

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TRENGGALEK REGENT'S 2022 INSTRUCTIONS ON CHILD MARRIAGE PREVENTION STRATEGIES IN TRENGGALEK

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ABSTRACT

The high rate of child marriage in Trenggalek poses a significant threat to children's welfare. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Trenggalek Regent's 2022 Instruction on Strategies for Preventing Child Marriage. The research employs a qualitative approach, collecting primary data through statistical analysis of child marriage rates and interviews with relevant stakeholders. The findings reveal a notable decrease in child marriage rates in 2023 following the implementation of the policy. This suggests that well-designed and sustained policy interventions can effectively address child marriage issues at the local level. The study highlights the importance of ongoing efforts in education, law enforcement, and collaboration among policymakers to safeguard children's welfare. This research contributes to the understanding of effective local strategies in combating child marriage. The study concludes that comprehensive policies, backed by strong stakeholder support, are effective in reducing child marriage rates. Recommendations include strengthening stakeholder collaboration and developing more efficient communication strategies.

Keywords: child marriage; public policy; regent's instructions.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia faces various challenges in welcoming a Golden Indonesia in 2045. One of the issues that is often discussed is child marriage (Murdiastuti, 2024). Child marriage has negative implications by increasing the risk of stunting in children born to young mothers. "Children born to adolescent mothers are at a higher risk of undernutrition; Children born to young mothers have a higher risk of nutritional deficiencies" (Haque et al., 2022). Unfortunately, currently, the number of child or teenage marriages is still quite high in Indonesia. Data from the East Java Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, and Population Service (DPA3K) reported 9,457 cases in 2020, representing 4.97% of the total 197,068 marriages. This percentage increased by 1.3% compared to 2019 (Huda & Khoirina, 2022).

Child marriage has a significant negative impact on children, both physically, mentally, and socially (Goel et al., 2022). Children who marry at an early age are at risk of complications from pregnancy and childbirth, malnutrition, dropping out of school, and domestic violence (Javad et al., 2023). Child marriage not only violates children's basic rights but also has serious consequences for their social welfare, education, and health. Children who marry at an early age are often forced to interrupt their education, face higher health risks, and are more likely to experience intergenerational poverty.

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According to Central Statistics Agency (BPS) (2020), addressing child marriage requires a variety of holistic strategies ranging from prevention to treatment. One of the efforts that can be made to deal with child marriage is to create appropriate regulations. The government through Law Number 16 of 2019 states that marriage is only permitted if a man and woman have reached the age of 19 years. However, in practice there are still many who apply for trials so that they can marry under the age of 19.

Puspitosari et al. (2022) states that public policy is the strategic use of existing resources to solve public or government problems. In a smaller scope, Trenggalek Regency is also making efforts to prevent child marriage through Trenggalek Regent's Instruction Number: 463/571/406.001.2/2022 concerning Strategies for Preventing Child Marriage. This Regent's Instruction was not prepared without reason, considering that in Trenggalek Regency the number of child marriages is still relatively high. In 2021, the number of child marriages based on data from the 2021 Trenggalek Regency Ministry of Religion Office was 7.67% with 956 marriages out of a total of 6,234 marriages in that year. Meanwhile, based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2020, the child marriage rate in Trenggalek reached 12.9%, higher than the national average of 10.6%.

The Regent's Instruction is a product of regional law. Trenggalek Regent's Instruction Number 463/571/406.001.2/2022 concerning Strategies for Preventing Child Marriage in Trenggalek Regency. This instruction contains various strategies for preventing child marriage, such as: 1) increasing public understanding about the dangers of child marriage; 2) strengthening the role of the family in preventing child marriage; 3) increased access to education for children; 4) improving the quality of health services for children; 5) law enforcement against perpetrators of child marriage.

In implementing the strategy to prevent child marriage, the Regent's Instructions are assigned to: 1) Chairman of the Trenggalek District/Religious Court; 2) Head of the Trenggalek Regency Ministry of Religion Office; 3) Head of the Trenggalek Regional Education Service Branch, 4) Head of Development Planning, Regional Research and Development; 5) Head of the Social Service, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection; 6) Head of the Education, Youth and Sports Service; 7) Head of the Health, Population Control and Family Planning Service; 8) Head of the Community and Village Empowerment Service; 9) Head of the Department of Cooperatives and Micro Enterprises and Trade; 10) Head of the Library and Archives Service; 11) Subdistrict head; 12) Village Head.

The implementation of Regent's Instructions in accordance with established Standard Operational Procedures. Regional governments have an important role in implementing child marriage prevention programs. The instructions issued by the Regent of Trenggalek in 2022 are a strategic basis for overcoming this problem (Bappenas, 2020). This instruction aims to reduce the rate of child marriage through a series of integrated policies and programs, starting from education campaigns, increasing access to reproductive health services, to the active involvement of educational institutions and community leaders in prevention efforts.

This research to evaluate the impact of the 2022 Trenggalek Regent's Instruction on reducing the rate of child marriage in Trenggalek Regency. By analyzing data before and after the implementation of this instruction, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive assessment of the policy's effectiveness. Additionally, the research aims to identify factors that facilitate or hinder the success of the instruction and to offer recommendations for future policy enhancements.

METHODS

This research is research descriptive analysis and not conducting hypothesis testing.

Descriptive research is intended to systematically describe the facts or characteristics of a particular population in a factual and accurate manner. Descriptive research focuses on natural settings that only describe situations or events. This study does not explain relationships, does not test hypotheses or make predictions. Descriptive research is research to create a picture of a problem regarding a situation or event. This research only presents facts to answer the research problem formulation.

The type of research used by researchers is descriptive qualitative. Qualitative research aims to explore phenomena that occur not only by quantifying the data obtained, but more deeply capturing the phenomena being studied. Kriyantono (2020) argues, "qualitative research aims to explain phenomena in as much depth as possible". Qualitative research is also not rigid and has flexibility in the research process. As expressed by Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2004), "The interdisciplinary landscape of qualitative research is rich because it does not privilege one philosophical basis or methodological approach to the research process."

Research location in Trenggalek Regency, East Java with a research period of 4 months, from March to June 2024. Data collection techniques using in-depth interviews were conducted with government officials to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation and impact of the Regent's Instructions. Documentation of this research was carried out by collecting secondary data from official documents and government reports regarding the regent's instructions and efforts to prevent child marriage. The data analysis technique is qualitative analysis of data from structured interviews and documentation. The sampling technique uses personal interviews with public officials and representatives of the elements included in the Regent's Instructions. The validity of the data from this research uses Data triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of interviews and documentation. The results of the research will be prepared in the form of a final report which includes conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the Trenggalek Regent's Instructions as well as recommendations for improving strategies for preventing child marriage in the future. With this methodology, it is hoped that research can provide a clear picture of the extent to which the Trenggalek Regent's Instructions are effective in preventing child marriage and identify areas that need to be improved to increase their effectiveness.

RESULTS

The research was carried out by conducting interviews with several policy makers and parties involved in the Regent's Instructions. The following are the policy makers and related parties who were interviewed (see: table 1).

Table 1 List of Personal Data for Policy Makers and Related Parties
Instruction from the Regents Interviewed

Num.	Name	Position	Role	Agency
1	Christina Ambarwati Soemarno, S.Sos, M.PSDM	PPPA Social Affairs Secretary/Plt. Head of PPPA Social Services	Regent's Instruction Drafter	Trenggalek Regency PPPA Social Service
2	Sujatmiko, S.Sos	Sub-district head	Implementation of Regent's Instructions at the sub-district level	Bendungan District, Trenggalek Regency

3	Dra. Farida Solikah	Family planning instructor (Chair of IPeKB Trenggalek)	PPKS Counselor Regency	PPKB Health Service, Trenggalek Regency
4	Dra. Lilik Sumarti	Family planning instructor	PPKS Counselor Regency	PPKB Health Service, Trenggalek Regency
5	Mr. G	Women and Children Empowerment Analyst	PUSPAGA Counselor	Trenggalek Regency PPPA Social Service
6	Ratri Purwaningsih, S.Psi	Extension Officer for Improving the Quality of Life for Women and Children	PUSPAGA Counselor	Trenggalek Regency PPPA Social Service
7	Heri Supriyanto	Village head	Socializing Regent's Instructions to Village Community	Tegaran Village Government District

Source: Direct Interview.

The selection of speakers came from various circles and were chosen based on the random sampling. However, all resource persons were asked the same questions regarding the effectiveness of implementing the Regent's Instructions in the field. Five of the interviewees have served more than 5 years in Trenggalek Regency.

When asked about the obstacles faced, the sources said different things. The most answers from three sources said that there is still a lack of understanding among the public regarding the impact of child marriage. Christina and Sujatmiko also conveyed the lack of commitment between stakeholders. There was 1 source who said there were no problems.

Interviewees also gave various answers to suggestions regarding the implementation of the Regent's Instructions. These include providing stricter marriage recommendations (Lilik Sumarti); Evaluating SOPs and increasing community/community leaders' literacy as well as implementing 6 national strategies for preventing and handling child marriage (Christina); Funding for counselors, training for new counselors (Farida); Increasing socialization in the form of Yasin congregation groups, social gathering groups, farmer groups, village meetings or village meetings, pamphlets, stickers placed in strategic places, collaborating with religious figures and community leaders (Heri); A strong commitment needs to be built so that the implementation of child marriage prevention can be systematic and based on the principle of fulfilling children's rights and the best interests of children (Ratri); The ability, commitment and willingness of the community, including officials, to prevent child marriage (Gilang); The existence of a Village BKK to prevent child marriage (Sujatmiko).

Regarding the effectiveness of the Regent's Instructions in preventing child marriage in Trenggalek Regency, two sources said that it was very effective and the rest were still at the quite effective stage. This may indicate that there is still something that can be improved from the Regent's Instructions. The majority of sources answered that the decline in child marriage rates shows the effectiveness of the Regent's Instructions. When asked what factors support the effectiveness of Regent's Instructions, 6 sources agreed to answer that there is good collaboration between agencies.

The interviewees gave different answers to each other when asked what factors hampered the effectiveness of the Regent's Instructions. There were sources who answered that collaboration between agencies was still poor; there are agencies that do not carry out the Regent's

Instructions; there are no rewards and punishments in the implementation of Regent's Instructions; if there is an option, you can get a recommendation (from the Religious Court: ed.); commitment of a small portion of OPD has not been maximized; The village government's policy response has not been optimal due to budget limitations.

It can be concluded from the results of interviews conducted with resource persons, no one was of the opinion that the Regent's Instructions were ineffective. Even though all of them answered that the Regent's Instructions was very effective or quite effective, each source had suggestions for improving the implementation of the Regent's Instruction regarding the prevention of child marriage even better in the future.

Various efforts have been made by the relevant agencies/OPD in Trenggalek Regency to support the implementation of the policy on Preventing Child Marriage (see: Table 2).

Table 2 List of Agency and Its Implementation of the policy on Preventing Child Marriage

Num.	Agency	Role
1	Chairman of the Trenggalek Religious Court	Permission to marry is only given if the conditions for being granted a dispensation have been met and vice versa if the requirements are not met
2	The Head of the Trenggalek Regency Ministry of Religion Office	Socialization of Maturation of Marriage Age, through PIK-R involving Madrasah Tsanawiyah/Aliyah; Prevent and not expel children from Madrasah; Socialization of Maturation of Marriage Age through counseling and recital; Creating child-friendly Islamic boarding schools
3	The Branch Head of the Tulungagung Regional Education Service	Involving education units to increase the achievements of school-based PIK R in vulnerable communities
4	Head of the Social Service, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection	Building a comprehensive service referral system for children experiencing unwanted pregnancies
5	Head of the Health, Population Control and Family Planning Service	Involve doctors/midwives at community health centers to provide health examinations for prospective child brides; Increasing coverage of adolescent reproductive health education through adolescent POSYANDU; Involving Family Planning Counselors to increase the coverage of counseling services for children who apply for marriage dispensation at the District Prosperous Family Service Center (PPKS)
6	Subdistrict head	Ensure that there is synergy and coordination in the implementation of policies to prevent child marriage at the village/sub-district level; Socialize Village 0 Child Marriage by putting up billboards at each District Office
7	Village Head	Refer to the Family Planning Counselor for prospective child brides; Do not provide the N1

formula for prospective brides under 19 years of age if they do not receive a recommendation from the Trenggalek Regency Social Service, PP and PA; Socialize Village 0 Child Marriage by putting up billboards at each District Office

Source: Trenggalek Regent's Instruction Number: 463/571/406.001.2/2022.

There are implementations at the sub-district and village levels in the form of child marriage prevention posters (see: Figure 1). Implementation of child marriage prevention at sub-district level Family Planning Counseling Centers in the form of marriage counseling for underage brides (see: Figure 2).

The results of counseling at the Family Planning Counseling Center are in the form of an assessment of marriage readiness which is then used as reference material to the Social Service as consideration for granting a marriage permit recommendation.

Figure 1 Village Billboards 0 Child Marriages at the District Office and Village Office



Source: Personal documentation.

Figure 2 Counseling at PPKS by Family Planning Counselors



Source: Personal documentation.

The results of this interview were also verified with the number of child marriage applications in Trenggalek Regency starting in 2021 before the Regent's Instruction was implemented and 2022-2023 after the Regent's Instruction was implemented. The number of child marriages based on data from the Ministry of Religion of Trenggalek Regency experienced a decline from 2021 to 2023, after the Regent's Instruction was implemented in 2022 (see: Table 3).

Table 3 Child Marriage Data for Trenggalek Regency

2021			2022			2023		
Number of Bride and Groom Candidate	Number of Child Bride and Groom Candidate	%	Number of Bride and Groom Candidate	Number of Child Bride and Groom Candidate	%	Number of Bride and Groom Candidate	Number of Child Bride and Groom Candidate	%
s	<19 years old Candidate	s	<19 years old Candidate	s	<19 years old Candidate	s	<19 years old Candidate	s
12.468	956	7,6 7	10.352	357	3,4 5	10.224	173	1,6 6

Source: Ministry of Religion, Trenggalek Regency.

This research contributes to the growing body of empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of targeted local government interventions in preventing child marriage. This shows that well-structured policies, when combined with a community-based approach, can provide significant results.

These findings provide a framework that can be adapted and implemented by other regions with high rates of child marriage, offering a practical roadmap for policymakers and practitioners looking to combat this problem.

Based on interviews with several stakeholders, several main points can be concluded regarding the effectiveness of the Regent's Instructions in preventing child marriage in Trenggalek Regency such as: 1) Most respondents considered this instruction to be quite effective or very effective in preventing child marriage; 2) The decline in child marriage rates and several villages that have reached zero child marriages are indicators of effectiveness; 3) Supporting factors such as good collaboration between agencies is the main factor that supports the effectiveness of this instruction and the legal basis and commitment from several services are also important supports.

The inhibiting factors the Regent's Instructions in preventing child marriage in Trenggalek Regency such as: 1) There are agencies that do not carry out the Regent's Instructions; 2) Lack of commitment between stakeholders and some agencies; 3) There is no reward and punishment in implementation; 4) Public awareness is still low regarding the age limit for marriage; 5) Service times and hours that conflict with other activities; 6) Lack of public understanding regarding the impact of child marriage; 7) Awareness and commitment from the community and officials is still lacking.

There are some suggestions from respondents to improved effectiveness: 1) Tighten recommendations; 2) Evaluate Procedure and Operational Standards and increase community literacy and community leaders; 3) Increase outreach through various community groups; 4) Increasing commitment between stakeholders so that the implementation of child marriage

prevention can be systemized and based on the principle of fulfilling children's rights and the best interests of children.

By understanding the obstacles and suggestions provided by stakeholders, the Trenggalek Regency Government can take more strategic and effective steps to prevent child marriage.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of interviews with several stakeholders in the Trenggalek Regency Government, several important points can be identified in discussing the effectiveness of the Regent's Instructions as a strategy to prevent child marriage.

The first is regarding the effectiveness of the Regent's Instructions. The majority of respondents stated that the Regent's Instruction was quite effective or very effective in preventing child marriage. Reasons supporting this assessment include: 1) Decline in Child Marriage Rates: Several respondents noted a significant decline in child marriage rates, with reports that several villages had reached zero cases of child marriage; 2) Strong Legal Basis: The existence of a legal basis and commitment from several services is an important basis for implementing this instruction; 3) Inter-Agency Collaboration: Good cooperation between various government agencies in Trenggalek is also said to be the main supporting factor for the effectiveness of this instruction.

Furthermore, there are several obstacles in implementing the Regent's Instructions, although they are considered effective, there are several obstacles faced in implementing these instructions such as public awareness, stakeholder's commitment, service times and schedules, and reward punishment system.

Suggestions from policy makers to increase effectiveness include more intensive socialization, evaluation and tightening of Procedure and Operational Standards, financing and training for counselors, and building a stronger commitment between stakeholders to ensure systematic and principled implementation of the fulfillment of children's rights and the best interests of children.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of interviews and discussion analysis, it can be concluded that the Trenggalek Regent's Instructions are quite effective as a strategy to prevent child marriage. This effectiveness is supported by a reduction in child marriage rates and good collaboration between agencies. However, there are still several obstacles that need to be overcome, such as low public awareness, lack of commitment from some stakeholders, and the absence of rewards and punishment. By following the suggestions provided by stakeholders, the effectiveness of this instruction can be further improved in the future.

The 2022 Trenggalek Regent's Instructions have shown considerable effectiveness in reducing the number of child marriages in Trenggalek Regency. A continued commitment to education, community engagement, and strong policy enforcement will be critical in sustaining and building on these gains. This research not only offers practical insights and policy recommendations but also provides a foundation for future research to further explore and improve child marriage prevention strategies.

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