



Child Social Vulnerability and Child Marriage Practices in Grobogan Regency: A Context-Based Analysis of Child Protection Policy

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Abstract. This study examines the phenomenon of child marriage in Grobogan Regency by focusing on the relationship between child vulnerability and the effectiveness of child protection policies within a local context. Despite the revision of the legal minimum marriage age to 19 years through Law No. 16 of 2019, child marriage remains a persistent social issue. Data from the Religious Court of Purwodadi indicate that there were 562 cases in 2024, 463 cases in 2025, and 152 cases from January to April 2026, totaling 1,177 cases. This condition highlights a significant gap between policy formulation and its implementation at the local level. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study explores the multidimensional vulnerability of children, particularly girls, which includes economic hardship, limited access to education, weak bargaining power within families, and strong socio-cultural pressures. The findings reveal that child marriage is not merely an individual choice but a structural outcome shaped by gender inequality and restricted capabilities. Furthermore, social norms and community influence play a crucial role in sustaining the practice, often overriding formal legal frameworks. Although various prevention efforts have been implemented through policy interventions, socialization programs, and institutional coordination, these efforts remain fragmented and insufficiently integrated. The study concludes that addressing child marriage requires a comprehensive and multisectoral approach that combines legal enforcement, economic empowerment, educational access, and transformation of social norms. Strengthening local governance capacity and community engagement is essential to ensure more effective and sustainable child protection policies.

Keywords: Child Marriage; Child Vulnerability; Gender Inequality; Local Governance; Public Policy.

1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of child marriage remains a serious issue in social development in Indonesia, despite the enactment of various regulations aimed at reducing its prevalence. According to UNICEF (2023), more than 640 million women worldwide were married before the age of 18. In Indonesia, although there has been a declining trend, the rate of child marriage remains relatively high compared to countries with similar levels of development. This condition indicates that policy interventions have not yet fully addressed the multidimensional root causes of the problem, which include economic, social, cultural factors, and weaknesses in policy implementation.

The revision of the minimum legal age for marriage through Law No. 16 of 2019, which amended Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage, represents a significant step toward strengthening child protection in Indonesia. However, the provision of marriage dispensation through the courts has created a loophole that is frequently used to legitimize child marriage practices. Data from the Indonesian Supreme Court indicate that applications for marriage dispensation remain high each year, particularly in areas characterized by socio-economic vulnerability. This suggests that legal reforms have not been accompanied by substantial changes in social structures and public awareness.

The amendment of the marriage law constitutes a critical milestone in Indonesia's efforts to protect children. By raising the minimum marriage age for both men and women to 19 years, the government demonstrates its commitment to safeguarding children's rights to grow, develop, and access proper education. This policy reflects a child rights-based approach in public policy, supported by empirical evidence indicating that child marriage has significant negative impacts on reproductive health, education, and social well-being, especially for girls.

Nevertheless, the implementation of this legal reform still faces considerable challenges. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection continues to strengthen derivative policies and intervention programs, including the National Strategy for the Prevention of Child Marriage. This strategy emphasizes a multisectoral approach involving family strengthening, education, and the transformation of social norms. Additionally, local governments are encouraged to adopt child-friendly policies and integrate child marriage prevention into regional development planning. However, the effectiveness of these policies largely depends on local implementation capacity, institutional coordination, and community participation.

Grobogan Regency is one of the regions facing significant challenges related to child marriage practices. Recent data show that from January 2024 to April 2026, there were 1,177 cases of child marriage in this area. This figure not only indicates a high prevalence but also reflects unresolved structural problems. As an agrarian region with considerable economic vulnerability, Grobogan faces complex social pressures, where child marriage is often perceived as an adaptive strategy to cope with poverty and economic uncertainty.

Child vulnerability in Grobogan cannot be separated from persistent poverty and inequality. Although the poverty rate has declined, the overall quality of welfare remains under pressure, including increasing poverty depth and severity. This situation creates a vulnerable environment for children, where limited access to education, economic pressure on families, and low social literacy contribute to child marriage. In many cases, girls are the most vulnerable group due to social constructions that position them in subordinate roles.

In addition to economic factors, socio-cultural aspects play a crucial role in sustaining child marriage practices. Social norms that tolerate or even encourage early marriage as a solution to premarital pregnancy or as a form of social protection for girls remain strong. From a sociological perspective, this phenomenon demonstrates that child marriage is not merely an individual issue but rather a socially constructed practice embedded in community life. This poses a significant challenge for public policy, which is often normative and insufficiently responsive to local contexts.

At the local level, child protection policies have been developed through various programs and regulations, including their integration into regional development agendas. However, the effectiveness of policy implementation still faces several constraints, such as limited institutional capacity, weak intersectoral coordination, and the lack of community-based approaches. Existing studies on regional development in Grobogan reveal a gap between policy formulation and its implementation in practice. This indicates that current policy approaches have not effectively reached the most vulnerable groups of children.

Child vulnerability in the context of child marriage is also closely related to limited access to basic services such as education, health, and social protection. Children from low-income families are more likely to drop out of school and enter early marriage. Within the framework of the capability approach, this condition reflects limitations in children's capabilities to make life choices. Therefore, child marriage is not a matter of free choice but rather a consequence of constrained opportunities within their social environment.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of child marriage in Grobogan reveals a paradox in regional development. While the local government continues to promote inclusive development and improve community welfare, child marriage rates remain high. This indicates that development has not been fully inclusive and has not effectively reached vulnerable populations. This finding aligns with studies showing that economic growth does not necessarily correlate with improvements in social welfare, particularly for marginalized groups.

Based on the above discussion, child marriage in Grobogan Regency can be understood as a complex phenomenon influenced by the interaction of structural, cultural, and policy-related factors. Therefore, a more in-depth analysis is required to examine the relationship between child vulnerability and the effectiveness of child protection policies within a local context. This study is important to identify policy gaps and to formulate more adaptive, contextual, and sustainable intervention strategies to reduce child marriage practices.

Previous studies have examined child marriage from social, economic, and cultural perspectives; however, most have focused on determinants such as poverty, low education, and permissive social norms (BPS, 2023; UNICEF, 2021; Bappenas, 2020). These studies tend to position women as vulnerable groups without thoroughly analyzing how public policies function in practice at the local level. Moreover, the predominantly quantitative and macro-level approaches used in prior research have not fully captured the dynamics of policy implementation, particularly regarding how local actors, institutional structures, and socio-cultural contexts influence the effectiveness of revised regulations.

Furthermore, previous research has not adequately integrated gender perspectives and child protection approaches in analyzing child marriage policies. Although some studies highlight the role of gender inequality, they rarely link it to local institutional capacity in implementing prevention policies. In addition, national policies such as the National Strategy for the Prevention of Child Marriage have not been extensively evaluated in rural contexts like Grobogan. Given that local context significantly affects policy success, this gap remains critical.

Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in integrating public policy analysis with gender and child protection perspectives within a local implementation context. This research not only identifies the causes of child marriage but also critically examines how revised policies and sectoral interventions are implemented at the local level. By employing an in-depth qualitative approach, this study contributes to filling the gap between policy design, institutional capacity, and grassroots social realities. It is expected to provide evidence-based and context-sensitive policy recommendations for strengthening child marriage prevention strategies.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The qualitative approach was chosen because it enables an in-depth understanding of complex social phenomena, particularly those related to child marriage practices and child social vulnerability within a local context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Through this approach, the researcher is able to explore meanings, experiences, and social constructions underlying the occurrence of child marriage, which cannot be comprehensively explained through quantitative methods alone. The descriptive design is used to systematically portray empirical conditions in the field, including causal factors, forms of vulnerability, and the dynamics of child protection policy implementation (Sugiyono, 2022). This approach allows the researcher not only to describe the phenomenon but also to interpret the relationship between social conditions and existing policies.

The research was conducted in Grobogan Regency, which was purposively selected due to the high number of child marriage cases, totaling 1,177 cases between January 2024 and April 2026. This case-based selection aims to provide a deep contextual understanding of the phenomenon under study (Yin, 2018). Grobogan also presents socio-economic characteristics relevant to examining child vulnerability from a public policy perspective.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Patton, 2015). The informants included representatives from local

government (Department of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection), officials from the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), the Religious Court, community leaders, social workers, as well as families and children affected by child marriage. This diversity of informants was intended to ensure comprehensive data and multiple perspectives.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the experiences and perceptions of informants in detail (Kvale, 2007). Observation was used to understand the social context and interactions within the community, while documentation provided secondary data such as reports, policy documents, and statistical records relevant to the study. The researcher served as the primary instrument (human instrument), directly involved in data collection and analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), supported by semi-structured interview guidelines to maintain flexibility while ensuring focus.

Data validity was ensured through triangulation, including source triangulation, method triangulation, and time triangulation (Denzin, 1978). Source triangulation involved comparing information from different informants, method triangulation compared findings from interviews, observations, and documents, and time triangulation involved data collection at different periods. In addition, member checking was conducted to verify the accuracy of the data obtained.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting and simplifying relevant data, data display was presented in descriptive narrative form, and conclusions were drawn continuously throughout the research process. The study also employed thematic analysis to identify key patterns related to child vulnerability, drivers of child marriage, and the effectiveness of child protection policies (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

This research adopts a gender perspective as the primary analytical framework to understand child marriage in Grobogan Regency. Gender analysis is essential because child marriage is closely linked to unequal power relations between men and women within social structures (Connell, 2009). Girls are more vulnerable due to social constructions that place them in subordinate and domestic roles with limited decision-making power.

The analytical framework refers to gender inequality concepts, including subordination, marginalization, stereotypes, violence, and double burden, as proposed by Moser (1993) and further developed by Fakih (2013). In the context of child marriage, subordination is reflected in the limited bargaining power of girls, while marginalization is evident in restricted access to education and economic resources. Gender stereotypes that portray girls as a "family burden"

further encourage early marriage, particularly in economically vulnerable households. Child marriage can also be considered a form of structural violence, as it deprives children of their fundamental rights.

Furthermore, this study integrates the Capability Approach, which emphasizes individuals' ability to make life choices (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011). From this perspective, child marriage is understood as a consequence of limited capabilities caused by poverty, lack of education, and socio-cultural pressures. By combining gender analysis with the capability approach, this study aims to comprehensively explain how child vulnerability is formed and reproduced within the context of public policy at the local level.

Finally, this study adheres to ethical research principles, particularly because it involves vulnerable groups such as children. The researcher ensured informed consent, maintained the confidentiality of informants, and minimized potential harm during the research process (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). Thus, the study upholds both academic rigor and ethical responsibility.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Child Marriage Prevention Policy in Grobogan Regency

Based on data from the Religious Court of Purwodadi, child marriage in Grobogan Regency remains a serious issue. In 2024, there were 562 cases, followed by 463 cases in 2025, and 152 cases recorded from January to April 2026. In total, there were 1,177 cases during the period from January 2024 to April 2026. Descriptively, although there is a decline from 2024 to 2025, this reduction is not sufficient to indicate that the issue has been effectively controlled. The 152 cases recorded within the first four months of 2026 suggest that child marriage practices are still ongoing and continue to pose a significant threat to child protection in Grobogan. From a policy perspective, this situation demonstrates that the existence of regulations does not automatically translate into reduced incidence at the local level. There remains a considerable gap between legal norms, policy instruments, and the effectiveness of implementation.

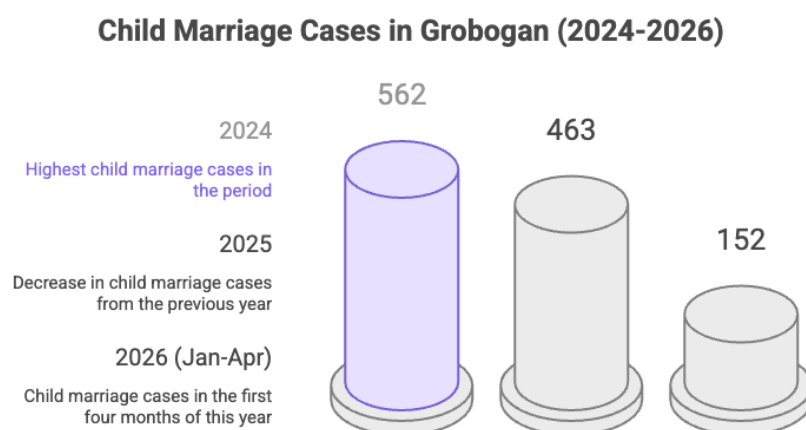


Figure 1. Child Marriage Prevention Policy in Grobogan Regency

Normatively, the government has established a relatively strong policy framework. The amendment of Law No. 1 of 1974 into Law No. 16 of 2019 has standardized the minimum legal age of marriage for both men and women at 19 years, aiming to strengthen child protection and prevent early marriage. At the sectoral level, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection has designated child marriage as a priority issue. Ministerial Regulation No. 2 of 2025 emphasizes that funding for women and child protection services should support not only case handling but also prevention efforts, data strengthening, institutional capacity building, and cross-sector coordination. Prevention strategies include coordination meetings, advocacy, socialization, action planning, communication–information–education programs, and community mobilization. This indicates that, in terms of policy design, the state has provided adequate instruments for preventing child marriage.

However, the findings reveal that the main issue lies not in the absence of policy, but in the limited reach and inconsistency of its implementation at the local level. Evidence shows that the role of local government remains suboptimal, as child marriage is still considered a sensitive issue that is difficult to address through purely administrative approaches. Family privacy, geographical dispersion, and weak stakeholder engagement further limit the effectiveness of prevention efforts. Interviews with local officials also indicate that although child marriage has received attention, prevention innovations remain limited and require better program synchronization across agencies. Thus, policies in Grobogan remain sectoral rather than integrated, despite child marriage being a multidimensional issue involving education, health, social protection, culture, and family governance.

Overall, child marriage prevention policy in Grobogan can be considered normatively adequate but operationally weak. While national regulations and ministerial policies provide clear direction, local implementation is constrained by limited program integration, lack of innovation, insufficient vulnerability mapping, and weak community mobilization. Consequently, policy has not yet functioned as an instrument of social transformation, but rather remains largely administrative. Effective policy requires concrete, measurable, and cross-sectoral actions, such as identifying high-risk villages, strengthening child forums, involving schools and religious leaders, integrating with social protection programs, and utilizing case data for targeted interventions.

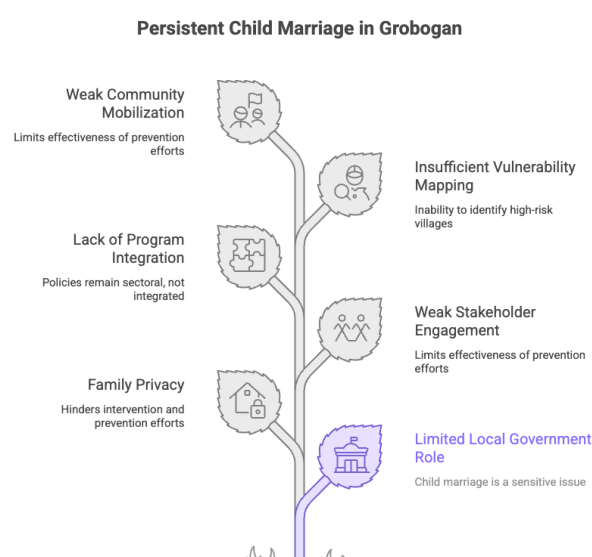


Figure 2. Child Marriage Prevention Policy in Grobogan Regency

Child Vulnerability in the Context of Child Marriage

The findings indicate that child marriage in Grobogan Regency is closely linked to the social vulnerability experienced by children, particularly girls. This vulnerability is multidimensional, encompassing economic, educational, social, and cultural aspects. Most child marriage cases occur in economically disadvantaged families, where children are often perceived as financial burdens to be alleviated through marriage. Limited access to quality education further restricts children's life choices, leaving early marriage as one of the few available options. Thus, child marriage is not merely an individual decision but a result of structural pressures that constrain children's opportunities.

Children's vulnerability is also reflected in their weak bargaining position within family decision-making. The decision to marry off children is largely determined by parents or extended family members, often based on economic considerations, social expectations, or

cultural norms. In many cases, girls have little or no agency to refuse or delay marriage, placing them in a subordinate position. This aligns with gender inequality concepts, where girls experience marginalization and subordination within social structures. This vulnerability is further exacerbated by limited legal awareness and understanding of children's rights among families and communities, resulting in child marriage being perceived as normal rather than problematic.

Moreover, broader social factors such as stigma and community pressure significantly contribute to child vulnerability. In several cases, child marriage occurs as a response to premarital pregnancy or to protect family honor. In such situations, children become victims of social norms that prioritize family reputation over their best interests. This indicates that child vulnerability is not solely economic but also socially constructed. Children in such conditions often experience psychological stress, loss of educational opportunities, and increased risk of domestic violence.

Child vulnerability in Grobogan is also structural and cyclical. Children from vulnerable families are more likely to experience repeated cycles of early marriage, school dropout, and intergenerational poverty. Without targeted interventions, child marriage will continue as a persistent social issue. Therefore, prevention must address not only regulatory frameworks but also family capacity, educational access, and social norm transformation.

Child Marriage Practices

The findings indicate that child marriage practices in Grobogan Regency remain prevalent and relatively high, as reflected in data from the Religious Court of Purwodadi, which recorded 562 cases in 2024, 463 cases in 2025, and 152 cases from January to April 2026. These figures not only demonstrate the استمرار (persistence) of child marriage but also suggest that the phenomenon has become a recurring social pattern. Although there was a decline from 2024 to 2025, this decrease cannot yet be interpreted as a significant success, as the numbers remain substantial. Moreover, if the 2026 trend continues, the total number of cases is likely to increase again. Therefore, child marriage in Grobogan can be categorized as a latent social phenomenon that persists despite increasingly stringent legal regulations.

Empirically, child marriage in Grobogan frequently occurs through the mechanism of marriage dispensation granted by the Religious Court. This legal provision serves as a formal pathway that legitimizes marriages below the age of 19, thereby allowing the practice to continue within a legal framework. The findings reveal that the primary reasons for filing marriage dispensation include premarital pregnancy, family pressure, and concerns over social stigma. In such situations, the court often faces a dilemma between enforcing legal norms and

accommodating prevailing social realities. As a result, marriage dispensation tends to function as a pragmatic solution that, paradoxically, reinforces child marriage practices. This indicates that legal instruments intended to restrict early marriage may, in practice, operate as adaptive mechanisms to social pressures.

Furthermore, child marriage practices in Grobogan exhibit a distinct pattern, particularly the dominance of cases involving girls from low educational backgrounds and economically vulnerable families. Girls are more frequently subjected to early marriage due to social constructions that assign them the responsibility of maintaining family honor. In many cases, child marriage is perceived as a solution to avoid social disgrace or to reduce the economic burden on the family. These findings confirm that child marriage is not merely an individual event but part of a broader social system that reproduces gender inequality and poverty. Without interventions targeting these structural root causes, child marriage in Grobogan will likely persist as a deeply embedded social phenomenon.

Social Influence on Child Marriage Practices

The findings reveal that child marriage practices in Grobogan Regency are strongly influenced by prevailing social structures and community norms. In many cases, society does not merely act as a passive environment but actively contributes to sustaining the practice. Social norms that frame marriage as a solution to various issues—such as premarital pregnancy, poverty, or concerns about social behavior—remain deeply entrenched. Within this context, child marriage is not perceived as a problem but rather as a socially acceptable mechanism to maintain family stability and honor. Consequently, social pressure from the community often outweighs formal legal regulations, leading families to prioritize social expectations over legal compliance.

The role of community leaders, religious figures, and local social networks is also significant in shaping perceptions and practices of child marriage. The findings indicate that in some cases, community leaders implicitly or explicitly legitimize child marriage based on moral or cultural considerations. This occurs due to interpretations of social and religious values that prioritize immediate problem-solving rather than long-term consequences for children. At the same time, not all community leaders possess adequate awareness of the negative impacts of child marriage or the importance of child protection. This highlights that social change cannot rely solely on formal policies but requires transformation of values and awareness at the community level.

Moreover, social influence is reflected in the intergenerational reproduction of cultural norms and mindsets. Child marriage practices that have long existed within the community

tend to be normalized and perceived as ordinary, making them difficult to change in a short period. Children raised in such environments are more likely to internalize and accept these practices as part of normal life. From this perspective, child marriage becomes institutionalized within local culture. Therefore, prevention efforts must go beyond legal and policy approaches, focusing instead on transforming social norms, increasing public awareness, and actively engaging communities in building a more child-friendly environment that prioritizes children's future well-being.

Child Marriage Prevention Efforts

The findings indicate that efforts to prevent child marriage in Grobogan Regency have been implemented through both structural and socio-cultural approaches. The local government, particularly through the Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, has conducted various programs such as socialization, education, and awareness campaigns targeting communities, schools, and families. These initiatives are generally delivered through communication, information, and education (CIE) activities, including outreach programs at the village and school levels. Additionally, efforts have been made to strengthen child forums and involve youth in advocacy initiatives. However, the study reveals that the reach of these programs remains limited and has not yet effectively covered all vulnerable groups, especially those in rural areas with limited access to information.

Prevention efforts have also been pursued through institutional approaches, particularly by promoting cross-sector coordination among local government agencies, educational institutions, religious organizations, and village authorities. In some cases, coordination teams or forums have been established to address child protection issues, including child marriage. Nevertheless, the findings show that such coordination remains fragmented and insufficiently integrated. Programs implemented by different government agencies often operate independently, lacking strong synergy. As a result, these interventions have not produced significant reductions in child marriage rates.

Educational pathways have also been utilized as a preventive strategy, both through formal schooling and non-formal education programs. Schools are expected to serve as strategic platforms for raising awareness among children about the risks of early marriage, reproductive health, and the importance of continuing education. However, the findings indicate that not all schools actively integrate these issues into their curricula or learning activities. Furthermore, children who have dropped out of school are difficult to reach through educational interventions, leaving them particularly vulnerable to early marriage.

Family-based approaches are another critical component of prevention efforts, given that families play a central role in decision-making regarding child marriage. Several programs have aimed to increase parental awareness of the negative impacts of child marriage from health, social, and economic perspectives. However, the findings reveal that changes in parental attitudes remain slow. Economic pressures, social expectations, and deeply rooted cultural values lead many families to continue viewing child marriage as a viable solution. This suggests that existing interventions have not yet effectively influenced family decision-making processes.

Another significant challenge lies in the utilization of data and information systems. Although data on child marriage cases are available—such as those recorded by the Religious Court of Purwodadi—their use in policy planning remains limited. Data have not been fully utilized to identify high-risk areas, determine target groups, or design more effective and targeted interventions. Consequently, prevention programs tend to be general rather than tailored to specific local needs.

Overall, the findings suggest that while child marriage prevention efforts in Grobogan have been initiated, they remain insufficiently effective and sustainable. Prevention strategies are still largely dominated by informational approaches, while transformative approaches addressing structural and socio-economic factors remain limited. Therefore, a more comprehensive and integrated strategy is required—one that combines awareness-raising with family capacity building, economic empowerment, and social norm transformation. Without such a holistic approach, child marriage will likely persist as a deeply rooted social issue.

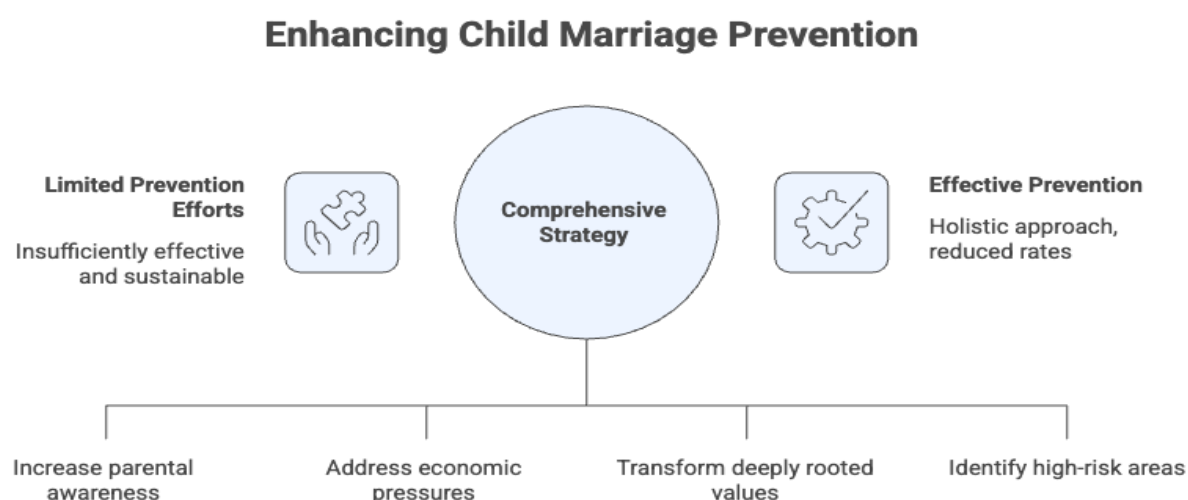


Figure 2. Child Marriage Prevention Efforts

The persistence of child marriage in Grobogan Regency highlights a significant gap between policy design and its implementation at the local level. This finding aligns with the framework proposed by Merilee S. Grindle (1980), which emphasizes that policy success depends not only on the content of the policy but also on the context of its implementation, including institutional capacity, actors, and socio-political environments. In Grobogan, although regulatory frameworks are normatively strong, their effectiveness is constrained by weak institutional integration and limited operational capacity. This indicates that child protection policies have yet to function as effective instruments of social transformation.

From a gender perspective, the findings clearly demonstrate that child marriage is deeply rooted in unequal power relations that disproportionately disadvantage girls. The study confirms that girls have limited agency in decision-making processes, as family and community pressures dominate. This is consistent with the theory of gender relations proposed by Raewyn Connell (2009), which explains how social structures perpetuate the subordination of women. Additionally, forms of gender injustice such as marginalization, stereotyping, and subordination, as outlined by Fakihi (2013), are evident in child marriage practices. Thus, child marriage should be understood not only as a social issue but also as a manifestation of institutionalized gender inequality.

Within the framework of the Capability Approach, child marriage can be interpreted as a consequence of limited capabilities among children, particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011). The findings indicate that children involved in early marriage often face restricted access to education, economic opportunities, and social support. These limitations reduce their ability to make autonomous life choices, making child marriage less a matter of choice and more a result of structural constraints. This is supported by empirical studies showing that lower levels of women's empowerment are associated with higher rates of child marriage (Ewerling et al., 2021; Nahar et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the strong influence of social norms and cultural values in Grobogan reflects the social construction of child marriage as an acceptable practice. As argued by Berger and Luckmann (1966), social realities are constructed and maintained through repeated social interactions, leading to the normalization of certain behaviors. In this context, child marriage is perceived as a legitimate solution to social problems such as premarital pregnancy or economic hardship. This explains why legal reforms alone are insufficient to change behavior, as deeply embedded cultural norms continue to shape community practices.

Finally, the findings emphasize that effective prevention of child marriage requires a multisectoral and transformative approach. As highlighted by UNICEF (2021), addressing

child marriage necessitates integrated interventions across education, social protection, economic empowerment, and normative change. In the context of Grobogan, strengthening cross-sector coordination, enhancing institutional capacity, and promoting community-based interventions are essential. Without such comprehensive strategies, existing policies risk remaining symbolic rather than impactful, allowing child marriage to persist within cycles of vulnerability and inequality.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that child marriage practices in Grobogan Regency remain high and recurrent, despite strengthened regulations through the increase in the legal minimum age of marriage. Data from the Religious Court of Purwodadi show that child marriage continues to be an uncontrolled social phenomenon, reflecting a significant gap between normative policy frameworks and their implementation at the local level.

Child vulnerability, particularly among girls, emerges as the primary factor driving child marriage. This vulnerability is multidimensional, encompassing economic pressures, limited access to education, weak bargaining power within the family, and strong social norms that legitimize the practice. In this context, child marriage is not merely an individual choice but rather a consequence of limited capabilities and deeply rooted gender inequalities within society.

Prevention efforts undertaken by local governments and various stakeholders remain suboptimal, as they tend to be fragmented and insufficiently integrated. Therefore, a more comprehensive and sustainable approach is required—one that goes beyond regulatory measures and awareness campaigns, and instead focuses on strengthening family capacity, promoting economic empowerment, expanding access to education, and transforming social norms to better serve the best interests of children.

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