

## **Culture and Coercion in Context: A Case Study of the Trafficking of Women in Indramayu**

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### ***Article Info***

Received: 2025-01-10

Revised: 2025-02-21

Accepted: 2025-05-31

### ***Keywords:***

Women Trafficking;  
Culture;Economy; West  
Java; Indramayu

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### ***Abstract***

*This study examines the phenomenon of female trafficking in Indramayu within the framework of interactions between local culture and economic compulsion. Indramayu is known as one of the regions with a high rate of female migrant worker deployment, some of whom become entangled in human trafficking practices. The aim of this research is to understand how cultural values, economic pressures, and weak legal protections contribute to this cycle of exploitation. Using a qualitative approach and case study method, data were collected through field observations and document analysis. The findings reveal that female trafficking in Indramayu is driven not solely by economic factors, but also by social norms that tolerate or even support the migration of women abroad for livelihood reasons. Within a context of limited options and deeply rooted gender inequality, women often lack full agency over their migration decisions. This study highlights the importance of policy interventions that go beyond economic aspects, advocating instead for cultural transformation and the strengthening of protections for women's rights.*

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## I. Introduction

Human trafficking constitutes a grave violation of human rights, particularly the right to personal freedom. Victims often suffer the loss of both their liberty and dignity. Although frequently labelled as illegal migrant labourers, what is traded in such circumstances is not merely their services, but their very selves. This issue is not confined to foreign countries; rather, it also poses a significant and persistent problem within Indonesia. The practice of human trafficking has a long-standing history across various parts of the world and is regarded as a deeply dehumanising act. It is categorised as a breach of fundamental human rights and stands in direct opposition to the humanitarian values upheld by Pancasila, as well as those guaranteed under the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. In earlier times, human trafficking was commonly understood as the forced transfer of individuals abroad for exploitative purposes such as prostitution and illegal forced labour over extended periods.

Cases of human trafficking are widespread across various regions of Indonesia, affecting both urban and rural areas. The most vulnerable groups are women and children, whose victimisation not only jeopardises the quality of future generations but also tarnishes the country's image on the international stage. Contributing factors such as powerlessness, poverty, limited access to education, and high unemployment rates further exacerbate the situation, driving individuals into the trap of trafficking networks. This condition reflects a blatant disregard for the fundamental principles of human rights, including the right to be free from torture, the right to personal liberty, and the freedoms of thought and belief.

In the realm of criminal law policy, the designation of an act as a criminal offence is far from a straightforward process. It requires a thorough and comprehensive examination. Beyond analysing the act from a criminological perspective, it is also essential to consider the very essence and purpose of criminal law. This includes identifying conduct that contradicts legal norms, evaluating the proportionality between the means employed and the outcomes intended, and assessing the capacity and effectiveness of law enforcement institutions in enforcing the relevant legal provisions.

Human trafficking, particularly offences targeting women and children, constitutes a grave crime that must be actively prevented and eradicated. Prevention efforts must be carried out in earnest to protect these vulnerable groups. Human trafficking encompasses a range of actions such as recruiting, harbouring, transporting, transferring, or receiving a person through means involving threats, the use of force, abduction, abuse of vulnerability, debt bondage, or the provision of payments or benefits to gain consent from those in control of the individual. These acts may occur both within the territory of the Republic of Indonesia and beyond its borders, with

the ultimate purpose of exploitation resulting in the victim's subjugation.

The various activities involving women and children ought to be pursued through proper education and the guidance of responsible adults, ensuring that their development is protected and directed toward positive and lawful opportunities.

The spread of trafficking cases is nearly uniform across Indonesia, affecting both major cities and rural areas. Women and children are the most frequent victims, and this reality poses a serious threat to the quality of future generations. It also has a damaging impact on the nation's reputation at the international level. The crime of human trafficking, closely linked to humanitarian concerns, has in fact long been regulated by the United Nations.

One of the key international legal instruments addressing this issue is the *United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime* (UNTOC), commonly known as the Palermo Convention of 2000. Specifically, Article 3 of the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, which supplements the Convention, provides a comprehensive definition of trafficking in persons:

*"Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs."*

This definition reflects the multifaceted and transnational nature of human trafficking. It underscores the need for international cooperation and comprehensive strategies to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking, especially when it involves vulnerable groups such as women and children.

Indonesia incorporated this international commitment into its national legal system through the enactment of Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 21 of 2007 on the Eradication of the Criminal Act of Human Trafficking (commonly referred to as the Human Trafficking Law). This legislation represents Indonesia's dedication to implementing the 2000 United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol), which had previously been signed by the Indonesian Government. Furthermore, it serves as a concrete expression of support for the prohibition of human trafficking, as outlined in a detailed and comprehensive legal framework.

The definition of human trafficking under this law is subsequently elaborated as follows:

*"The act of recruiting, transporting, harbouring, transferring, sending, or receiving a*

*person by means of the use of force, threat of force, abduction, confinement, deception, forgery, abuse of power or a position of vulnerability, providing payment or inducing debt or benefits to obtain the consent of a person having control over another, whether carried out within the country or across national borders, for the purpose of exploitation or resulting in the exploitation of that person."*

Referring to both definitions above, there are three essential components that must be present for an act to be categorised as the criminal offence of human trafficking: (i) the process (*actus reus*), (ii) the means (*mens*), and (iii) the purpose (*mens rea*).

First, the process (*actus reus*) refers to the perpetrator's actions aimed at removing the victim from their original community. This may include recruiting, transporting, sending, transferring, or receiving the person.

Second, the means (*mens*) involves the methods used by the perpetrator to gain control over the victim, such as through threats, violence, abduction, confinement, or other coercive or deceptive means.

Third, the purpose (*mens rea*) pertains to the perpetrator's intent to exploit the victim or to engage in conduct that results in the victim's exploitation for financial gain. This includes, for example, forcing the victim to engage in prostitution or other forms of forced labour.

One of the regions with a significant record of human trafficking cases is Indramayu. The first regional regulation designed to address human trafficking was formulated in Indramayu Regency, an area widely recognised as having one of the highest rates of human trafficking in Indonesia. This regional anti-human trafficking regulation serves as a legal foundation for the local government to implement concrete measures in tackling and resolving the issue.

One of the key initiatives undertaken following the regulation's enactment was a series of public awareness campaigns, conducted after the establishment of the anti-human trafficking task force. This task force comprises representatives from various sectors, including government agencies, universities, and NGOs or civil society organisations. The anti-human trafficking task force is entrusted with full responsibility for planning, implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation of all efforts aimed at eradicating human trafficking in Indramayu.

## The Recruitment Process, Forms, and Patterns of Labour Intermediaries.

| <i>Subject</i> | <i>Process</i>                                                                                                      | <i>Form of Channel</i>                                                               | <i>Pattern of Channel Operation</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                             |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
|                |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                      | <i>Active</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <i>Passive</i>                                              |
| Mom Dar        | Sen, the child of Mrs Dar, received information and an invitation from a friend who had already been earning money. | The channel that brought Sen was their own friend, who was working for a pimp.       | As a recruiter, they persuaded Sen by describing the nature of the work and the income that could be earned.<br>Acting as the sender, they escorted Sen all the way to the pimp's location.                                                       |                                                             |
| Pak Moh        | Nu, the child of Mr Moh, was invited by a friend to work at a café in the Cikampek area.                            |                                                                                      | She was assigned by her boss, so that if she brought in a new person, she would receive a reward.                                                                                                                                                 |                                                             |
| Ri             | Ri was lured by the lifestyle of her friend who worked as a sex worker.                                             | The channel that brought Ri was her close friend who had already been earning money. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | They displayed a lifestyle that became a role model for Ri. |
| Sa             | Sa and her family were persuaded with the promise of a job in Jakarta offering a decent salary.                     | A pure intermediary working in the village, with a direct network to the boss.       | As a recruiter, they persuaded the victims by offering debt facilities (advance payments).<br>As a sender, they transported women from the village to their destination.<br>They were provided with operational funds, <u>a fee, and bonuses.</u> |                                                             |

Based on empirical findings, women and children are identified as the most vulnerable groups to fall victim to the criminal offence of human trafficking. They are frequently subjected to exploitation, not only through forced labour or modern slavery, but also via prostitution and sexual exploitation. In Indonesia, the trafficking of women and children generally begins with the process of migration. In this context, migration opportunities are often misused by irresponsible parties for exploitative purposes. This paper aims to examine the trafficking of women by analysing the social, cultural, and economic dimensions present in the Indramayu region, as well as exploring the forms of legal protection available to victims of human trafficking.

## 2. Research Method

In this study, the researcher employs a qualitative approach using a descriptive method to analyse the data. A qualitative approach is adopted as it focuses on gaining a deep understanding of social and humanitarian phenomena through a variety of methodological perspectives. The research aims to construct a comprehensive and thorough understanding of the realities under examination by analysing narrative data, producing detailed reports, and situating the study within a natural context.

The type of research used is a case study with a gender perspective, which allows for an in-depth exploration of a particular phenomenon or programme—specifically, the handling of victims of human trafficking. The case study method was chosen to observe the full dynamics of a specific case, examined through a qualitative lens. The aim of using this approach is to capture the subjective meanings attached to participants' experiences, views, perceptions, and emotional responses.

The validity of the data is tested using triangulation techniques, which involve comparing and confirming data through various methods, theoretical frameworks, and sources of information, including both informants and expert references. This process is undertaken to ensure the credibility and objectivity of the findings through intersubjective discussion.

Primary data is analysed using the *verstehen* approach, which seeks to uncover the meanings embedded in the data both textually and contextually, in order to understand its connection to the dimensions that explain programmes aimed at supporting victims of trafficking. This analysis is also used to identify gender-related issues and to reformulate policies or programmes in a manner that is responsive to gender perspectives, supported by relevant analytical tools.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### General Overview of Women's Trafficking

In the past, the practice of human trafficking was often regarded as a marker of social status. Individuals of high standing, whether economically or politically, typically owned slaves as a symbol of power. The term "slave" referred to a person who was bought and sold to serve as a servant, subordinate, or low-status worker. Slave ownership was frequently associated with prestige and social honour. This account illustrates that human trafficking has existed since ancient times and is deeply rooted in historical tradition. The trafficking of persons itself began with the degrading perception of women's status, a view that persisted into the medieval period until the introduction of legal reforms.

Historically, the practice of slavery has existed for thousands of years, originating from the conquest of one group by another. The dominant, more powerful group would typically subjugate the weaker one. In this context, economic and political power served as the primary driving forces behind the emergence and expansion of the slavery system, which functioned as a form of total subjugation resulting from such conquests.

In the course of Indonesian history, human trafficking took place in the form of slavery or servitude. During the era of kingdoms in Java, human trafficking—particularly involving women—was an integral part of the prevailing power structure and governance system. Several regions in Java were even known as sources of trafficked women. Ten regencies have been historically recorded as major suppliers of women: in West Java (Indramayu, Karawang, Kuningan), Central Java (Pati, Jepara, Wonogiri), and East Java (Blitar, Malang, Banyuwangi, Lamongan). To this day, these areas still bear the historical stigma of being key suppliers of women for human trafficking.

Human trafficking emerged as a highly significant issue within the political landscape of the 1990s. Concerned groups—such as feminists, human rights activists, and non-governmental organisations—began to highlight the fact that this practice often targets women and girls, who are forced to migrate and are subsequently exploited as sex workers. This problem is global in nature, particularly in the context of modern globalisation, where the flow of international capital no longer involves merely the exchange of physical goods. Today, cross-border economic relations also encompass the information and entertainment sectors, both of which have become integral to global trade. This dimension warrants serious attention, as it represents a grave violation of human rights and the inherent dignity of individuals.

From the perspective of criminal law, the act of trafficking women and underage boys is explicitly prohibited under Article 297 of the Indonesian Penal Code (KUHP), which states: “Anyone who traffics women or trades in underage boys shall be punished with a maximum imprisonment of six years.” However, Book I of the KUHP, which contains general provisions, does not provide a clear explanation of the term *perniagaan* (trade/commerce).

Commenting on this article, R. Soesilo offers an interpretation: the term *perniagaan* or trafficking of women refers to actions carried out with the intention of delivering women into prostitution. According to him, this typically involves individuals who recruit young women to be sent abroad, with the sole purpose of placing them into prostitution.

The definition of human trafficking under Law Number 21 of 2007 on the Eradication of the Criminal Act of Human Trafficking, specifically Article 2 paragraph (1), is as follows:

“Any person who recruits, transports, harbours, sends, transfers, or receives another person by means of the threat or use of violence, abduction, confinement, falsification, deception, abuse of power or a position of vulnerability, debt bondage, or the giving or receipt of payments or benefits—despite obtaining the consent of a person having control over another person—for the purpose of exploiting that person within the territory of the Republic of Indonesia, shall be punished with imprisonment of no less than 3 (three) years and no more than 15 (fifteen) years, and a fine of no less than IDR 120,000,000 (one hundred and twenty million rupiah) and no more than IDR 600,000,000 (six hundred million rupiah).”

Based on the definitions and explanations above, human trafficking comprises three essential elements that form the basis of the offence. When the victim is an adult ( $\geq 18$  years old), the elements that must be established are: the process (movement), the means, and the purpose (exploitation). However, when the victim is a child ( $\leq 18$  years old), the crime of trafficking can be identified by focusing solely on the process (movement) and purpose (exploitation), without the need to prove the means used in the trafficking.

In particular, regions such as Indramayu and its surrounding areas, which are known hotspots for human trafficking cases, reveal highly complex patterns. The methods employed in these practices are often covert and difficult to detect, one of the most common being the recruitment of migrant workers. Furthermore, human trafficking may take other forms, such as arranged marriages, temporary (contract) marriages, and illegal adoptions. These practices predominantly affect individuals from impoverished backgrounds, especially women and children.

Within the patriarchal cultural context that remains deeply entrenched in Indonesia, vulnerable groups such as women and children are the most frequently targeted victims of human trafficking. Social constructions that place women in a subordinate position to men carry serious consequences, including the marginalisation of women's roles in the social structure. The perception that a wife belongs to her husband and a child to their parents reflects a power imbalance that positions women and children as objects with limited bargaining power in social life.

### **Social, Economic, and Cultural Factors Behind the Occurrence of Women Trafficking in Indramayu in the Pursuit of Money**

One of the most prominent underlying causes in many cases across the globe—particularly in poorer countries—is the limited availability of employment opportunities combined with rapid population growth, which drives many people to migrate abroad in search of a better life. In addition to poverty, global economic inequality between nations

also contributes significantly to the prevalence of human trafficking. However, poverty alone is not the sole factor that makes individuals vulnerable to trafficking. Certain groups, although relatively well-off economically, still choose to migrate in the hope of improving their quality of life, which can ultimately lead them into trafficking networks. Moreover, a consumerist and hedonistic lifestyle adopted by some individuals as a life goal further encourages them to pursue material wealth by any means necessary—even if it involves the exchange of services or exploitation of themselves.

Passage based on Syamsuddin: There are several forms of human trafficking identified in various contexts:

- a) Forced Labour, Sexual Slavery, and Sexual Exploitation:** In many instances, women and children are lured with promises of employment as migrant workers, domestic helpers, restaurant staff, shopkeepers, or in other low-skilled jobs. However, they are deceived and end up being forced to work in the sex industry under coercive conditions where refusal to work is not an option. One major form is prostitution, which women and children may enter through three primary routes: voluntarily, through debt bondage, or by force.
- b) Domestic Work (both abroad and within Indonesia):** Domestic workers often face exploitative working conditions, such as excessively long hours, confinement, unpaid or underpaid wages, debt bondage, physical and psychological abuse, sexual assault, food deprivation, and restrictions on religious practice. Employers and recruitment agents frequently confiscate passports and identification documents to prevent the workers from escaping.
- c) Dancers, Entertainers, and Cultural Exchange Participants – particularly overseas:** Women and girls are sometimes recruited under the pretext of becoming cultural performers, singers, or entertainers abroad. Upon arrival, many are forced into the sex trade or made to work in conditions akin to slavery.
- d) Mail-Order Brides – especially in international contexts:** Some women and girls who migrate under the promise of marriage to foreign nationals are deceived and trapped in exploitative marital arrangements that are often abusive and not based on genuine consent.
- e) Certain Forms of Child Labour – especially in Indonesia:** Not all, but some children who are found begging on the streets, fishing in offshore installations (such as jermal), or working on plantations have been trafficked into these conditions.
- f) Baby Trafficking – both internationally and domestically:** In some cases, Indonesian migrant workers are tricked into sham marriages abroad and later coerced into surrendering their babies for illegal adoption.

This comprehensive categorisation highlights the multifaceted and deceptive nature of trafficking practices, many of which target vulnerable individuals under the guise of legitimate opportunities.

The vulnerability of women to being trafficked stems from several underlying factors. Foremost among these is the persistent demand for women to serve as commercial sex workers. Many women fall victim to human trafficking through deception. Initially, they are offered seemingly legitimate jobs, such as domestic work, modelling, or employment in restaurants, only to later find themselves coerced into the sex trade. In other cases, women are abducted and threatened with violence as a means of forcing them into trafficking networks.

Another contributing factor is the practice of forced marriage, which is not a new phenomenon in Indonesia. Numerous folktales and historical narratives recount stories of women being compelled to marry, often to men significantly older than themselves. One well-known example is the story of *Siti Nurbaya* and *Datuk Maringgi* from West Sumatra, which illustrates the longstanding tradition of forced marriage. Similarly, in Madura, forced marriage has become a culturally embedded practice. Girls are frequently married off at a very young age (child marriage), sometimes to men much older than themselves. In other instances, both the bride and groom are below the legal minimum age for marriage as set by the government, yet are nonetheless compelled to marry due to familial or parental pressure.

In some communities, there is even a tradition of arranging marriages for children from infancy, or during pregnancy, often initiated by relatives or neighbours. These arrangements are typically driven by motives related to inheritance, with the intention of ensuring that family assets remain within the extended family and are not passed on to outsiders.

In addition, from a social perspective, victims of human trafficking often experience conditions of isolation. This is characterised by a lack of social support, limited access to transportation, language and cultural barriers, and even physical restrictions. A study conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reveals that Indonesian victims of trafficking frequently endure various forms of inhumane treatment. These include wage deductions, excessive working hours, restrictions on their freedom of movement, verbal and psychological abuse, and the confiscation of travel documents.

Furthermore, a 2010 survey by an Indonesian non-governmental organisation recorded that 471 Indonesian migrant workers returned from the Middle East pregnant as a result of rape, while another 161 returned with children born during their time abroad.

In 2023, the Annual Record (Catahu) published by the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) reported a total of 289,111 complaints of gender-based violence against women. Of these, 3,303 cases were formally submitted to Komnas Perempuan. "From the total number of complaints received, the majority—284,741 cases (98.5%)—took place within the personal sphere, followed by 4,182 cases (1.4%) in the public sphere, and 188 cases (0.1%) within the state sphere," the report explains.

Indramayu Regency, located in West Java, had a total population of 1,894,325 in 2023, of whom 943,362 were women (BPS Indramayu Regency, 2023). In terms of issues

specifically affecting women in the region, the number of divorce cases recorded by the Indramayu Religious Court in 2023 reached 7,931. Furthermore, the number of child marriage applications, as evidenced by the requests for marriage dispensation submitted to the Indramayu Religious Court, stood at 514 in the same year.

Regarding maternal health, data from the Indramayu Health Office recorded 42 maternal deaths in 2021 and 35 cases in 2022 (BPS, based on data from the Indramayu Health Department).

According to the 2024 case records of *Selendang Puan*, the organisation handled 15 cases of violence against women and children throughout the year. These comprised 13 cases of sexual violence and 2 cases of domestic violence. In terms of gender distribution, 14 of the victims were female and 1 was male. The age range of the victims included 14 individuals between the ages of 3 and 17, and one victim aged 50.

Retno (2024) further explained that the prevalence of violence against women resembles an iceberg phenomenon—what is visible is only a small portion, while the actual number of cases is likely much higher. This is due to the fact that many victims have yet to report their experiences, often hindered by social stigma and limited access to adequate support services.

Following the discussion on economic factors, it is also essential to consider the cultural elements rooted in local history. Bong Village, located in Indramayu, is notably recognised as one of the villages associated with sending women into prostitution (Pattilima, 2015). This practice has been carried out for generations and is widely accepted as part of local tradition. The term commonly used for this phenomenon is *luru duit*, which literally means “to seek money” or “to earn a living”. Derived from the Javanese language, *luru* translates to “search” and *duit* means “money” (i.e., wealth or material possessions).

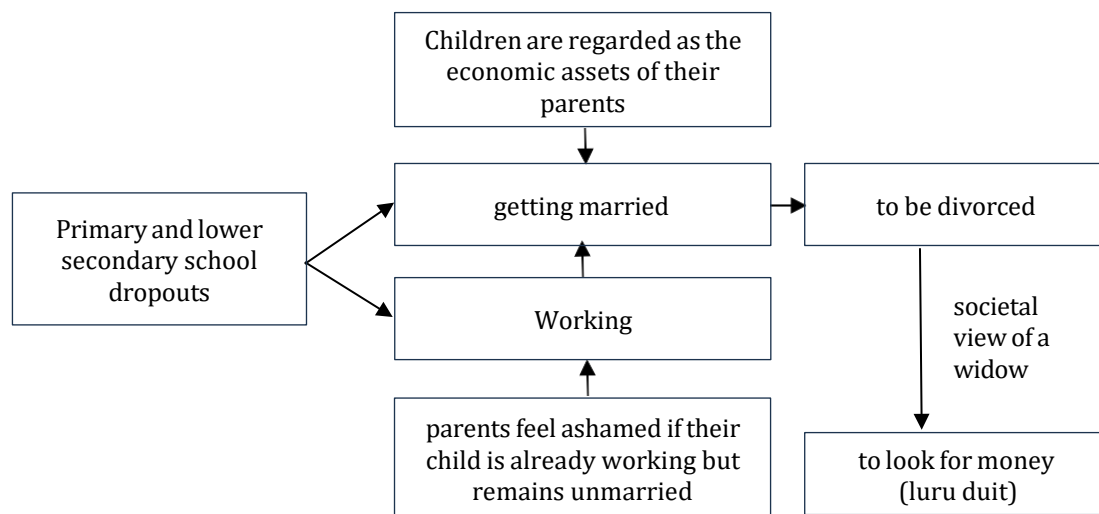
Pattilima’s (2005) study provides a critical portrayal of *luru duit* as a deeply embedded cultural norm within the local community, widely practised across different households. The underlying motivation is often the desire to accumulate wealth and elevate social status, particularly from the perspective of parents. The role and approval of parents have been identified as key elements sustaining the practice. For many families, *luru duit* is not considered a source of shame. On the contrary, parents often express pride if their daughters are seen as successful in *luru duit*.

In connection with this, Uchrowi explains that, within this local context, daughters are perceived by parents as valuable family assets. From an early age, girls are instilled with the belief that there is no shame in becoming a sex worker. On the contrary, if successful, such a path is believed to offer an opportunity to transform one's fate and bring honour to the family. In fact, those who refuse to involve their daughters in such work are often viewed as naïve or even foolish. As a result of this social pressure, some girls who resist their parents’ expectations choose to run away from home in order to avoid being coerced.

The practice of *luru duit*—earning money by engaging in sex work—has become embedded in the local tradition of Bong Village, where the research was conducted. Some narratives even link this cultural phenomenon to a legend surrounding the foundation of Indramayu. According to this tale, a king from the Bagelen Kingdom sought to expand his territory peacefully, without resorting to warfare. To achieve this, he sent a man disguised as a woman to be married to the Regent of Sumedang. The regent accepted the proposal, agreeing to cede part of his territory as a dowry. However, the ruse was uncovered on the wedding night when the disguised figure reverted to his male identity. Enraged by the deceit—having lost land but gained no bride—the Sumedang regent allegedly cursed the descendants of Bagelen, declaring they would inherit the same deceptive traits, becoming seductresses or even transgender figures, akin to the original impostor.

From a social-historical perspective, the emergence of Bong Village as a key supplier of young women to the sex industry cannot be divorced from broader historical developments in Indramayu. During the era of the ancient kingdoms, prostitution was institutionalised through the practice of *perseliran*, whereby kings maintained harems of concubines. Gabus Wetan, one of the historically noted villages, served as a prominent source of such women for the Cirebon royal family.

This practice persisted during the Dutch colonial period. At the time, prostitution served to satisfy the desires of Dutch soldiers and European settlers. These interactions were influenced by strict cultural prohibitions on interracial marriage among the colonisers. Consequently, native women were commodified and traded for the purpose of servicing the colonisers' needs. Women who became mistresses (*nyai*) of Dutch officials often acquired elevated social standing within the indigenous community, reflecting the socio-economic incentives underlying the practice.



*Picture 2: to look for money (luru duit)*

This further reinforces the notion that *luru duit* is essentially a form of child exploitation driven by the economic interests of parents. Imelda (2004) explicitly states that child prostitution constitutes an exploitative act whereby children are used in exchange for monetary or material compensation. Child sexual exploitation is closely linked to the underlying motives of child trafficking.

From the explanations previously outlined, it becomes evident that the *luru duit* tradition in Indramayu is connected to the practice of child prostitution. These children are drawn into the sex trade and come to perceive it as a form of employment. Observing this reality, the researcher has undertaken an in-depth study into the dynamics of the *luru duit* tradition in Indramayu, which, in practice, involves the exploitation of children through prostitution.

### **Forms of Legal Protection for Victims of the Trafficking of Women in Indramayu**

Legal protection for victims, as previously described, encompasses a range of measures, including providing support and assistance in safe locations, whether in the victim's place of origin or in other areas. This protection also involves legal aid and accompaniment throughout judicial proceedings, rehabilitation efforts focusing on both physical and psychological recovery, as well as the reintegration of victims into their families or communities. The overall aim is to ensure that victims can be empowered once more within their family or social environment and to promote their economic and educational empowerment, reducing the risk of them falling back into trafficking networks.

In addition to offering legal assistance to the public, legal aid institutions are increasingly playing a vital role in promoting access to justice. The number of such institutions continues to grow in response to the rising need for legal support, particularly for victims. Moreover, these organisations are actively engaged in public awareness campaigns and advocacy, targeting law enforcement authorities to ensure that perpetrators of human trafficking are prosecuted and handed down severe penalties.

The Regional Government of Indramayu Regency plays a crucial role in promoting the development of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations so that they can actively participate in efforts to provide legal protection and prevent human trafficking. This responsibility aligns with the provisions set out in Indramayu Regency Regional Regulation Number 4 of 2013, which governs family and community empowerment programmes within the region. According to this regulation, the primary objectives of the empowerment programme are as follows:

1. To provide legal protection for children who fall victim to trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation.

2. To enhance the community's ability to prevent the recruitment, sheltering, and deployment of child labour without clear information or legal protection guarantees, whether such actions are carried out by individuals, groups, or recruitment agencies.
3. To raise public awareness about the harmful impacts of child trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.
4. To shift families' economic dependence away from the exploitation of children for sexual purposes towards more humane and sustainable economic sectors.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the practice of *luru duit* in Indramayu is shaped by the interplay of social, economic, and cultural factors. Structural poverty, low levels of education, cultural norms that are permissive towards the role of women as breadwinners, and social pressure are the main drivers behind women's involvement in human trafficking practices. The tradition of labour migration and the normalisation of women leaving the country without sufficient protection further exacerbate their vulnerability to exploitation.

Although Indonesia has enacted legislation such as Law No. 21 of 2007 on the Eradication of Human Trafficking, the implementation of legal protection for victims on the ground still encounters numerous obstacles. These include a lack of legal assistance, limited access to information, and the social stigma attached to victims. Therefore, a multidimensional approach is essential—one that combines economic empowerment, gender-based education, and victim-oriented law enforcement—in order to address the root causes and provide effective protection for women who fall victim to trafficking.

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