

Yayasan Nurul Muhibbin Curup

Editorial Office: Gajah Mada Raya Street, Curup, Rejang Lebong, Bengkulu, Indonesia
Email: ynm.curup@gmail.com. Website: indonesianknowledge.org

Volume 01 Issue 01 2026 (January – April)



Indonesian Journal of Islamic Research

ISSN XXXX-XXXX (Online)
Editor: Ihsan Rahmat

Publication details, including author guidelines

Url: <https://ejournal.indonesianknowledge.org/index.php/ijire/about/submissions>

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Article History

Received: 11 December 2025

Revised: 20 December 2025

Published: 16 January 2026

How to cite (APA 7th)

Rosa, Y. F. W., & Sabirin, Y. B. (2026). *Religious Institutions and Social Problem Management: The Role of KUA in Handling Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy in Rural Indonesia*. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Research*, 1(1), 33–38.

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Religious Institutions and Social Problem Management: The Role of KUA in Handling Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy in Rural Indonesia

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ABSTRAK

Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dan menganalisis peran serta upaya Kantor Urusan Agama (KUA) Kecamatan Air Nipis dalam menanggulangi kasus hamil di luar nikah yang berdampak pada moral, keharmonisan keluarga, dan ketertiban sosial masyarakat. **Metode:** Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi dengan informan yang terdiri dari pihak KUA dan masyarakat. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tahapan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. **Temuan:** Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa KUA Kecamatan Air Nipis memiliki empat peran utama dalam menanggulangi kasus hamil di luar nikah, yaitu peran administratif, pembinaan, mediator, dan pencegahan. Peran tersebut dijalankan melalui pencatatan pernikahan, bimbingan pranikah, mediasi keluarga, serta penyuluhan kepada masyarakat dan remaja. **Implikasi:** Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa KUA tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai lembaga administratif, tetapi juga sebagai lembaga sosial-keagamaan yang berperan dalam menjaga stabilitas sosial dan meningkatkan kesadaran moral masyarakat.

Kata Kunci: Kantor Urusan Agama, Hamil di Luar Nikah, Konseling Keluarga, Pencegahan Kehamilan

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to identify and analyze the role and efforts of Kantor Urusan Agama (KUA) of Air Nipis District in addressing cases of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, which have significant implications for morality, family harmony, and social order within society. **Method:** This research employed a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving KUA officials and community members as informants. The data analysis process consisted of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. **Findings:** The findings show that the KUA of Air Nipis District plays four main roles in addressing out-of-wedlock pregnancy cases: administrative, developmental, mediating, and preventive roles. These roles are implemented through marriage registration, premarital counseling, family mediation, and community education programs. **Implications:** This study indicates that the KUA functions not only as an administrative institution but also as a socio-religious institution that contributes to maintaining social stability and strengthening public moral awareness.

Keywords: Office of Religious Affairs, Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy, Family Guidance, Pregnancy Prevention

INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy during adolescence has become a global issue. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that each year approximately 21 million girls aged 15–19 years in developing countries become pregnant, and around 12 million of them give birth. This phenomenon has significant negative impacts on the health, social, and economic conditions of adolescents and their families, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. As a developing country, Indonesia faces an additional challenge, namely not only early childbirth among adolescents but also pregnancies occurring outside legally and religiously recognized marriages (Pawitaningtyas, 2020).

Approximately 15.5% of unmarried women in Indonesia have experienced unintended pregnancy, indicating a significant reproductive health issue. Education serves as an important protective factor, as higher educational attainment is associated with lower risk. In addition, working women are nearly twice as likely to experience unintended pregnancy, poverty increases the risk, and multiparous women are approximately four times more likely to experience unintended pregnancy compared to primiparous women (Ningsi, 2020).

Out-of-wedlock pregnancy in Indonesia has various serious social, economic, and health consequences. Women experiencing pregnancy outside marriage often face stigma and discrimination from both family and society, which can negatively affect their mental and emotional well-being (Ningrum & Fadhilah, 2024). Furthermore, many adolescent girls are forced to discontinue their education, limiting their opportunities for career development and economic independence, particularly when financial support is lacking. From a health perspective, unintended pregnancy increases the risk of medical complications and psychological stress, while children born from out-of-wedlock pregnancies are also vulnerable to discrimination and limited access to education and social welfare.

The importance of research lies in its ability to identify the causes, impacts, and solutions to social problems while also providing a strong foundation for policies, programs, and new innovations (Zunaidi, 2024). Research serves as a primary instrument for improving societal quality of life, encouraging technological advancement, and strengthening theoretical foundations across various fields of study (Syafii, Akhmad, & Mertayasa, 2024). The problem addressed in this study emerges from two aspects: the limited number of previous studies and the social reality of out-of-wedlock pregnancy cases in Air Nipis District, South Bengkulu Regency. Therefore, this study aims to explore the role and efforts of the Office of Religious Affairs or Kantor Urusan Agama (KUA) in Air Nipis District in preventing and addressing cases of out-of-wedlock pregnancy (Aulia & Haja, 2023). This research is expected to provide best practices for other KUA institutions, particularly in rural communities. Additionally, it is expected to contribute to the literature concerning the role of religious institutions in addressing the problems faced by adolescents in modern rural societies.

METHODS

This Based on the research objectives, this study is categorized as applied research. The study aims to understand and analyze in depth the role and efforts of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in addressing cases of out-of-wedlock pregnancy. Therefore, the findings are expected to provide practical contributions to improving KUA services and policies in Air Nipis District, South Bengkulu Regency. From the perspective of natural setting, this research is classified as naturalistic research because it was conducted under natural conditions without any treatment

or manipulation of the research object. The researcher directly engaged in the field to collect data based on actual social realities occurring within the community (Sugiyono, 2019).

This study employed a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach was chosen because the research focuses on understanding the meanings, roles, strategies, and efforts undertaken by the KUA in addressing cases of out-of-wedlock pregnancy in a comprehensive and in-depth manner. The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to obtain data through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation.

RESULTS

The Role of the Office of Religious Affairs in Addressing Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy Cases

Based on the field research findings, the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) of Air Nipis District plays a highly significant and multidimensional role in addressing cases of out-of-wedlock pregnancy within its jurisdiction. This role is not merely limited to functioning as an administrative institution responsible for marriage registration, but has evolved into a socio-religious institution that serves as a guardian of moral values, a mediator of family conflicts, and a facilitator for resolving social problems through persuasive and equitable approaches (Azmi, 2025). The KUA positions itself as an institution that provides solutions not solely oriented toward administrative settlement, but also toward restoring social and religious values. This approach makes the KUA an important actor in maintaining the balance between religious norms, legal norms, and the social realities faced by society. The following are the findings regarding the roles of the KUA of Air Nipis District.

1. Administrative: The KUA in addressing out-of-wedlock pregnancy can be categorized into five main functions: verificative, procedural, legal-formal, preventive-administrative, and humanitarian functions. These functions are interconnected and collectively form a legally valid and socially stable resolution mechanism;
2. Developmental: In addition to carrying out administrative functions, the KUA of Air Nipis District also plays a significant developmental role in addressing cases of out-of-wedlock pregnancy. This developmental role is not merely complementary to the marriage registration process, but constitutes an integral part of preparing couples mentally, spiritually, and socially for married life (Fatahillah, Rusdi, & Ardiyansyah, 2025). In the context of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, this guidance becomes increasingly important because couples often experience unstable psychological conditions, intense social pressure, and inadequate economic readiness;
3. Mediating: The mediating role is one of the most crucial functions performed by the KUA of Air Nipis District in addressing out-of-wedlock pregnancy cases. Within the social reality of society, out-of-wedlock pregnancy is not merely an individual issue involving two people, but often develops into interfamily conflict. Issues related to responsibility, shame, social pressure, and marriage expenses frequently create tensions that may worsen the situation. In such circumstances, the KUA acts as a neutral party that facilitates dialogue and directs conflict resolution in a wise and equitable manner.
4. Preventive: In addition to carrying out administrative, developmental, and mediating roles, the KUA of Air Nipis District also plays an important preventive role in reducing the occurrence of out-of-wedlock pregnancy cases. This preventive role is proactive and long-term in orientation, aiming to build moral

awareness and family resilience within society. The KUA is not only present after cases occur, but also seeks to minimize the potential for moral and social violations through education, counseling, and continuous community guidance.

Efforts in Addressing Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy Cases

The efforts undertaken by the KUA of Air Nipis District in addressing out-of-wedlock pregnancy cases are implemented through two primary approaches: preventive efforts and curative efforts. These two approaches are carried out systematically, continuously, and complementarily as part of the KUA's responsibility in maintaining family resilience, public morality, and social harmony within the Air Nipis District area (Kardina, Azwar, & Fathurrohman, 2024). This dual approach demonstrates that the KUA is not only oriented toward resolving existing problems but is also strongly committed to preventing similar issues from occurring in the future.

1. Preventive: The preventive efforts undertaken by the KUA of Air Nipis District in addressing out-of-wedlock pregnancy cases constitute strategic measures aimed at early prevention through moral development, strengthening religious values, and social education targeting various levels of society;
2. Curative: In addition to preventive efforts, the KUA of Air Nipis District also implements curative or treatment-oriented approaches toward cases of out-of-wedlock pregnancy that have already occurred. This curative approach is responsive and solution-oriented, aiming to resolve problems in accordance with both religious and state law while minimizing broader social impacts. In practice, the handling process is not limited to marriage registration but also includes family mediation, specialized counseling, and the provision of legal and social guidance for the parties involved.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings and discussion regarding the role and efforts of the KUA of Air Nipis District in addressing out-of-wedlock pregnancy cases, several conclusions can be drawn. First, the KUA of Air Nipis District performs four primary roles in addressing out-of-wedlock pregnancy cases: administrative, developmental, mediating, and preventive roles. The administrative role is reflected in the examination and registration of marriages in accordance with Islamic law and state regulations, thereby providing legal certainty for society. The developmental role is implemented through premarital counseling and religious guidance aimed at improving public understanding of family life and moral values. The mediating role is evident in the KUA's involvement in facilitating family conflict resolution arising from out-of-wedlock pregnancy cases through deliberative approaches. Meanwhile, the preventive role is carried out through counseling and socialization programs directed particularly toward adolescents in order to reduce deviant behavior.

Second, the efforts undertaken by the KUA of Air Nipis District include religious guidance programs, family mediation, marriage services in accordance with legal provisions, and community counseling. These efforts are implemented through premarital guidance, adolescent development programs, approaches toward families involved in such cases, and collaboration with community leaders and village authorities. These findings indicate that the KUA functions not only as an administrative institution but also as a socio-religious institution actively contributing to the maintenance of public order and morality.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study concerning the role and efforts of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in addressing out-of-wedlock pregnancy cases in Air Nipis District, South Bengkulu Regency, it can be concluded that the KUA of Air Nipis District plays an important role through guidance, counseling, and community assistance programs. The KUA provides religious education, premarital counseling, and socialization regarding the importance of maintaining social relationships in accordance with religious norms. In addition, the institution collaborates with religious leaders, schools, and the wider community in promoting moral and spiritual development. The KUA also offers guidance and solutions for couples experiencing out-of-wedlock pregnancy so that they may proceed in accordance with religious principles and applicable legal regulations. However, in its implementation, the KUA of Air Nipis District faces several challenges, including low public awareness, the influence of permissive social environments, limited family supervision, and the low participation of adolescents in religious development activities. Therefore, stronger collaboration among the KUA, families, educational institutions, religious leaders, and society is necessary to ensure that prevention and intervention efforts related to out-of-wedlock pregnancy cases can be implemented more effectively and contribute positively to the social life of the community in Air Nipis District, South Bengkulu Regency.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to thank Administrator of As-Salam Grand Mosque in Lubuklinggau City for the direction and discussion that are very helpful in the development of ideas and the improvement of this article.

ETHICAL STATEMENT

This research is carried out by adhering to the principles of research ethics that uphold respect for human rights, human dignity, fairness in the treatment of research subjects, balance between benefits and risks, and scientific integrity, which includes honesty and openness in reporting data and research results.

AI DECLARATIONS

The authors declare that artificial intelligence (AI)–assisted tools were used to support the literature review process in the introduction, particularly for identifying relevant studies and improving clarity of synthesis. All interpretations, critical analyses, and scholarly judgments remain the full responsibility of the authors.