

## The Child Marriage Trends in 3T Regions of Sumatra: The Impact of Law No. 16/2019 and the Covid-19 Pandemic on Poor Communities

Budi Wahyuni<sup>1</sup>, Ratih Hidayah Nur<sup>2</sup>, and Sri Purwatiningsih<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan (LBH APIK), Yogyakarta, <sup>2</sup>Indonesia Women Center Yayasan Hari Ibu (YHI) Kowani, Yogyakarta, <sup>3</sup>Center for Population and Policy Studies, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Sri Purwatiningsih (email: athayarafif@yahoo.com)

### Abstract

The study "Identification of Changes in Marriage Trends Age < 19 years Post the Law No. 16/ 2019 and in Covid Age 19 in Rural and Urban Poor, in 3T (Outer, Remote, and Frontier) Region of Sumatra Island" was carried out by PERMAMPU (Perempuan Sumatra Mampu) in 26 villages distributed over 26 districts, in 8 provinces on the island of Sumatra, using the FPAR (Feminist Participatory Action Research) method. This study is undermined by PERMAMPU's concerns about the increasing data and practice of child marriage and early marriage <19 years especially in the countryside, although the Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974, which previously allowed 16 years of marriage for women and 19 years for men, has been reduced to a minimum age of 19 years in women and men through the Law No.1 of 2019. The FPAR method focuses on the life stories of women and related stakeholders. The information and data obtained from 1,147 sources (986 women & 161 men) resulted in 32 case studies. In addition to qualitative data, also obtained quantitative data that showed an increasing trend in child-age marriage practices. This is typically caused by, among other things, a lack of understanding of Law No. 16 of 2019 and a low level of education about sexual and reproductive health rights, which led to unwanted pregnancies, school dropouts, and poverty.

**Keywords:** child marriages; 3T (Outer, Remote, and Frontier); reproductive health; poverty

### Introduction

Child marriage is one type of forced marriage, according to the National Commission on Violence Against Women's Study on Culture-Based Violence. There are a number of customs and cultural norms that contribute to the practice of underage marriage. Cultural and religious constraints are often the driving forces for early marriage (Sulaiman, 2012; Latifiani, 2019; Lebni, et.al., 2020). According to cultural interpretations, women who have menstruated are seen as ready for marriage,

then are viewed as spinsters and turn into gossip. In addition to preventing adultery or bad behaviours, planned marriages are also performed to uphold social rank and class, prevent unwanted pregnancies, and girl abductions. Ending child marriage is a global strategy to protect children's rights. However, in some places, this agenda faces resistance (Natsif, 2018).

People will marry off women who became pregnant unintentionally in the name of culture. Unwanted pregnancies are frequently the cause of early marriage, one of which is the focus of Elfani and Muarifah's

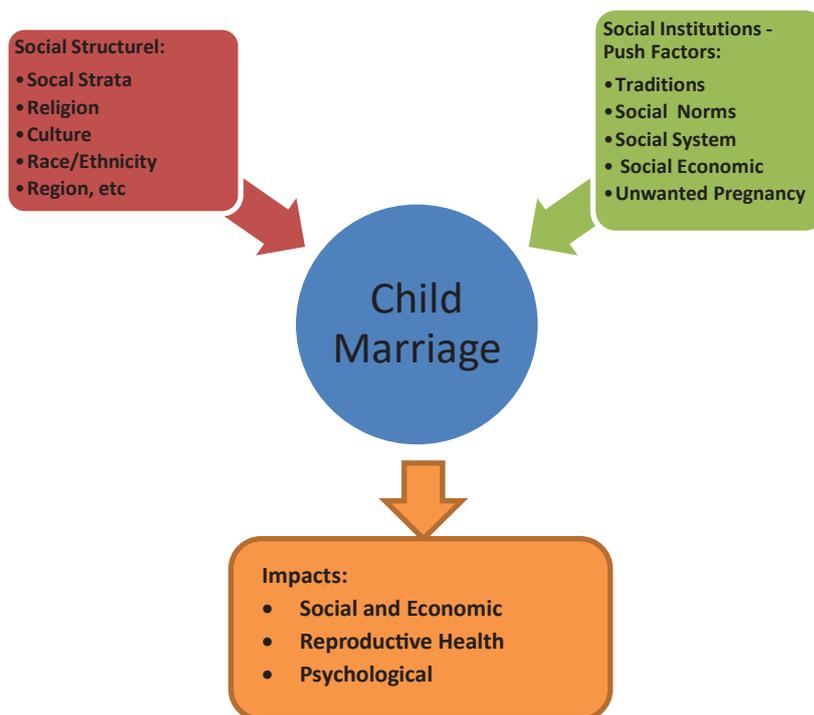
(2022) research. Despite the fact that the pregnancy was caused by rape in an attempt to hide the shame of the family. Girls as young as nine or ten years old have been single parents two or three times in some places, according to research. Additionally, girls are sometimes married off to local religious leaders as a kind of hoping for blessing. As an offering to receive blessings from the god is the goal. The practice of child marriage is carried out because the girl has misbehaved. So the solution is to marry off the girl in order that her delinquency will decrease or even disappear.

The 2020–2024 RPJMN aim for Indonesia is for a reduction in the marriage rate below 19 years old to 8.74 percent. In the meantime, child marriage rates in Indonesia decreased to 10.82 percent in 2019 from 11.21 percent in 2017, according to KPPPA (Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak RI = Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection) data. Nonetheless, the National Commission on Violence Against Women discovered that during Covid-19, there was a notable surge in the number of weddings between individuals under the age of 19. There were 23,126 marriages under 19 in 2019, but that figure shot up to 64,211 in 2020. Globally, Riany (2022) even predicted that Indonesia, one of the nations with the greatest rates of underage marriage, will rank seventh in the world in 2022. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), 33.76 percent of Indonesia's youth

will marry for the first time between the ages of 19 and 21 in 2022. Then, between the ages of 22 and 24, 27.07 percent of the nation's youth will get married for the first time. Additionally, 19.24 percent of young individuals were married for the first time between the ages of 16 and 18. The government of Indonesia is actively implementing a variety of efforts to avoid child marriage (Eleonora and Sari, 2019; Tan, 2022; Yoshida, et.al., 2022), one of them is through efforts to increase the age of marriage (Putri and Rosida, 2019; Siswari, et.al., 2022)

Child marriage is encouraged by a number of variables, including social standards that are in place, economic factors, and unintended pregnancy. Numerous investigations have demonstrated that underage marriage is still a common occurrence in Indonesia. Child marriage is frequently caused by economic factors (Khaparistia and Edward, 2015; Hidayatulloh, 2018; Khaerani, 2019; and Dafani, et.al., 2023). Since social action is defined as individual action that is impacted by and influences other people, Max Weber's theory of social action serves as the framework for this study.

Child marriage is a phenomena that results from variables affecting its likelihood. In addition, child marriage affects the persons involved as well as other people. Thus, one way to analyse the social phenomena of child marriage is through the lens of Weber's theory.



**Figure 1.** Weber's Theory in Viewing the Phenomenon of Child Marriage

According to Weber, the idea of social structure and social institutions, or institutions in society, generate or produce social action, or in this case, child marriage. One reason why child marriage occurs in our society is because of the relationship between these two ideas. Additionally focused on the intentions and ambitions of the offender is Max Weber's theory of social action (Ritzer, 2014). We can comprehend the behaviour of both individuals and groups—each with distinct reasons and objectives for implementing child marriage—by applying this theory. Using this hypothesis will also allow for the investigation of the effects of child marriage.

Next, by putting the prevalence of child marriage into a framework, Psaki, et.al. (2021) put Weber's theory into practice. Many drivers that may contribute to child marriage are described in this framework. Child marriage is widely accepted in society because of poverty and societal standards. Psaki (2021) further stated that the prevalence of child marriage is also

influenced by other variables, including unintended pregnancies, a lack of agency, and a lack of chances. After thereafter, these diverse motivations will interact and may show themselves as differences between cultures.

The 3T region is also a crucial area for research. Because it touches on a number of key issues, including equitable development, poverty reduction, national security, and unrealised potential for natural resources, the 3T Regions issue is significant. Furthermore, focussing on 3T Regions is a component of the endeavour to enhance national integration and establish social fairness. If these areas don't receive enough attention, they risk falling farther behind and finding it more challenging to achieve inclusive and sustainable growth.

Afterwards, the study's findings will be used as supporting evidence by district/city governments, interested parties, and policymakers to enhance the application and extension of laws and policies prohibiting the marriage of underage minors

to poor urban and rural subdistricts. As required by Minister of Health Regulation No. 3/2016 concerning Training and Implementation of Abortion Services for Indications of Medical Emergency and Pregnancy Due to Rape, the outcomes of Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) will also serve as important information for policy advocacy and public awareness regarding girls who have been raped's access to safe abortion services.

## **Methods**

Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) is the research technique used in this study. It is centred on achieving women's human rights via the processing and analysis of women's experiences, knowledge, and engagement as change agents. FPAR incorporates communities and groups in its implementation. In order to develop coordinated action to uphold women's rights, community involvement is crucial. If issues come up, the FPAR

This study concerned to 3T regions, due to its bearing on a number of key issues, including equitable development, poverty reduction, and national security. The list of

programme functions properly. As a result, a sense of kinship must be prioritised in dealing with victims.

In addition to building empowerment and social change initiatives for marginalised and oppressed groups, FPAR will be able to give voice to underrepresented populations, such as poor women, women who have experienced violence, and persons with disabilities. As opposed to Participation, Action, and Research (PAR), which is more conventional or generic (simple) and occasionally overlooks marginalised groups, such women (Maguire, 1996; McIntyre, 2008; Ryan-Flood and Gill, 2010 in Andajani, et.al., 2022). Furthermore, FPAR integrates the beneficial elements of PAR with a feminist research paradigm, which empowers marginalised communities via a socially equitable, democratic, and participatory research process (Andajani, et al, 2022).

This study was carried out in 26 villages, 26 districts in 8 provinces on the island of Sumatra. Five (5) of these districts are 3T areas (Outer, Remote, Frontier)<sup>1</sup>. resource persons in this FPAR is 1147 people consisting of 161 men and 986 women as follows.

---

<sup>1</sup>List of underdeveloped regions in Sumatra for the year 2020-2024: 1) Provinsi Sumatera Utara (Kabupaten Nias, Kabupaten Nias Selatan, Kabupaten Nias Utara, Kabupaten Nias Barat), 2) Provinsi Sumatera Barat (Kabupaten Kepulauan Mentawai), 3) Provinsi Sumatera Selatan (Kabupaten Musi Rawas Utara), 4) Provinsi Lampung (Kabupaten Pesisir Barat). Kementerian Desa, Pembangunan Daerah Tertinggal, dan Transmigrasi (kemendes.go.id)

**Table 1. List of Resource Persons in PERMAMPU's Research**

Resource Person	Sex		Disability	Age				
	M	F		≤19	> 19-44	45-59	> 60-70	>70
<b>Resource Person in Village Level</b>								
FGD of Adult Women	1	409	0	26	273	84	12	2
FGD of Young Women (12-19 yo)	1	360	0	268	54	11	2	0
Interview:								
Married Women ≤ 19 yo (age of marriage 0-5 yo)	0	32	0	14	15	0	0	0
Married Women ≤ 19 yo (age of marriage 5-10 yo)	0	25	0	0	22	1	1	1
Married child's parents ≤ 19 yo	2	39	0	2	11	22	3	0
Unmarried young woman's parents ( 12 & 19 yo)	2	21	0	1	10	11	0	0
Religious Leader	19	3	0	0	4	10	4	2
Traditional Figures	22	4	0	0	1	12	9	3
Village Government (Village Leader, Village Secretary, BPD/Tuhapeut/MPD (Majelis Permusyawaratan Desa), Sekretaris Pekon)	21	3	0	0	13	9	0	0
Village Cadres, Midwives, PKK cadres	0	10	0	0	6	3	0	0
Youth figures, mosque teenagers	6	0	0	0	1	4	0	0
<b>Resource Person in Sub-district Level</b>								
Principal/teacher	1	3	0	0	3	1	0	0
Puskesmas	3	22	0	0	13	9	0	0
KUA	22	1	0	0	4	14	1	0
<b>Resource Person in District Level</b>								
Women and Children Empowerment Office	10	24	0	0	14	17	0	0
Health Office	5	7	0	1	6	5	0	0
Education Office	5	4	0	0	2	4	0	0
Department of Population and Civil Registration	3	1	0	0	0	4	0	0
Religious Courts	18	7	0	0	11	9	0	0
Ministry of Religion	9	1	0	0	1	8	0	0
Traditional Council	4	0	0	0	0	2	0	1
Sharia Police	2	1	0	0	2	1	0	0
Ulema Consultative Council	4	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
NGO Network, Mass Organizations, CBOs	1	6	1	0	4	2	0	0
<b>Resource Person in Province Level</b>								
Women and Children Empowerment Office	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Development Planning Agency at Sub-National Level	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
High Religious Court in Pekanbaru	0	1	0					
<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>986</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>9</b>

*Source:* Data of FPAR Research Findings, 2023

## Result and Discussion

### Marriage <19 Years in Sumatra

Child marriage is one of the most crucial issues related to the protection of children and women. Some groups even mention that Indonesia can be said to have a child marriage emergency (Farihah, 2023). UNICEF data states that the number of child marriage cases in Indonesia was 25.53 million in 2023, making Indonesia ranked fourth in child marriage globally (*Kompas*, Maret 2024).

Meanwhile, Sumatra is a region where marriage under the age of 19 is common. PERMAMPU (Konsorsium Perempuan Sumatera Mampu), also known as “Women of Sumatra MAMPU”, is a coalition of eight women’s non-governmental organizations (NGOs) established in the Sumatra region. The coalition was founded on the principle of empowering grassroots women leaders to fulfill sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) for women in the eight provinces of Sumatra Island.

Despite the fact that the 2019 Marriage Law raised the legal age of marriage from 16 to 19 for both men and women, not many people, including religious institutions, are aware of this change in the law. That’s the reason the phrase “less than 19” is unknown, although it always alludes to child marriage. Many people still refer to Law

No. 1, the 1974 Marriage Law, or assume that the sole change is the 18-year-old child age limit. All 24 participants in a PESADA (Perkumpulan Sada Ahmo), an NGO in North Sumatera Utara concerned with Gender Equality and Social Justice, assessment in 2023 who were representatives of six faith-based organisations in North Sumatra were unaware of Law No. 16 of 2019, a revision to the Marriage Law from 1974. In fact, some still refer to the view that children are under 17 years old because they do not yet have a KTP/NIK; and a small percentage stated that as long as they are over 18 years old, they can get married. This comes as a huge surprise. This viewpoint is thought to be representative of the general viewpoint in society, particularly in frontier, isolated, and outermost places; it is also thought to be representative of the viewpoint in PERMAMPU-assisted areas with rigid religious and customary practices that have not yet been attained.

For example, data from Lampung Province shows that there are still many requests for marriage dispensation. In Lampung Province, there has been an increase in the number of marriage dispensation applications since 2020. Data on the number of marriage dispensation cases from 2019 - 2023 in the Bandar Lampung Religious High Court area are as follows.

**Table 2. Child Marriage Data in Lampung Province 2019-2023**

Marriage Situation in Lampung in the Last 5 Years	
2019	283
2020	798
2021	722
2022	714
2023	666

\* as of December 28, 2023

\* High Court of Religious Affairs Bandar Lampung

Source: FPAR Report Lampung Province

Table 2 above shows that in Lampung Province there has been a surge in marriage dispensation applications since 2020. The post-Covid situation has actually increased cases of child marriage. In addition, the increase in the marriage age limit does not seem to have had an impact on society, because requests for marriage dispensation are still high. Requesting a marriage dispensation remains responsibility that must be performed by the relevant stakeholders (Salam, 2017).

Meanwhile, FPAR results also show that there are many cases of Siri marriage as a solution for not meeting the general administrative requirements for marriage at the KUA (Office of Religious Affairs). This option is taken when parents consider that it is time for their children to get married, while state marriage is not possible. For example, FGD results in Lampung Province where many people consider the marriage dispensation process to be complicated and bureaucratic, so they tend to prioritize the siri marriage process. There are also those who apply for marriage at the KUA and are rejected, then enter into a Siri marriage through religious leaders. Only when they are old enough do they remarry at the KUA in a registered manner and get a marriage book.

### *Maturation of Marriage Age*

Four presidential directives pertaining to child protection should be prioritised nationally in terms of national policy. These directives include (1) enhancing the role of mothers and families in the upbringing and education of children; (2) decreasing child abuse; (3) decreasing child labour; and (4) preventing child marriage. Various ministries, institutions, and civil society have obeyed the aforementioned instruction; yet, children's rights breaches continue to occur in a variety of contexts.

KPAI is advocating for significant efforts to lower child marriage, which stands at 10.35% at the moment. The prevalence of

child weddings includes both legally recognised marriages and those for whom a marriage dispensation is requested. The secret to preventing child marriage is to uphold children's fundamental rights, including education and parental education. When requests are made for marriage dispensation, there must be compelling reasons to grant the request, and the supporting documentation must be grounded in an expansive interpretation of *maslahah* and *mafsadah*, taking into account the child's best interests as well as the child's internal and external circumstances. Setting a minimum age at which to seek dispensation is crucial addition to that. In an attempt to strictly enforce marriage dispensation as part of the best preventive measures against child marriage, KPAI urges the prompt ratification of the Draft Government Regulation on Marriage Dispensation.

The study findings indicated that teens' views about the approaching marriage age were correlated with their level of education. The prevention of early marriage is accomplished through counseling teenagers, with the goal of raising the age at first marriage so that women attain a minimum age of 20 and men age 25 at the time of marriage. Maturing the age of marriage and family planning is delaying marriage and pregnancy, the period of preventing pregnancy, the period of spacing pregnancies, the period of terminating pregnancy. The growth of the female reproductive organs terminates at the age of 20, and the growth of the male reproductive organs finishes at the age of 20 or 21. Men's reproductive organs continue to develop during this period of time, delaying pregnancy (Meliati dan Sundayani, 2021).

A common consideration in marriage decisions is the significance of enhancing the quality of human resources, such as the chance to pursue further education and secure employment, prior to the marriage process. The problems of employment and unemployment that affect the public are

directly linked to the question of decent work. Consequently, the BKKBN establishes the Marriage Age Maturation (PUP) programme at 25 years for men and 21 years for women. Men are already financially able to support their families at this age, while women are physically, intellectually, and emotionally prepared, particularly for pregnancy and childbirth. Naturally, this is done in light of Indonesia's 12-year mandatory school system, the chance to pursue further education, and the availability of respectable employment.

One effective way to stop child marriage and make sure girls can reach their full potential is to put a high priority on their education. For a girl to delay marriage and have more time to acquire the abilities, information, and self-assurance necessary to make judgements, the longer she attends school. In order to create healthier families that will last for generations, girls should put off getting married and having children (UNICEF, 2018).

The gender component of the protection of children's rights is acknowledged by both the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Girls confront unique gender-based issues such as early pregnancy, child marriage, less access to school than boys, and vulnerability to sexual abuse in addition to issues that are common to children, such as health and education.

Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) is an important issue for both women and girls. Enhancing education and reproductive health resources for girls in schools is one strategy to improve the protection of children's rights in the SRHR. One example of enhancing SRHR for girls in schools is the Menstrual Health Management programme, but regrettably, neither the community nor the government has given this kind of programme enough attention or support.

Women are subjected to gender inequity and prejudice from an early age. Girls' experiences with gender inequity will define their mature potential. Therefore, it is impossible to separate the component of gender justice from the preservation of children's rights. As a result, starting in early life, efforts must be taken to promote gender justice, increase the representation of women, and end prejudice against them. Thus, the feminist agenda to advance gender justice includes children's rights protection (Atnike, 2020).

According to the findings of the focus group discussion (FGD) conducted in West Sumatra, marriage at the age of 19 is customarily performed in practically every region, including nagari and sub-districts (urban areas) for a variety of reasons. For instance, for religious, cultural, traditional, or economic reasons. However, because they are more likely to experience domestic abuse, drop out of school, or even become pregnant or lose a child, victims of child marriage will ultimately suffer negative effects from the union. Because they are not yet ready for parenthood, mothers under the age of 19 are more susceptible to difficulties during pregnancy and childbirth, which could endanger both the mother and the child.

Due to their failure to comply with state regulations, a large number of marriages between individuals under the age of 19 are also performed through unregistered marriages. Islam permits halal marriages, therefore one option to have an unregistered marriage is through one of these reasons: lack of age, something undesirable, marriage to someone else's husband, promiscuity, or reasons not to commit adultery. According to studies conducted in Aceh Tamiang, there was one instance of an unreported marriage that happened without a marriage dispensation application; the couple was forced to get married during a raid.

In societies where there are Islamic communities, the process of being married at the age of 19 is known as *sirri* marriage.

There are, nevertheless, distinctions between Muslim and non-Muslim communities in places like the islands of Nias and Mentawai. When someone reaches the age of 19, in Nias Island, for instance in West Nias, they are only allowed to marry in front of their families and under the watchful eyes of traditional leaders. In the meanwhile, in North Nias, a child under the age of 19 will be temporarily adopted as the male parent's adopted child, with permission to share a room. When the child reaches the age of 19, the marriage will take place.

Meanwhile, church-conducted marriages for those under the age of 19 are practiced in Mentawai, West Sumatra Province. However, prior to the church performing the wedding ceremony, church sanctions—also referred to as "Church Strategy"—are applied to those who violate marriage laws pertaining to individuals under the age of 19. This church plan consists of numerous stages that need to be completed, including:

- Following each weekly worship service, the couple will receive additional instruction from the pastor or church leadership regarding the principles of goodness. They will be asked to confess their sins and commit to the correct teachings once more.
- The church implemented its plan as a kind of support, and this continued for almost half a year.
- Following the church's assessment that the couple is prepared, has admitted their transgressions, and has received adequate guidance on life and domestic duties, a re-blessing is performed in front of the congregation.
- This blessing serves as a means of repentance, official reunification with the church, and official acknowledgement of their marriage by the church.

There are a number of interrelated factors that contribute to child marriage in Indonesia. Poverty, for instance, is one reason. Results from earlier research, including the National Socio-Economic Survey (Susenas), indicate that girls, children from low-income households, children living in rural regions, and children with low levels of education are the groups of children most at risk from child marriage (UNICEF, 2020). For instance, in Aceh Province, poor family functioning, discord in the home, divorce, children from broken households, poverty, inadequate education, and school dropout are the main causes of marriage at the age of 19. Mass judgements, raids, beatings, and forced marriages for couples caught in extramarital affairs or wooing, pregnant outside of marriage, or wedded because they left school to lessen the financial load on their parents. Aside from that, it's also accepted that a person who has reached puberty may accept a marriage proposal from someone else. Belief in social myths: for instance, you won't find love easily if you turn down three proposals. The process of discovering one's individuality, joining in and feeling like you're gaining freedom of action, peer pressure, and the continuation of child marriages within the family.

### *Impact of Child Marriage*

Based on the results of FGDs and interviews, there are various negative impacts of <19 years of marriage, including:

- Unstable emotions are the root cause of domestic violence (KDRT).
- Health conditions pertaining to reproduction that may lead to miscarriage.
- Stunting in cases of low birth weight (LBW).
- It is challenging for girls to find employment since many drop out of school. They will then face structured poverty as a result of the economy collapsing.

- Shifting the burden of caring for babies to parents which also adds to the economic burden.
- Double burden on women (wife must carry out her obligations as wife, mother, and backbone).
- Stress and disharmony which lead to divorce.
- Parenting styles that lead to kid neglect (because of financial and mental inadequacies; marriage is merely a means of avoiding penalties).

**Table 3. Impact of Marriage Age <19 Years on Health Aspects**

<b>Nagari Katapiang, Padang Pariaman Regency</b>	<b>Nagari Tanjung Bonai, Tanah Datar Regency</b>	<b>Goisooinan Village, Kepulauan Mentawai</b>
The reproductive organs are not yet perfect, which often leads to death of the mother and baby, miscarriage and low birth weight (LBW)	The vulnerability of women who marry and conceive at 19 years of age	Mothers die during childbirth at a higher rate
Miscarriages	The mother's physical development is not at her best	The infant mortality rate is high
Malnutrition, anemia	Miscarriage, enabling the mother's and child's deaths	Being traumatised up to adulthood.
Being stressed out as a young woman because she was carrying more weight than she could handle in life.	Malnutrition during pregnancy	Numerous illnesses exist, including cervical and breast cancer.
Harm to a woman's reproductive organs.	Becoming the victim of economic, domestic, or sexual violence, etc.	Children born to young moms are frequently stunted
Children's development and growth are delayed	Low birth weight	-

*Source:* FGD results from 3 *nagari*/villages in the research location (Research Report FPAR/Feminist Participatory Action Research in West Sumatera Province)

Child marriage has consequences on health aspects. Based on the results of previous studies, it shows that adolescent girls who marry early are more likely to experience complications during pregnancy and childbirth due to their physical immaturity. This includes higher risks of maternal mortality, and low birth weight for newborns (WHO, 2006; Maheshwari, 2022, and Dadras, et.al., 2023).

The research result also showed the health impacts of child marriage. They are

extensive and severe, ranging from heightened risks during pregnancy and childbirth to long-term mental health challenges. Child brides face a lack of reproductive autonomy, poor access to healthcare, and increased exposure to violence, all of which contribute to compromised physical and mental well-being. These health consequences extend to their children, perpetuating a cycle of poor health and poverty. Addressing child marriage is critical to improving maternal and

child health outcomes globally, and requires concerted efforts to improve education, healthcare access, and legal protections for vulnerable girls.

*Impact of Marriage Age <19 years from Socio-Economic Aspects*

Women are typically the ones who lose out on marriages under the age of 19, including mental health issues brought on by not being prepared to raise children, child neglect, and other issues specific to young marriage. Adding to the financial strain brought on by having more family members living in the home, as well as the load parents bear in caring for their grandchildren. The wife needs to fulfill her responsibilities as a wife, mother, and backbone, which creates a double load. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that occasionally they endure discord that results in divorce. Parenting

styles range from nurturing (kids looking after kids) to neglectful (married off to avoid sanctions).

Child marriage has significant socio-economic impacts on individuals, families, communities, and even national economies. The practice not only affects the life trajectory of child brides but also perpetuates cycles of poverty, limits economic growth, and reinforces gender inequality. Child brides are more likely to be economically dependent on their husbands or families, which limits their decision-making power within the household. This economic dependency increases their vulnerability to domestic violence and abuse, as they have fewer options for financial independence. A study in Feminist Economics discusses how this dependency diminishes their overall well-being and exacerbates gender inequalities within society (Parsons and Edmeades, 2015).

**Table 4. Impact of Marriage Age <19 years from Socio-Economic Aspects**

<b>Jambi Province</b>	<b>West Sumatera Province</b>
Becoming a burden on parents	Short marriage life (frequent divorce)
Don't have a permanent job yet	To find job, many people relocate to Padang City, but typically the salaries is poor
Poor, triggering divorce	Many of the survivors who remain in the village work as agricultural labourers or weavers
Informal sector jobs: risky, low wages	
Create new poverty	

Source: FGD & Interview in Jambi and West Sumatera Province

In the meantime, as most married children discontinue their schooling, child marriage will also affect children's education. The girl child, who cannot continue her education because of physical evidence of pregnancy and will eventually have to care for her child, is the disadvantaged party when there is an unwanted pregnancy and the students are married off. On the other hand, the boy child is able to continue his

education because he does not experience physical changes (Judiasih, 2022).

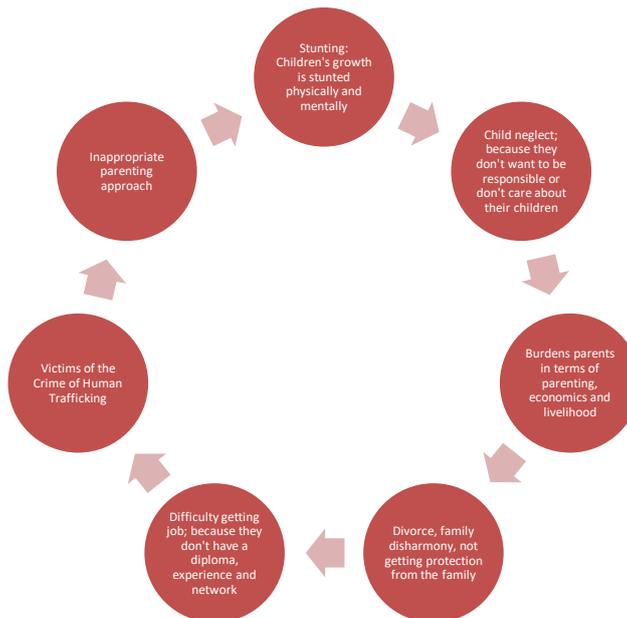
Due to their lack of a legal identity, children born into marriages when the couple's age was under 19 are also at risk of not being able to attend school. The majority of marriages between people under 19 take place in a Siri, and children born out of these unions are not officially recorded in the nation. It is still possible to obtain legal identity, but the process is lengthy and

requires parental carelessness because it is closely tied to the history of their parent's marriage being officially or unofficially registered in the nation.

Examining the effects of child marriage instances on health, socioeconomic status, and education will subsequently have an impact on the general quality of human resources. Among the other effects of child marriage are:

1. those who married while they are under 19 or when they are still in school show no interest in or are compelled to finish their schooling,
2. labelling: when unwed pregnancies or marriages at under-19 occur, women
3. are held responsible, which breeds mistrust of women in general,

4. the infant has a short life expectancy at birth,
5. their parents' aspirations for a respectable life are also dim due to their lack of education.
6. when a household lacks the information, abilities, and guidelines necessary to maintain a high standard of living, it is more likely to disintegrate,
7. women who were married but younger than 19 years old reported experiencing both physical and psychological abuse. Eight of them went through trauma and developed more closed-off behaviours



Source: FPAR Study in Aceh Province

**Figure 2.** The Continuing Impact of Child Marriage

The children of child marriage victims will also experience disruptions in family resilience, and based on the results of FPAR, in general, many marriages under the age of 19 do not last long. Related to family resilience, the results of research in Riau Province identified several impacts that arise

if there is marriage under the age of <19 years, specifically as the following.

1. Children from child marriages or marriages between people under the age of 19 sometimes lack resilience and tenacity (babies move less actively and

- are less agile), and as they become older, they tend to be less imaginative.
2. Newborns are typically reserved, less imaginative, and psychologically unstable.
  3. Children under the age of 19 or who have experienced child marriage lack the capacity or competence to sustain a family. As they get older, kids will often emulate their parents' behaviour patterns because they are wired to do so. Parents who have been split will also have a tendency to respond adversely when their parents do.
  4. A lack of independence and a generally unsatisfactory level of family unity, with frequent disagreements negatively influencing the kids.
  5. Children born into marriages before the age of 19 are mostly raised by their mother's parents; they do not always receive the full amount of care from both of their biological parents.
  6. Children are more exposed to the parenting styles of their moms' relatives, their grandmothers and aunts.

### *The Reasons Behind Child Marriage*

**Table 5. The Reasons Behind Child Marriage**

No.	Causes of marriage <19 years old	
	Unmarried young women (12 - 18 years old)	Female (adult) - married and unmarried - assisted group member
1.	Unwanted Pregnancy	To avoid adultery
2.	Deep love	Unwanted Pregnancy
3.	School dropouts	Economic reasons
4.	Promiscuity	The influence of social media
5.	The influence of social media	Caught by security/environmental forces
6.	Restrictions on activities during Covid-19	Victims of parental domestic violence
7.	Fear of becoming an old maid	Lack of parental supervision
8.	Not knowing the impact of early marriage	Less understanding of reproductive health
9.	Absence of youth-oriented activities	Lack of applying religious values
10.	Subject to customary law: for escaping with a boyfriend from one's home	Subject to customary law: for escaping with a boyfriend from one's home
11.	Lack of parental attention	Not aware of Law No. 16 of 2019
12.	Not aware of Law No. 16 of 2019	-
13.	Minimal knowledge of SRHR	-
14.	Relationship with boyfriend is very close	-

*Source:* FGDs with groups of adult women and young unmarried women aged 12-19 years, in Jambi Province, 2023

The factors that contribute to early marriage, as stated in the table above, will be examined using past research findings. The factors that contribute to early marriage described above appear to be consistent

with the findings of Hikmah's (2019) study in Kutai Kartanegara Regency, including economic reasons, education, parents, and customs. According to Nabila, et.al. (2022), poverty, economic survival strategies,

conventions, and cultures all influence early marriages. Furthermore, Mubasyaroh (2016); Marta (2017); Muhith, et.al. (2018); Naveed and Butt (2020); and Anggreni, et.al. (2023) have indicated the aforementioned aspects. Moreover, the table lends itself to the following analysis.

1. Social Influence

**Social media:** Social media has an impact on both groups of women, teenagers and adults. Early marriage behaviour and decisions are heavily influenced by social media, particularly in regards to expectations of romantic connections and unrestricted association. This demonstrates how social media platforms can provide teenagers with knowledge and social norms that are not always helpful in helping them manage relationships and make life decisions.

**Intimate Partnerships:** The adolescent group's primary causes were found to be deep love and extremely tight connections with lovers and girlfriends. This emphasises how critical it is to teach adolescents about healthy relationships and emotional literacy so they can comprehend the long-term effects of making marital decisions too young.

2. Pressures from Culture and Customs

**Customary Law:** Cultural constraints pertaining to customary law, particularly those pertaining to escaping with a boyfriend, affect both groups. This demonstrates how certain communities continue to uphold customs that support early marriage in spite of national legislation like Law No. 16 of 2019. The conflict between state law and customary law is demonstrated by social pressure to marry following a customary transgression, such as escaping with a boyfriend.

**Fear of being a Spinster:** The fear of becoming a spinster, which mostly affects young females, is another

cultural pressure. This societal convention highlights how crucial it is to get married young in order to escape social shame.

3. Economic and Educations

Economic factors are a major factor among adult women, and they frequently result in early marriage in an effort to lighten the load on the family. Teenagers' school abandonment is a significant contributing factor because a lack of knowledge frequently limits their options for a more diverse existence. The decision to marry young seems to be heavily influenced by the lack of proper financial and educational assistance.

4. Inadequate Understanding of Reproductive Health

One important aspect in both groups is a lack of knowledge about reproductive health. Many young girls are forced into early marriage as a result of this ignorance, which also results in unintended births. Better education initiatives on sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) are crucial, as this illustrates.

5. Environment Factors and Violence

In the group of adult women, parental domestic violence emerged as one of the causes. This indicates that early marriage for some women is an escape from an unsafe home environment. This reflects the need for greater attention to the protection of women and children in situations of domestic violence.

*Prevention of Child Marriage*

A community-based approach is one element that needs to be taken into consideration because the prevention of child marriage is a difficult issue. One of the most crucial things that can be done to safeguard children's rights and make sure they have access to health care, education, and opportunity to grow up and realise their

full potential is to prevent child marriage. Child marriage prevention aligns with the Minister of National Development Planning's "National Strategy on Preventing Child Marriage" (Bappenas, 2020). One significant point is that efforts to prevent child marriage necessitate collaboration among the government, community, and religious leaders (Musawwamah, et.al, 2023).

One way to tackle this issue is to enact and implement rules and regulations that forbid marriage in any capacity and to strictly enforce the consequences for those who break them.

a. Women and Child Empowerment

This strategy involves providing women and children with economic empowerment, education, and training so they can make educated decisions about their future.

b. Cross-Sector Cooperation

This approach is carried out by involving various parties, including the government, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector and others in efforts to prevent marriage at the age of <19 years.

c. Community Intervention

This approach involves dialogue and consultation with communities to understand and address the cultural, social and economic factors that encourage marriage at the age of <19 years.

## Conclusions

The age of 19 and child marriage are not easy issues to solve. According to Weber's theory, every actor contributes in a complex way. Although Law No. 6 of 2019 raised the marriage age to at least 19 years old, which was initially seen as a remedy, the reality is very different. It appears that gender equality begins around age 19. In this instance, women's reproductive organ preparation has not been greatly impacted by reaching the age of 19. Particularly if the health center's

health letter's definition of reproductive health is restricted to having a regular menstrual cycle or monthly menstruation. Couples in child marriage and under 19 years of age are relatively difficult to encourage to delay pregnancy. In addition to pregnancy being evidence of women's fertility, available contraceptives are not adequate for women with child marriage and under 19 years of age, apart from male condoms and IUDs (Intrauterine Contraceptive Devices). The real picture that stunting investment has started from child marriage and age under 19 years. At least pregnancy is in a situation of unprepared reproductive age.

The results of this FPAR show less encouraging results. The difficulty of guarding Law No. 6 of 2019 is not a simple task. Unraveling this problem requires the commitment of all parties without exception. At the family level, how parents prepare their children's future, how community leaders, traditional leaders and religious leaders support their community members not to marry off their children before the age of 19, teachers who are active in schools to continue to echo the importance of delaying the age of marriage until after the age of 19, as well as the KUA and Religious Courts which are considered the frontline for passing marriage age dispensation for adherents of Islam.

Law No.6/2019 seems unable to prevent child marriage because child marriage and the age of <19 still takes place for various reasons and uses loopholes to pass the marriage. The complicated requirements for applying for marriage dispensation could actually be a solution to reduce child marriage. Unfortunately, there are no sanctions for those who avoid the dispensation. As a result, marriages at this age continue to take place even if they are traditional or religious (nikah sirri).

In order to prevent child marriage and the age of 19 as early as possible, the results of multiple FGDs provide recommendations that highlight the need for derivative

regulations, such as Regent or Mayor regulations, as well as village-level regulations. One such recommendation is to forbid applications for dispensation to the Religious Court, as this will exacerbate the issues, particularly for women. Domestic violence and divorce are sometimes the results of child marriages and unions involving people under the age of 19.

## References

- Andajani, S, Najmah, Etrawati, F. 2022. "Feminist-Partisipasi, Aksi Dan Riset (FPAR) Dalam Upaya Promosi Kesehatan Dan Pencegahan Hiv Pada Ibu Rumah Tangga" *Promosi Kesehatan dalam Berbagai Perspektif*. Aceh: Syah Kuala University Press.
- Anggreni, D., Notobroto, H. B., & Soedirham, O. 2023. Determinants factors of early marriage in developing countries: A literature review. *Journal of Public Health in Africa*, 14(S2), Article 2543. <https://doi.org/10.4081/jphia.2023.2543>.
- Atnike Nova Sigiro. 2020. Catatan Jurnal Perempuan: Hak Anak dan Keadilan Gender, *Jurnal Perempuan*, 25(2), Mei. [www.jurnalperempuan.org/uploads/1/2/2/0/12201443/105\\_cjp\\_\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.jurnalperempuan.org/uploads/1/2/2/0/12201443/105_cjp__1_.pdf).
- Bappenas. 2020. National Strategy on the Prevention of Child Marriage.
- Dadras, Omid, Hazratzai, Mohammadsediq, and Dadras, Fateme, 2023. "The association of child marriage with morbidities and mortality among children under 5 years in Afghanistan: Findings from a national survey". *BMC Public Health*, 23,32
- Dafani, Sherly Kurnia, Komalasari, Maya Atri, dan Awalia, Hafizah. 2023. "Faktor Pendorong Praktik Perkawinan Anak di Desa Taman Baru, Kecamatan Sekotong". *Multikultural: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial*, 1(1), Juli, 30-37.
- Eleonora, Fransisca Novita, and Sari, Andang. 2019. "Child Protection And Marriage Prevention". *Humani; Hukum dan Masyarakat Madani*, 9(1). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.26623/humani.v9i1.1446>.
- Elfani, Azzahra Hanurita, Muarifah, Alif. 2022. "Regulasi Emosi Pasangan Pernikahan Dini Akibat Kehamilan yang Tidak Diinginkan (KTD) di Kecamatan Banguntapan, Bantul, Yogyakarta". *Psikoborneo: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi*, 10(2). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.30872/psikoborneo.v10i2.7561>.
- Fariyah, Rindang. 2023. "Indonesia Darurat Perkawinan Anak" dalam Pusdeka 2023. <https://pusdeka.unu-jogja.ac.id/artikel/indonesia-darurat-perkawinan-anak/>.
- Hidayatulloh, Ilham, et all. 2018. "Persepsi Perkawinan Usia Dini dan Pemberdayaan Gender (Studi Kasus Desa Pancawati Kecamatan Caringin Kabupaten Bogor)". *Jurnal Pemikiran dan Penelitian Sosiologi*. Vol. 3 (1), 1-16.
- Hikmah, Nuria. 2019. "Faktor-Faktor yang Menyebabkan Terjadinya Pernikahan Dini di Desa Muara Wis Kecamatan Muara Wis Kabupaten Kutai Kartanegara". *eJournal Sosiatri-Sosiologi*, Volume 7, No.1, 261-272. <https://www.kpai.go.id/publikasi/catatan-pelanggaran-hak-anak-tahun-2021-dan-proyeksi-pengawasan-penyelenggaraan-perlindungan-anak-tahun-2022>.
- <https://www.unicef.org/indonesia/id/siaran-pers/perkawinan-anak-dan-kekerasan-berbasis-gender-merupakan-ancaman-terbesar-bagi>.
- <https://www.kompas.id/baca/riset/2024/03/08/tingginya-angka-perkawinan-usia-anak-di-indonesia>.
- Judiasih, Sonny Dewi dkk. 2022. Implementasi Hak Pendidikan

- Terhadap Anak Perempuan Yang Melakukan Perkawinan Dibawah Umur. *Juris and Society: Jurnal Ilmiah Sosial dan Humaniora*, Vol. 2 No. 1, Juni, 105.
- Khaerani, S. N. 2019. "Faktor Ekonomi Dalam Pernikahan Dini Pada Masyarakat Sasak Lombok". *Qawwam*, 13(1), 1–13. DOI:10.20414/qawwam.v13i1.1619.
- Khaparistia, Eka dan Edward. 2015. "Faktor-Faktor Penyebab Terjadinya Pernikahan Usia Muda Studi Kasus di Kelurahan Sawit Seberang Kecamatan Sawit Seberang Kabupaten Langkat". *Jurnal Ilmu Kesejahteraan Sosial*, Vol. 141, 39-52.
- Komnas Perempuan. 2019. "Siaran Pers Komnas Perempuan Refleksi 25 Tahun Pelaksanaan Beijing Platform for Action di Indonesia: Komitmen Negara dalam Menjawab Tantangan 12 Bidang Kritis Kehidupan Perempuan". <https://komnasperempuan.go.id/siaran-pers-detail/siaran-pers-komnas-perempuan-refleksi-25-tahun-pelaksanaan-beijing-platform-for-action-di-indonesia>.
- Laporan Penelitian FPAR / *Feminist Participatory Action Research* Provinsi Aceh.
- Laporan Penelitian FPAR / *Feminist Participatory Action Research* Provinsi Bengkulu.
- Laporan Penelitian FPAR / *Feminist Participatory Action Research* Provinsi Jambi.
- Laporan Penelitian FPAR / *Feminist Participatory Action Research* Provinsi Lampung.
- Laporan Penelitian FPAR / *Feminist Participatory Action Research* Provinsi Riau.
- Laporan Penelitian FPAR / *Feminist Participatory Action Research* Sumatera Barat.
- Laporan Penelitian FPAR / *Feminist Participatory Action Research* Provinsi Sumatera Utara.
- Laporan Penelitian FPAR / *Feminist Participatory Action Research* Provinsi Sumatera Selatan.
- Latifiani, Dian. 2019. "The Darkest Phase For Family: Child Marriage Prevention And Its Complexity In Indonesia". *JILS (Journal of Indonesian Legal Studies) Volume 4 Issue 2*, 241-258.
- Lebni, JY, Solhi M, Azar, FEF et al. 2020. "Qualitative study of social determinants of child marriage in Kurdish regions of Iran: Evidence for health promotion interventions". *J Educ Health Promot*; 9.
- Maheshwari, Marvi, V, Nabeeha Khalid, Pragnesh D Patel, Rahmah Alghareeb, and Afshan Hussain, 2022. "Maternal and Neonatal Outcomes of Adolescent Pregnancy: A Narrative Review". *Cureus Vol 14 No. 6*, e25921. DOI 10.7759/cureus.25921.
- Marta, Arif Rahmadia. 2017. "Keputusan Perempuan Menikah Dini". *Konselor*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 101–104 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24036/02017637689-0-00>.
- Meliati, Linda and Sundayani, Lina. 2021. "Upaya Peningkatan Pengetahuan Remaja Dalam Pendewasaan Usia Perkawinan Dimasa Pandemi COVID-19". *SELAPARANG, Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Berkemajuan*, Vol.5, No.1. Desember.
- Mubasyaroh, M. 2016. "Analisis Faktor Penyebab Pernikahan Dini Dan Dampaknya Bagi Pelakunya". *Jurnal Pemikiran dan Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan Yudisia*, Vol 7 No. 2, 385-411. DOI: 10.21043/yudisia.v7i2.2161.
- Muhith, A, A. Fardiansyah, M. H. Saputra, & Nurmiyati. 2018. "Analysis of causes and impacts of early marriage on

- Madurese Sumenep East Java Indonesia". *Indian Journal of Public Health Research and Development*, Vol. 9, No. 8, 1495-1499. DOI: 10.5958/0976-5506.2018.00944.0.
- Musawwamah, S, Taufiq, M, Hariyanto, W, Supraptiningsih, U, and Maimun. 2023. "Resistance to Child Marriage Prevention in Indonesia and Malaysia". *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah*, Vol. 23 No.1. DOI: 10.15408/ajis.v23i1.32014.
- Nabila, Rizkia, Roswiyani, R, and Satyadi, Heryanti. 2022. "A Literature Review of Factors Influencing Early Marriage Decisions in Indonesia". *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, Vol.655, 1392-1402 under the CC BY-NC 4.0 license - <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>. 1392.
- Natsif, F. A. 2018. "Problematika Perkawinan Anak (Perspektif Hukum Islam dan Hukum Positif)". *Jurnal Al-Qadau: Peradilan Dan Hukum Keluarga Islam*, 5(2), 175–186.
- Naveed, S., and Butt, D. K. M. 2020. "Causes and consequences of child marriages in South Asia: Pakistan's perspective". *South Asian Studies*, 30(2).
- Parsons, Jennifer, Jeffrey Edmeades, Aslihan Kes, Suzanne Petroni, Maggie Sexton, and Quentin Wodon. 2015. "Economic Impacts of Child Marriage: A Review of the Literature" *The Review of Faith & Internasional Affairs*, Vol. 13, 2-22.
- Psaki S, Misunas C, Patel S, et al. 2021. "What are the drivers of child marriage? A conceptual framework to guide policies and programs". *Journal Adolescent Health*, 69, S13e22.
- Puspitasari, MD, Murniati, C, Nasution, SL. 2021. "Determinan Perencanaan Pendewasaan Usia Perkawinan pada Remaja 10-19 Tahun di Indonesia: Analisis SKAP KKBPK Tahun 2019". *Jurnal Keluarga Berencana*, Vol.6 No.02, 21-34.
- Putri, Intan Mutiara and Rosida, Luluk. 2019. "Peningkatan Pengetahuan Program Pendewasaan Usia Perkawinan di Karang Taruna Angkatan Muda Salakan Bantul Yogyakarta". *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Kebidanan*, Vol 1 No. 1. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26714/jpmk.v1i1.4475>.
- Riani, Eva. 2022. <https://ipb.ac.id/news/index/2022/03/jumlah-kasus-pernikahan-anak-di-indonesia-duduki-posisi-7-dunia-mirip-afrika-dan-amerika-latin/5d42a51f095aadc822ac813d6d23d6f4>.
- Ritzer, George. 2014. *Sosiologi Ilmu Pengetahuan Berparadigma Ganda*. Jakarta: PT Rajawali Press.
- Riany, Yulina Eva. 2022. "Jumlah Kasus Pernikahan Anak di Indonesia Duduki Posisi 7 Dunia, Mirip Afrika dan Amerika Latin". <https://ipb.ac.id/news/index/2022/03/jumlah-kasus-pernikahan-anak-di-indonesia-duduki-posisi-7-dunia-mirip-afrika-dan-amerika-latin/5d42a51f095aadc822ac813d6d23d6f4>.
- Risalah Kebijakan Perkawinan Anak: Menutup Aib dan Tertutupnya Hak Atas Pendidikan, Ekonomi dan Kesehatan Mental, Reproduksi serta Seksual. Hlm 1-2. ©Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan (Komnas Perempuan), 2019.
- Salam, S. 2017. "Dispensasi Perkawinan Anak di Bawah Umur: Perspektif Hukum Adat, Hukum Negara & Hukum Islam". *Pagaruyung Law Journal*, Vol 1 No 1, 110-124. <https://jurnal.umsb.ac.id/index.php/pagaruyuang/article/view/273>.
- Siswari, DB, Sari, AS, Novita, RI, Sahraini. 2022. "Pendidikan Kesehatan Pada Remaja Tentang Pendewasaan Usia Perkawinan Di Dusun Anjani Selatan

- 1". *Indonesian Journal of Community Dedication (IJCD)*, Volume 4 Nomor 2, Juli, 40-46.
- Sulaiman, S. 2012. "Dominasi Tradisi dalam Perkawinan di Bawah Umur". *Jurnal Analisa*, Vol 19 No 1, 15-26. <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/42045-ID-domination-of-tradition-in-under-age-marriage.pdf>.
- Tan, W. 2021. "Perkawinan di Bawah Umur dan Tantangan dalam Mencapai Sustainable Development Goals". *Justisi*, 7(2), 76–88. <https://doi.org/10.33506/js.v7i2.1342>.
- WHO. 2006. *Pregnant Adolescents: Delivering on Global Promises of Hope*. Geneva, WHO Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.
- Yoshida, Yeni Herliana, Rachman, Junita Budi, Darmawan, Wawan Budi. 2022. "Upaya Indonesia Dalam Mengatasi Pernikahan Anak Sebagai Implementasi Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Tujuan 5 (5.3)". *Aliansi: Jurnal Politik, Keamanan dan Hubungan Internasional*, Volume 1 No. 3, Desember, 153-166.