

PERSPECTIVES
AND ASPIRATIONS OF ADOLESCENT
GIRLS ON CHILD MARRIAGE

PREPARED BY THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF FAMILY
RESILIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

PREPARED FOR OXFAM IN INDONESIA

MAY 2020

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Acknowledgments

We would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to all who have made it possible to complete this project. We are especially grateful for the opportunities to work hand in hand with partners from different background and walks of life, for their hard work and patience during the fieldwork.

We also would like to acknowledge with much appreciation the support of the respondents and participants in West Java and Lombok, for without them, this research will not be possible.

Last but not certainly not least, our special recognition for the hard-working Creating Space team who had accomplished so much in the past years. Their passion and commitment to stop child marriage is inspiring to all of us. We sincerely hope that this study will contribute to the improvement of future programs and campaigns.

Jakarta, May 2020

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List of Abbreviations and Key Terms

Akil Baligh	Puberty
Awiq-awiq or hukum adat	Customary law or traditional law (particular in West Nusa Tenggara)
CS	Creating Space project
Dianggap tidak laku	Considered a spinster/old maid
Disdukcapil (Dinas Kependudukan dan Pencatatan Sipil)	The Department of Population and Civil Registration
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
Forum Anak	Also known as Forum Anak Nasional. An organization consists of children from different parts of Indonesia. The forum was established to fulfill children's participation rights, and is managed by the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection to bridge communication between the government and children all over Indonesia.
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
Itsbat Nikah	Legalization or verification of previously unregistered marriage
Jodoh	Soulmate
Karang Taruna	Youth organization at the village/sub-district level. The organization is managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs.
Kawin gantung	A practice in which after the matrimony is legalized, couples were separated (not allowed to unite as husband and wife) for a certain period of time
Kejar Paket	Acceleration program provided by the government for those who dropped out of school or those who were homeschooled to receive certification based on the education level: Kejar Paket A is equal to the elementary level, Kejar Paket B to middle school, and Kejar Paket C to high school level.
Kiai	Islam religious leader or scholar (particular term used in West Java)
KPI	Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia
KPPAD (Komisi Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak Desa)	The Village Commission for the Protection of Women and Children

KPPPA (Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak)	Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia
KUA (Kantor Urusan Agama)	Office of Religious Affairs
LBH (Lembaga Bantuan Hukum)	Legal Aid Institute
Main or bermain	To play, hanging out with friends, visiting friends house, strolling with friends, or using gadget (if the word “main” is followed by a type of a gadget)
Membelas	To separate a marriage (particular in West Nusa Tenggara)
Menafkahi	To provide
Merari'	Particular practice in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, in which a girl is being stolen from her home by a man who wishes to be her husband. The tradition was originally a practice to preserve the self-esteem and manhood of a Sasak man, because he has succeeded in eloping his beloved girl.
MUI (Majelis Ulama Indonesia)	Indonesian Council of Muslim Scholars (Ulama)
Mut'ah	Pleasure marriage or contract marriage
Nikah siri	Unregistered wedding (usually only officiated religiously)
Omongan orang	Gossip
Penasaran	Being curious
Pengajian	Qur'an recitation meeting
Penghulu	Religious marriage officiant
Perdes (Peraturan Desa)	Village Regulation
PKK (Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga)	Family Welfare Movement
Posyandu (Pos Pelayanan Terpadu)	Integrated Healthcare Center
Puskesmas (Pusat Kesehatan Masyarakat)	Community Health Center
Ridho	Blessing
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
Surat Edaran	Circular Letter

Survei Sosial Ekonomi Nasional (Susenas)	National Social and Economy Survey
Ta'aruf	To become acquainted
Terlanjur	Too late/already happened/already gone too far
ToC	Theory of Change
Tokoh Adat	Traditional leaders
Tuan Guru	Islam religious leader or scholar (particular term used in West Nusa Tenggara)
UN	The United Nations
UNCRC	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
Zina	Adultery

Executive Summary

The general purpose of the research is to explore young girls' perception and aspiration on marriage. The research findings are aimed to be used to strengthen advocacy arguments, for campaign materials and to drive social change towards positive social norms in the efforts to prevent and eliminate child marriage and gender-based violence.

This study utilized mixed-methods approach. A quantitative survey was distributed to obtain data on the perspectives and aspirations of girls on marriage, risk perception, game changers, as well as mediators of child marriage. Qualitative methods used include focus group discussions and key informant interview to further explore young girls' perception and aspiration on marriage, game changers, and mediators of child marriage. Field collection of the data was conducted in January to February 2020 in three districts in West Java (Bogor, Bandung, and Indramayu), and in February 2020 in two districts in West Nusa Tenggara (West Lombok, and North Lombok).

This project obtained a total of 108 married girls (West Java: 75 girls and West Nusa Tenggara: 33 girls), 141 non-married girls (West Java: 106 girls and West Nusa Tenggara: 35 girls), 47 parents of married girls (West Java: 28 parents and West Nusa Tenggara: 19 parents), 62 parents of non-married girls (West Java: 45 parents and West Nusa Tenggara: 17 parents), and 13 influencers (West Java: 9 influencers and West Nusa Tenggara: 4 influencers).

Most of the married girls respondents from both sites in this study either only have religious marriage or had their marriage not registered at all: only 4% of the girls from West Java reported having civil marriage, while none of the girls from West Nusa Tenggara had civil marriage.

As a result of being married at a young age, most girls experienced dropping out of school (72.7% in West Nusa Tenggara and 60% in West Java), domestic violence (45.5% in West Nusa Tenggara, and 34.7% in West Java), health issues (30.70% in West Java and 21.2% in West Nusa Tenggara), and abandonment/neglect (22.7% in West Java and 3% in West Nusa Tenggara).

Young girls' perception about marriage

Before marriage, most of the young girls perceived marriage as being happy, always being together with the partner, and having a provider. Having said that, some girls identified marriage with more financial difficulties. Most of the girls in the married-girls group had a change in perception about marriage; that marriage is now perceived as being social restricted (i.e. no time to play [visit a friend, have friend come over, strolling]), having financial issues, and more household chores. Nevertheless, some girls perceived their current situation as being happier or more contented as their family situation as better than their own original family's condition (e.g. better economy).

A particular theme emerged in West Nusa Tenggara on current perception on marriage was the acceptance of her situation, in which a man stole her from her home to marry her. This tradition, referred to as the merari' tradition, is a particular practice in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, in which a girl is being stolen from her home by a man who wishes to be her husband. The tradition

was originally a practice to preserve the self-esteem and manhood of a Sasak man, because he has succeeded in eloping his beloved girl. Lately, however, the practice became more inappropriately used for other purposes (e.g. revenge or getting an ex-girlfriend back).

Similar to the married-girls group's perception on marriage, the non-married girls group also identified marriage as identical with happiness, being together, and having somebody to provide for their needs.

In addition to these themes, there are particular themes of responses emerged in each research site. A theme on marriage as a combination of happiness and challenges was particularly mentioned only in West Nusa Tenggara; whereas themes on marriage as identical with having an offspring, submission to the husband, and intimacy particularly emerged only in West Java.

A specific perception about marriage as religious call was mentioned by girls in both sites. The non-married girls particularly mentioned marriage as a way to fulfill their obligations, to find God's *ridho* (blessing), and to complete their religion.

Young girls' perception on delaying marriage

Girls perceived delaying marriage was not considered reasonable in their community due to: the idea of having met the soulmate (e.g. why delay if you have met your soulmate), neighbor's gossip (e.g. the neighbors will gossip when a girl is not yet married), a girl will be considered a spinster/old maid, and that a child marriage is common in their village.

In addition, the girls brought up being married as a way to prevent future incidences that is going to happen (e.g. committing adultery and unintended pregnancy).

Perception of married girls on things that they aspire to achieve

Girls perceived that there are things that they aspire to do, but somehow have not been accomplished due to being married. These aspirations are: to get a proper job, to finish school or pursue a higher degree, to own a house, and to play.

Aspiration to marry

While most of the married and non-married girls from West Java did not aspire to marry before 19 years old, majority of married girls in Lombok did respond that they wanted to marry before 19 years old. Contrariwise, none of the non-married girls from the same site wanted to be married before they reached 19 years old. In both sites, the major factor that drives married-girls to aspire to marry before 19 years old were to ease parents' burden.

Among the married-girls who did not aspire to marry, the reasons for them to marry were different in both research sites, except on the reason of unintended pregnancy. Major driving force for the girls in West Java was the force/suggestion/arrangement from the parents and/or the man. On the other hand, in West Nusa Tenggara, the theme was heavy on the *merari'* practice. Although there are differences, the common reason for girls in both sites who did not aspire to marry but ended up marrying was the force from boy/man.

Risk perceptions

Across all groups of respondents, misperception consistently occurs on the issue of STD and low birth weight of babies. Additionally, the data shows that the two groups with the poorest risk perceptions were married girls and parents of married girls.

Game changers

The game changers identified through quantitative and qualitative inquiries were: (1) Family and community members (including boys/man and their parents, and parents of girls); (2) Young girls; (3) Youth groups (Karang Taruna, Forum Anak, etc.); (4) Survivors of child marriage; (5) Families of survivors of child marriage; (6) Religious leaders (including informal ones, e.g. Qur'an recitation teachers); (7) Majelis Ulama Indonesia or other similar reputable religious institutions; (8) Local healthcare facilities (Puskesmas, Posyandu); (9) Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga or PKK (Family Welfare Movement); (10) KPPAD (Komisi Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak Desa [The Village Commission for the Protection of Women and Children]); (11) Village officials; (12) Formal/informal education institutions; and (13) Surrounding industries. Additionally, game changers particularly identified in West Nusa Tenggara include community/traditional leaders (e.g. *Tokoh Adat*) and highly respected religious leaders (e.g. Tuan Guru).

Mediators of child marriage

Actors who enable the child marriage to happen of the marriage identified in this study were: religious marriage officiants, traditional and religious leaders (prominent in Lombok), parents (more prominent in West Java), while certain conditions that will put girls at-risk of being child brides include: punitive law, disagreement between influencers, dropping out of school, lack of road access to the village, raised minimum age of child marriage without properly educating community members, work opportunities (that also provides opportunities for young men to acquire a job and enabling them to marry at young age), and certain cultural beliefs and practices.

Recommendation

The recommendation of the study covers the target audience and topic for future programs, parties to include in the collaboration to end child marriage, and issues for advocacy.

1. Programs should **target** community members (including parents of boys and girls, and the boys and girls themselves) and influencers to: (a) correct common misperception related to child marriage (e.g. no rights taken from the child, girls are ready to marry once they have their period); (b) educate on the risk and health impact of child marriage as well as benefits of delaying marriage. These programs may be delivered through formal and informal events.
2. **Collaboration** should be arranged with wide range of influencers: religious leaders, traditional leaders, religious institutions, victims of child marriage and their family members, healthcare centers (Puskesmas, Posyandu), existing PKK structure, youth groups (Karang Taruna, Forum Anak), and surrounding industries.
3. **Advocacy** should cover at least four major issues: (a) for government to provide mechanism to report officials who officiate any wedding that involves children; (b) for village officials to plan ahead of time and allocate village budget time to mitigate and prevent child marriage (e.g. to fund hard skills training, Kejar Paket); (c) for village regulations to be issued in every village; and (d) particularly relevant to West Nusa Tenggara, advocacy should be made for customary law to be updated to prevent, instead of encouraging child marriage. Approaches should also be made to traditional leader to quickly separate underaged girls taken away from her home.

I. BACKGROUND

Creating Spaces to Take Action on Violence Against Women and Girls', also referred as the Creating Space (CS) project, seeks to reduce violence against women and girls, and child, early and forced marriage in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan and Philippines. Funded by Global Affairs Canada, this five-year project (2016-2021) involved 214,000 beneficiaries across six countries, engaging with influencers (religious, community, private sector, political actors and youth), men and boys, and women and girls who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing violence, and institutions and alliances that are engaged in influencing change.

Particularly in Indonesia, the CS project aims to reduce violence against women, girls and child marriages in Indonesia. To achieve these goals, the CS project focuses on three objectives or 3 Pillars, namely: (1) engaging community actors to support and promote positive gender norms; (2) supporting women and girl survivors and victims of violence and child marriage; and (3) expanding knowledge and building capacity of institutions and alliances (networks) to influence policy changes. In conducting the CS project, Oxfam in Indonesia collaborates with four local partners namely: (1) Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia, with working areas in five districts in West Java (Bogor, Sukabumi, Bandung, Indramayu, Cirebon); (2) LBH APIK Makassar, with working areas in two districts and 1 city in South Sulawesi (Gowa, Pangkep, Makassar); (3) Yayasan Kesehatan Perempuan, with working areas in three districts in East Java (Blitar, Bojonegoro, Ponorogo); and (4) Yayasan Tunas Alam Indonesia, with working areas in two districts in West Nusa Tenggara (West Lombok, North Lombok).

Commenced in April 2016, the CS project has now been running for four years in Indonesia. Broadly speaking, the achievements of the CS program so far are: (1) Amendment of Marriage Law in Indonesia; (2) Increased commitment of key figures who are capable to influence legal regulations at village, district/city and national levels; (3) Increased understanding, skills and courage to speak up for women survivors in order to access and to drive the improvement of various legal services and fulfilment of the right to get identity, including a marriage certificate through *Itsbat Nikah* (legalization of unregistered marriage) and birth certificate for children born from child marriages; and (4) the stronger use of innovative knowledge related to good practices and networks in the prevention and handling of violence against women, child violence and child marriages. In achieving these results, the local partners worked by strengthening the capacity of influencers (religious leaders, communities, women survivors, girls, women activists, youth, government officials); cooperating with government and non-governmental organizations to carry out activities in preventing and eliminating violence against women, girls and child marriages; and conducting a series of advocacies encouraging governments at national, district/city and village levels to issue policies that support the elimination and prevention of child marriage and violence against women and girls, among others.

Entering the final year and to ensure the achievement of the objectives of the CS program, in addition to the abovementioned activities carried out by partners, Oxfam in Indonesia is supported by the involvement of all partners in conducting the research on child marriage. In general, this research aims to find effective initiatives and efforts to prevent the practices of child marriage.

An initial literature review conducted by Oxfam in Indonesia (Oktaviani & Sabaniah, 2019) suggested that although studies have identified the factors, impacts, policies, actors of child marriage, and interventions to prevent child marriage, gaps in studies still exist especially on the topics related to: the role of gender transformative education as a tool to protect children against child marriages, the role of media in perpetuating positive or negative norms surrounding child marriage, adolescent girls' perspectives on child marriage and aspirations for marriage, decision-making at the household level surrounding child marriage, and success stories of religious leaders changing norms surrounding child marriage.

Upon further discussion with the partners of Oxfam in Indonesia in 29-31 July 2019, the topic on adolescent girls' perspectives on child marriage and aspirations for marriage was chosen, considering their perspectives as crucial in our attempts to better understand and respond to child marriage, as well as to prevent future cases from recurring.

1.1. The situation of early child marriage in Indonesia

Early or child marriage is defined as a formal or informal union before the age of 18 years old, the age of transition to adulthood according to the UNCRC. Later in the literature, the definition has become more negative and constructed by adding terms such as "forced" to denote a lack of free and full consent of the child¹, therefore, it is a violation of human rights and considered as an act of violence against children (WLUML, 2013; Wodon, Tavares, Fiala, Nestour, & Wise, 2017).

Early child marriage is practiced around the world, including in Indonesia. 650 million girls or one in five today were married as children. Without any intervention, Save the Children estimates that between 2018-2030, 134 million more girls will be married, two million of them will be married before reaching 15 years old. In Indonesia, (UNICEF, 2020) suggests that 11% of girls and 1% of boys age 20-24 were married before 18 years old in 2018. Among them, 0.56% were married before 15 years old. Given the strong evidence that such practice imposed serious economic, health, and psych-social consequences to the children, many UN member countries have put high agenda to commit to the elimination of early-child marriage in 2030.

Indonesia, a country with a large young population, is no exception. An economic calculation reveals that this problem has cost the country at least 1.7% of GDP in 2014 (Grijn & Horii, 2018). In fact, during the past two Post-New Order Regimes, the Indonesian government has been investing more in child protection programs, including those to end early child marriage. A study by SMERU Institute (Marshan, Rakhmadi, & Rizky, 2015), suggests that Indonesia has made

¹ International Covenant of on Civil and Political Rights – Article 10: Marriage must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouses.

significant progress since four decades ago. Years of schooling for women in Indonesia increased from 6.91 to 8.83 within four decades (1971-2010). Improved education for women followed by higher labor participation in the same periods. Overall, women are more engaged in economic activity than in the past. Today, Indonesian girls were able to delay their marriage for as long as three years.

Based on the 2018 National Social and Economy Survey (Survei Sosial Ekonomi Nasional [Susenas]) (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2018), child marriage occurs more in rural areas as compared to the urban areas as evident in the prevalence of child marriage before the age of 18 (16.87% and 7.15% respectively). The report also identified that girls who belong to the households with the lowest levels of expenditures are about two times more likely to be married before 18 than girls from the highest levels of expenditures. This report, however, could not conclude that poverty is the main driver of early child marriage since the data suggests that 11.14% of early child marriage also occurs in the households with highest level of expenditures. There are more factors involved in the decision to marry children. Another vulnerability factor identified by the study is the high percentage of older women with no or primary education only. This factor speaks the importance of raising the education level of mothers to cut the cycle of intergenerational early child marriage. We need to acknowledge that this vulnerability factor is also a cyclical result of early child marriage. Other related variables are education, working sectors of the head of household, and government health intervention program. The higher the education of the head of household and working in the formal sectors, the less incidence of early child marriage.

1.2. Explaining decisions to marry children in Indonesia

Since there are different factors that drive early child marriage in Indonesia, depending on cultural context and specific reasons to marry children, we are going to review the literatures from the perspective of social constructionism, in which decisions to marry are viewed as a byproduct of social interactions reflecting or inherently supporting of cultural norms and values, and compose several models that emerge from the information and data available to date. These models were based on emic² (actor) perspectives of context, perceived risks, and perceive solutions.

a. The opportunity costs model

The opportunity costs model basically explains that every time a choice is made, an alternative is sacrificed (Caputo, 2013). Free things have zero opportunity cost, while scarce matters have positive opportunity cost, in which in order to have more of the scarce things, another thing must be sacrificed (Caputo, 2013). In the context of child marriage in Indonesia- wherein there is a high percentage of families living in poverty (absolute and relative), and mother and infant mortality rates are high due to poor access to clean water, sanitation, and healthcare services- scarcity of money and resources might be one of the reasons that girl's education and future are being sacrificed in exchange for a better economy. In this case, girls are perceived as assets or an

² Relating to or involving analysis of cultural phenomena from the perspective of one who participates in the culture being studied (Miriam-Webster Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/emic>)

economic solution (Febriany, 2005, 2006; Hidayana et al., 2020; Utami & Putranto, 2002) to the perceived problems of having limited family resources, limited community and government assistance, and affected family production opportunities due to deaths and other conditions such as disabilities. Additionally, coming from a community that believes that children should be obedient and obliged to respect their parent's decision for the family, including their future (filial piety principles), or else they would be considered *anak durhaka*³ (children who betray or being disobedient or ungrateful)- girls are often left with no choice but to follow their family's wishes.

b. Rescuing family honor

The rescuing family honor model is described as the effort to protect their children against the perceived risk of premarital sex and unintended pregnancy (Grijn & Horii, 2018; Hidayana et al., 2020; Pratiwi & Hari, 2010). With the rapidly changing society with the tendency to be more commercial, hedonic, open, facilitated by ICT, girls are perceived to be prone to negative peer pressures⁴. As such, both boys and girls are perceived to be at risk of getting into a social relationship that has elements of sexual experimentation and risks of unintended pregnancy and abortion. The perceived solution based on this model is to accept the first marital offer to their daughter, or to propose marriage as a solution to maintain family honor especially in a case of a legal dispute involving any report of sexual or social misconduct of their daughter (see Irwanto, Yusna, & Putri, 2014; Kusumaningrum & Supatmi, 2012). The latter perceived solution has been very problematic for boys that are potentially to be in conflict with the law. In most cases, boys are found guilty of initiation and acting sexually against the girl. If he accepts mediation advice to marry the girl, the legal process will be stopped and the couples are married. When it is not possible to marry the couple, boys will most likely be imprisoned⁵.

c. Intention to marry and legal requirements

The third model explains the context in which the parent or future husband intends for girl to marry but she is too young to marry by legal requirements. Decision to marry a girl was made based on the perceived risk that potential bride parental consent might not be granted later, or that children, especially girls, have to be monitored to avoid *zina* (adultery). Perceived solution therefore was to manipulate the Department of Religious Affairs infrastructures to obtain a marital dispensation from the Judge (Eddyono, Anggara, Sidauruk, Napitupulu, & Kamilah, 2016; Grijn & Horii, 2018), or to opt for *kawin gantung* (see Mubarok, 2012) as a practice in which after the matrimony is legalized, couples were separated (not allowed to unite as husband and wife) for a certain period for better preparation.

³ The concept is also often associated with being cursed or having other consequences later in life

⁴ It is interesting to note that SMERU (n.d.) study found that as the woman has better information access the tendency to be child brides decrease. However, the possession of internet through mobile phone positively related to the possibility of being child marriage

⁵ <https://www.hukumonline.com/klinik/detail/ulasan/lt5018012dba3d7/bisakah-dipenjara-karena-berhubungan-seks-dengan-pacar/>

In relation to this, Grijn & Horii (2018) in their study in West Java found that (1) law-making in family law is compromised between progressive and conservative ideas; (2) as such the practice cannot avoid friction with rights-based laws; (3) the social and cultural pressure make judges use their discretion to achieve compromises between state laws and local norms; and (4) key actors at village level are creatively interpreting the law and benefit from illegal practices around child marriages.

d. Contract marriages

The context of this model is explained by the presence of demand and supply. Demands come from adult male on the move – far from home and wants sexual companion, especially young girls; whereas on the supply side, there was a poor community with relatively high unemployment rate around the temporary resident of the adult male. Aidatusshollah (2012) suggests that from the parent's perspective, their action is based on livelihood (*mencari nafkah*) reasons (p. 48-49).

To avoid non-matrimonial sex forbidden by his religion, and legal consequences, girls are introduced to a form of contract marriage⁶ or called Mu'tah - as frequently occur at Puncak Bogor (see Aidatusshollah, 2012; Amili, 1992) with the help of a broker or a middle-man⁷. A thorough study of this practice informed us that the contract marriage as practice in Puncak, Bogor failed to comply with the legal requirements of the national and religious law (it does not even comply with the Mut'ah principles), therefore, should be considered illegal and very harmful to the girls.

I.3. Looking for Game Changers

In 2017, the Constitutional Court issued Decision No. 22/PUU/XV/2017 regarding Law No/ 1 Year 1974 on Marriage with consideration stating that “different treatment to men and women will affect the fulfillment of their basic needs or their constitutional rights as citizens both civil and political rights encompassing economic, education, and cultural rights which should not be discriminated on the basis sex or gender, it is clear that the treatment is an act of discrimination”. It was further considered that such discrimination is against the 1945 Constitution article 28B(2). The court provides a directive order to the parliament to amend the Marriage law within 3 years.

On 16 October 2019 the parliament made a historic decision to enact Law No. 16 Year 2019 on the amendment of Law No. 1 Year 1974, especially article 7 on the legal age of marriage for girls from 16 years old to 19 years old. The amendment creates a new momentum to seriously address early child marriage practices. The moment is supported by research evidence that level of

⁶ There are three forms of contract marriage in Puncak (Aidatussolah, 2012, p: 53-54). First, marriage is arranged by two parties only, the groom and the bride. *Mahar* (dowry) is provided and terms of contract (time period) are discussed and agreed. Second, witnesses (*wali, wakil, penghulu*) are present as required Mut'ah marriage (Syiah) but no legal implication nor benefits for the bride. Third, when witnesses were paid and it is considered not appropriate. In conclusion, the Mut'ah practice does not serve the objectives of matrimonial union and, therefore considered as a form of sexual exploitation.

⁷ Recent news can be viewed at <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20191224010823-12-459510/polisi-bekuk-muncikari-korban-kawin-kontrak-di-puncak-bogor>

education of girls and women, parents access to information on global issues and knowledge about domestic laws, and nationwide rights-based programs such as reproductive health and child protection programs have significantly improved in scope and quality. Pro-poor public policies in health, education and social welfare have received favorable evaluation reports (Bah, Bazzi, Sumarto, & Tobias, 2019; KPPPA, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c; Tamyis et al., 2020).

On the other hand, however, we are still dealing with "classical" issues, especially strong belief that biological markers such as in the notion of *Akil Baligh*⁹, filial piety principles¹⁰ in the family norms, inequality in national development, and harmful practices for girls that should not be ignored. The SMERU study found that refusing a marriage proposal is considered to bring bad luck to the girls, so girls must keep their dates out of sight of their parents if they are not ready to marry them. Parents, on the other hand, still have a big say in the timing of the marriage. Before we dwell on these factors in more depth, we would like to begin with addressing some myths around early child marriage.

MYTH 01: Child or early marriage is occurring in less developed or poor regions and countries

Early of child marriage is a global phenomenon and a global problem. Although it is often constructed as a problem of the lower or low middle-income countries, a recent account has found that the incidence of child marriage also occurs among religious communities in Canada (Zaman & Koski, 2020). The National Post reported that child marriage is "ongoing and legal" in Canada (2017)¹¹. Similar cases are found in the USA and Japan¹². In the USA, age of marriage for a minor with parental consent in the state law of 36 states (2/3) is currently 16 years old, according to the ChildUSA¹³". More concerning than that, in approximately half of the states, there is no minimum age (or "floor" or bottom limit) for marriage with parental and judicial consent¹⁴.

This reminds us that if the law provides an article on parental consents to allow marriage below the minimum age, child marriage will continue to persist as a public problem.

MYTH 02: Early marriage mostly concerns about and impacted mostly on girls and women

Our current knowledge and evidence do support the notion that there are more girls than boys who were married before the age of 18 or thus specified by the local law. But boys were also married early in many communities. A recent survey in a village in West Java (Grijn & Horii, 2018) found almost a similar proportion of girls (7.3%) and boys (8.7%) of total 370 marriages were married before the age permissible by the National Law at that time (16 years old for girls and 19

⁹ When one has reached puberty. The notion is not necessarily reaching certain age, but rather related to reaching phase of physical change (e.g. when a woman has had her period, or in men, when he has had wet dreams)

¹⁰ Virtue of respect for parents and elders (e.g. being obedient, not questioning back their decision)

¹¹ <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/child-marriage-legal-and-ongoing-in-canada-researcher-finds>

¹² The Japanese Times, OPINION, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2018/03/30/commentary/japan-commentary/japan-can-end-child-marriage-home-help-end-abroad/#.Xo3POLMzZBw>

¹³ <https://www.childusa.org/child-marriage>

¹⁴ <https://www.childusa.org/child-marriage>

years old for boys). We also have more documented evidence of the negative impacts of early marriage on the lives of girls than boys. We need to be open-minded, however, of our limited observations of the negative impacts of early marriage on the lives of boys. For both boys and girls, the practice of early marriage strips them from enjoying childhood, prevents them from higher education, and decent employment. The DailyBeast indicates the following¹⁵:

“The consequences of early marriage on young girls are well known, but millions of underage boys are also married off each year—and there is little research on their fates... They are often forced to drop out of school and take menial jobs to support their new family. This perpetuates the cycle of poverty that led to their marriage in the first place. Generation after generation will struggle to lift themselves out of this tradition.”

We need more research and expertise on this topic and enable everybody to implement SDG 5.3 on the elimination of early marriage. This is a crucial issue especially when we seriously believe that change should be advocated by robust evidence. Besides, children these days have greater agencies and that significant change in the situation should be championed by both boys and girls.

MYTH 3: Community does not perceive child marriage positively

Since activists are concentrated on and looking mostly at data and information that are harmful to children, especially girls, many failed to acknowledge the emic perspective of the positive aspect of the decision to marry children early. Grijn & Horii (2018) in their study in West Java strongly suggests that parents, community members, and religious leaders believe that defending the family honor a preserving tradition of no premarital sex in the religion is very important obligation that is ingrained within their ethnic and religious identity. In rapidly changing social norms, especially among young people, parents' concerns are legitimate. Any advocacy efforts that neglect or even opposed to this notion will generate negative consequences for the community and the children. Every activist understands that changing customs is very difficult. Successful advocacy to end early child marriage should be in line with values in the society. Using the same argument of honor and family values may help the participant to see that (for example) higher education for girls will lead to family honor if she can get the highest education to become a teacher, nurse, or scientist. Of course, this should be enabled through appropriate and relevant public policies.

I.4. Identifying drivers of change

Who are we looking for? We are looking for champions who would affect the direction of the trend of child marriage in significant ways in relevant sectors. Literature that deal with the elimination of early child marriage suggests the following:

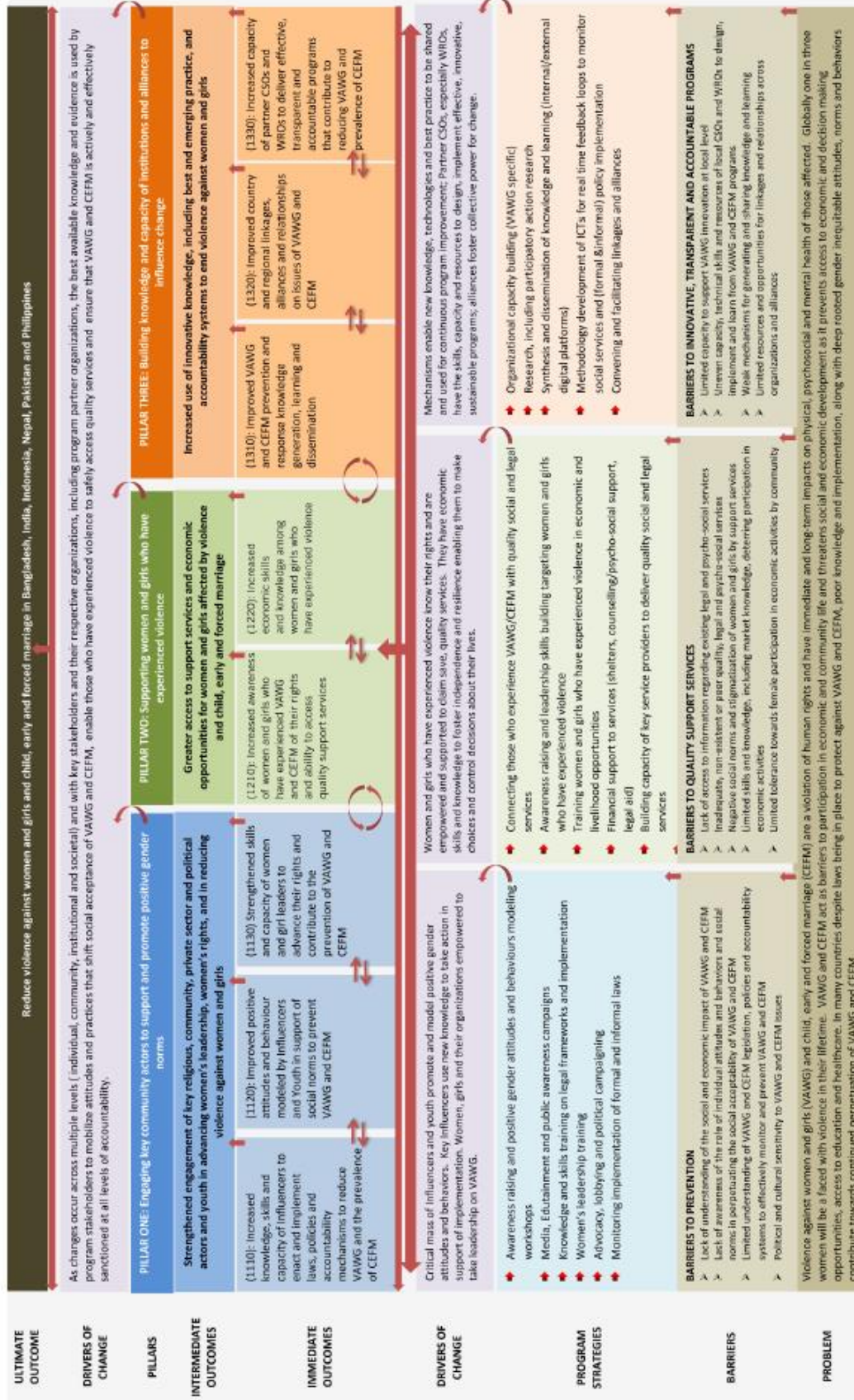
¹⁵ <https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-sad-hidden-plight-of-child-grooms>, published September 18, 2014

- Teachers, education administrators and policymakers, researchers, writers who can create open spaces for safe learning on reproductive health and human rights and who can provide narratives that empower and improve awareness to protect children (see Adhikari, 2019; Hidayana et al., 2020)
- Policymakers, public and private business entities (including the media), political leaders at the local and central level to resolve issues of inequalities and social justice (Wodon et al., 2017).
- Lawmakers and judges who defend the 1945 Constitution and who can ensure consistent implementation of the law (Eddyono et al., 2016; Grijn & Horii, 2018; Hidayana et al., 2020; KPPPA, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c).
- Service providers in different sectors to ensure access to basic services for all citizens, men and women, boys and girls (Adhikari, 2019; Save the Children, 2018; Wodon et al., 2017).
- We need parents, teachers, community leaders, who can listen to and bring children voices in the forefront of policymaking at the local and the highest level of discourse (Adhikari, 2019; Hidayana et al., 2020; Save the Children, 2018).
- Girls and women themselves are actors as well as agents of change. Yvonne van der Kooij (2016 in Oktaviani & Sabaniah, 2019) proposed that although children are often seen as victims, in many instances, they might be the actors who took the decision to marry to avoid social pressure from the society. Furthermore, as the girls became women who face adversities like domestic violence, they may also serve as agents of change by making physical and intellectual breakthrough for women to fight for their equality, dignity, autonomy, and by speaking up regardless of the risk of being blamed for their marriage failure (Aisyah & Parker, 2014 in Oktaviani & Sabaniah, 2019).

I.5. Creating Space Project Theory of Change

The Creating Space Project proposed a theory of change (ToC) to guide the whole project implementation. Diagram below illustrates the ToC of the Creating Space project.

Diagram 1. Creating Spaces to Take Action on Violence Against Women and Girls: Theory of Change (Oxfam Canada, August 2016)



I.6. Research Objectives

The general purpose of the research is to explore young girls' perception and aspiration on marriage. The research findings are aimed to be used to strengthen advocacy arguments, for campaign materials and to drive social change towards positive social norms in the efforts to prevent and eliminate child marriage and gender-based violence.

The following are the specific objectives of the research project:

1. To explore young girls' perceptions about marriage.
2. To assess young girls' aspirations on marriage.
3. To assess the risk perceptions about child marriage.
4. To identify the "game-changers" (actors and conditions) of child marriage.
5. To identify the mediators (middle-man or conditions) of child marriage.
6. To provide recommendations for campaign or programs to prevent and eliminate child marriage that targets young girls, parents, religious and community leaders, and government institutions.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized mixed-methods approach. A quantitative survey was distributed to obtain data on the perspectives and aspirations of girls on marriage, risk perception, game changers, as well as mediators of child marriage. Qualitative methods used include focus group discussions and key informant interview to further explore young girls' perception and aspiration on marriage, game changers, and mediators of child marriage. The field collection of the data was conducted in January to February 2020 in West Java, and in February 2020 in West Nusa Tenggara.

II.1. Area of Coverage

The study was implemented in three districts in West Java (Bogor, Bandung, and Indramayu) and two districts in West Nusa Tenggara (West Lombok, and North Lombok). The villages covered for each district is identified in the table below.

Table 1. Area of Coverage: Province, District, and Villages

Province	District	Village
West Java	Bogor	Sampora, Cibinong
		Wates Jaya, Cigombong
		Cimandala, Sukaraja
	Bandung	Cipagalo, Bojongsoang
		Soreang, Soreang
		Banjarsari, Pangalengan
	Indramayu	Gelarmendala, Balongan
		Cibeber, Sukagumiwang
		Krasak, Jatibarang
West Nusa Tenggara	Lombok Utara	Sigar Penjalin, Tanjung
		Medana, Tanjung
	Lombok Selatan	Sekotong Tengah, Sekotong
		Taman Baru, Sekotong

II.2. Participants and Procedure

There were few major groups of participants in the study: (1) Non-married girls; (2) Women/girls who were married at 18 years old or younger; (3) Parents of non-married girls; (4) Parents of girls who were married at 18 years old or younger; (5) Influencers: Local community/youth leaders, educators, local religious leaders, government officials. Inclusion criteria for the girl participants include: in-school and out-of-school girls, girls from low to middle-up socioeconomic status, girls with and with no disability, and beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the Oxfam partner programs. To minimize recall bias, we only recruited women/girls who were married at 18 years old or younger who were not more than 25 years old at the time of the data collection. Convenience sampling was used to recruit all the participants. Prior to the proper study, we had the study reviewed by the ethical committee of the Institute for Research and Community Services at Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia, Jakarta. The implementation of this study involved the enumerators from CS project implementing partners, namely the Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia (KPI) and Yayasan Tunas Alam Indonesia. All the enumerators received training on Child Safeguarding Policies, data protection, and research instrument prior to data collection. Before collecting data from children respondents, informed consent form was explained to the parents. The general purpose of the study, confidentiality of the data, and the right to cease or withdraw from the study were covered in the informed consent. We also explained the purpose of the study, confidentiality of the data, and the right to cease or withdraw from study in the assent forms for children.

II.3. Instruments

There were four different versions of survey questionnaires distributed in this study. First version was intended for women/girls married at 18 years old or younger. Second version was intended for non-married girls. Third version was developed for the influencers, and the fourth version was intended for the parents of the women/girls married at 18 years old or younger and parents of non-married girls. Semi-structured interview and discussion guidelines were used to gather qualitative data from key informant interviews and focus group discussions respectively.

Table 2 summarizes the methodology and sample based on each research objective.

Table 2. Methodology and Sample per Research Objective

No	Objectives	Methodology and Sample
1	To explore young girls' perceptions about marriage	FGD and Survey: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-married girls - Women/girls married at 18 years old and younger
2	To assess young girls' aspirations on marriage	FGD and survey: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-married girls - Women/girls married at 18 years old and younger
3	To assess the risk perceptions about child marriage	Survey: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women/girls who married at 18 years old and younger - Non-married girls - Parents of women/girls married at 18 years old and younger - Parents of non-married girls - Local community/youth leaders - Educators - Local religious leaders - Government officials
4	To identify the "game-changers" (actors and conditions) of child marriage.	Survey and FGD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women/girls who married at 18 years old and younger - Non-married girls - Parents of women/girls married at 18 years old and younger - Parents of non-married girls KII: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local community/youth leaders - Educators - Local religious leaders - Government officials

5	To identify the mediators (middle-man or conditions) of child marriage	<p>Survey and FGD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women/girls who married at 18 years old and younger - Non-married girls - Parents of women/girls who married at 18 years old and younger - Parents of non-married girls <p>KII:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local community/youth leaders - Educators - Local religious leaders - Government officials
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The following table shows the details of the samples obtained per region based on the composition of the groups of participants.

Table 3. Number of samples per region

Group of Sample	West Java	West Nusa Tenggara
Married girls	75	33
Non-married girls	106	35
Parents of married girls	28	19
Parents of non-married girls	45	17
Influencers		
- Local community leaders	4	1
- Youth leaders	1	1
- Educators	1	2
- Local religious leaders	1	0
- Government officials	2	0

The number of respondents/participants by method of the study in each province is shown below.

Table 4. Number of respondent/participants by research method

Research Method	West Java	West Nusa Tenggara
Survey		
- Married girls	75	33
- Non-married girls	106	35
- Parents of married girls	28	19
- Parents of non-married girls	45	17
Focus Group Discussion		
- Married girls	9 groups	4 groups
- Non-married girls	9 groups	4 groups
Key Informant Interviews	9 informants	4 informants

This project obtained a total of 108 married girls (West Java: 75 girls and West Nusa Tenggara: 33 girls), 141 non-married girls (West Java: 106 girls and West Nusa Tenggara: 35 girls), 47 parents of married girls (West Java: 28 parents and West Nusa Tenggara: 19 parents), 62 parents of non-married girls (West Java: 45 parents and West Nusa Tenggara: 17 parents), and 13 influencers (West Java: 9 influencers and West Nusa Tenggara: 4 influencers). A full demographic profile can be found in the Annex of this report. We will highlight the important findings in the following subsections.

II.4. Potential Risks and Minimizing the Harm

In conducting this research, we are guided by Oxfam's General Research Ethics and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). To specify, Oxfam General Research Ethics are:

1. Informed and voluntary consent is required from all participants
2. Confidentiality should be maintained at all times (with some possible legal exception)
3. Informant have the rights to refuse to answer a question or terminate participation at any time
4. Do no harm, ensure the safety of all informant and researchers
5. Respond immediately and appropriately to distress, disclosure, or requests for assistance by research informants and researchers
6. Research integrity, ensure the quality, accuracy and beneficence of the research

To comply with Oxfam general research ethics and GDPR principles, we particularly implemented the following measures:

1. A de-identified dataset where names was prepared, with addresses and other identifiable information removed and replaced with an anonymous unique ID number for data analysis. Only the core research team had access to the dataset containing personal information. The dataset with identifiable information was stored in Excel format. Data with anonymous unique ID number was analyzed using SPSS.

2. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis subsequent to transcription. Transcription was done by the enumerators, and any name appeared in the recording was anonymized.
3. All collected quantitative and qualitative data was password-protected.
4. The survey questionnaire and interview may inquire participants about some negative experiences related to child marriages. Thinking about their lives, themselves and the support available to them may be upsetting for some girls and stir up uncomfortable memories or feelings. The information sheets, consent and assent forms, and the interviewers themselves emphasized that participants can withdraw their consent at any time and should not hesitate to raise any issues with the interviewer as soon as they occur. When a participant showed signs of discomfort during the research, we reminded them that they do not have to continue, or answer uncomfortable questions, or that they may take a break if they wish. We trained the enumerators to be sensitive towards the signs of discomfort. The consent and assent form explained that responses will be treated as confidential, unless any risk of harm is disclosed. To minimize the risk of child protection concerns, all interviewers completed briefing on child safeguarding and data protection.

II.5. Data Analysis

Survey data was encoded and analyzed using SPSS 25 by reviewing the descriptive results (e.g. frequency, mean and SD) of the variables, data cleaning, creating new variables as necessary, and cross-tabulating categorical variables whenever necessary. Thematic analysis was done for qualitative data.

II.6. Research Limitations

There were few limitations of this study. First, the study utilized convenience sampling that can be highly prone to selection bias. Second, due to schedule of the data collection, which was during day time, parent participants were mostly housewives. Their view might not represent the view of their partners (fathers of the girls). Third, the responses are self-reported that might be subject to biases. Fourth, the research findings do not reflect a representative view of certain groups as previously planned in the beginning of the study. Due to limited budget, the planned for cross-cutting intersectionality did not go through as planned. With the strict budget and time constraint, and lack of access, we were not able to get enough data from married girl who were still studying and girls with disabilities. In addition, during daytime, the married girls who had jobs (e.g. in the surrounding industries) were not able to participate, since their working hours did not allow so. Further studies should consider the view of married girls who are keeping up with their education, as well as the view of girls with disabilities. Last, the limited time made it challenging for us to establish rapport with the respondents and participants of the study. Since some of the issues are sensitive, we acknowledge that girls may have withheld some information regarding their situation.

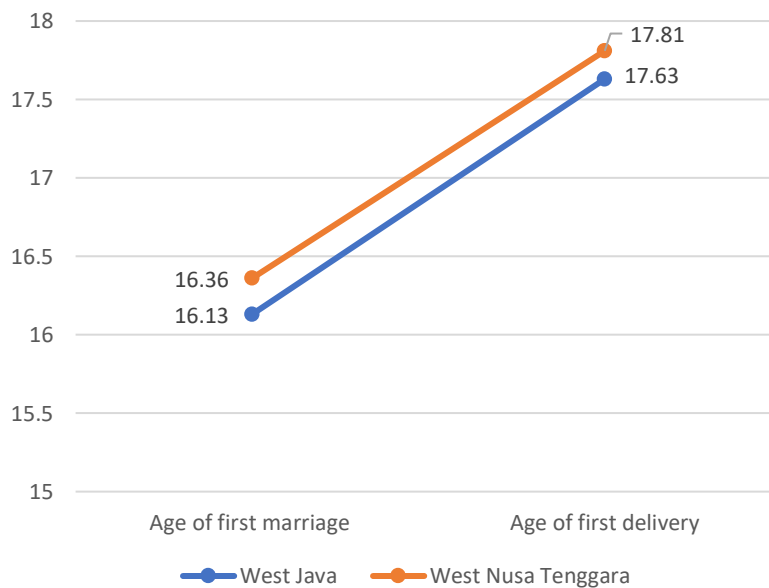
III. RESULTS

III.1. Characteristics of the study sample

III.1.1 Characteristics of married girls: Age

Married girls survey respondents in this study were between 14 to 25 years old in West Java, and 16 to 25 years old in West Nusa Tenggara¹⁶. Average age of married girls survey respondents was 20 years and 5 months old in West Java and 19 years and 1 months old in West Nusa Tenggara. In general, girls from West Java in this study were married at younger age than married girl respondents from West Nusa Tenggara. Average age of first marriage in West Java was 16 years and 2 months old, while average age of first marriage in West Nusa Tenggara was 16 years and 4 months old. The age range of first marriage was the same in both regions-girls were married between 13-18 years old. Following the same trend, average age of their first delivery is slightly lower in West Java. Average age of first delivery was 17 years and 8 months old in West Java, and 17 years and 10 months old in West Nusa Tenggara. Diagram below summarizes the age characteristics of married girls in this study.

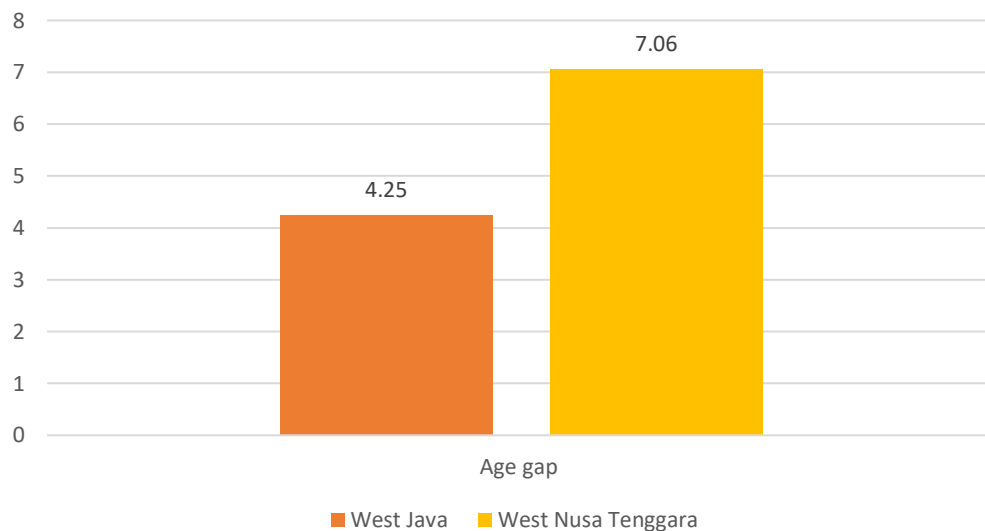
Diagram 2. Age of first marriage and age of first delivery



¹⁶ 7 girls reported that they forgot or do not know their birth date

In terms of age difference with their first husband, it was found that girls from West Nusa Tenggara were married to older man as compared to girls from West Java. Average age gap of married girls and their husband was 7 years and 1 month in West Nusa Tenggara, and 4 years and 3 months in West Java.

Diagram 3. Age gap between married girls and their first husband

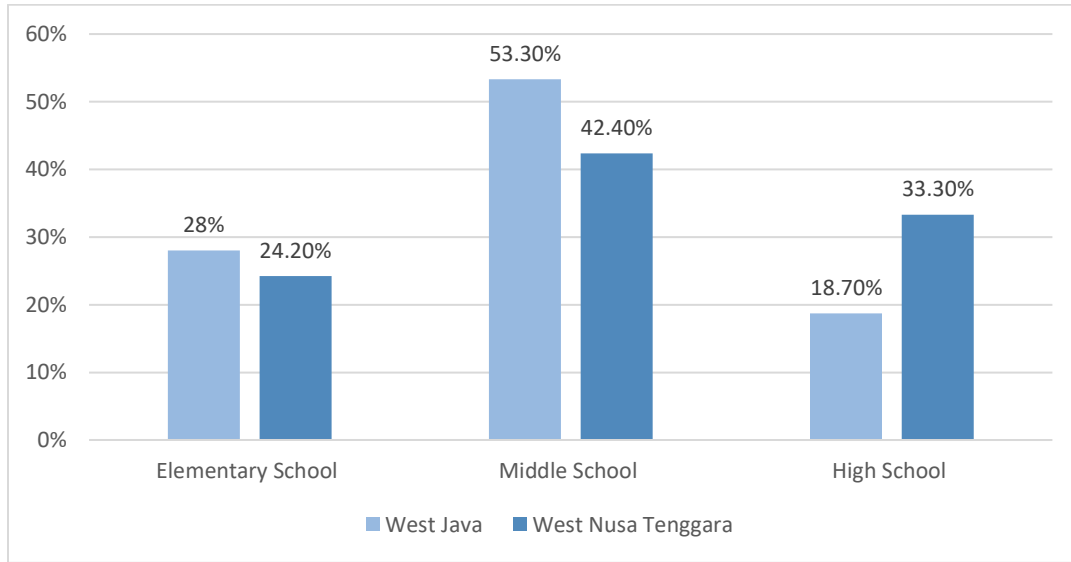


III.1.2 Characteristics of married girls: Education

Large percentage of married girls in both sites are no longer in school. However, there were 6.7% of girls from West Java and 3% from West Nusa Tenggara who pursue their education. The education here includes the Kejar Paket or the acceleration program¹⁷. In terms of last completed education, more girls continued to high school in Lombok (33.3%) as compared to West Java (18.7%).

¹⁷ Kejar Paket is a program provided by the government for those who dropped out of school or those who were homeschooled to receive certification based on the education level: Kejar Paket A is equal to the elementary level, Kejar Paket B to middle school, and Kejar Paket C to high school level.

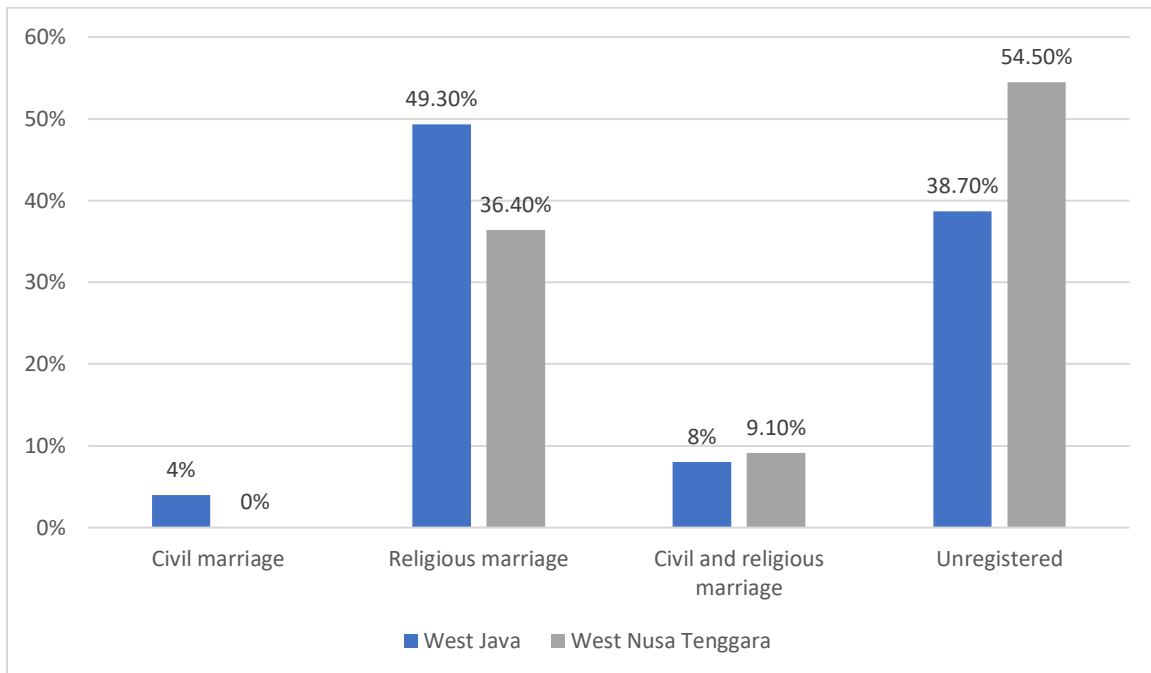
Diagram 4. Last completed education of married girls survey respondents



III.1.3 Characteristics of married girls: Marital Status and Registration

By marital status, married girls survey respondents in this study were mostly married (88% in West Java and 97% in West Nusa Tenggara). Upon further inquiries on whether the girls have marriage certificate, it was found that being “married” may be defined differently, from being legally married and having marriage certification, to being married only with the presence of marriage officiant. The following diagram summarizes the marriage registration of the girls’ first marriage.

Diagram 5. Marriage registration of married girls survey respondents



As illustrated in the diagram above, most of the married girls respondents from both sites in this study either only have religious marriage or had their marriage not registered at all. Religious marriage refers to marriage being registered only at the Office of Religious Affairs (Kantor Urusan Agama) for the Moslems, and corresponding religious institutions for the non-Moslems. The religious marriage itself is not recognized by the country as a legal marriage. Being unregistered based on the findings was referred to: (1) marriages only attended by marriage officiant (*penghulu*)/other religious or prominent figure, and witnesses from the bride and groom¹⁸, or (2) being married by means of marriage dispensation (*dispensasi menikah*)¹⁹.

Only 4% of the girls from West Java reported having civil marriage, while none of the girls from West Nusa Tenggara had civil marriage. Civil marriage refers to having marriage certificate from the Department of Population and Civil Registration (Dinas Kependudukan dan Pencatatan Sipil), and the only marriage certification document acknowledged as a legal document in Indonesia is the one issued by this Department.

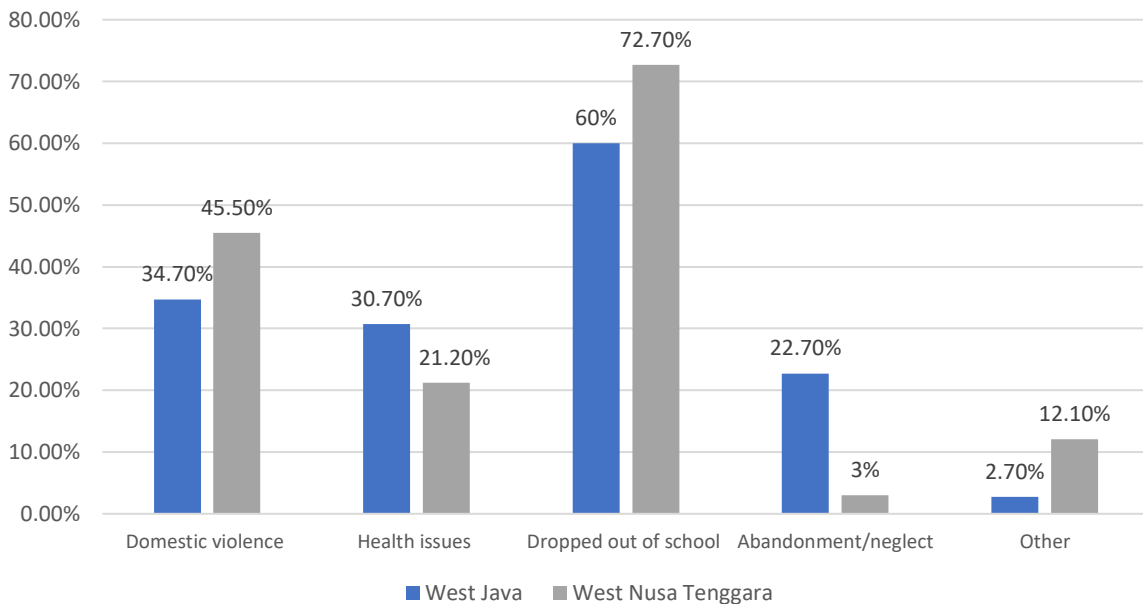
¹⁸ Officially, a *penghulu* must report and record all the weddings he officiated, but in many cases, especially when the girls are underaged, the *penghulu* only officiated the wedding without recording and reporting it to the government.

¹⁹ <https://www.hukumonline.com/berita/baca/lt5db127b0b52f3/dispensasi-perkawinan-tetap-dimungkinkan--begini-syaratnya-menurut-uu-perkawinan-yang-baru/>

III.1.4 Characteristics of married girls: Experience related to child marriage

The summary of the experience of married girls related to child marriage is shown below.

Diagram 6. Experiences related to child marriage



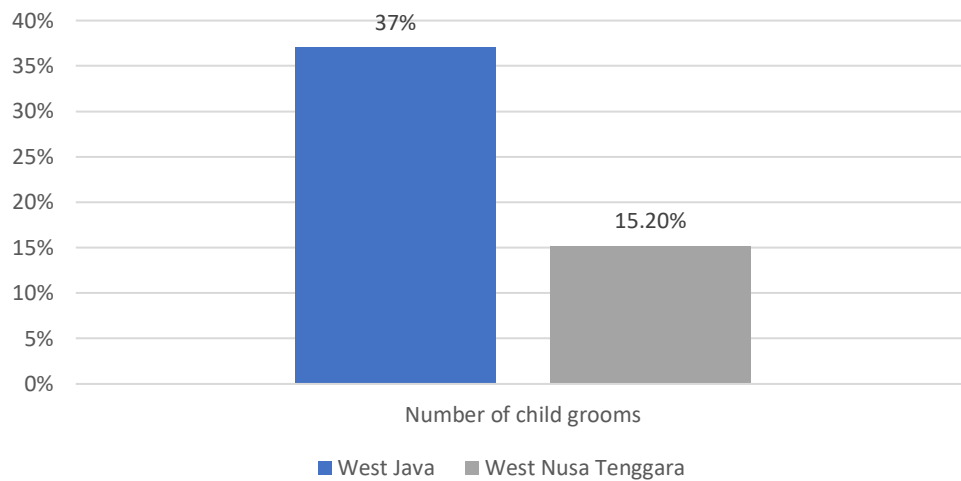
As we can see from the result, most girls experienced dropping out of school (72.7% in West Nusa Tenggara and 60% in West Java) as a result of being married at a young age. Apart from that, the married girls also experienced domestic violence (45.5% in West Nusa Tenggara, and 34.7% in West Java), health issues (30.70% in West Java and 21.2% in West Nusa Tenggara), and abandonment/neglect (22.7% in West Java and 3% in West Nusa Tenggara). Having said that, we also acknowledge the likelihood of girls to refrain from reporting domestic violence due to fear, shame, lack of awareness of what constitutes violence, and preserving family honor.

III.1.5 Characteristics of married girls: Profile of the husband

The study found that although the average age was 20 and above (20 years and 5 months old in West Java and 23 years and 5 months old in West Nusa Tenggara), in both sites, husbands are sometimes child grooms themselves (West Java, 37% and 15.2% in West Nusa Tenggara)²⁰.

²⁰ Age of the girls' husband at the time of the wedding. Child groom refers to those who have not reached 19 years old at the time of the wedding.

Diagram 7. Number of child grooms



Men who marry young girls in West Java, based on this study, were boys/men aged 16-30 years old. Most of the boys/men were single (93.3%), while a small percentage of them were widower (1.3%) and married (1.3%). Around one third of the men worked as manual laborer (33%), some worked as entrepreneur (16%), and 12% of them were unemployed. Girls also reported their husband's occupation as gojek driver, parking boy, security guard, etc. (18.7%). Boys/men in West Java mostly completed elementary school (32%) and middle school (32%), and high school (28%).

Men who marry young girls in West Nusa Tenggara in this study were boys/men aged 16-60 years old. Most of the boys/men were single (84.8%), while the rest of them were divorcees (15.2%). Around three fourth the boys/men worked as manual laborer (75.8%). Some worked as farmers (6.1%), and some of them were unemployed (6.1%). In West Nusa Tenggara, quite a number of them completed high school (39.4%), and the rest of them completed middle school (33.3%) and elementary school (27.3%).

III.1.6 Characteristics of non-married girls: Age

Non-married girls survey respondents in this study were between 11 to 19 years old in West Java, and 13 to 19 years old in West Nusa Tenggara. Average age of married girls survey respondents was 15 years and 5 months old in both West Java and West Nusa Tenggara.

III.1.7 Characteristics of non-married girls: Education

Most of the non-married girls survey respondents in this study were still in school (85.5% in West Java and 88.6% in West Nusa Tenggara). Most of the girls attended middle school (52.8% in West Java and 62.9% in West Nusa Tenggara) and high school (34.9% in West Java and 34.3% in West Nusa Tenggara).

III.1.8 Characteristics of influencers

Apart from the adolescent girls, we also collected data from local influencers in the village. Average age of the influencers was 40 years and 8 months old in West Java and 41 years and 9 months old in West Nusa Tenggara. The range of the age of the influencers were 21 years old up to 52 years old in West Java, and 26 years old up to 61 years old in West Nusa Tenggara.

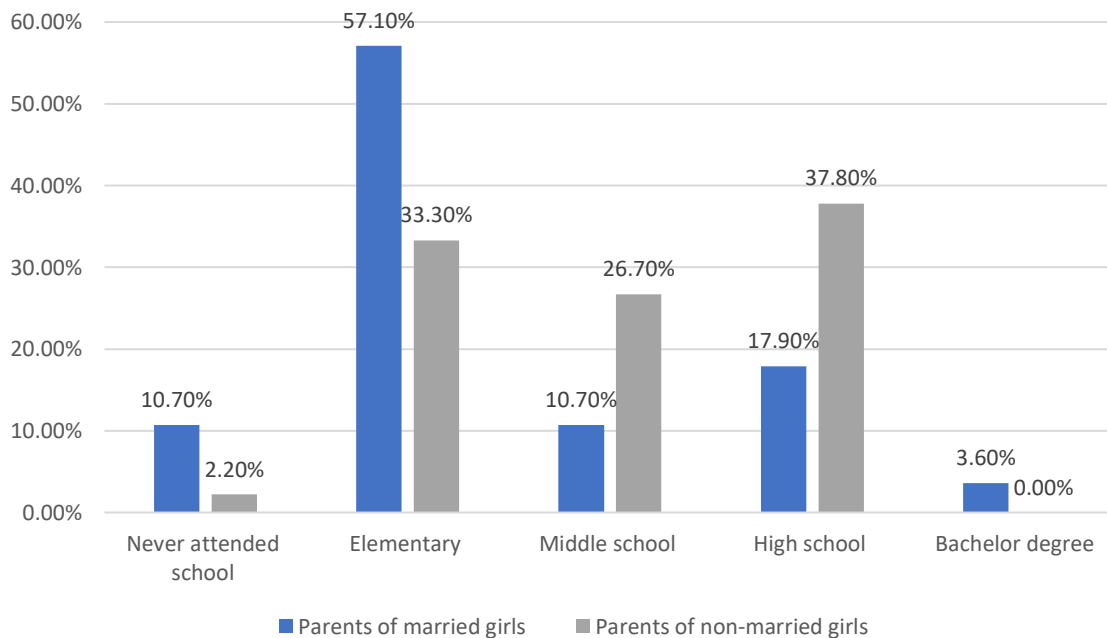
In terms of length of tenure, we had influencers who was working for 3 to 20 years in West Java, 2 to 15 years in West Nusa Tenggara. Average length of tenure was more than 8 years in both sites.

In terms of gender, we had more male influencers (66.7% in West Java and 75% in West Nusa Tenggara) than female in both sites. It should be noted that influencers that took part in this study may or may not be the beneficiaries of the CS project. The percentage therefore does not necessarily reflect the gender representation of beneficiaries of the CS project.

III.1.9 Characteristics of parents respondents

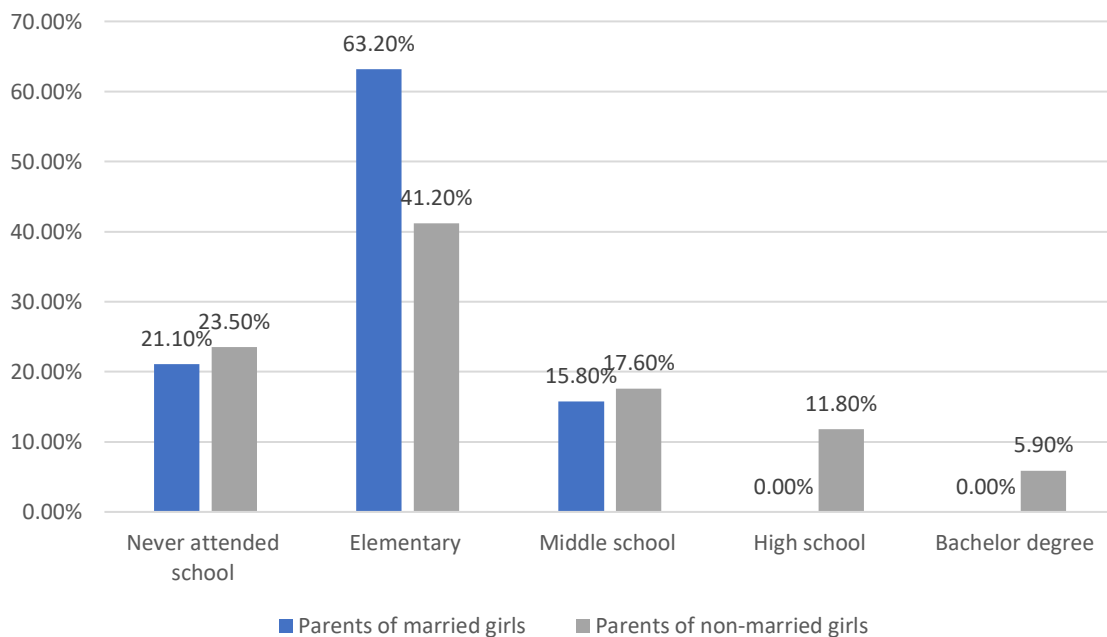
In general, more parents of married girls never attended school as compared to the parents of non-married girls. Most of the parents of married girls had elementary education, but less completed middle school and high school. As a comparison, less parents of non-married girls only completed elementary education, as some of them continued their education to middle school and high school. In the diagrams below, we illustrated the difference in the two sites.

Diagram 8. Education level of parents of married and non-married girls in West Java



Data of parents from West Java showed that more parents of married girls never had any kind of education as compared to the parents of non-married girls. Furthermore, more than half of the parents of married girls attended elementary school, and only about 1 in 10 of them continued to middle school, and 1 in 5 continued to high school. None of the parents of married girls in West Java had college education. As a comparison, about one third of parents of non-married girls attended elementary, one fourth of them continued to middle school, and about 1 in 3 parents of non-married girls continued to have high school education. In addition, some of the parents of non-married girls also proceeded to have a college education.

Diagram 9. Education level of parents of married and non-married girls in West Nusa Tenggara



Data of parents from West Nusa Tenggara showed that more parents of married girls and parents of non-married girls were similar in terms of having no education, and completion of middle school. However, more parents of married girls attended elementary, and none of them continued to high school or college. As a comparison, about 1 in 10 parents of non-married girls continued to have high school education, and a small percentage of them had college education.

III.2. Objective 1: Findings on young girls' perception about marriage

III.2.1 Perception of married-girls before the marriage

On the question about perception of marriage, we asked the married girls an open-ended question in the survey: "Before you were married, in your opinion, what was marriage identical with?". Major themes of the answers are the themes on happiness, being together, and financial-related.

On the theme on happiness, it was found that apart from being happy or joyful, we also had girls identified the happiness of other couple as their reference. They mentioned:

"I was curious. When I observe other people, it looks like being married was fun"- 19 years old, married at 18 years old, West Java

"I saw other people and they were happy"- 20 years old, married at 19 years old, West Java

"It (a marriage) looks beautiful, that's why I also wanted to get married. Many of my friends were also married", 19 years old, married at 18 years old, West Nusa Tenggara

The observation of girls of the role models in their village and community plays an important role in their perception about marrying at young age. When young girls in the village portrayed happiness, joy, and being problem-free, girls may be encouraged to perceive early marriage as fun and joyful. As stated in the example, being curious (*penasaran*) might be one of the factors that lead them to being married at young age.

On the issue of being together, the girls shared:

"Living together under one roof, sharing joy and sorrow together" 15 years old, married at 15 years old, West Java

"Being married to me was identical with living and sleeping together", 25 years old, married at 16 years old, West Java

"When a couple go out, they must always go out together and filled with joy", 18 years old, married at 17 years old, West Nusa Tenggara

Being together in many of the responses were related with going out together, like what was mentioned in the last two examples. In Indonesia, parents of young girls often require girls to go out with a chaperone. To have a lifetime chaperone was thought to grant them a "greater social freedom"²¹, when in fact, girls realized later on that they had more freedom prior to being married. In this study, girls mentioned that as compared that their pre-marriage condition, their social lives are now more restricted as they are obliged to manage the household and caring for their children.

On financial-related theme, the girls also perceived being married as having a provider, to free/ease parents or family from financial burden, and again, observation that other girls were being provided. On the other hand, few girls also mentioned that being married was identical with having more financial difficulties.

²¹Youth Identities and Social Transformations in Modern Indonesia, edited by Kathryn Robinson (2016).

“Seeing other people, it looks great to have someone to provide for you”, 17 years old, married at 16 years old, West Java

“My perception was that being married was identical to facing financial hardships, just like my own family”, 17 years old, married at 17 years old, West Nusa Tenggara

“Marriage was identical with difficulties, many financial problems”, 24 years old, married at 15 years old, West Nusa Tenggara

Apart from family financial struggles, *menafkahi* (to provide) is considered part of men’s obligation by many Indonesians²². Having said that, the concept of *nafkah* may also simply be the transfer of financial burden from the parents or the family to the husband. From this perspective, girls may willingly marry just to take off the burden from their parents’ shoulder²⁴. It was stated,

“I want to ease the burden of my parents...I don’t have regrets”, 24 years old, married at 16 years old, West Java

To sum, young girls’ pre-marriage perception about marriage was majorly related to happiness, being together, and financial-related. On the issue of happiness, it is important to highlight the importance of role models, as girls identified the happiness of other couples as their reference. On perception of togetherness, many of the responses were found to be related with “going out together”. As girls are often required to have a chaperone, being married was perceived as a way to have a lifetime chaperone and freedom to go anywhere. Lastly, on financial-related themes, girls perceived being married as having a provider, to free or ease parents or family from financial burden, and having more financial difficulties.

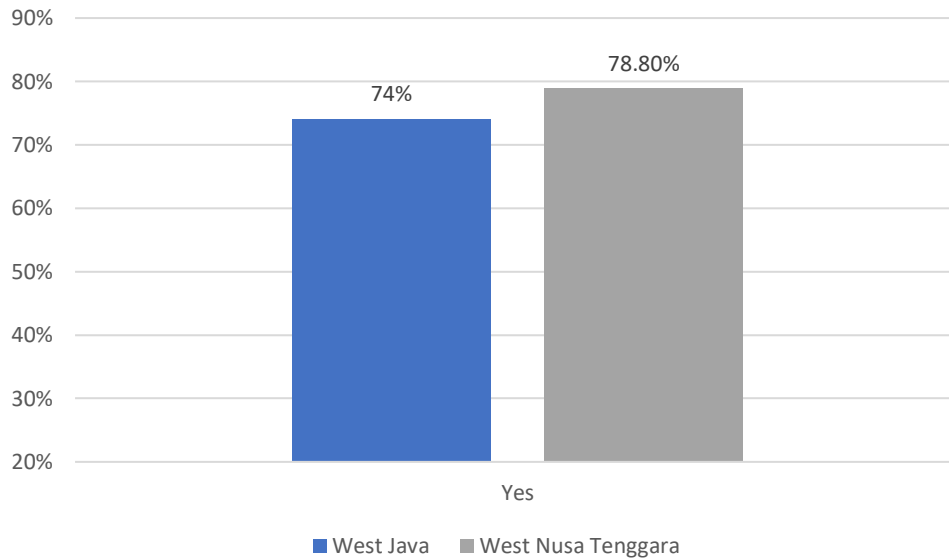
III.2.2 Perception of married-girls after the marriage

To compare the perception, we further asked the married girls whether their perception on marriage changed after they were married, and what is their current perception (when there is a difference in perception).

²² Gender, State, and Social Power in Contemporary Indonesia: Divorce and Marriage Law. (2009). O’Shaughnessy, Kate.

²⁴ As perspectives and aspirations may correlate with each other, we shall also see the agreement of themes emerged in the adolescent girls’ aspiration to marry.

Diagram 10. Does the perception of married girls change after marriage?



74% of the married girls respondents from West Java and 78.8% from West Nusa Tenggara responded that their perception changed after marriage. Major themes emerged on their current perceptions include: social restrictions, financial issues, more household chores. On financial issues and household chores, the girls stated:

"It is not as beautiful as I imagined. Before I was married, I could ask for money from my parents. Now I have to wait for my husband to give me money", 21 years old, married at 16 years old, West Java

"I found changes in my husband's behavior. I also had more chores...many household chores", 19 years old, married at 16 years old, West Nusa Tenggara

"I'm tired, I have lots of chores. It is also difficult when you don't have money", 24 years old, married at 17 years old, West Nusa Tenggara

Particularly on the issue of social restrictions, we particularly learned that the term "main" or "bermain" was consistently found in girls' statement in both sites. Literal translation of the terms "main" or "bermain" is to play or playing. The girls stated,

"I am now a mother and a wife. (I) cannot play", 24 years old, married at 16 years old, West Java

"Huge difference with my condition before marriage. I don't play anywhere that much", 22 years old, married at 16 years old, West Nusa Tenggara

"My husband does not allow me to play", 25 years old, married at 15 years old, West Java

Upon clarification with local enumerators and partners, we found similarities in the description of the terms, which for people in both sites, may refer to: the playing activities itself, hanging out with friends, visiting friends house, strolling with friends, or using gadget (if the word “*main*” is followed by a type of a gadget).

In addition to the social restrictions related to inability to “play”, girls also stated that due to their condition, their activities are limited to managing the household and caring for the child.

“I used to study only, now I am busy managing the household”, 21 years old, married at 17 years old, West Nusa Tenggara

“Turns out that there is a difference with when we were dating, I could work at that time if I would. It is difficult now, especially when I am nursing my child”, 20 years old, married at 17 years old, West Java

Having said that, another theme on being happier or contented after marriage was also found in this study, especially when the current family situation is better than their own family’s condition. Girls stated,

“I am happier now. I came from a broken-home family. I have somebody who pays attention to me after being married”, 19 years old, married at 16, West Nusa Tenggara

“I am no longer a burden to my family”, 22 years old, married at 16 years old, West Java

“I am happier with this current family”, 16 years old, married at 15 years old, West Nusa Tenggara

Finally, particularly in West Nusa Tenggara, we found a specific theme related to the *merari’* tradition²⁵. The following case was related to a girl being stolen from her home by the ex-boyfriend of her cousin. He stole and married her as a revenge because the girl’s cousin married somebody else. Upon discussion with local partner, it was found that the original purpose of *merari’*, which was to preserve the self-esteem and manhood of the man, have now been more inappropriately used for other purposes like what we found in this case.

“It turns out that marriage does not equal to being happy. I am happier to live with my kids. My husband abandons me. I’m tired”, 20 years old, married at 16 years old, West Nusa Tenggara.

Still within the theme of *merari’*, a girl mentioned that she has accepted her condition after being stolen.

²⁵ The *merari’* tradition is a particular practice in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, in which a girl is being stolen from her home by a man who wishes to be her husband. The tradition was originally a practice to preserve the self-esteem and manhood of a Sasak man, because he has succeeded in eloping his beloved girl (Saladin, 2013).

“I have accepted my condition because I am already (terlanjur) stolen, and no one in my family came to my defense”, 21 years old, married at 16 years old, West Nusa Tenggara.

The term *terlanjur* used here refers to a condition that already happened (too late), and the person now has no control over it²⁶.

At this subsection we learned that most of the girls from both sites responded having a change in perception after marriage. Similar themes in both sites include social restrictions, financial issues, and having more household chores. On the issue of social restrictions, girls discussed the inability to play and having activities that are limited to managing household and caring for the child. On financial issues, girls admitted to have to wait for the husband to give them money (while previously they could ask for money from their parents), and having financial difficulties. Having said that, some girls in both sites admitted that they are happier with their marriage, especially when the current financial and family situation is better than their own family's condition. Particularly in West Nusa Tenggara, we found a theme related to the *merari'* tradition, in which girls are either unhappy with their marriage, or they just accepted their condition since the marriage has (*terlanjur*) happened.

III.2.3 Perception of non-married-girls about marriage

Similar to the question we inquired from the married girls, we also asked the non-married girls the question, “In your opinion, what is marriage identical with?”. It was found that the non-married girls had more elaborated themes. Some similar themes consistent with the married girls groups responses were the themes on happiness, being together, and having somebody to provide for their needs.

In addition to the themes above, a theme on a more balanced view on marriage was brought up by the non-married girls in West Nusa Tenggara. They mentioned,

“It seems happy, but it looks like it is going to be difficult once the couple has a child”, 19 years old, West Nusa Tenggara

“It seems happy and joyful, but who knows what lies ahead. (Women) only work in the kitchen, and have no freedom after marriage. I think (women should) marry after they become successful”, 19 years old, West Nusa Tenggara

“The happiness is temporary. You will be bored in no time”, 17 years old, West Nusa Tenggara
A particular theme that emerged on the perception on marriage as a religious call. Girls stated,

²⁶ Similarly, Platt (2012) described the term *terlanjur* as “already gone too far” in her work on women and marriage in Lombok.

“Being married means happiness. You get to fulfill your obligations”, 17 years old, West Nusa Tenggara

“To marry means to find God’s ridho (blessings)”, 18 years old, West Java

“Being married is identical with holy ties, to complete the religion”, 15 years old, West Java

Another concept brought up by the girls, particularly from West Java was on the theme on submission to the husband.

“(A wife) should not argue with her husband. His wish is your command. A wife should be a sholehah, the one who preserve the family’s honor”, 19 years old, West Java

“(A wife) should not confront her husband”, 16 years old, West Java

“(A wife) should not violate husband’s rules. She should be obedient to her husband. She should also observe daily prayers”, 18 years old, West Java

Apart from the themes above, we found a specific theme brought up by girls from West Java, which was intimacy.

“Being married is identical with having intimate relationship with the opposite sex”, 19 years old, West Java

“The unity of relationship between a man and a woman”, 20 years old, West Java

“Being married means to have an intimate relationship”, 18 years old, West Java

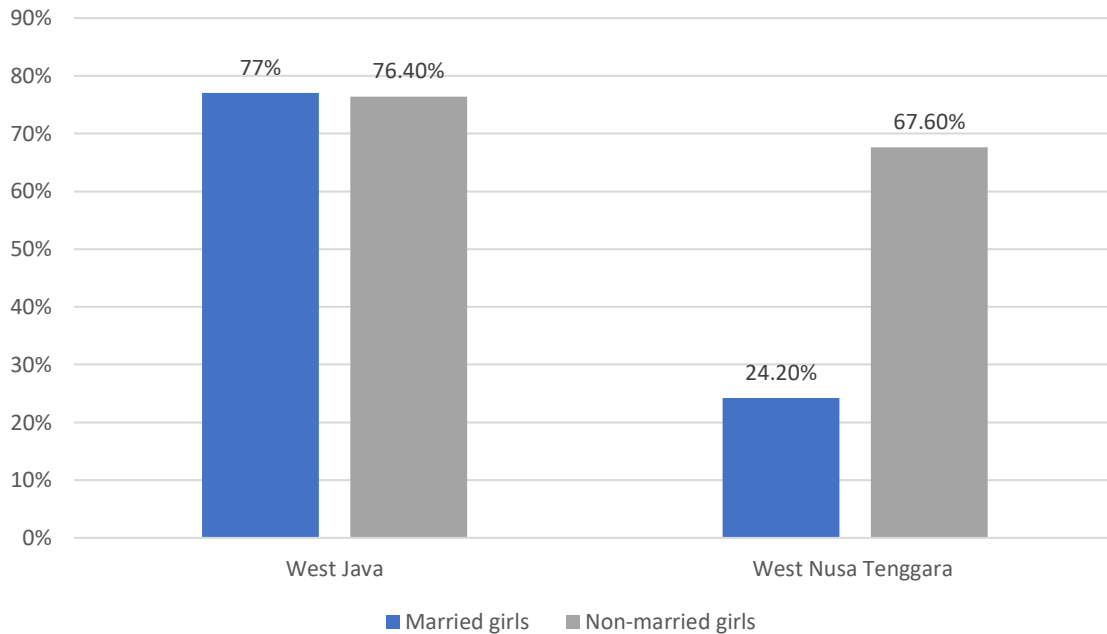
At this subsection, we learned that there were some consistencies between the perception of the married and non-married girls group in both sites, especially on the themes on happiness, being together, and having a provider. In addition to these themes, other theme particularly brought up by non-married girls in both sites was the perception of marriage as a religious call (e.g. to fulfill their obligations, to find God’s *ridho* (blessings), or to complete one’s religion).

Particular to the girls in West Nusa Tenggara, we found that non-married girls from this site had a balanced view on marriage, in which marriage was perceived as both happy and challenging; or that although a marriage seems happy and joyful, women will be tied to the kitchen and having no freedom after marriage. The last point was the view particular to the non-married girls from West Java, in which marriage was perceived as submission to the husband (e.g. that a wife should not argue with or confront the husband) and being physically intimate.

III.2.4 Perception on delaying marriage

On the issue of perception on delaying marriage, we asked an open-ended question in the survey to the girls “Is it considered reasonable for girls to delay marriage in your community? Why or why not?”. The diagram below summarized the married vs non-married girls view.

Diagram 11. Percentage of girls perceived that delaying marriage is considered reasonable in their community



The diagram above shows that there is a similar trend in West Java, wherein majority of both married and non-married girls groups perceived that it was considered reasonable for girls to delay marriage in their community. On the other hand, majority of married girls from West Nusa Tenggara perceived that delaying marriage was not reasonable in their community. On the contrary, non-married girls from West Nusa Tenggara perceived that delaying marriage was considered reasonable in their community²⁸.

When asked for the reason that delaying marriage was not considered reasonable in their community, we found four major categories of themes: *jodoh* (soulmate), *omongan orang* (gossip), *dianggap tidak laku* (considered a spinster/old maid)²⁹, and child marriage is common in the village.

²⁸ Particularly in West Nusa Tenggara, there was a significant association between marital status and perception of delaying marriage as reasonable, $\chi^2(1) = 11.642, p = .001$

²⁹ Particularly found in West Nusa Tenggara

The girls explained,

“When you have met your soul mate, you have to marry”, 17 years old, married at 15 years old,
West Nusa Tenggara

“People will gossip when a girl is not yet married”, 19 years old, married at 16 years old, West
Nusa Tenggara

“When you have graduated and not yet married, you will be considered an old maid”, 21 years
old, married at 16 years old, West Nusa Tenggara

“Nobody in my village delays marriage”, 20 years old, married at 16 years old, West Nusa
Tenggara

Apart from the themes above, it is important to note that girls perceive being married as a prevention of future incidences that is going to happen.

“To prevent committing zina (adultery)”, 18 years old, married at 16 years old, West Java

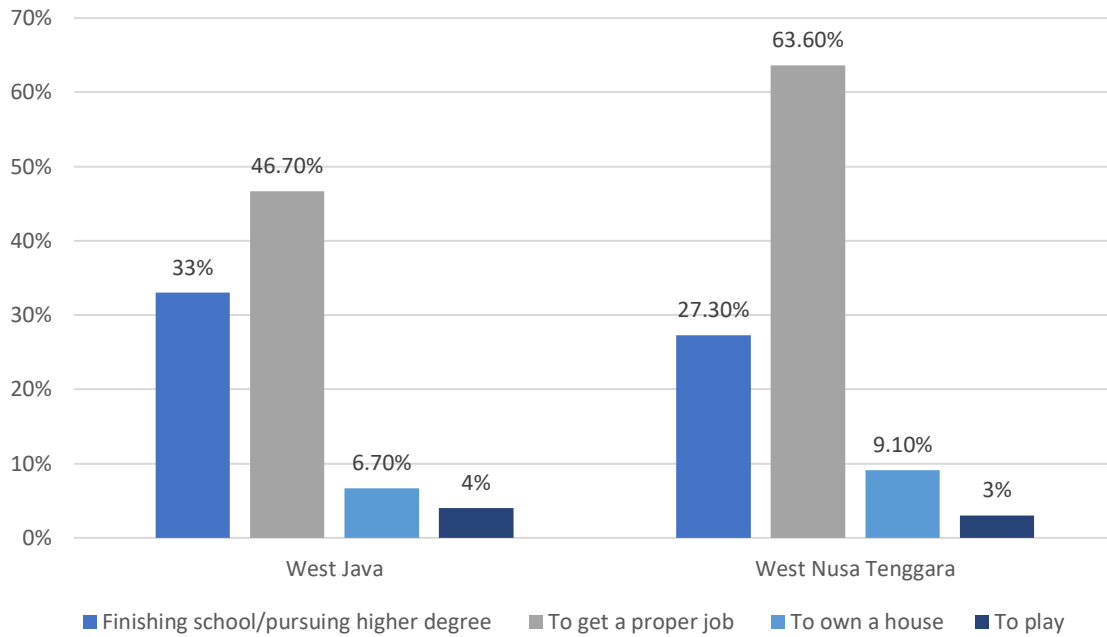
“Parents are worried when the girl is out and going home late. It is better to marry than to wander around and getting pregnant”, 19 years old, married at 18 years old, West Nusa Tenggara

To sum, in contrast with the findings of other groups, married girls from West Nusa Tenggara did not perceive that delaying marriage as reasonable in their community. The reasons include the issues of: soulmate (e.g. no need to delay when one has found the soulmate), gossip, considered a spinster, child marriage is common in the village, and prevention of future incidence (e.g. preventing girls from committing adultery or being pregnant).

III.2.5 Perception of married girls on things that they aspire to achieve

Apart from the perception on marriage and delaying marriage, we additionally asked married girls an open-ended question “Are there things that you still want to do but not yet accomplished because you were married?”. The summary of major responses are as follows:

Diagram 12. Things that married girls aspire to achieve



Consistently, the four themes occur in the data of both sites. To get a proper job was the main aspiration that have not been accomplished due to being married (46.7% in West Java and 63.6% in West Nusa Tenggara), followed by the girls desire to finish school or pursue a higher degree (33% in West Java and 27.3% in West Nusa Tenggara), to own a house (6.7% in West Java and 9.1% in West Nusa Tenggara), and to play (4% in West Java and 3% in West Nusa Tenggara)³⁰.

III.3. Objective 2: Young girls' aspiration about marriage

III.2.1 Married vs non-married girls' aspiration to marry

On the issue of aspiration to marry, we asked the question "Did/do you want to marry before 19 years old? Why and why not?" Diagram below summarize the findings of the girls' aspiration to marry before 19 years old.

³⁰ The concept of "play" here is similar to what we have discussed earlier

Diagram 13. Adolescent girls' aspiration to marry before 19 years old

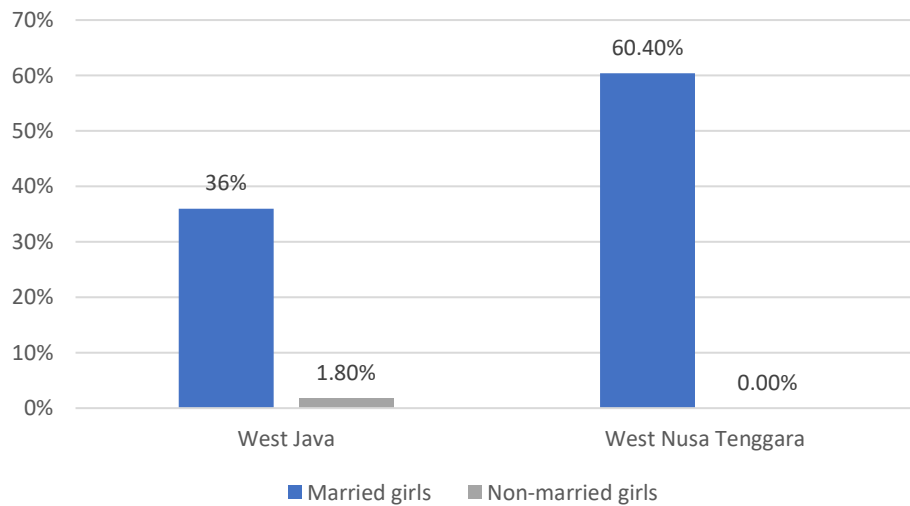


Diagram above suggested that majority of married girls in Lombok wanted to marry before 19 years old. Contrariwise, none of the non-married girls from the same site wanted to be married before they reached their 19th birthday. In both sites, the major factor that drive married-girls to aspire to marry before 19 years old were to ease parents' burden.

Among those who did not aspire to marry, but were married anyway, the themes were quite different in both sites, except on the issue of pregnancy. Major driving force for the girls in West Java was the force/suggestion/arrangement from the parents and/or the man, such as in the cases of girls who wanted to be engaged first but denied by the parents (suggesting the girl and her boyfriend to marry instead); or parents who agreed to marry the daughter off after a man asked her parents; girls who are forced to marry because she goes out with her boyfriend too often; or simply girls who are married just because a guy already asked for her hand in marriage.

The girls stated:

"The original plan was my boyfriend and I wanted to be engaged first. My parents disagree and suggested us to marry instead", 16 years old, married at 15 years old, West Java.

"I don't like my husband. The marriage was arranged by my parents. I regret that I married at young age. I am angry because my parents and the guy forced me to marry him", 18 years old, married at 16 years old, West Java

"The first wife of that guy passed away. He then went to my mother and asked if he could marry me", married at 15 years old, West Java

"I got married because of my mother" (the girl did not continue to say much about her mother), 14 years old, married at 14 years old, West Java

On the other hand, in West Nusa Tenggara, the theme was heavy on the *merari'* practice. Girls said:

"I wasn't ready. I still wanted to go to school, but my husband really wanted to marry me that he lied to ask me out. It turned out that he took me out to run off/steal me from my home", 21 years old, married at 16 years old, West Nusa Tenggara

"My husband really wanted to marry. He took me from my home, and I would not dare to go home after that. I had to marry", 19 years old, married at 16 years old, West Nusa Tenggara

"My husband took me from my home because he was afraid that I would be taken away by somebody else", 24 years old, married at 15 years old, West Nusa Tenggara

Based on the findings above, in both sites, although there are differences, the common reason for girls who did not aspire to marry but ended up marrying was the force from boy/man. In West Java, the man pressured the girl by approaching the parents or the girls, while in West Nusa Tenggara, the man takes the girl from her home sometimes without considering the girl's readiness.

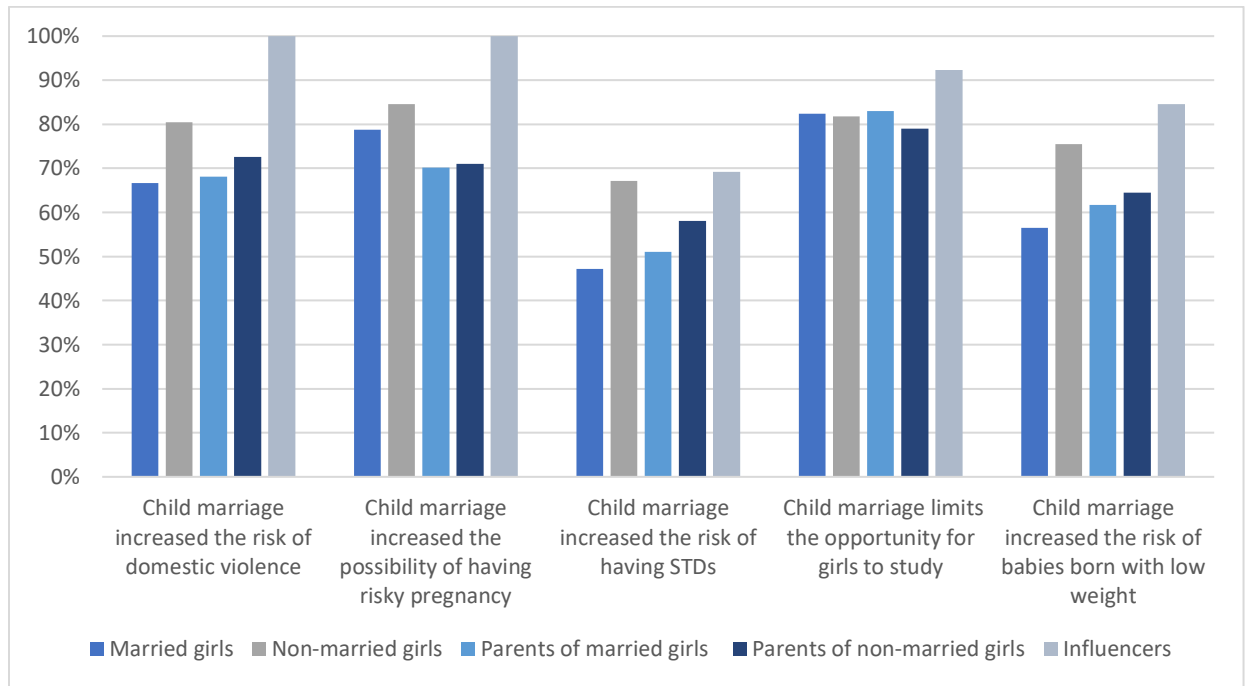
III.4. Objective 3: Risk Perceptions

The third objective entails the findings on how aware are the girls, their parents, and the influencers of the risk of child marriage

To address this objective, we gave all the respondents five statements on risks of child marriage. The five statements were: (1) Child marriage increased the risk of domestic violence; (2) Child marriage increased the possibility of having risky pregnancy; (3) Child marriage increased the risk of having STDs; (4) Child marriage limits the opportunity for girls to study; and (5) Child marriage increased the risk of babies born with low weight.

We present the summary of findings in the diagram below. The number in the diagram represents the percentage of respondents who identified each factor as a viable risk associated with child marriage.

Diagram 14. Comparison of Risk Perception across Groups of Respondents



The diagram above indicates that, mostly, misperception consistently occurs on the issue of STD and low birth weight of babies. Having said that, upon comparing the findings between the two research sites, we learned that non-married girls from West Nusa Tenggara were significantly more likely to perceive the possibility of risky pregnancy as compared to non-married girls from West Java³¹.

In addition to these findings, we also learned from the data that the two groups with the poorest risk perceptions were married girls and parents of married girls. Although further analysis is needed, we may say that the poor risk perception might be one of the risk factors for girls to marry at such young age. The less people perceive the risks or dangers, the more people will engage in risky behaviors. Similarly, when parents or young girls do not understand the health risk or violence that may happen, the more they would not be guarded against child marriage.

³¹ $\chi^2(1) = 5.982, p = .014$

III.5. Objective 4: Game Changers

The fourth objective of the study focuses on the game changers of child marriage. Game changers in this context refer to champions who would affect the direction of the trend of child marriage in significant ways. Conclusions on game changers based on the quantitative and qualitative inquiries with married and non-married adolescent girls and their parents, and influencers are explained per findings on each research site. Since we realized that not all of the influencers possess the same power in changing the direction of child marriage, we propose to employ a spectrum that explains influencers participation/engagement.³²

Table 5. The influencers engagement spectrum

To be informed	To be consulted and involved	To collaborate with	To empower
Influencers who should be provided with understanding/ facts/ objective information on the issue of child marriage	Influencers that we take feedback from and listened to, and work directly with to ensure that issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered, and to help guide the development of programs, alternatives, or decisions	Influencers that we work in partnership with for input and advice, jointly formulating/ developing solutions and/or options	Influencers who have the final say to change their current situation

III.5.1 Game Changers

Table 6. Game changers and their roles

	The game changers	Roles
To be informed	Family and community members (including boys/man and their parents, and parents of girls)	- To receive information/ facts about impact and risk of child marriage, as well as benefits of delaying marriage ^{a, c}
To be consulted and involved	- Young girls - Youth groups (Karang Taruna, Forum Anak, etc.) - Survivors of child marriage - Families of survivors of child marriage	- To provide relevant information on the impact of child marriage ^{a, c} - To share personal stories as case studies to develop and improve programs ^c - To share experiences in dealing with challenges in program implementation in the past ^c

³² Adapted from the IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum

To collaborate with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Religious leaders (including informal ones, e.g. Qur'an recitation teachers) - Majelis Ulama Indonesia - Religious leaders (e.g. <i>Tuan Guru</i>) - KPPAD (Komisi Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak Desa [The Village Commission for the Protection of Women and Children]) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not to officiate any marriage that involves children as brides^{a, b, c} - Educate parents (of girls and boys) on impact of child marriage and benefits of delaying marriage (e.g. through Qur'an recitation meetings [<i>pengajian</i>])^c - To address issues that are related to religious teachings^c - To mediate/separate (<i>membelas</i>) the child whenever any underage girl is being taken away from her home*^{a, b, c} - Issuance of <i>awiq-awiq</i> (local/traditional law) to prevent child marriage*^c
	Youth groups (Karang Taruna, Forum Anak, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To come up with programs/ activities to improve hard skills^c - To be advocate of children's rights^c - To set good examples as role models to the youth in the village^b - To provide activities for children to divert their attention^c
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local healthcare facilities (Puskesmas, Posyandu) - Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga or PKK (Family Welfare Movement) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To educate the community members on the risks and health impact of child marriage to the girls and their babies' health^c
	- Village officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be selective or rigorous in checking the requirements before issuing marriage license (<i>ijin menikah</i>) or marriage certificate^c - Allocating village budget to provide opportunities for children who dropped out of school^c - To report officials who officiated a wedding illegally^c - Issuance of local/village regulations (e.g. Peraturan Desa [Village Regulations] or Surat Edaran [circular letter]) about child marriage^c - To mediate or prevent any marriage that involves a child when parents seek for any method to marry their children off^{a, b, c} - To mediate/separate (<i>membelas</i>) the child whenever any underage girl is being taken away from her home*^{a, b, c}
	- Formal/informal education institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To come up with scheme on re-entry into formal education or informal programs (e.g. Kejar Paket [acceleration program] or courses to improve hard skills)^{b, c}

	- Survivors of child marriage	- To educate the community members and school children on the risks of child marriage ^{a,c}
	- Surrounding industries	- Provide work opportunities to look forward to after they finish their education, and chances for families to have better income ^{a,c}
To empower	- Young girls	- Saying no when they are not ready for marriage ^{a,b} - Saying no to physical intimacy ^{a,b}

* Only relevant to West Nusa Tenggara

^a As indicated by married girls

^b As indicated by parents of married girls

^c As indicated by influencers

Findings of this subsection suggested that although there were agreements in terms of the perspectives of the game changers, differences in views also exist between the groups of respondents. In this study, married girls emphasized the force from the parents and man, pregnancy, family income, pressure from the community, and lack of mediation by family and community members and leaders. On the other hand, although the parents group realized that they have put certain force for girls to marry, the groups rather emphasized girls’ pregnancy over and above other issues.

III.6. Objective 5: Mediators of Child Marriage

III.6.1. Actors/enablers of child marriage

In this section, we will be discussing the actors who enable the child marriage to happen, based on the qualitative inquiries. We should note that the role of actors and conditions (next section) may also be interrelated and overlapped with each other.

A. Religious marriage officiants (Both West Java and Lombok)

The study found that religious marriage (*nikah siri*) was very common in both West Java and Lombok, since the girls are not yet of age. The marriage was conducted by *penghulu* or *kiai* (who serves as religious marriage officiant), hence many of the weddings are unregistered. Parents and couples often opted for this option, and have the marriage registered when the girls are of age. Even with the new regulations on child marriage, the law would most likely be useless when certain respected individuals are lenient are permissive, and use all sorts of justifications to marry children off.

“My hope is for my marriage to be confirmed (isbat), because until today I have not had my own personal identification card and family card. I don’t even have an access to the subsidized housing, that’s why I still live with my parents-in-law. My children also do not own birth certificate and child identity card”, Married girl, West Nusa Tenggara

“Many of the weddings here are only officiated by a kiai. They will have the marriage registered with the Office of Religious Affair later when the girl is of age”, Parent of married girls, West Java

B. Traditional and religious leaders (prominent in Lombok)

Discussions with influencers and partners indicated that some *tokoh adat* (traditional leaders) and religious leaders may be the proponents of early marriage, especially those who had certain beliefs like, girls are of age when they already had their period or the religion does not forbid the marriage.

“In this community, 16 years old is already an appropriate age for a girl to marry since she already has her period. When you already have your menstruation, you can already marry”- 33 years old, influencer, West Nusa Tenggara

C. Parents (more prominent in West Java)

Consistent with the previous findings, parents in West Java had major role in matchmaking and/or marrying their daughters off for various reasons. As stated by these girls, these reasons were related to prevention from committing adultery, being subject to gossip for dating boys at their age, pregnancy, and financial difficulties. In addition, some of the girls did not go through dating phase, as some of them were married through the process of *ta’aruf* (become acquainted). The girls stated:

“Through the process of ta’aruf. His parents came to my house to propose, and both my parents agreed. I finally agreed to be married off”- Married girl, West Java

“The dating process started by being introduced by my parents. We dated for 1.5 years before we got married. The parents of the husband live far away. We were married off to prevent being subject to gossip”- Married girl, West Java

“Because I played³³ too much, so my parents were worried. Rather than being the talk of the neighbor, when there was a boy who wanted to marry me, my parents just agreed. I was too young to understand what it means to have a family. When I was being told to marry, I just agreed” Married girl, West Java

“The marriage was arranged by my parents, I had no choice but to follow their wish” Married girl, West Java

“I was dating at first, then my parents asked me to marry because I already dated for too long. I rejected the idea, but my parents still forced me. I finally got married” Married girl, West Java

³³ Refers to the term play discussed earlier

III.6.2 Conditions that put children at-risk

Now, apart from the actors or enablers, we also identified added certain conditions that will put girls at-risk of being child brides, and other related conditions. These conditions are drawn from field notes, discussion with influencers and partners, and our observation of the sites.

A. Punitive law (only relevant to West Nusa Tenggara)

Upon discussions and listening to partners in the field, we learned that girls are more prone to being married when the local law (e.g. practices of discriminative *awiq-awiq* in certain parts of Lombok) or curfew are rather punitive. Girls are ordered to obliged blindly, to marry once they arrive home late. For instance, girls who are home after sunset are told to better marry, rather than to bring shame to the family. Instead of educating or inquiring the girls on their whereabouts, parents and sometimes community leaders took the decision to marry them off. The living law applied in the society encourages social punishment and creating a sense of helplessness to the young girls.

B. Disagreement between influencers

Not all influencers we found in the field are supportive of ending child marriage. It was reflected in the denial of rights ("*there is no rights of children that is taken away from her*"), and denial or ignorance of cases during interviews ("*None. The people in this community only married at legal age*" or "*None. We never issued marriage permission before 19 years old*").

Another influencer stated that in the socialization of new regulations on child marriage, they had significant difficulties with traditional leaders (*tokoh adat*) who did not agree with village head who also was in disagreement with religious leaders. On one hand they were told to socialize, on the other hand their efforts were negated by other influencers who did not agree with the law. It therefore results in the lack of community knowledge and positive attitude towards the new regulations.

C. Dropping out of school

Apart from dropping out of school due to being married, some girls did get married because they were dropped out of school. They explained:

"I dropped out of school, so I played all the time. I also didn't want to continue studying. Rather than being the talk of the neighbor, I just got married since a guy already proposed anyway"
Married girl, West Java

"Because of financial issue, I could not continue studying. Then a guy proposed to me. I introduced him to my parents, and they agreed. We finally got married" Married girl, West Java

D. Lack of road access to the village

In our few weeks journey for data collection, we learned that some villages in West Java had very challenging road access. Not only that it made it difficult for implementer of programs to reach the girls in that area, but also the lack of access to reach any higher education institution from that village. When the highest level of education accessible physically to the girl is middle school, for example, the girls will end up being married due to poverty and the lack of activities. This observation was also confirmed by the interview results, wherein the influencers had to cover 3 smaller areas within his authority for implementation of programs, but the areas are too distant from each other and geographically challenging, even for the locals.

E. The downside of raising minimum age

Raising the bar on minimum age, without properly educating the community members, may have its own disadvantages. Parents who insist to marry their daughters off opted to have unregistered marriages.

F. The downside of providing work opportunities

Work opportunities provides better future for girls. Or that's what we assumed. Upon discussions with influencers, we found that providing jobs for girls also mean that jobs are also available for men in that area. As having jobs are identical to being financially capable, men also felt that they could already provide for the family, and encouraged to marry. In an area in Lombok in 2008, for example, an influencer reported that child marriage was at its peak since gold mining newly existed there.

G. Other cultural beliefs and practices

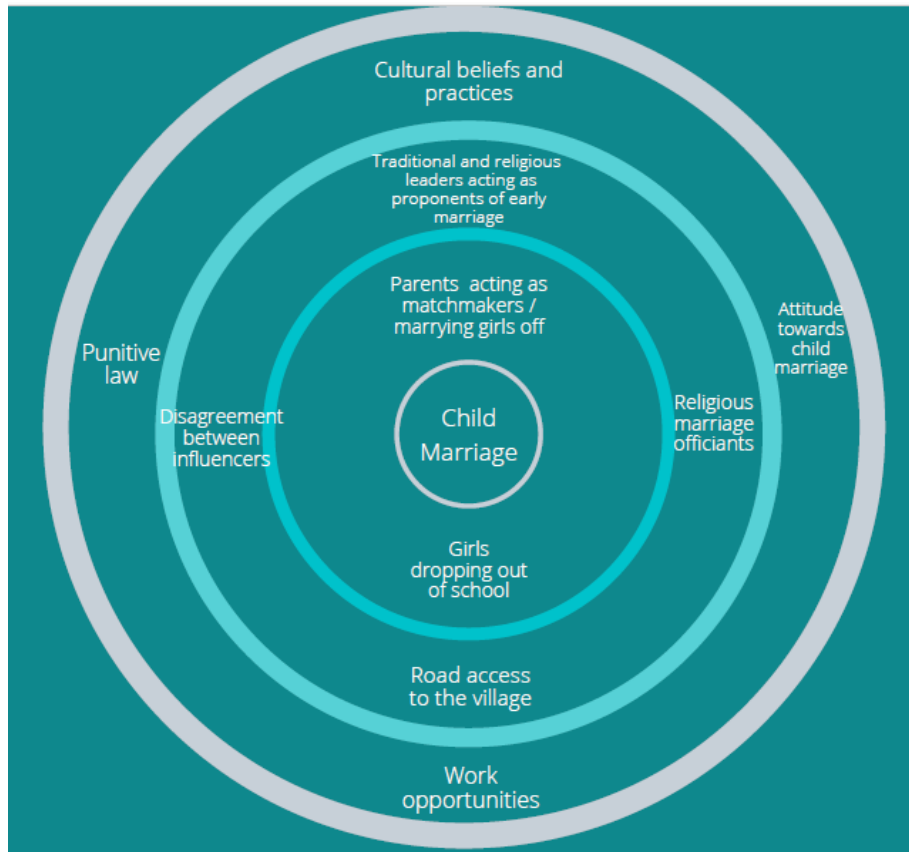
The theme on soulmate (*jodoh*) kept recurring all throughout surveys responses and qualitative inquiries. Girls are married off without delay because of the existing perception about meeting their soulmate ("*Why delay if you have met your soul mate*").

"Because I have met my soul mate. The marriage certificate is kept in the Office of Religious Affair because I am not yet of age" Married girl, West Java

In addition, specific to West Nusa Tenggara, certain cultural practices like *merari*, especially when the practice has been more commonly and inappropriately used for purposes that deviated from its original intention.

Summary of the mediators of child marriage is presented in the following diagram.

Diagram 15. Mediators of child marriage



Mediators of child marriage found in this study include both actors and conditions that put children at risk. Based on our findings, actors who enable child marriage to happen include the religious marriage officiants who officiated the ceremony without informing the wedding to the related government Departments (families only report the wedding once the girl is of age), traditional and religious leaders who hold certain beliefs (e.g. on certain phase in girl's life unrelated to age) who might be proponents of early marriage, and parents acting as matchmakers. Whereas conditions that put children at-risk in this study include punitive local law (e.g. local laws practiced in certain parts of Lombok that order girls to marry once they arrive home late or pass the curfew), the differences or disagreements between influencers in terms of knowledge and attitude towards child marriage, girls dropping out of school, the lack of road/physical access to the village for program implementation, lack of road/physical access from the village to any high school or higher education institution, the lack positive attitude that goes along with the new regulation of minimum married age for girls, work opportunities (both positive and negative impact of it), and certain cultural belief and practices (e.g. on soulmate and *merari'* tradition).

III.7. Recommendations for campaign or program to prevent and eliminate child marriage

Table 7 Recommendations for campaign or program to prevent and eliminate child marriage

Source	Main Findings	Recommendations
Demographic Data	Most of the married girls respondents from both sites in this study either only have religious marriage or had their marriage not registered at all.	Advocacy for better mechanism to prevent marriage officiants (e.g. whistleblowing system and sanction) to officiate a wedding without registering or recording it to the state
	Girls experienced dropping out of school, domestic violence, health issues, and abandonment/neglect	Socialization programs to educate community members should include the risks of child marriage
Objective 1: Young girls' perception about marriage	Perception of girls is often influenced by the religious ideals firmly uphold in the community	Engaging prominent religious institutions, leaders, educating community members through religious events (e.g. <i>pengajian</i> [Qur'an recitation meeting]) are crucial for both West Java and West Nusa Tenggara
	The observation of girls of the role models in their village and community plays an important role in their perception about marrying at young age.	Youth groups members (e.g. Forum Anak and Karang Taruna) to set good examples as role models to the youth in the village
	Girls had aspirations that are still unaccomplished due to being married at young age	Campaigns on prevention of child marriage should include information on the benefits of delaying their marriage (e.g. to get a proper job, to be able to help their parents by contributing to the family's income, to finish their education and pursue a higher degree, to save money, or to enjoy their adolescent years).
	Girls who perceived marriage as having a provider may have entered the marriage willingly to help to take off their parents' financial burden	
Objective 2: Young girls' aspiration about marriage	Although girls did not aspire to marry before 19 years old,	Campaign programs to change community mindset

	the control of the decision to marry sometimes derives from other people (e.g. parents, boy/man)	should target not only young girls, but also young men/boys in the community, as well as parents of girls and boys
	The <i>merari'</i> practice was substantially brought up by girls in West Nusa Tenggara as their reason for being married	Advocacy to traditional leaders to take initiatives to quickly mediate the separation (<i>membelas</i>) if the girls are underaged
Objective 3: Perception of risk	Across all groups of respondents, misperception of risk consistently occurs on the issue of STD and low birth weight of babies	Collaborate with local healthcare facilities (Puskesmas, Posyandu) and Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga or PKK (Family Welfare Movement) to educate the community members on the risks and health impact of child marriage
Objective 4: Identify game changers	Some of the strong community advocates are the survivors of child marriage and/or the family of survivors themselves	Involve and consult the survivors and their family members to create or improve programs and educate community members and school children to prevent child marriage
	Some villages already issued Village Regulation (<i>Peraturan Desa</i>) to prevent child marriage	To advocate for regulations on prevention of child marriage to be issued in every village
	Some villages already allocated certain budget to mitigate the impact of child marriage (e.g. for Kejar Paket, informal education)	For any prevention or mitigation program to sustain in the community, certain budget should be allocated from the village fund
	Married girls emphasized family's financial condition as one of the crucial game changers	Collaborate with surrounding industries to provide work opportunities for girls and their family
Objective 5: Mediators of child marriage	Particularly in West Nusa Tenggara, the control of the decision to marry is also	Advocacy to local traditional leaders to update <i>hukum adat</i> to protect girls and

	influenced by the local tradition law called <i>hukum adat</i> or <i>awiq-awiq</i>	prevent child marriage, instead of punishing them to marry
	Dropping out of school put children at risk	To involve and engage youth groups (e.g. Karang Taruna and Forum Anak) to come up with programs/ activities to improve hard skills
	Disagreement between influencers put children at risk	Programs should also target influencers to correct their misperception about child marriage (e.g. on children's rights, girls are ready to marry once they have their period)

To sum, the recommendation of the study covers the target audience and topic for future programs, parties to include in the collaboration to end child marriage, and issues for advocacy.

1. Programs should **target** community members (including parents of boys and girls, and the boys and girls themselves) and influencers to: (a) correct common misperception related to child marriage (e.g. no rights taken from the child, girls are ready to marry once they have their period); (b) educate on the risk and health impact of child marriage as well as benefits of delaying marriage. These programs may be delivered through formal and informal events.
2. **Collaboration** should be arranged with wide range of influencers: religious leaders, traditional leaders, religious institutions, victims of child marriage and their family members, healthcare centers (Puskesmas, Posyandu), existing PKK structure, youth groups (Karang Taruna, Forum Anak), and surrounding industries.
3. **Advocacy** should cover at least four major issues: (a) for government to provide mechanism to report officials who officiate any wedding that involves children; (b) for village officials to plan ahead of time and allocate village budget time to mitigate and prevent child marriage (e.g. to fund hard skills training, Kejar Paket); (c) for village regulations to be issued in every village; and (d) particularly relevant to West Nusa Tenggara, advocacy should be made for customary law to be updated to prevent, instead of encouraging child marriage. Approaches should also be made to traditional leader to quickly separate underaged girls taken away from her home.

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