
ISLAMIC SOCIO-RELIGIOUS REFLECTIONS ON EARLY MARRIAGE, FAMILY RESILIENCE, AND STUNTING IN SIRAMPOG, BREBES

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Abstract

Early marriage and child stunting remain persistent issues in Sirampog District, Brebes, a highland horticultural area characterized by long farming hours and limited service access in its upper hamlets. Although national and local initiatives including Presidential Regulation No. 72/2021, *Jo Kawin Bocah*, KUA premarital guidance, and posyandu services are available, policy messages often remain at the level of general moral advice and are not sufficiently translated into practical 1,000-day nutrition behaviors. This study aims to: (1) identify the social and religious determinants of early marriage; (2) assess how family resilience spiritual, economic, relational, and parenting dimensions—shapes child nutritional status; and (3) estimate the relationship between early marriage and stunting after accounting for parenting practices, parental education, economic conditions, and access to health services, while examining the roles of Islamic institutions (mosques, Qur'an learning centers/TPQ, *majelis taklim*, and Muslimat NU). Using a qualitative instrumental case-study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, FGDs, observations of health and religious activities, and document analysis, and examined using Reflexive Thematic Analysis with a Framework Matrix. Findings show that early marriage is driven by religious norms framed as “protection from zina,” social pressure to formalize relationships, gaps in religious literacy, and strategies involving unregistered marriage dispensation registration. Child nutrition is more strongly shaped by family resilience spiritual motivation, food planning, supportive marital relations, and age-appropriate feeding practices. The direct link between early marriage and stunting weakens after key household factors are controlled. Islamic institutions are effective when religious

messages are paired with actionable nutrition guidance. These results reinforce the relevance of *hijz al-nasl* and *hijz al-nafs* in stunting prevention.

Abstrak

Pernikahan dini dan stunting masih menjadi persoalan utama di Kecamatan Sirampog, Brebes, wilayah pegunungan dengan pekerjaan tani yang panjang dan akses layanan terbatas, terutama di dusun lereng. Meskipun telah tersedia Perpres 72/2021, program *Jo Kavin Bocah*, bimbingan perkawinan KUA, serta layanan posyandu, pesan kebijakan tentang pendewasaan usia kawin belum cukup terhubung dengan praktik gizi 1.000 HPK. Penelitian ini bertujuan: (1) mengidentifikasi determinan sosial-keagamaan pernikahan dini; (2) menilai pengaruh ketahanan keluarga (spiritual, ekonomi, relasional, dan pengasuhan) terhadap status gizi anak; dan (3) menganalisis keterkaitan pernikahan dini dan stunting setelah mempertimbangkan pengasuhan, pendidikan orang tua, ekonomi, dan akses kesehatan, serta menilai peran institusi Islam (masjid, TPQ, majelis taklim, Muslimat NU) dalam pencegahan. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan wawancara mendalam, FGD, observasi layanan, dan studi dokumen, dianalisis melalui *Reflexive Thematic Analysis* dan matriks *Framework*. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa pernikahan dini dipengaruhi oleh norma religius sebagai “pagar zina”, tekanan sosial, rendahnya literasi keagamaan, dan pola nikah siri–dispensasi–pencatatan. Status gizi anak lebih ditentukan oleh ketahanan keluarga melalui motivasi spiritual, pengaturan makanan anak, relasi suami-istri yang suportif, dan keterampilan pemberian MP-ASI. Hubungan langsung pernikahan dini dengan stunting melemah setelah faktor pengasuhan, pendidikan, ekonomi, dan akses layanan dikendalikan. Institusi Islam terbukti efektif ketika pesan keagamaan dipadukan dengan panduan gizi yang aplikatif. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa pencegahan pernikahan dini dan stunting merupakan amanah syariah dalam kerangka *hijz al-nasl* dan *hijz al-nafs*).

Keywords: Early Marriage; Family Resilience; Stunting, Islam

INTRODUCTION

Marriage in Islam is regarded as a sacred bond aimed at establishing a family grounded in *sakinah* (tranquility), *mawaddah* (affection), and *rahmah* (mercy), as stated in the Qur’ān (Q. S. al-Rūm [30]: 21).

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

It means: *And among His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find tranquility in them. He placed between you love and mercy. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who reflect*” (Q. S. al-Rūm [30]: 21).

From a social-hermeneutic perspective, *sakinah* (tranquility) can be understood not merely as spiritual serenity but as a form of family resilience in responding to sociocultural and nutritional challenges. Empirical evidence in Indonesia shows that family resilience particularly adaptive coping capacity, communication quality, and shared belief systems plays a significant role in shaping how families manage stunting risks and fulfill children's nutritional needs.¹² Similarly, research indicates that the core determinants of stunting, including parental education, household economic stability, and food security, directly influence a family's resilience and

¹ Dwi Cahya Rahmadiyah et al., “Family Resilience With Stunted Children Aged Below 5 Years: A Qualitative Study in Depok City, Indonesia,” *Global Qualitative Nursing Research* 11 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1177/23333936231221753>.

² Rahman Rahman et al., “Hadith Interpretation of Law and Justice and Its Implementation as an Alternative Solution Rule of Law Enforcement In Indonesian,” *Muslim Heritage* 8, no. 2 (2023): 293–308, <https://doi.org/10.21154/muslimheritage.v8i2.7214>.

consequently mediate child growth outcomes.³ Early marriage has also been identified as a major contributor to weakened family resilience, as it reduces parents' psychological readiness and socioeconomic capacity to provide proper childcare and nutrition.⁴ Thus, the Qur'ānic ideal of *sakinah* aligns closely with contemporary indicators of family resilience as a foundation for preventing malnutrition and promoting child development.

Within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, the verse supports the objectives of *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (preservation of progeny) and *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (preservation of life). The practice of early marriage undermines these goals by increasing maternal and child health risks, decreasing educational attainment, and weakening economic stability all of which are strongly correlated with higher stunting prevalence.⁵ Legal-juridical analysis similarly affirms that delaying marriage age is consistent with the *maqāṣid* framework, as it promotes parental maturity, socioeconomic preparedness, and the capacity to build a stable and nurturing family environment. In this light, the Qur'ānic injunction is reframed: establishing a *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, *rahmah* family is not only a spiritual ideal but also a practical pathway to safeguard child growth, health, and long-term family welfare in contemporary Indonesian Muslim society.⁶

The issues of early marriage and stunting remain prominent in Indonesia despite improvements in national trends. The prevalence of stunting declined from 24.4% in 2021 to 21.6% in 2022⁷ and further decreased to 19.8% in 2024 according to SSGI. However, the figure remains above the interim target and reflects persistent regional disparities⁸. Brebes Regency is categorized as a priority district with significant dynamics; SSGI-based analysis reported a stunting prevalence of 26.3% in 2021, rising to 29.1% in 2022, before declining to 21.6% in 2023⁹. Sirampog District itself is recorded as one of the areas with a significant volume of marriages; Statistics Indonesia (BPS) documented 583 marriages in this district in 2021¹⁰. The age at first marriage is also alarming: BPS Brebes reported that 26.8% of ever-married women stated that they had married before the age of 17 (2019).¹¹ The provincial context further underscores the urgency; data from the "Jo Kawin Bocah" program indicate that cases of child marriage in

³ Yusup Hidayat et al., "Is Early Marriage a Problem in Indonesia? Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah, Economic and Quadruple Helix Analysis," *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 20, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.18196/afkaruna.v20i1.19493>.

⁴ Iknilul Khoiroh, A rzan Anwari, and Fitriana Deva Yanti, "Perbandingan Batas Usia Perkawinan Di Negara-Negara Muslim Asia Dan Afrika Utara: Kajian Yuridis Dan Sosio-Kultural," *Muslim Heritage* 9, no. 2 (2024): 337–51.

⁵ Tarmizi Tahir, Syekh Hasan, and Abdel Hamid, "Maqasid Al-Syari ' Ah Transformation Implementation for Humanity In," *Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din* 26, no. 1 (2024): 119–31.

⁶ Berlia Sukmawati and Mu'Ammar Khadafi, "Family Achievements That Are Sakinah, Mawaddah, Warahmah," *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 1, no. 2 (2022): 243–56, <https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v1i2.6212>.

⁷ Fachrudin Ali, "Angka Stunting Tahun 2022 Turun Menjadi 21,6 Persen," *Humas BKPK*, 2023, <https://www.badankebijakan.kemkes.go.id/angka-stunting-tahun-2022-turun-menjadi-216-persen/>.

⁸ Kemenkes, "SSGI 2024: Prevalensi Stunting Nasional Turun Menjadi 19,8%," *Kemenkes*, 2025, <https://kemkes.go.id/id/ssgi-2024-prevalensi-stunting-nasional-turun-menjadi-198>.

⁹ Ulil Absor and Kartika Ratriana, "Enhancing Stunting Reduction Through Collaborative Governance: Concepts and Implementation in Brebes Regency," *Jurnal Keluarga Berencana* 9, no. 1 (2024): hal. 30, <https://doi.org/10.37306/w6f8xj35>.

¹⁰ Fachrudin Ali, "Angka Stunting Tahun 2022 Turun Menjadi 21,6 Persen."

¹¹ Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Brebes, "Persentase Wanita Berumur 10 Tahun Ke Atas Pernah Kawin Menurut Umur Perkawinan Pertama Di Kabupaten Brebes (Persen), 2019," *Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Brebes*, 2019, <https://brebeskab.bps.go.id/id/statistics-table/2/MjE3IzI=/persentase-wanita-berumur-10-tahun-ke-atas-pernah-kawin-menurut-umur-perkawinan-pertama-di-kabupaten-brebes.html>.

Central Java remain high, although they have shown a declining trend up to 2022.¹² The state has established a national strategy for accelerating stunting reduction through Presidential Regulation No. 72/2021, which prioritizes strengthening families at risk of stunting.¹³

From a theoretical perspective, stunting is positioned as a multi-level problem influenced by the characteristics of the child, the mother, the household, and the community. Multilevel studies in Indonesia confirm these cross-level determinants and underscore the need for comprehensive interventions.¹⁴ Family studies identify household characteristics such as parental education, income, sanitation, parenting practices, and social support as key determinants of nutritional status.¹⁵ Recent qualitative evidence highlights the role of family resilience and religious beliefs in fulfilling toddler nutrition, as well as common misconceptions about stunting such as the notion that children will “grow out of it” which significantly influence parenting behaviors.¹⁶ In line with this, studies in Indonesia reveal varying findings regarding the role of socioeconomic conditions and maternal employment in relation to stunting, demonstrating the complexity of household factors in shaping child nutrition outcomes.¹⁷

The literature on early marriage links it to maternal and child health vulnerabilities, low educational attainment, and economic insecurity. In the Indonesian context, education has been shown to play a significant role in reducing the likelihood of early marriage.¹⁸ Recent quantitative findings even indicate that parental child marriage is correlated with an increased likelihood of stunting and child food insecurity, although the underlying mechanisms remain unclear.¹⁹ The causal pathways are often mediated through parenting practices and household economic conditions.²⁰ The Islamic perspective on family emphasizes the preservation of lineage, intellect, and life (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*), which is highly relevant for strengthening family resilience and promoting nutrition-oriented parenting practices.²¹ Evidence at the local level in Central Java

¹² Mutiara Yuniar and puji Astuti and Supratiwi, “Implementasi Program ‘Jo Kawin Bocah’ Sebagai Upaya Pencegahan Pernikahan Usia Anak Di Provinsi Jawa Tengah,” *Journal of Politic and Government Studies* 14, no. 1 (2024): hal. 470, <https://ejournal3.undip.ac.id/index.php/jpgs/article/view/48850>.

¹³ Republik Indonesia, “Peraturan Presiden (Perpres) Nomor 72 Tahun 2021 Tentang Percepatan Penurunan Stunting,” 2021, <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/174964/perpres-no-72-tahun-2021>.

¹⁴ Tri Mulyaningsih et al., “Beyond Personal Factors: Multilevel Determinants of Childhood Stunting in Indonesia,” *PLoS ONE* 16, no. 11 November (2021): hal. 10, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0260265>.

¹⁵ Desy Indra Yani et al., “Family Household Characteristics and Stunting: An Update Scoping Review,” *Nutrients* 15, no. 1 (2023): hal. 12, <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu15010233>.

¹⁶ Rahmadiyah et al., “Family Resilience With Stunted Children Aged Below 5 Years: A Qualitative Study in Depok City, Indonesia,” hal. 6.

¹⁷ Laili Rahayuwati et al., “The Influence of Mother’s Employment, Family Income, and Expenditure on Stunting Among Children Under Five: A Cross-Sectional Study in Indonesia,” *Journal of Multidisciplinary Healthcare* 16, no. August (2023): hal. 2275, <https://doi.org/10.2147/JMDH.S417749>.

¹⁸ Maya Fitria et al., “Education Role in Early Marriage Prevention: Evidence from Indonesia’s Rural Areas,” *BMC Public Health* 24, no. 1 (2024): hal. 6, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-024-20775-4>.

¹⁹ Isnawati Hidayah et al., “The Role of Parental Child Marriage in Children’s Food Security and Nutritional Status: A Prospective Cohort Study in Indonesia,” *Frontiers in Public Health* 12, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2024.1469483>.

²⁰ Hidayah et al., hal. 7.

²¹ Audrey Dwinandita, “Islamic Child Parenting Practices and Muslim Family Resilience in Southeast Asia: A Systematic Literature Review,” *Al-Athfal: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak* 10, no. 2 (2024): hal. 90, <https://doi.org/10.14421/al-athfal.2024.102-01>.

further illustrates the situation, including the persistently high trends of adolescent pregnancy and child marriage.²²

Recent studies further support these observations, showing that adolescent or early marriage is a strong predictor of child stunting,²³ that children born to adolescent mothers face higher risks of low birth weight and early nutritional deficiencies,²⁴ and that religious institutions increasingly contribute to health promotion and maternal education in Muslim-majority communities.²⁵ Additional evidence also indicates that regional disparities in stunting, including those in Central Java, are strongly associated with socioeconomic vulnerabilities and adolescent reproductive health patterns.²⁶ These findings reinforce the relevance of integrating religious values, family sociology, and public health perspectives in understanding early marriage and child nutrition.

The research gap appears in three areas. First, although many Indonesian studies link early marriage to stunting, most do not test this relationship after controlling for parenting practices, parental education, household economic conditions, access to services, and religious support factors that recent evidence shows to mediate child nutrition outcomes. Second, despite growing interest in family resilience and religious beliefs in shaping parenting and nutrition, few studies explicitly connect these elements with Islamic values and the institutional roles of mosques, TPQ, and *majelis taklim* at the sub-district level. Third, existing publications are dominated by national or provincial analyses, leaving limited micro-level evidence from priority areas such as Sirampog, Brebes. In this study, the Islamic perspective is not only used normatively but also analytically to interpret family resilience indicators based on *maqāṣid al-shari'ah*, ensuring that religious concepts function methodologically rather than symbolically.

This study addresses three main research questions. 1) To identify the main determinants of early marriage within the Muslim community of Sirampog from social and religious perspectives (including norms, social pressure, religious literacy, and the support of religious leaders or institutions). 2) To assess how family resilience encompassing spiritual, economic, relational, and parenting dimensions affects child nutritional status (stunting) in Sirampog. 3) To estimate the extent to which early marriage is associated with stunting after controlling for parenting, parental education, economic conditions, and access to health care, as well as to evaluate the role of Islamic values and institutions (mosques, Qur'ān learning centers/TPQ, and majelis taklim) in prevention efforts.

The novelty of this study lies in the integration of Islamic perspectives and family sociology into a multi-level analytical model within a single priority district, disentangling the direct effects of early

²² PKBI Jateng, "Tingginya Kehamilan Remaja Tuntut PKBI Jateng Susun Program Kerja 2015-2018," PKBI Jawa Tengah, 2018, <https://pkbijateng.or.id/tingginya-kehamilan-remaja-tuntut-pkbi-jateng-susun-program-kerja-2015-2018/>.

²³ Demsa Simbolon and Frensi Riastuti, "Adolescent Marriages and Risk of Stunting in Indonesia: Based on Indonesian Family Life Survey (Ifs) 2014," *Indonesian Journal of Public Health* 19, no. 2 (2024): 276–88, <https://doi.org/10.20473/ijph.v19i2.2024.276-288>.

²⁴ Nur Lailatul Fadhillah and Rizky Pranadyan, "Effect of Adolescent Pregnancy on the Incidence of Low Birthweight in Dr Soetomo Hospital, Surabaya, Indonesia," *Majalah Obstetri & Ginekologi* 28, no. 2 (2020): 67, <https://doi.org/10.20473/mog.v28i22020.67-74>.

²⁵ Aswar Annas and Zaldi Rusnaedy, "The Role of Religious Figures in Supporting the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction in East Nusa Tenggara," *Journal of Government Civil Society* 3, no. 2 (2020): 117–28.

²⁶ Hastin Dyah Kusumawardani et al., "Stunting Among Children Under Two Years in the Islands Areas: A Cross-Sectional Study of the Maluku Region in Indonesia, 2021," *Journal of Research in Health Sciences* 23, no. 4 (2023): e00597–e00597, <https://doi.org/10.34172/jrhs.2023.132>.

marriage from parenting and household economic pathways, while simultaneously measuring family resilience through relational and spiritual dimensions. The theoretical contribution is to enrich the understanding of family-based determinants of stunting in Muslim communities and to clarify the position of early marriage within the causal chain after comprehensive controls. The practical contribution is directed toward designing mosque-based and TPQ-based community interventions that strengthen nutrition literacy, parenting skills, and family counselling in alignment with Presidential Regulation No. 72/2021 and regional stunting-reduction strategies. Theoretically, this research expands the discourse of Islamic family sociology by contextualizing *maqāṣid al-shari‘ah* into family resilience and child health frameworks.

THE MAIN DETERMINANTS OF EARLY MARRIAGE IN THE SIRAMPOG MUSLIM COMMUNITY FROM A SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE AND FIQH MUNAKAHAT

Interviews and FGDs revealed a strong belief in Sirampog that marrying at a young age is positioned as the “safest safeguard” against promiscuity and zina amid the currents of globalization, mobile phone access, and increasingly relaxed interactions between the sexes. Parents and local leaders linked such decisions to preserving family honor and the “lineage” (*nasab*) of daughters. This pattern of rationalization is consistent with both Indonesian and global literature on child marriage, which highlights the central role of religious norms and beliefs in accelerating the age of marriage, alongside economic and educational factors. UNICEF has emphasized that changing these practices requires addressing socio-religious norms rather than merely regulating legal marriage age, since context-specific data and understandings of values and culture often remain limited.²⁷

Community narratives indicate a strong ecology of social and communal pressures. Family reputation, neighborhood gossip, and the expectation to “formalize” adolescent relationships once they become publicly visible create a collective push that shortens the family deliberation process and shifts the focus from psychosocial readiness toward symbolic compliance with norms of honor. The provincial context reinforces this picture through the Jo Kawin Bocah program, designed by the Central Java Provincial Government to curb child marriage by means of education, service networks, and cross-stakeholder coordination. Regional policy studies on the program highlight its emphasis on team strengthening and field-level implementation effectiveness, signaling the existence of alternative channels for families and adolescents beyond early marriage.²⁸

The practice of navigating the route of *nikah siri* → marriage dispensation → official registration repeatedly emerged in the field data as a household strategy to reconcile religious norms with the legal age requirement. The amendment of Law No. 16/2019, which equalized the minimum marriage age at 19 for both men and women, has restricted access to direct registration, thereby prompting couples under 19 to seek dispensations from the religious court in accordance with Supreme Court Regulation (PERMA) No. 5/2019. Administrative records from court decision directories and the Badilag dashboard indicate significant numbers of dispensation cases in the jurisdiction of the Semarang High Religious Court (PTA), with the Brebes Religious Court

²⁷ Unicef, “Child Marriage,” 2025, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-marriage/>.

²⁸ Mutiara Yuniar and puji Astuti and Supratiwi, “Implementasi Program ‘Jo Kawin Bocah’ Sebagai Upaya Pencegahan Pernikahan Usia Anak Di Provinsi Jawa Tengah,” hal. 471.

recording 531 cases in 2022, while local reports summarize 394 applications in 2023 and 319 in 2024. This trajectory underscores that the pattern of “marry first, legalize later” is not an individual anomaly but a discernible configuration of practices within the judicial system.²⁹

The legal consequences of unregistered marriage constitute a crucial reason for families to pursue *isbat* (marriage validation) or dispensation in order to obtain official registration³⁰. Explanations from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and educational channels of the religious courts emphasize that while *nikah siri* is deemed religiously valid if all pillars and requirements are fulfilled, it does not provide administrative or civil protection for the wife and children until formal validation (*isbat*) or registration takes place. This administrative gap affects access to marriage certificates, the establishment of lineage (*nasab*), inheritance rights, and public services.³¹ Families in Sirampog interpret official registration as a means of “securing status” that is legally safe while not abandoning religious legitimacy, thereby positioning the judicial pathway as a bridge between community norms and state governance.

From the perspective of *fiqh al-munākahāt*, scholars emphasize that marriage should be regarded both as an act of worship (*‘ibādah*) and as a contract (*‘aqd*) that carries specific legal requirements, pillars, and *shar‘ī* objectives. The principle of *al-kifāyah* (preparedness) encompasses physical, psychological, economic, and spiritual readiness. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated: “*O young people, whoever among you is able to marry, should marry...*” (Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim).³² Thus, *fiqh al-munākahāt* does not merely legitimize marriage on the basis of biological age but requires maturity in fulfilling *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (protection of life and safety), *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (protection of lineage), and *ḥifẓ al-‘aql* (protection of intellect). The practice of early marriage in Sirampog reflects a partial interpretation, in which the dimension of *ḥifẓ al-nasl* is emphasized to safeguard family honor and lineage, while the aspects of *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (maternal and child health) and *ḥifẓ al-‘aql* (intellectual maturity) are often neglected.

Meanwhile, local Islamic traditions in Sirampog also shape the patterns of early marriage. Within an agrarian and religious culture, marriage is often perceived as a means of safeguarding family honor, avoiding the stigma of adolescent interactions, and accelerating the attainment of social status. Local narratives likewise frame marriage as an act of obedience to Islamic norms, intertwined with customary expectations of preserving family reputation and lineage (*nasab*). The influence of local religious figures, including *kiai* and *ustādh*, plays a crucial role, as their legitimization of early marriage often reinforces the practice. Nevertheless, there are also traditions of Qur’ānic study circles and *majelis taklim* that have begun to internalize a new perspective: that readiness for marriage should align with *maṣlaḥah* in the *sharī‘ah*, reproductive health, and family sustainability.

The quality of religious literacy appears to shape how families interpret the *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*. Some informants emphasized *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (preservation of lineage), which was translated

²⁹ Republik Indonesia, “Peraturan Mahkamah Agung Nomor 5 Tahun 2019 Tentang Pedoman Mengadili Permohonan Dispensasi Kawin,” 2019, <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/206071/perma-no-5-tahun-2019>.

³⁰ Sakirman Sakirman, “Akibat Hukum Dalam Praktik Nikah Sirri Menurut Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 1974 Tentang Perkawinan,” *Muslim Heritage* 1, no. 2 (2017): 63–86, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21154/muslimheritage.v2i1.1046>.

³¹ Abu Rokhmad, “Isbat Nikah Dan Pencatatan Perkawinan,” 2025, <https://kemenag.go.id/opini/isbat-nikah-dan-pencatatan-perkawinan-N4Myg>.

³² Muslim Pizza, “Hadist Muslim No. 2485 /Anjuran Untuk Nikah,” accessed August 19, 2025, <https://www.hadits.id/hadits/muslim/2485>.

into a preference for “early marriage,” while the dimensions of *ḥifẓ al-nafs* and *ḥifẓ al-‘aql* (physical psychological readiness, protection of life, and intellectual maturity) were not always given equal weight. A corrective space is provided through the Bimbingan Perkawinan (Bimwin) program of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), which has become a compulsory requirement for prospective brides and grooms under the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Guidance No. 189/2021 and its amendment No. 172/2022. Policy documents and technical circulars underscore the mandate of Bimwin, while local juridical empirical studies highlight its implementation at the sub-district level (including Sirampog), which could be further strengthened in terms of facilitation, coverage of family readiness materials, and linkage with youth services.³³³⁴

The interplay of these factors produces a configuration of interlocking determinants. The religious norm of “avoiding zina” provides a readily accepted moral justification; social pressure reinforces the urgency of formalizing relationships; legal–institutional routes offer formal pathways after *nikah siri*; while the level of religious literacy determines whether religious messages are understood partially or comprehensively. Regional administrative evidence shows that the policy of raising the legal minimum age of marriage has led to increased use of dispensation mechanisms, indicating that the effectiveness of prevention depends heavily on the quality of youth education ecosystems and premarital counseling, rather than solely on age regulation.

The findings in Sirampog highlight five interrelated determinants of early marriage: (1) religious norms of preventing zina, which frame early marriage as a moral safeguard; (2) socio-communal pressures related to family reputation and the expectation of formalizing adolescent relationships; (3) uneven levels of religious literacy, leading to interpretations of the *maqāṣid* that privilege the preservation of lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) over the maturity of life and intellect (*ḥifẓ al-nafs* and *ḥifẓ al-‘aql*); (4) legal institutional pathways involving *nikah siri*, dispensations, and official registration; and (5) the influence of local Islamic traditions that position marriage as a symbol of honor, while also opening space for reinterpretation toward a more comprehensive understanding of *fiqh al-munākahāt*.

Strengthening the Bimwin program at the Sirampog Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), fostering mosque–TPQ partnerships, and consolidating the Jo Kawin Bocah initiative provide realistic levers to shift the prevailing narrative from “avoiding zina as quickly as possible” toward “preparing for family maturity,” in alignment with the *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* and child protection goals.

Family resilience (spiritual, economic, relational, and parenting) and its impact on child nutritional status (stunting) in Sirampog

³³ Republik Indonesia, “Kepdirjen Nomor 172 Tahun 2022 Tentang Perubahan Kepdirjen Nomor 189 Tahun 2021 Tentang Juklak Bimwin Catin,” 2022, <https://aprijateng.id/index.php/detail/kepdirjen-nomor-172-tahun-2022-tentang-perubahan-kepdirjen-nomor-189-tahun-2021-tentang-juklak-bimwin-catin>.

³⁴ Agus Hermanto, “Larangan Perkawinan Perspektif Fikih Dan Relevansinya Dengan Hukum Perkawinan Di Indonesia,” *Muslim Heritage* 2, no. 1 (2017): 125–52.

Field observations and documentation position Sirampog as a highland horticultural area characterized by long and seasonal agricultural work rhythms. Residents rely on vegetable farming (cabbage, potatoes, chili, and others) as their primary livelihood. Publications such as Sirampog in Figures 2023 by Statistics Indonesia (BPS) and the 2023 Agricultural Census outputs for Sirampog confirm this horticultural-agrarian profile, including tables of vegetable production by sub-district that identify Sirampog as one of the key vegetable-producing pockets in Brebes.³⁵ In-depth interviews revealed that some parents prioritized time spent in the fields over pursuing higher education, while both religious and general literacy regarding the 1,000 HPK (first 1,000 days of life) nutrition framework remained uneven. These findings provide context that household economies tend to be relatively liquid during harvest seasons, yet parenting time and access to formal information are constrained by long working hours and the distance to services.

The spiritual dimension functions both as a source of meaning in parenting and as a channel for legitimizing healthy behaviors. Parents who are active in mosques or majelis taklim described parenting as a form of religious trust (*amānah*), such that their involvement in posyandu activities and compliance with health cadres' recommendations were linked to religious obligations. This spiritual value is consistent with Islamic teachings that children are a trust from Allah for which parents will be held accountable ("Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you will be asked about his flock" – narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim).³⁶ Family practices such as congregational prayer, collective supplication, and *tarbiyah rūḥiyyah* strengthen the awareness that safeguarding children's growth and development is an integral part of worship. The analysis, however, reveals a gap when religious sermons on the pulpit do not connect with technical guidance on complementary feeding (MP-ASI), even though mosque-based interventions have been proven effective as nodes of health promotion when carried out in collaboration with medical professionals.³⁷ Policies and evidence from the first 1,000 Days of Life (HPK) programs underscore the need for integrating community- and household-based nutrition services (posyandu, holistic early childhood education/PAUD HI, and religious leaders) so that moral messages can be transformed into adequate feeding practices.

The economic dimension constitutes the material "floor" for the quality of children's diets. Weekly expenditure records and FGD discussions illustrated the strategy of an "envelope for children's meals" among families that planned daily protein purchases; families without such a budget line tended to substitute rice, instant noodles, or sauces on "bad days." In Islam, providing sustenance is the obligation of a father, as the Prophet stated: "It is sufficient sin for a person that he neglects those whose provision is his responsibility" (Narrated by Abū Dāwūd). Data from BPS horticultural production highlight the strength of the local food supply base; however, the conversion of this supply into a child's plate depends on household planning and intrafamily preferences. Quantitative evidence from Indonesia confirms that dietary diversity (MDD) is positively correlated with the nutritional status of children aged 6–23 months, even

³⁵ Badan Pusat Statistik kabupaten Brebes, "Kecamatan Sirampog Dalam Angka 2023," 2023, <https://brebeskab.bps.go.id/id/publication/2023/09/26/6680ec3ef089ec30208de193/kecamatan-sirampog-dalam-angka-2023.html>.

³⁶ Mutakdir, "Tanggung Jawab Pemimpin Dalam Perspektif Hadis Nabi SAW (Analisis Tahlili Terhadap Hadis Kullukum Rā'in Wa Kullukum Mas'ūlun **كلكم راع وكلكم مسؤول**)" (UIN Alauddin, 2019), hal. 4.

³⁷ Wahiba Abu-Ras et al., "Mosques and Public Health Promotion: A Scoping Review of Faith-Driven Health Interventions," *Health Education and Behavior* 51, no. 5 (2024): hal. 685, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10901981241252800>.

after controlling for sociodemographic factors.³⁸ Multilevel analyses also position household and regional factors such as parental education, wealth, WASH, and service access as key determinants of stunting risk. The findings from Sirampog illustrate how horticultural cash flows and household food planning translate economic strength into daily variations of animal protein for toddlers.

The relational dimension determines the stability of parenting decisions. Mothers who received emotional and financial support from their husbands were more consistent in providing protein-based meals, more punctual in attending posyandu sessions, and better prepared to handle symptoms of infection. This concept aligns with the Qur'ānic command for husbands and wives to live together in mutual kindness (*mu'āsharah bil ma'rūf*), as stated in Q.S. al-Nisā' [4]:19:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرْهًا وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا آتَيْنَهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيَّنَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا

It Means: O you who have believed, it is not lawful for you to inherit women by compulsion. And do not make difficulties for them in order to take back part of what you gave them, unless they commit a clear immorality. And live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them, it may be that you dislike something while Allah has placed much good in it.

This verse underscores the importance of treating one's spouse with compassion, consultation, and cooperation. Families experiencing prolonged conflict tended to delay accessing services and opted for "just filling the stomach" rather than ensuring quality nutrition. Active paternal involvement such as being present at posyandu, discussing meal plans, and jointly agreeing on "children's protein menus" was associated with more consistent breastfeeding and feeding practices. National evidence reinforces this pattern, showing that paternal support is correlated with the success of exclusive breastfeeding during the first three months and with its continuation. Meanwhile, qualitative studies of families with stunted children highlight the role of family resilience and functioning in sustaining adequate nutrition.³⁹

The parenting dimension functions as the execution point of values, economic resources, and relationships. Observations at posyandu and audits of child health books (KIA/e-KMS) revealed three recurring barriers for children aged 6–23 months: feeding frequency not adjusted to age, inappropriate progression of food texture, and low dietary variety (particularly in the use of affordable animal protein sources such as eggs and small fish). Some grandmothers, acting as secondary caregivers, maintained dietary taboos (e.g., "eggs should be avoided during coughs") that reduced nutrient intake. In Islam, child-rearing is considered both a trust (*amānah*) and an obligation of education (*tarbiyah*), as the Prophet stated: "No father gives his child a better gift than good education." (by al-Tirmidhī).⁴⁰ Thus, weaknesses in complementary feeding (MP-ASI) practices are not merely technical problems but also reflect the suboptimal fulfillment of the family's educational trust (*amānah*). Counseling sessions accompanied by cooking demonstrations and low-cost shopping lists have proven effective as efforts to uphold this responsibility.

³⁸ Badan Pusat Statistik kabupaten Brebes, "Kecamatan Sirampog Dalam Angka 2023."

³⁹ Ratu Ayu Dewi Sartika et al., "Parental Support and Exclusive Breastfeeding at 3 Months in West Java, Indonesia: A Mixed-Methods Approach," *Clinical and Experimental Pediatrics* 67, no. 7 (2024): hal. 362, <https://doi.org/10.3345/cep.2023.01375>.

⁴⁰ NU Online, "Peran Ayah Dalam Pendidikan Akhlak Anak," 2025, <https://islam.nu.or.id/tasawuf-akhlak/peran-ayah-dalam-pendidikan-akhlak-anak-xwLdJ>.

Cross-dimensional analysis positions family resilience as the medium through which resources and values are translated into child feeding behaviors. Low-income families were still able to maintain growth curves when husbands and wives agreed on prioritizing daily protein meals and when religious messages emphasized child growth and development as a sacred trust (*amānah*). Conversely, families with adequate purchasing power remained at risk if relational dynamics were fragile and parenting practices were misguided. From the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*, the spiritual dimension relates to *ḥifẓ al-dīn*, the economic dimension to *ḥifẓ al-māl*, the relational dimension to *ḥifẓ al-‘aql* and *ḥifẓ al-nafs*, and the parenting dimension to *ḥifẓ al-nasl*. The most relevant intervention package for Sirampog includes mosque-based *posyandu* featuring sermons on “1,000 HPK nutrition,” father and grandmother caregiver classes, and a toolkit of affordable local protein menus aligned with the agricultural calendar.

EARLY MARRIAGE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO STUNTING AFTER CONTROLLING FOR PARENTING, PARENTAL EDUCATION, ECONOMY, ACCESS TO HEALTH, AND ASSESSING THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC VALUES AND INSTITUTIONS IN PREVENTION

In-depth interviews and observations in Sirampog revealed a consistent pattern: toddlers from low-income households more frequently experienced limited nutritional care, with feeding frequency not age-appropriate, low dietary variety (particularly in affordable animal protein sources such as eggs and small fish), and the persistence of traditional food taboos when children were ill. Records from *posyandu* cadres indicated that farming families with “long working days” often delayed service visits during planting and harvest seasons. FGD discussions reinforced the finding that knowledge, rather than willingness, was the main barrier to caregiving, and that daily food decisions were strongly influenced by the availability of household cash. This local pattern aligns with national evidence, which identifies dietary diversity (MDD), household income/food security, parental education, and environmental/WASH conditions as strong determinants of child nutritional status.⁴¹

Our thematic analysis did not identify a direct relationship between early marriage and stunting once parenting practices, parental education, economic conditions, and service access were controlled. Family narratives pointed to the underlying mechanism: in many cases of early-age marriage, childcare was delegated to grandparents or the couple’s parents, meaning that the quality of complementary feeding (MP-ASI) and *posyandu* compliance reflected the capacity of the older generation rather than the biological parents’ age at marriage. This “buffering” pattern reduced the effect of early marriage once caregiving and economic factors were taken into account. National quantitative evidence further confirms that parental child marriage is associated with stunting and food insecurity, primarily through economic and parenting pathways, rather than the marital age itself.⁴² The findings from Sirampog follow the same trajectory: when key mediators (parenting, economic conditions, and education) were controlled, the direct association became substantively weak or disappeared altogether.

Access to health services in Sirampog is generally adequate, with *posyandu* operating regularly and referrals to community health centers (*puskesmas*) functioning smoothly. However,

⁴¹ Hidayah et al., “The Role of Parental Child Marriage in Children’s Food Security and Nutritional Status: A Prospective Cohort Study in Indonesia,” hal. 8.

⁴² Hidayah et al., hal. 9.

hamlets located on mountain slopes face challenges of distance, steep roads, and weather conditions that disrupt the regularity of visits. Informants noted that prolonged rainy days triggered absences, rather than any rejection of services. Indonesian literature identifies distance and transportation as critical components of access in the utilization of basic services for child nutrition and health; mapping the determinants of stunting likewise includes community- and regional-level factors as determinants alongside household-level conditions.⁴³ These findings reinforce the argument that service availability alone is insufficient; strategies are needed to bring services closer to the mountain-slope hamlets and to adjust schedules in line with the agricultural planting calendar, so that continuity in growth monitoring can be maintained.

From the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, early marriage and stunting directly intersect with two primary objectives of Islamic law: *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (preservation of lineage) and *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (protection of life). While early marriage is often understood by communities as an effort to safeguard honor and lineage, if it results in weakened parenting, malnutrition, and stunting, it in fact threatens the very quality of progeny that should be preserved. Islam commands parents to fulfill the rights of their children, both physically and spiritually. The Prophet stated: “It is sufficient sin for a person that he neglects those whose provision is his responsibility” (Narrated by Abū Dāwūd). This hadith underscores that preserving the life and health of children is a religious obligation. Therefore, protecting future generations from stunting is not merely a medical matter, but also part of fulfilling the *sharīʿah* mandate to ensure the birth of healthy, strong, and intelligent offspring.

The role of Islamic values and institutions emerges prominently as an enabler of prevention. In several villages, Muslimat NU actively delivered materials on delaying the age of marriage and adolescent reproductive health through Qurʾānic study groups (*pengajian*) and *majelis taklim*, with some activities linked to local government and UNICEF agendas on child marriage prevention. Cadres reported collaborations between women’s study circles and *posyandu* on the topics of complementary feeding (MP-ASI) and the first 1,000 days of life (HPK). This institutional footprint aligns with partnership documents between the provincial government and NU (in the domains of communication, information, and education/KIE and family resilience) as well as NU–UNICEF initiatives for child marriage prevention. Public health literature highlights the effectiveness of mosques and religious institutions as hubs for health promotion when moral messages are linked with practical guidance and partnerships with health workers (scoping reviews of mosque-based interventions). The Sirampog experience offers a concrete example: Friday sermons and *majelis taklim* that addressed the theme of 1,000 HPK nutrition enhanced the legitimacy of cadres’ messages, while cooking demonstrations and low-cost shopping lists ensured that these messages were translated into action.⁴⁴

Synthesis Local evidence positions parenting and household economy as the main channels explaining variations in child nutritional status. Early marriage does not provide an independent direct contribution once key mediators are controlled, as childcare is often “buffered” by grandparents and the influence of marital age is largely “translated” through household economic capacity and nutrition literacy. Service access is generally adequate, yet geographical barriers in

⁴³ Mulyaningsih et al., “Beyond Personal Factors: Multilevel Determinants of Childhood Stunting in Indonesia,” hal. 17.

⁴⁴ Abu-Ras et al., “Mosques and Public Health Promotion: A Scoping Review of Faith-Driven Health Interventions,” hal. 685.

mountain-slope hamlets require more adaptive scheduling and service formats. Islamic institutions particularly the Muslimat NU network, mosques, Qur'ān learning centers (TPQ), and majelis taklim prove effective as levers of change when religious content is integrated with operational nutrition messages and partnerships with posyandu and community health centers (puskesmas). The most reasonable policy direction for Sirampog is an intervention package that: (i) sharpens parenting literacy and promotes “local protein menus” among low-income families; (ii) brings posyandu services closer to mountain-slope hamlets and adjusts schedules to the agricultural calendar; and (iii) utilizes pulpits and Muslimat NU/majelis taklim forums as key channels for promoting delayed marriage age and appropriate complementary feeding (MP-ASI). From a sharī'ah perspective, these steps align with the maqāṣid objectives of preserving life (ḥifẓ al-naḥs) and lineage (ḥifẓ al-nasl), while fulfilling the Islamic mandate to ensure that every generation grows healthy and strong as God's vicegerents (khalifah) on earth.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes three key points. First, early marriage in Sirampog is driven by the religious norm of “avoiding zina,” social pressure, gaps in religious literacy, and legal strategies involving nikah siri (unregistered marriage), dispensations, and subsequent registration. This pattern underscores ḥifẓ al-nasl (the preservation of lineage), yet often neglects ḥifẓ al-naḥs and ḥifẓ al-'aql, which relate to physical and psychological readiness. Second, child nutritional status is more strongly shaped by family resilience: spirituality fosters compliance with health services, economic resources determine food purchasing power, spousal relationships sustain consistent caregiving, and complementary feeding (MP-ASI) skills ensure that resources are effectively translated into children's meals. From an Islamic perspective, this aligns with the mandate of ḥifẓ al-naḥs and ḥifẓ al-nasl. Third, the direct relationship between early marriage and stunting is not significant once parenting, economic conditions, education, and service access are controlled, as many children are cared for by grandparents and health services are relatively accessible. Islamic institutions such as mosques, Qur'ān learning centers (TPQ), majelis taklim, and Muslimat NU prove effective as catalysts for change when religious messages are integrated with practical nutrition guidance and posyandu partnerships. Framed within the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, the most relevant interventions include mosque-based nutrition education, father and grandmother caregiver classes, affordable local protein menus, and adaptive services for mountain-slope hamlets. These efforts affirm that preventing early marriage and stunting is not only a socio-economic concern but also a religious obligation to safeguard the life (ḥifẓ al-naḥs) and lineage (ḥifẓ al-nasl) of the Muslim generation.

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