Aisyiyah's Role In Preventing Child Marriage In Indonesia: A Qualitative Study

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| ARTICLE INFO |  | ABSTRACT (10pt) |  |
| Article historyReceivedRevised Accepted |  | The pandemic is having a negative effect on the economies of the most vulnerable households and increasing the risk of child marriage. Millions of children have been badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the most affected are those who are under the socio-economic status of people who are already poor and neglected. The purpose of this study was to analyze in depth the role of Aisyiyah in efforts to prevent child marriage during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. This research uses a qualitative research type. This research was conducted in Dukun Sub-District, Magelang Regency, Indonesia. The sampling technique used in this research is purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The results of the research on child marriage prevention programs are the Dukun Sub-District Government is very concerned with the prevention of child marriage programs that have been carried out by involving cross-sectors such as Religious Affair Office (KUA), Public Health Center (Puskesmas), Village Advisory Advisor (Babinsa), Midwives, Teacher, and Village Professional Revulotionaries (Kader Desa). Involving the community and using the rules and norms that have been regulated by the Ministry of Religion, they collaborate with the Religious Affairs Office in implementing these regulations. Suggestions for parents that the role of parents is very important in providing early education about reproductive health in children and adolescents.https://licensebuttons.net/l/by-sa/3.0/88x31.pngThis is an open access article under the [CC–BY-SA](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.  |  |
| **Keywords**Aisyiyah rolePreventingChild marriage A-Qualitative study |  |

# Introduction

Child marriage is defined as a formal or informal marriage between two people under the age of 18 years old, according to UNICEF. This can cause lifelong loss and deprivation for kids, particularly females, but it is still common in developing countries (Central Bureau of Statistics 2020). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), between 2011 and 2020, more than 140 million girls will marry as children over the world. According to study, there are forces that drive child marriage and its consequences for young girls' health. One of the factors that encourage child marriage during the COVID-19 pandemic is social and economic, social isolation, restrictions on personal freedom and lack of education due to online learning (Ferdousi 2014) (Mahato 2016).

Millions of children have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the worst affected are those who are under the socioeconomic status of people who are already poor and neglected (Gupta, S., & Jawanda 2020). COVID-19 also increases the risk of domestic violence (Anurudran, A., Yared, L., Comrie, C., Harrison, K., & Burke 2020) (Dahal, M., Khanal, P., Maharjan, S. , Panthi, B., & Nepal 2020)(Kofman, YB, & Garfin 2020)(Roesch, E., Amin, A., Gupta, J., & Garcia-Moreno 2020)(Properties 2020). COVID-19, according to UNFPA-UNICEF, will impede attempts to stop child marriage, perhaps resulting in an additional 13 million child marriages between 2020 and 2030 that might otherwise be avoided (Central Bureau of Statistics 2020). UNICEF itself estimates that the increase in poverty in the archipelago due to COVID-19 will damage the physical and mental growth of children, which will lead to an increase in the number of child marriages (Central Bureau of Statistics 2020).

In the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, child marriage is also on the rise in Indonesia (Arshad 2019). In Indonesia, people can marry at the age of 21 without the agreement of their parents. Women are allowed to legally marry with parental consent at the age of 19 (the minimum age for female marriage has increased from 16, following the amendments to the 1974 Marriage Law in September 2019. While men can marry with parental consent at 19. However, men parents are also allowed to ask the court to issue a “dispensation” that gives legal permission for underage girls and boys to marry (Arshad 2020).In addition, many marry religiously because they are not registered and so do not apply for dispensation to married at a young age according to the Head of the Office of Women's Empowerment, Empowerment, Child Safety, Population Control and Family Planning (International 2020) .

The pandemic has a negative impact on the most vulnerable households' economies and raises the probability of child marriage (Ramaswamy, S., & Seshadri 2020). Women and girls are at greater risk, because they are already marginalized and vulnerable (Roesch, E., Amin, A., Gupta, J., & Garcia-Moreno 2020) (Vora, M., Malathesh, BC, Das , S., & Chatterjee 2020) (Group 2020), . The Save the Children study shows that 2.5 million girls are at risk of marriage by 2025 due to the pandemic, the largest increase in child marriage rates in 25 years; and as many as one million more girls are at risk of becoming pregnant which is the main cause of death for mothers aged 15-19 years (Children 2020). If a woman gives birth before the age of 18, the mother's and child's physical and mental health is endangered. It also has an impact on the family's finances and stability. Meanwhile, the effect is amplified if her husband is also under the age of eighteen. Intimate partner violence has also been linked to underage sex (Speizer, I. S., & Pearson n.d.).

There are various reasons why someone decides to get married. Some are short-minded to marry in the early age because they are running away from schoolwork and home. Teenagers think that getting married will solve the problem, but if they marry early, there is a risk of a much bigger and more complicated problem. Child marriage is highly correlated with physical and emotional violence (Nasrullah, M., Zakar, R., & Zakar 2014). Having children out of wedlock is viewed negatively and is often regarded as one of the main causes of child marriage in Indonesia. There are striking differences between Asian and Western cultures both in marriage. People in many Asian countries including Indonesia still believe that marriage is a religious requirement or social obligation (Himawan n.d.).

The last reason the surveyed teens explained why they married in the early age was the influence of their peers (Do, K. T., Prinstein, M. J., Telzer, E. H., Do 2020) (Johansen 2014). Several studies have shown that peer participation in behavior has a strong influence (Do, K. T., Prinstein, M. J., Telzer, E. H., Do 2020). In several studies, economic and social reasons, cultural background have been discussed as reasons behind child marriage. (Mahato 2016) found that the main causes of child marriage in Nepalese society are lack of awareness, limited access to information, low level of knowledge of government policies, investment in girls as a waste of money, fear of remaining single, increased dowry, higher wedding ceremony costs. low levels, and poor law enforcement (Mahato 2016).

The urgency of this research Data on cases of child or early marriage is a fairly high trend among teenagers in Dlingo Bantul Yogyakarta, this is due to the economy or poverty, marrying girls is expected to reduce the burden on parents and be caused by promiscuity. Meanwhile, child or early marriage in the Dukun Sub-District, Magelang Regency also shows a fairly high trend at the age of 12-16 years for reasons of fear of being left by a girlfriend, being forced by their parents and not wanting to be a burden on their parents.

The contribution of research due to the COVID-19 pandemic which has caused the number of cases of child marriage to increase, this is a concern for policy makers, parents, and schools who need to consider how to prevent child marriage.

# Methods

This research is a type of qualitative research. Qualitative research gives rise to different meanings in each historical period. The methods used in this research can be varied, even including interpretive and naturalistic approaches to the subject of study. Efforts to study objects in their natural context aim to understand or interpret surrounding phenomena in terms of the meanings attached by humans (researchers) to them.

The sampling technique used in this research is purposive sampling and snowball sampling. This study uses a purposive sampling technique by finding key informants to determine the informants who know best about the data on the role of the Aisyiyah organization in efforts to prevent child or early marriage. Retrieval through documentation methods, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions (FGD). Documentation is taken from materials, modules and books that support the implementation of the research. Then to collect interview data in detail as follows: Then to collect interview data in detail as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Informant** | **Description** | **Total** |
| Aisyiyah Administrator | Organization Roles | 4 persons |
| Parents of Families who early married | Family Support | 4 persons |
| Village Officials | Citizen Support | 4 persons |
| Sub-district officials or District officials | Public Figure Support | 4 persons |

**While the details of participants FGD are as follows:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Participants** | **Description** | **Total** |
| Family who early married | Respondent | 5 persons |
| Aisyiyah Administrator | Aisyiyah Role | 5 persons |

The analysis method uses data triangulation analysis, which combines documentation, interview and documentation data and analyzes it more deeply using the theories that have been described previously. This research has gone through a research ethics test through the KEP of Aisyiyah University Yogyakarta with No. 1873/KEP-UNISA/VIII/2021.

# Results and Discussion

There are 7 categories of discussion that can be underlined in the program for handling and preventing child marriage, which we can describe as follows:

1. The Role of Stakeholders in Prevention of Child Marriage

Dukun Sub-District Government is very concerned with the prevention of child marriage programs that have been carried out by involving cross-sectors such as Religious Affair Office (KUA), Public Health Center (Puskesmas), Village Advisory Advisor (Babinsa), Midwives, Teacher, and Village Professional Revulotionaries (Kader Desa).

*We involve cross-sectors such as Religious Affair Office (KUA), Public Health Center (Puskesmas), Village Advisory Advisor (Babinsa), Head of Villages, Midwives, Teacher, and Village Professional Revulotionaries (Kader Desa). (A, Sub-District Government, 20 October 2021)*

The program to prevent child marriage and empower young families who marry at an early age has become a must by the government at the village or sub-district level. Seeing the activities and roles of the Dukun sub-district government above, they have made prevention efforts with counseling on reproductive health by involving multi-stakeholders, namely Religious Affair Office, Public Health Center, Midwives, Head of Village, Village Professional Revulotionaries and community organizations. As the results of research by R Raudlatun (2020) (Raudlatun and Asiah 2020) this activity is similar to what has been carried out by the Rubaru Sub-District Government, Sumeneb Madura District by conducting socialization of increasing the rate of morning parade (village heads), reproductive health education, mediation forums for preventing child marriage and making village hundreds. about compulsory education and zero drop out program.

The government has taken part in the prevention and curative efforts of the problem of child marriage. As research conducted by Raudlatul and Khairul A (2020) (Raudlatun and Asiah 2020) describes the role of the Madura government in preventing child marriage with various activities, namely conducting socialization about the age limit for marriage, increasing the role of morning parade (Head of Village), reproductive health education for adolescents. , created a media forum to postpone marriage and issued a village regulation (Peraturan Desa) on compulsory learning. Based on survey evidence has a relationship that early marriage is associated with income, health, mortality and sexual satisfaction (England et al., 2001). However, not every marriage has a happy ending—economic, psychological, and mental preparedness appear to be important for a satisfied and healthy marriage (Fincham et al., 2006). The NTB Child Protection Agency recorded data related to early marriage during the pandemic. From January-September 2020, there were 805 applications for marriage dispensation in the Religious Courts, an increase of 59% from the 332 cases recorded in 2019. (International 2020) (Drefahl 2012).

Many Indonesians believe that early marriage can prevent adultery (zina is a major sin in Islam). Religious leaders and teachers usually promote marriage to prevent premarital sex which is culturally unethical (Fachrudin 2016). This perception suggests that it is easier to marry than to sin (Hull 2016). Marriage is considered as a collective not individual activity involving the married couple and the entire family and society (Bennett 2013). Values ​​and beliefs related to early marriage are created through interpersonal relationships and social networks. In this case, group members will exert social pressure on each other by influencing their expectations for early marriage (Delprato, M., Akyeampong, K., & Dunne 2017). Another explanation is that underage marriage is due to their family's economic situation. Child poverty is closely related to marriage at a young age (Ramaswamy, S., & Seshadri 2020). Children act as a saving mechanism to assist families in solving family economic crises (Kim, J., & Prskawetz 2010).

1. Child marriage prevention activities

The Dukun sub-district government program on the prevention of child marriage has been carried out by involving cross-sectors such as Religious Affair Office (KUA), Public Health Center (Puskesmas), Village Advisory Advisor (Babinsa), Midwives, Teacher, and Village Professional Revulotionaries (Kader Desa). Programs in the form of counseling and health education about the dangers of early marriage. It is hoped that this activity can be disseminated to the surrounding community.

*Activities in the form of counseling and health education about early childhood marriage. We involve cross-sectors such as Religious Affair Office, Public Health Center, Religious Counselors, Midwives, Village Advisory Advisor, Teachers etc. (A, District Government, 20 October 2021)*

*Provide input to relevant agencies and institutions regarding education to the public about the dangers of marriage at an early age. (A, District Government, 20 October 2021)*

Child marriage is substantially associated with unwanted births, termination of pregnancy, and female sterilization (Raj, A., Saggurti, N., Balaiah, D., & Silverman 2009). Women who marry as children have higher schooling and are more likely to accept patriarchal gender roles and have lower levels of household autonomy (Tenkorang 2019). Women who marry young are usually unable to access further education to provide them with the skills, knowledge and job opportunities needed to support their families (Bartels, SA, Michael, S., & Bunting 2020) (Sarfo, EA, Salifu Yendork, J. , & Naidoo 2020). It has been found that marriage is associated with higher levels of happiness in a large number of studies across countries and time periods (Diener et al., 2000) (Diener, E., Gohm, C. L., Suh, E., & Oishi 2000). This affects girls' education, health, psychological well-being, the health of their offspring, accelerating the risk of sexually transmitted infections, cervical cancer, malaria, obstetric fistula and maternal death (Nour 2009).

1. Community Engagement

The Dukun sub-district government, Magelang Regency always involves the community in carrying out child marriage prevention programs and empowering married couples who marry at a young age.

*Through the head of village and village officials there are coordination meetings. (A, District Government, 20 October 2021)*

 *Then through the professional revolutionaries in the village. It is hoped that this can be conveyed to the surrounding community. (A, District Government, 20 October 2021)*

1. Parenting and Education on Reproductive Health Parents to their children

The role of parents in educating their children, especially reproductive health education is not too much, parents are limited to advising promiscuity and accepting complaints (complaints) from their children when children face problems.

*So far, children are prohibited from having free sex, they are not allowed to go out at night, (F, October 25, 2021)*

*Since someone has already applied, how else can we….we'll just get married (D, 23 October, 2021*

*Children sometimes vent, when someone has a crush (C, October 22, 2021)*

*Asking what activities at school, in the environment with whom they play. (E, October 24, 2021)*

Their parents have not delivered comprehensive reproductive health education, from 4 informants who provided reproductive health information only 1 (one), the knowledge given to their daughters was about how to use the correct sanitary napkins, this was due to a lack of parental knowledge about reproduction health information. The lack of parental knowledge about reproductive health makes parents do not understand the dangers of marriage at a young age. So that when someone proposes to their child at a young age, parents just allow it without considering the unpreparedness of female reproduction and other important things such as economics, psychology and others.

In order to avoid child marriage, parents play a critical or urgent/important role. The need of family communication in order to learn about each other's concerns. According to N.Putra's research, parents' role in avoiding aberrant sexual behavior is critical. Communication in the family is critical for increasing mutual understanding, affection, and respect for parents from a sociocultural standpoint. Thus, it is anticipated that early marriage can be prevented by open conversation. Parents have the most significant role in educating children who are at risk of marrying when they are still youngsters, because young couples under the age of 21 are not regarded psychologically or physically competent at this age. Because this pair is under the age of 21, they have less emotional stability and are more likely to have trouble managing themselves and carrying out their responsibilities in marriage and raising children. Young couples who still rely heavily on their parents are not rare, indicating that their level of independence and readiness to carry out their tasks and obligations as rural people is still insufficient, and they do not grasp the importance of schooling or raising children. Supartini (2004) claims that if you are too young to be a parent, you will most likely be unable to fulfill this position to its full potential because it necessitates physical and psychosocial strength.

Child marriage happens when at least one of the parties is under the age of 18, as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Women's health, economy, and autonomy are all harmed by child marriage or early marriage. Each year, around 12 million women under the age of 18 marry (Paul, P., & Mondal 2020). Poor families are one of the main causes of child marriage. In certain underdeveloped nations, parents believe that girls are a financial burden on the family, thus they marry off their daughters young (Parsons, J., Edmeades, J., Kes, A., Petroni, S., Sexton, M., & Wodon 2015) (Petroni, S., Steinhaus, M., Fenn, NS, Stoebenau, K., & Gregowski nd). Marrying girls often allows extended families to receive money, or at least frees parents from the burden of caring for girls (Swain 2020). Marriage also gives a dowry to the bride's family. The younger the daughter, the higher the dowry, the faster the economic burden of raising a daughter will be (Nour 2009).

1. Knowledge of Reproductive Health and Family Sakinah PASUTRI

The average knowledge of reproductive health for young married couples in the Dukun sub-district of Magelang is still very low; only one (one) of the four informants who participated in the Aisyiyah organization's activities, and there was no reproductive health counseling and counseling/education service in the Dukun sub-district. This is in line with other studies that show that people who marry at a young age have little knowledge about reproductive health. This is due to a lack of education and access to information about reproductive health, which leads to misinformation or incorrect information. Early marriage also occurs as a result of pregnancy out of wedlock.

1. The Role of Organizations in the Prevention of Child Marriage

The role of Aisyiyah in preventing marriage in the Dukun sub-district has not been fully realized, as evidenced by the fact that only one of the four informants interviewed participated in Aisyiyah's activities, and none of them had ever received information or counseling on preventing child marriage. Aisyiyah's efforts have so far centered on strengthening parents who marry at a young age, with parenting activities in Aisyiyah's Early Childhood Education (PAUD) with reproductive health counseling and organic agricultural economic strengthening.

*PAUD's parents We provide regular parenting meetings once a month with reproductive health education, economic strengthening, and excellent parenting to the children here who are married between the ages of 12 and 16. (B, Chair of PC Aisyiyah, 21 October 2021).*

Aisyiyah is the first women's organization in Indonesia which currently has 33 Aisyiyah Provincial Leadership, 370 Aisyiyah Regional Leadership Level, 2.332 Aisyiyah District Leadership Level, and 6.924 Aisyiyah Village Leaders. Aisyiyah as an autonomous organization plays an important role in building the quality of Islamic women in Indonesia (P. Suyaman, L. Siwiyanti 2017). Organizations play a very important role in preventing marriage and curative activities or empowering families who are already married at an early age by strengthening towards a sakinah family. As researched by (Samsidar and Sormin 2019) that Mu'tamar's mandate in 2015 in Makassar was one of the efforts to prevent child marriage and strengthen the sakinah family with 8 (eight) foundations towards a sakinah family, namely the foundation of religion, reproduction, civilization, love, protection, society, education and economy.

The 'Aisyiyah organization also plays a role in preventing child marriage and assisting families who marry at a young age. They provide assistance in the form of studies and parenting group discussions on parenting patterns and assistance in strengthening the economy by making woven bamboo crafts to increase income generating for young families. The role of community and religious organizations is very important in preventing and assisting families who marry at this young age. This is in accordance with the concept of the 'Aisyiyah National program written by Samsidar (2019) (Samsidar and Sormin 2019) in his article entitled 'Aisyiyah Program Realizing a SAkinan Family Towards Progressive Islam, which among the concepts is Developing an Education model for parents (parenting) in character building. children in the family through various models according to the demands of the sakinah family. In addition, it also develops various models of premarital education for brides and young people to anticipate child marriages and serial marriages. The Sakinah family guidebook from the central leadership of 'Aisyiyah can be a guide in carrying out household life (Syukur Kholil1, Hasyimsyah Nasution2 n.d.).

Organizational culture is a set of underlying beliefs discovered, established, or developed by certain individuals or employees in order for government organizations to solve problems. In working with government entities, organizational culture is a broad term that includes human resources (HR). As a result, organizational culture has a significant impact on the fundamental features of performance management. If organizational culture is a significant factor in enhancing performance, then it must be appropriately controlled (Syardiansah 2020). This will motivate employees to work harder and increase motivation at work (Arif 2019).

Aisyiyah women's organizations can be found all over Indonesia. Aisyiyah's involvement in transforming women's mindsets and education is progressing well. The role of Aisyiyah is to serve everyone from children to the elderly (Tri, 2019). Aisyiyah's role has a positive impact on the Indonesian nation and women, allowing them to develop and reach their full potential in accordance with the role they desire to play in society (Qodariah 2016). The gender perspective is also very important in Aisyiyah's job. Nasyiatul Aisyiyah, her daughter's organization, acknowledges peace and protects their interests in the context of women's rights (Abualsaud 2019). ' Aisyiyah's role in developing a sakinah family is shown in a variety of counseling that includes religious, educational, health, economic, and social components. Coaching is carried out through a work program owned by 'Aisyiyah' management structure at all levels of leadership (Adawiah 2013) .

According to previous research on Aisyiyah, it is a women's group that supports women's empowerment activities (Handayani 2016). (Nikolaou, E. Vasilis, P., Nikos, A., Yota, X., Dimitris, M., Fevronia, S., & Maria 2019). Aisyiyah also offers a program that promotes women's empowerment in general (Eko Kurniasih Pratiwi1 2019). Furthermore, mothers with higher levels of empowerment have a lower risk of infant mortality. This underlines the importance of women's empowerment in reducing infant mortality (Wicaksono 2017). Women's empowerment through education, health, and economic empowerment will improve the quality of life for women. The result will be the emergence of a new generation of superior nation-states and a better social life (Hasin 2016). Men's involvement is critical in promoting women's empowerment and preventing early marriage (Ruhaini 2012).

1. Group Assistance Activities for Young Children

As a religious and social institution, Aisyiyah assists adolescent children who marry at a young age. The support is in the form of economic connections, specifically the manufacture of woven bamboo.

*Yes, I followed but only certain activities, the themes raised in 'Aisyiyah's study about parenting must be patient, children imitate our behavior so we must be careful. Then about the service individually, namely by coming to his house. Meanwhile, his economic activities are about woven bamboo (An, married at an early age, interview on 22 September 2021)*

This claim is reinforced by evidence demonstrating that in some disaster-affected nations, poor families marry off adolescents as a method to explore other sources of income or relieve existing household responsibilities as a result of crises and catastrophes. (Kim, J., & Prskawetz 2010) (Schlecht et al., 2013) (Kumala Dewi, LPR, & Dartanto 2019). This results in a dearth of educational options for girls as well as their incapacity to work. Child marriage has a number of health effects around the world, including issues with early sexual intercourse and pregnancy, which include newborn and maternal mortality, repeated pregnancy or abortion, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases risk, and depression. (Ferdousi 2014)(Mahato 2016)(Nour 2006)(Ferdousi 2014)(Svanemyr, J., Chandra-Mouli, V., Raj, A., Travers, E., & Sundaram 2015).

# Conclusion

The government's role in child marriage prevention is to: 1) socialize child marriage prevention; 2) provide alternative activities to deal with the frustration and stress of online learning and staying at home; and 3) change people's perceptions that marrying off children solves adolescent promiscuity, prevents pregnancy, and eliminates the problem of pregnancy out of wedlock. Parents have the most significant role in educating children who are at risk of marrying when they are still youngsters, because young couples under the age of 21 are not regarded psychologically or physically competent at this age. The study's contribution is that, despite the lack of previous supportive studies on child marriage, it remains a source of worry in policymaking because to the dynamic nature of the COVID-19 epidemic. Many children struggle to keep up with modern learning methods and decide to marry as a way to escape the constraints of online schooling. Parents and schools should take this into account.

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