, child marriage in Indonesia has decreased by 3.5 percentage points over the past 10 years. However, this decline is still relatively slow, and systematic and integrated efforts are needed to reach the target of 8.74 percent by 2024 and 6.94 percent by 2030.

Some of the major problems facing Indonesian youth today include early marriage, premarital sex, education, promiscuity, and economic issues.

- a. Early marriage is marriage that occurs before the prospective bride and groom reach 19 years of age.
- b. Premarital sexual behavior is any act, such as holding hands, kissing, affection, or even sexual intercourse, undertaken out of sexual desire before marriage.
- c. Education is a conscious effort to prepare students through guidance, teaching, and/or training for their future roles.
- d. Promiscuity is a form of deviant behavior, where the word "free" means crossing the boundaries of norms established by law or invisible norms created by society.
- e. Economics is the study of how humans meet their needs using available resources. All forms of human effort and endeavor to meet these needs are aimed at achieving a prosperous life.
- f. The problems facing adolescents mentioned above are as explained in the following diagram.

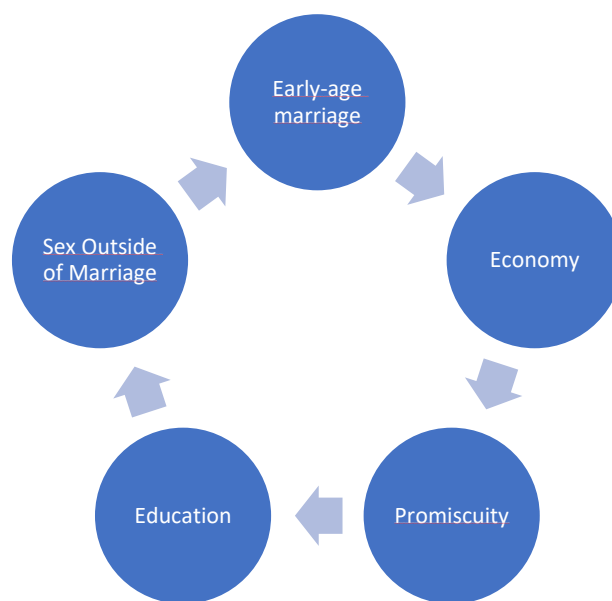


diagram 1.

The above are several factors influencing the high rate of early marriage in this research location. These include traditions and social norms that consider early marriage normal and even a form of parental responsibility. Furthermore, educational issues and lack of awareness of the importance of schooling may also contribute to this phenomenon. Limited access to quality education and understanding of children's rights and reproductive health are important issues that require attention (Samnuzulsari, T., Oktariyani, S. & Safitri, A. 2025).

Furthermore, social pressure from the surrounding environment can also influence the decision to marry at an early age. Economic factors such as poverty or family financial burdens can also trigger families to arrange their children's marriages at a young age as a way to overcome financial difficulties. Lack of parental education is also a factor in early marriage.

The Indonesian government has made various efforts to address early marriage through legislation and social programs. These include Law No. 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law No. 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, early childhood development by the Office of Religious Affairs by 2023, the Ministry of Religious Affairs successfully producing 3,200 BIMWIN and BRUS mentors, marriage clinics, creative videos, and programs to empower women and children. Efforts made by both the government and social institutions, both public and private, have not been sufficient to reduce the rate of early marriage.

Research findings deemed relevant to this study and which will subsequently be used as comparative material are presented in the below:

1. Family Education and the Social Environment in Preventing Early Marriage in Banjarmasin Regency. Authors: Jurnal, Mukhsin Aseri. Research findings: Pressure from family and social norms in the surrounding environment influence adolescents' decisions to marry at an early age. (Aseri, M. (2023)
2. The role of family communication in the decision-making process for early marriage among adolescents. Authors: Jurnal, Dea Syifa Fauziah, Yanti Tayo, Wahyu Utamidewi. Results: Family communication plays a crucial role in the decision-making process for early marriage among adolescents. (Fauziah, D.S., Tayo, Y. & Utamidewi, W. 2024)
3. The Role of Marriage Clinics in Building Marriage Readiness as an Effort to Form a Sakinah Family: Jurnal, Indah Sari, Fatimah Fatimah. The results of Marriage Clinics

in minimizing divorce cases are by providing and increasing knowledge to the community so they can build a *sakinah* family. (Sari, I. & Fatimah, F. 2024)

Parental education plays a central role in shaping the identity, behavior, attitudes, character, and outlook on life of family members. Therefore, this research will yield a new concept in the form of Parental Education to prevent early marriage in their children. The sentence states, "Al-Ummu madrasatul ula, iza adadtaha adadta syaban thayyibal araq." This means: Mother is the first madrasah (school) for her child. If you prepare her well, you will also prepare a good nation in essence. So far, the government has only focused on the subject of early marriage, namely children, even though parents are a more important subject in determining whether or not early marriage occurs. We know that parental permission to conduct a marriage is mandatory, and parents are even part of the harmony of a marriage, whether it is declared valid or not.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a sociological-juridical method with a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the socio-legal context of early marriage and the role of parents within it. Data collection was conducted through a literature review of relevant laws, journals, and reports, as well as through field activities, including:

1. Guided discussion forums with parents in the research area to explore their perceptions, knowledge, and roles in preventing early marriage.
2. Legal and reproductive health education and counseling using interactive lecture methods, aimed at increasing parents' understanding of the impacts of early marriage.
3. Secondary data analysis from relevant agencies such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs, BPS, and BKKBN complemented the qualitative findings.

The collected data was analyzed thematically to identify patterns, challenges, and opportunities in efforts to prevent early marriage through parental involvement.

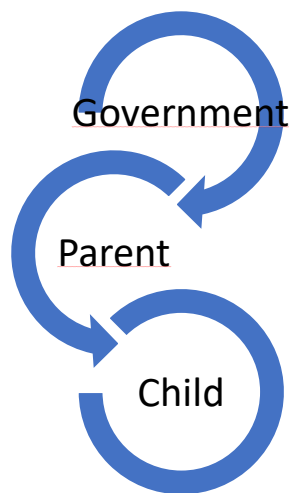
## DISCUSSION

### Government Strategies and Efforts to Prevent Early Marriage

As part of community empowerment, family education plays a strategic role in reducing early marriage. Adequate knowledge about how to properly care for children, eat a balanced diet, and manage family finances can improve well-being and reduce the risk of early marriage (Wahyuni & Anggraeni, 2022).

In this regard, the government, as the primary entity responsible for state administration, from the highest to the most privileged positions, has full responsibility for preventing early marriage. At the lowest level, the government can collaborate with parents to prevent early marriage, thereby protecting children from it.

The government, parents, and children must work together, as illustrated in the following diagram:



**Diagram 2.**

The Indonesian government has undertaken various efforts to address early marriage through legislation and social programs. These include Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, the Compilation of Islamic Law, and regulations issued by governors, regents, and village heads. However, deviations from the 19-year-old age requirement for marriage are still possible, including by requesting a dispensation from the court for urgent reasons and with sufficient supporting evidence.

In addition to the marriage law, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, through the School-Age Youth Guidance Program (BRUS), currently a program of the Directorate of Religious

Affairs Offices (KUA) and Sakinah Family Development, is also being implemented by the Islamic Guidance Division in each district/city of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This program is projected to broaden students' understanding of the impacts and risks of child and early marriage.

The BRUS program aims to provide adolescents with knowledge and understanding of the negative impacts of underage or young marriage and to encourage them to become self-aware, aware of their strengths and weaknesses.

### **The Important Role of Parents in Preventing Early Marriage**

Parents play a crucial role in parenting. Knowledge of how to raise children well is essential for maintaining their children's habits and lifestyle, including providing psychological support. Children raised in families that provide support and good instruction tend to have better physical and mental development. On the other hand, poor parenting, such as placing pressure on children, tends to result in unstable mental health.

Parental education also influences how families operate economically. Economic skills training, such as sewing, handicrafts, and micro-enterprise courses, can reduce the rate of early marriage in a community. This is because mothers who receive this education have greater financial independence and the ability to provide a better education for their children. Economic involvement in the family can raise awareness of the importance of formal education for children, including girls. With better knowledge of the long-term impacts of early marriage on health, education, and economic well-being, families with access to education are more likely to delay their children's marriage until a more mature age. Families with adequate income are also better able to cope with financial challenges without relying on early marriage.

Furthermore, efforts to prevent early marriage through reproductive health education in several villages have shown positive results in reducing early marriage rates. A better understanding of women's rights and reproductive health encourages delayed marriage and provides opportunities for girls to continue their education.

If early marriage is still possible, parents need to consider the psychological implications of early marriage:

- a. Physically, a child in their teens is still developing. Having sex makes them vulnerable to various diseases, especially for women. Furthermore, they are not

physically ready to become mothers or undergo childbirth, and they are also not physically ready due to frequent bleeding or miscarriage, and even anemia.

- b. Cognitively, during childhood and adolescence, children's perspectives are not yet broad, and their problem-solving and decision-making skills are not yet fully developed. If problems arise in their marriage, they tend to have difficulty resolving them.
- c. Language: Children and adolescents cannot always communicate their thoughts clearly. This can be a major problem in a marriage. Socially, if they marry as teenagers, their social life will tend to be limited and they will receive less support from their environment.

Emotionally, adolescents are often unstable. If they encounter problems, they are more likely to experience depression, which poses risks for themselves as teenagers and for any children born into the marriage. In addition, with unstable emotions, the impact of early marriage on children/teenagers is that they fight more often so that their marriage is unhappy.

### **The Perspective of Children and the Impact of Early Marriage**

Children are the budding, potential, and future generation of the nation's ideals. Children play a strategic role in ensuring the future existence of the nation and state. To enable them to carry out this responsibility, they need the broadest possible opportunities to grow and develop optimally, both physically, spiritually, and spiritually. They need to be granted their rights, protected, and ensured for their well-being. Therefore, all forms of violence against children need to be prevented and addressed. The impacts of early marriage on children include:

- a. Physical: reproductive health risks, teenage pregnancy, and risky childbirth.
- b. Psychological: emotional instability, depression, and difficulty resolving domestic conflicts.
- c. Socio-educational: interrupted access to education, limited social interaction, and loss of potential for self-development.

Marsaid cites the definition of a child in the General Indonesian Dictionary, as a human being who is still small. Marsaid also quotes Soedjono Dirjisisworo, who states that according to customary law, a minor is someone who has not yet shown clear physical signs

of adulthood. Legally, Indonesia has laws and regulations that guarantee children's rights and mitigate the impact of child labor, namely: (Marsaid (2015))

1. The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia
2. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
3. Ratification of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child at the UN General Assembly on November 20, 1989, which became Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia Number 36 of 1990 concerning the Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
4. Ratification of ILO Convention No. 138, which became Law No. 20 of 1999 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, the fifth International Labor Conference
5. Law No. 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection
6. Law No. 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower

From 2019 to the end of 2021, cases of early marriage in Indonesia continued to increase, according to data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA) and the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN), increasing by 30% annually. In Central Java alone, according to data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Central Java Province, there were 8,700 cases of early marriage in 2021. To obtain a marriage certificate, marriage must be conducted through a trial or a marriage dispensation case at a religious court. Meanwhile, early marriage in Central Kalimantan also remains high. Based on 2019 data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the marriage rate for women aged 10 and over is 18.42% for those aged 16, 22.55% for those aged 17-18, 23.34% for those aged 19-20, and 35.69% for those aged 21.

## **CONCLUSION**

Early marriage is a complex problem that requires holistic and integrated approaches. Existing public policies, while demonstrating government commitment, are not effective enough without the active involvement of parents. Parental education on law, reproductive health, and childcare is a key factor in preventing early marriage. Furthermore, efforts to empower families economically, improve access to health services, and strengthen communication within families need to be continuously promoted. Therefore, it is recommended that the government:

1. Strengthen the dissemination of early marriage prevention policies down to the grassroots level by directly involving parents.
2. Integrate parenting education modules into the BRUS, BIMWIN, and family counseling programs.
3. Encourage collaboration between local governments, educational institutions, and community organizations to build collective awareness about the dangers of early marriage.

With synergy between regulations, programs, and family participation, it is hoped that the number of early marriages in Indonesia can be significantly reduced, thereby fulfilling children's rights and safeguarding the quality of Indonesia's young generation.

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