

# The role of community leaders in the prevention of prostitution in Eretan Kulon Village: Perspective social structure theory

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<p><b>Article History</b> Accepted: 28 January 2025 Revised: 27 March 2025 Available Online: 30 April 2025</p> <p><b>*Corresponding</b> <a href="mailto:fertycirebon@students.unnes.ac.id">fertycirebon@students.unnes.ac.id</a></p> <p> 10.22219/satwika.v9i1.39658</p> <p> <a href="mailto:jurnalsatwika@umm.ac.id">jurnalsatwika@umm.ac.id</a></p> <p><b>How to Cite:</b> Ferti, F., &amp; Arsi, A. A. (2025). The role of community leaders in the prevention of prostitution in Eretan Kulon Village: Perspective social structure theory. <i>Satwika: Kajian Ilmu Budaya dan Perubahan Sosial</i>, 9(1), 290-304. <a href="https://doi.org/10/22219/satwika.v9i1.39658">https://doi.org/10/22219/satwika.v9i1.39658</a></p> 	<p><b>ABSTRAK</b></p> <p>The persistence of prostitution in Eretan Kulon Village, Kandanghaur District, Indramayu Regency, is a significant social concern. This study seeks to elucidate the perspectives of the community and the preventive measures undertaken by the community leaders. Employing a qualitative research methodology with a case study approach, this investigation engaged 13 informants, including community leaders, law enforcement officials, and local residents. Thematic analysis was used as the data analysis technique. The findings indicate that the majority of the population perceives prostitution as a negative phenomenon primarily driven by economic factors, although many acknowledge the challenges in eradicating it. Community leaders have implemented various preventive strategies, such as routine raids, educational initiatives, counseling on the adverse effects of prostitution, rehabilitation programs, HIV testing, regular religious gatherings and public demonstrations. While these efforts have not completely eradicated prostitution, there has been a noticeable decline in its practice in the village. Collaboration between the police, Satuan Polisi Pamong Praja, religious leaders, and village governments is pivotal in addressing this issue. This research contributes to the understanding of the role of community leaders and the significance of inter-agency collaboration in addressing prostitution in the village, highlighting that active community participation is essential for effectively tackling this social issue.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> <i>prostitution, eretan kulon village, prevention efforts, community participation</i></p> <p><b>ABSTRAK</b></p> <p>Praktik prostitusi di Desa Eretan Kulon, Kecamatan Kandanghaur, Kabupaten Indramayu, masih menjadi masalah sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pandangan masyarakat dan upaya pencegahan yang dilakukan tokoh masyarakat. Menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus, penelitian ini melibatkan 13 informan, termasuk tokoh masyarakat, aparat penegak hukum, dan warga setempat. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan adalah analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan mayoritas masyarakat memandang prostitusi sebagai fenomena negatif yang dipengaruhi oleh faktor ekonomi, meskipun sebagian besar menganggapnya sulit dihilangkan. Tokoh masyarakat telah melakukan berbagai upaya pencegahan, seperti razia rutin, pembinaan, penyuluhan dampak negatif prostitusi, program rehabilitasi, pemeriksaan HIV, pengajian rutin, dan unjuk rasa. Meskipun upaya tersebut belum sepenuhnya menghilangkan prostitusi, praktik prostitusi di desa ini telah menunjukkan penurunan. Kolaborasi antara polisi, Satpol PP, tokoh agama, dan pemerintah desa berperan penting dalam mengatasi masalah ini. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi dalam memahami peran tokoh masyarakat dan pentingnya kolaborasi antar lembaga dalam menanggulangi prostitusi di desa, serta menunjukkan bahwa partisipasi aktif masyarakat sangat penting untuk keberhasilan penanggulangan masalah sosial ini.</p> <p><b>Kata kunci:</b> <i>prostitusi, upaya pencegahan, kolaborasi masyarakat, penanggulangan sosial</i></p>
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## INTRODUCTION

Prostitution, as a component of the social structure, is defined as a form of sexual activity conducted by an individual in exchange for monetary compensation or goods, typically involving a person referred to as a commercial sex worker (Adiningtyas & Loviana, 2018). In Indonesia, this practice is legally prohibited because it contradicts prevailing moral, religious, and cultural values. It is governed by various legal frameworks, including the Criminal Code (KUHP) and Law No. 44/2008 on Pornography (Sevrina, 2020). as sexual exploitation, the transmission of infectious diseases, and disruption of social order. Consequently, the government endeavors to address prostitution through stringent law enforcement and the provision of rehabilitation services for individuals involved in this practice (Tirtana and Sunarya, 2024).

Despite explicit legal prohibitions, prostitution in Indonesia remains a multifaceted social challenge. This practice is prevalent in various regions, including major urban centers and specific areas designated as "localization" (Puspita & Rusdiana, 2021). Although law enforcement agencies have made efforts to eliminate it, prostitution persists due to economic factors, low educational attainment, and demand from certain segments of the population (Marliana et al., 2018).

The social phenomenon of prostitution in Indonesia represents a multifaceted issue that necessitates serious attention from various stakeholders. Despite significant government efforts to address this practice, prostitution persists in several regions, including West Java (Seprianto, 2022). In Indramayu Regency, particularly in the Eretan Kulon area, prostitution is a persistent challenge. Eretan Kulon, situated on the north coast, is recognized as a location frequently associated with prostitution, primarily driven by economic factors and limited employment opportunities (Vallery et al., 2020). Although law enforcement officials have undertaken eradication efforts, prostitution endures in this area due to the ongoing demand and the community's struggle to find viable economic alternatives. Despite the challenges encountered, the local government continues to implement various programs aimed at enhancing citizen welfare and addressing this social issue.

In Indramayu, despite explicit legal regulations prohibiting prostitution, the practice continues,

particularly in Eretan Kulon Village. One pertinent regulation is the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 21 of 2007 on the Eradication of the Crime of Trafficking in Persons (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia, 2007). Notwithstanding these legal provisions, prostitution remains prevalent, with Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs) still observed in various locations, notably in the Eretan Kulon Village. The persistence of prostitution in this village indicates that, despite the clarity of the regulations, the practice endures.

Individuals engaged in prostitution employ sexual activity as a means of self-promotion and income generation. Beyond economic objectives, additional factors such as cultural, educational, and social influences are significant (Putri & Rahmadhani, 2024). Commercial sex workers frequently sacrifice their personal well-being, future prospects, and lives, primarily for financial gain (Destrianti & Harnani, 2018). It is noteworthy that the financial remuneration obtained from their work is not entirely retained by the sex workers, as it must be distributed among various parties involved in their activities, including pimps, bail, lodging, and service fees. Consequently, it is reasonable to assert that, as a result of the contractual sexual exchanges between sex workers and their clients, these individuals constitute one of the most disadvantaged groups (Syam, 2010). Nonetheless, commercial sex workers (CSWs) continue to proliferate in Indramayu, a regency located along the north coast of West Java, as well as along the north coastal route (Putri & Rahmadhani, 2024).

Research has explored the reasons individuals enter prostitution, identifying several primary factors. Economic pressure and financial hardship are frequently cited as the predominant reasons for choosing to work as a commercial sex worker (Rakhmah & Putra, 2024). Additionally, traumatic experiences such as domestic violence or sexual abuse significantly influence the decision to engage in prostitution (Ambarwati et al., 2024). Family instability, including parental separation or a lack of social support, also contributes to this decision. Furthermore, low levels of education and limited access to suitable employment opportunities often compel individuals to resort to prostitution as a viable option (Agusman & Mujiadi, 2024). A study by Tirtana and Sunarya (2024), similarly identified the impact of the social environment and unhealthy

associations as factors that may lead individuals to choose prostitution.

Recent studies have increasingly focused on community responses to prostitution within their environment. These studies indicate that prostitution is frequently perceived as a social issue that necessitates eradication, with the majority viewing it as a behavior that is detrimental to social norms. Research conducted by [Syifa \(2023\)](#) further highlight that communities are inclined to stigmatize prostitutes negatively, despite efforts by some community leaders to offer social support and rehabilitation. A comparable response was observed in a study by [Herawati \(2018\)](#), which demonstrated that certain communities have attempted to mitigate prostitution through economic empowerment programs aimed at sex workers.

In addition to the individual and social determinants influencing an individual's decision to engage in prostitution, other studies have demonstrated that economic dynamics and public policy significantly contribute to either exacerbating or mitigating prostitution. [Widiyani et al. \(2023\)](#) emphasized the impact of challenging economic conditions, particularly within impoverished families, as a factor that exacerbates prostitution rates, where many individuals feel compelled to work in this sector for survival. [Gilang & Susanti \(2023\)](#) in their research on online prostitution, identified that technological advancements and the accessibility of online platforms have facilitated the recruitment of sex workers, thereby creating a form of prostitution that is more challenging to monitor and address.

Numerous studies have examined the social ramifications of prostitution, which can impact not only the individuals involved but also surrounding communities. [Setyanti & Marwan \(2024\)](#) observed that rehabilitation and counseling programs for individuals engaged in prostitution often encounter obstacles due to low participation rates and a lack of trust from these individuals towards the institutions intended to assist them. [Hidayat and Syamsuddin \(2019\)](#) revealed that social networks, whether comprising peer groups or family, significantly influence individuals' ability to exit prostitution. However, these networks can sometimes exacerbate the situation by encouraging continued involvement in the profession. In a more comprehensive study, [Pardita et al. \(2022\)](#) demonstrated that economic empowerment programs for former prostitutes have a markedly positive effect on aiding them in reconstructing a more stable life. Furthermore, [Samusamu et al. \(2023\)](#) indicate that insufficient legal regulations addressing prostitution often result in

uncertainty for those involved, leaving them susceptible to exploitation.

Previous research has explored the motivations behind individuals' engagement in prostitution, community reactions to local prostitution, and the influence of economic factors and public policy on either exacerbating or alleviating issues related to prostitution. Nonetheless, most of these studies have concentrated on the general phenomenon of prostitution, often neglecting an in-depth analysis of prevention initiatives at the local community level. This study aims to address this gap by examining contemporary community perceptions of prostitution and preventive measures implemented by community leaders, with a particular focus on Eretan Village.

Previous research has identified a gap in the examination of specific prevention measures at the local level. Although existing studies address community responses to prostitution, there is a paucity of research specifically analyzing the interventions and concrete efforts undertaken by communities to address this issue. This study aims to address this gap by focusing on the prevention initiatives implemented by community leaders in Eretan Village and the local community's perspectives on ongoing prostitution. Consequently, this study offers a novel perspective by integrating the views of local communities with practical measures for preventing prostitution, a topic that has not been extensively explored in the prior research.

This research significantly contributes to both theoretical and practical domains, particularly in elucidating the role of community leaders in preventing prostitution. Theoretically, this study enhances the understanding of the impact of community leaders in shaping social norms and facilitating behavioral change at the village level. Practically, the findings of this study serve as a valuable reference for prostitution prevention initiatives in other regions by incorporating the involvement of community leaders. Furthermore, the results of this study have potential policy implications, as they can inform governmental strategies to formulate policies that engage the community in prostitution prevention and in social empowerment.

In the Indramayu region, the demographic composition of Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs) spans 16 to 40 years of age. According to data from the Indramayu Regency Social and Labor Office, there are 1,361 individuals engaged in prostitution. These individuals were distributed across thirty-one sub-districts within the Indramayu Regency. The sub-district of Kecamatan Gabus Wetan has the highest concentration, with 336 CSWs, followed by

Kecamatan Haurgeulis with 232 CSWs, Patroli with 112 CSWs, Cikedung with 93 CSWs, Losarang with 89 CSWs, and Kroya with 83 CSWs. Conversely, the sub-districts of Pasekan, Widasari, and Sindang are declared free of prostitution. Several factors contribute to the proliferation of prostitution in certain areas, including environmental, educational, and external factors (Mudjiyanto et al., 2025).

Indramayu is encircled by approximately 176 Islamic boarding schools (Rasmadi, 2023). Nevertheless, prostitution persists in this region. The persistence of prostitution, despite the absence of a definitive solution, necessitates an investigation to identify the underlying causes (Suhendi, 2019). Religious and educational institutions, as systemic entities, significantly influence individuals' worldviews by shaping the conceptual frameworks of morality and comprehension. These institutions delineate notions of right and wrong through their teachings and establish the boundaries of permissible behavior. Consequently, it is unsurprising that moral principles and religious teachings shape belief systems, which subsequently affect perceptions of various issues. In such contexts, moral guidance from educational or religious institutions often serves as the primary influence on individual perspectives (Ardi et al., 2024).

In the context of education, educational attainment in Indramayu remains notably low. According to a 2004 UNICEF report, no students in Indramayu pursued education beyond junior high school. Furthermore, 25% of commercial sex workers did not complete junior high school, and 50% had only completed primary education. These findings were corroborated by data from the International Labour Organization (ILO). Low educational levels in Indramayu are influenced by prevailing community attitudes towards education. Many residents, particularly parents, perceive education as not guaranteeing improved welfare and deem it less important than securing a well-paying job and a substantial income (Burhanuddin & Thohiroh, 2021).

External factors play a significant role in influencing children to enter prostitution. One such factor is the involvement of pimps, who act as intermediaries between prostitutes and clients. According to Maramis and Umbas (2024), pimps often target young girls. A common strategy employed to entice teenagers, even those in elementary school, into prostitution is the promise of substantial financial rewards, which is used to persuade their parents. This approach creates the perception that prostitution is a lucrative and prestigious career path, thereby encouraging parents to direct their

children to comply with these expectations (Rahmadani, 2023).

Prostitution has continued to proliferate due to these factors. Given the prevalence of prostitution cases in Indramayu, this study seeks to elucidate the efforts undertaken by community leaders to prevent prostitution in Eretan Kulon Village, without assessing the effectiveness of current strategies. The primary focus of this research is to comprehend the role of community leaders, the nature of the initiatives implemented, and their contribution to fostering social awareness and norms conducive to prostitution prevention. While this study may also offer insights into the impact of these efforts, its principal aim is to delineate the measures that have been employed to address the issue of prostitution in the village.

This study employs Emile Durkheim's social structure theory to examine the role of community leaders in mitigating prostitution in Eretan Kulon Village. Durkheim posited that society is composed of interconnected elements that collectively function to uphold social stability (Durkheim, 1933). In this framework, social structure encompasses the norms, values, and institutions inherent in society, all of which contribute to maintaining social order. The emergence of prostitution is attributed to imbalances within the social structure, such as economic and social inequalities and incomplete adherence to societal norms by individuals. Community leaders, including religious figures, village officials, and law enforcement personnel, are instrumental in reinforcing the norms and values that promote social welfare. They endeavor to formulate policies aimed at reducing social and economic disparities and providing moral education to curtail prostitution. Consequently, the involvement of community leaders can be perceived as integral to efforts aimed at enhancing social structures to preserve community harmony and stability (Durkheim, 1933).

## **METHOD**

The research methodology employed in this study is qualitative in nature, facilitating an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of prostitution by examining the perspectives of both prostitutes and the surrounding community (Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2019). Utilizing a case study approach, this research focuses on analyzing the experiences of prostitutes and community leaders to investigate the factors influencing prostitution practices within a specific context (Mali, 2023). These two approaches contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of this social issue. This study focuses on efforts to prevent the

perpetuation of prostitution in Eretan Kulon Village, Kandanghaur District, Indramayu Regency. This location was selected because of its known issues related to prostitution and the initiatives undertaken by local community leaders to address them. The data utilized in this research comprise two types: primary and secondary. Primary data were obtained directly from key informants, including Aipda Imran, with the main informants being the residents of Eretan Village and community leaders, and supporting informants being members of the sex worker community. Secondary data were sourced from relevant documents such as village activity reports, policy notes, and archives related to prostitution prevention.

In this study, 13 informants were engaged, representing diverse societal elements within Eretan Kulon Village. These included one police officer, one member of the Pol PP, one midwife, one Ustad, one village head, one social worker, four local community members, and three individuals involved in prostitution. The informants were selected based on their social roles pertinent to the issue of prostitution. The police officer and Pol PP member were chosen for their involvement in law enforcement, the midwife for insights into health perspectives, the ustad for religious viewpoints, the village head for village policy considerations, the social worker for rehabilitation approaches, and the community members and individuals involved in prostitution for direct perspectives from those affected by the issue.

The research employed interviews and documentation as data-collection techniques. In-depth interviews were conducted with various stakeholders possessing knowledge of or direct involvement in prostitution prevention efforts in Eretan Kulon Village. The interviews were semi-structured, with each session lasting between 30 and 60 minutes. Interviews were conducted in several pertinent locations, including the homes of community leaders, the village office, the Satpol PP base, and public areas within the village. The primary topics addressed in the interviews encompassed the role of community leaders in preventing prostitution, strategies implemented, and challenges encountered in these efforts. The documentation technique was used to gather various archives and written data that corroborated the information obtained from the interviews. The collected data were subsequently analyzed using a triangulation technique that integrated data from interviews, documentation, and other sources to ensure the accuracy and validity of the findings.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted in Eretan Kulon Village, which is situated in the Kandanghaur Sub-district of Indramayu Regency. As of 2023, the population of Eretan Kulon Village was 11,434 individuals, comprising 5,775 men and 5,659 women (BPS, 2024). The village has a diverse social structure, with residents actively participating in various sectors of life. In the educational domain, Eretan Kulon Village offers a range of formal educational facilities, both public and private, including MTS, PKBM, RA, SD, SMK, SPS, and TK. The presence of these educational institutions significantly contributes to the enhancement of human resource quality in the village by providing adequate access to education for its inhabitants (registersekolah.net, 2025).

Furthermore, the residents of Eretan Kulon Village engage in various occupations. According to the available data, the majority of the population is employed in the agriculture and fisheries sectors, comprising 401 farmers and 1,168 fishermen. Additionally, a significant number of individuals are either unemployed or not currently working (2,212), engaged in household management (2,200), or pursuing education as students (1,939). A smaller segment of the population includes retirees (5), civil servants (45), and farmers (2). This occupational diversity indicates the relatively dynamic economic conditions present in Eretan Kulon Village (Official website of Eretan Kulon Village, Kandanghaur Subdistrict, 2025).

Despite the abundant potential of natural resources, particularly in the agriculture and fisheries sectors, Eretan Kulon Village continues to encounter challenges concerning the economic welfare of its community, notably due to the high unemployment rate. According to the data, 2,212 residents are recorded as unemployed or underemployed, constituting approximately 19% of the total village population. This statistic highlights the disparity between job availability and the existing labor force. Factors contributing to this unemployment rate include limited job opportunities, a lack of skills aligned with market demands, and restricted access to education and training that could enhance labor competencies (Pardita et al., 2022). In this context, Emile Durkheim's social structure theory provides an explanatory framework. Durkheim posited that an imbalanced social structure can impact individuals and groups within society (Durkheim, 1933). The disparity between the number of workers and employment opportunities in Eretan Kulon Village reflects social tensions that may lead to alienation among individuals trapped in unemployment. Individuals lacking adequate access to education and skills are likely to be marginalized from

broader employment opportunities, thereby exacerbating social inequality and impeding economic welfare. As Durkheim elucidated, disharmony within the social structure can result in societal dysfunction, including elevated unemployment rates due to the structure's failure to offer equitable opportunities for all (Durkheim, 1912).

The scarcity of employment opportunities has led to the emergence of certain ideas within the Eretan community, one of which involves engaging in prostitution (Beno et al., 2022). The advent of prostitution in Eretan Kulon Village can be attributed to the historically constrained social and environmental conditions. Initially, the village comprised a few residences, resulting in the dispersion of prostitution venues around the inhabitants' homes. For instance, areas adjacent to, behind, or even in front of residential properties are frequently utilized for prostitution activities. This practice proliferated as pimps approached parents with daughters, enticing them with lucrative employment prospects. These pimps successfully garnered parental interest by promising substantial financial rewards in exchange for their daughters' involvement under the pimps' supervision. This situation was exacerbated by prevailing economic hardships, which rendered many parents susceptible to the allure of monetary compensation.

As the village expanded and additional residences were constructed, the initially concealed locations of prostitution began to decline; however, the practice did not entirely disappear. Instead, individuals involved in the trade established new enterprises along the Pantura route. These individuals operated ordinary stalls selling food and beverages, such as chicken noodles, ketoprak, or other snacks. Nonetheless, these establishments covertly offered the services of Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs) within their premises. Over time, these venues became known as "warung remang-remang" due to their exclusive nighttime operation, characterized by conspicuous flickering lights that attract visitors' attention. This practice has continued to evolve and persists as a social phenomenon along the routes where these establishments have become organized and increasingly visible. In addition to the financial incentives provided by those managing the trade, another factor compelling some women into prostitution is economic hardship, particularly when they are pursued by moneylenders offering high-interest loans. In such circumstances, many women feel compelled to become CSWs to repay their debts, although this exacerbates the social issues in Eretan Kulon Village.

In the face of life's adversities, individual life choices are frequently shaped by economic and environmental pressures. Emile Durkheim's social structure theory offers a framework for understanding this phenomenon. Durkheim posited that individuals are influenced not only by personal circumstances but also by the prevailing social structure. In the realm of life choices, economic and environmental pressures can be regarded as external factors that influence individual behavior through social structure disparities. When individuals find themselves in challenging economic conditions, they may feel compelled to pursue certain life paths because of the social inequalities or expectations that surround them (Durkheim, 1912).

Durkheim posited that imbalanced social structures, such as economic and social inequality, significantly influence individual decision-making and actions when confronting life's challenges (Durkheim, 1912). These external factors shape behavior through discordance with societal norms and values. Consequently, social structures and societal imbalances play a crucial role in shaping individual decisions, as individuals are influenced by prevailing social conditions to select a life path that aligns with the pressures and expectations surrounding (Durkheim, 1933). This phenomenon is exemplified by the experiences of Mami and Een, two sisters who both entered the realm of prostitution, albeit for different reasons and roles. Mami, the elder sister, currently operates as a pimp, managing commercial sex workers. Her entry into this domain was initiated by a friend's invitation, who subsequently became an intermediary between prostitutes and clients. As a pimp, Mami assumes significant responsibility for overseeing prostitution operations within her community.

Een, the younger sister, embarks on a path of prostitution due to personal and stressful circumstances. After experiencing discomfort at school, she opted to discontinue her education there. Initially, following her departure from school, Een was employed in a factory; however, she found the work exhausting. This employment was short-lived, as she realized that her income was insufficient to meet her family's needs. Subsequently, Een decided to marry her boyfriend, but marital difficulties arose after the birth of their child, culminating in a divorce. Faced with the necessity of supporting her mother, sister, and child, Een chooses to emulate her sister's decision to engage in prostitution. This decision underscores the profound impact of social and economic conditions on individual life choices, despite the inherent risks and significant consequences associated with such paths.

In the context of economic adversity, Mami and Een perceive prostitution as a viable means of securing income with relative ease and expediency. In Indramayu, where employment opportunities are scarce and difficult to obtain, Mami and Een encounter significant challenges in securing work that offers sustainable livelihoods. The prevailing economic hardships and elevated unemployment rates have placed Mami and Een in a predicament in which they perceive no superior alternative. Faced with the prospect of unemployment and lack of income, they ultimately opted to collaborate in prostitution as a survival strategy. Although this decision may appear pragmatic given the circumstances, Mami and Een must contend with the social and moral consequences of this occupation, which is frequently regarded as taboo and subject to societal stigma. Nevertheless, for Mami and Een, this choice represented the most feasible means of meeting their daily necessities.

In addition to Mami and Een, Tria also became a commercial sex worker following her transition to widowhood. Her separation from her husband was precipitated by his lack of responsibility, as he depended solely on Tria's parents, failed to secure employment, and neglected his duties as a husband to her. Her husband's inability to provide an adequate standard of living for the family ultimately compelled Tria to pursue a divorce and assume the responsibility of supporting herself and her child independently of him. The decision to divorce was further influenced by the escalating demands of daily life, particularly after her child required continued education, which inevitably increased the family's financial burden beyond the basic cost of living.

In her role as a single mother, Tria chose to engage in sex work due to its perceived ease and ability to generate sufficient income to meet her daily necessities and her child's educational expenses. Nevertheless, this occupation does not consistently offer stability, particularly during periods of low demand and in the absence of clients. During such times, Tria's earnings are significantly constrained, leading to financial instability. Despite these challenges, Tria perceives this occupation as advantageous because of its accessibility and the rapid income it provides, in contrast to other employment opportunities that may be more challenging to secure.

## **Perspectives on the Presence of Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs) in Society**

Community perspectives on prostitution in Eretan Kulon Village are diverse; however, the majority emphasize the adverse effects of this phenomenon on various aspects of life. Both Satpol PP and the police regard prostitution as a legal violation and attribute its occurrence to insufficient employment opportunities in the village. This issue can be analyzed through the lens of Emile Durkheim's structural theory, which posits that the social structure of a society influences the behavior of individuals and groups within it. In this context, the emergence of prostitution can be seen as a consequence of the failure of the social structure to provide adequate employment. The inability of the social structure in Eretan Kulon Village to offer sufficient employment opportunities may compel individuals to seek alternatives perceived as quicker and easier, despite their risks and contravention of established legal and moral norms. Consequently, prostitution can be viewed as a response to the social structure's inadequacy in meeting individuals' economic needs, potentially leading to tension and negative repercussions in the community.

The perspective of the Satpol PP, which regards prostitution as an offense that must be eradicated to maintain public order, alongside the police's view that inadequate employment opportunities are the primary factor driving individuals into prostitution, can be associated with Émile Durkheim's theory of social structure. In this context, the failure of the social structure to offer adequate employment opportunities in Eretan Kulon Village may compel individuals to resort to prostitution as a means of survival, despite its contravention of the existing legal norms.

Durkheim posits that a social structure that fails to ensure adequate access to employment and social welfare engenders tensions, potentially prompting individuals to engage in actions deemed deviant, such as prostitution, as a response to systemic injustices (Durkheim, 1912). Although prostitution is legally prohibited, within this framework, it can be interpreted as an adaptation to the social structure's inadequacy in offering more appropriate and viable solutions for individuals in need of support. Thus, while prostitution contravenes legal and social norms, it emerges from imbalances within the social structure that fail to provide sufficient access to legitimate employment opportunities and necessary resources for survival (Durkheim, 1933).

From a legal perspective, such actions are classified as offenses under Article 296 of the Criminal Code, which governs the provision of venues or facilitation of prostitution activities (Kristiyanto, 2019). This article stipulates that any individual who provides a location or means for engaging in obscene acts or prostitution may

be subject to criminal penalties as part of efforts to combat sexual exploitation and human trafficking (Islamy & Katimin, 2021).

“Hukum tersebut hanya berlaku bagi germo yang dikenai hukuman penjara selama satu tahun, sementara untuk anggota PSK (Pekerja Seks Komersial), mereka hanya diwajibkan mengikuti rehabilitasi selama kurang lebih 3 hingga 5 bulan. Hal ini menunjukkan adanya perbedaan perlakuan antara germo dan anggota PSK, di mana germo menerima hukuman yang lebih berat, sementara anggota PSK mendapatkan kesempatan untuk pemulihan melalui program rehabilitasi.” (Interview wit Aipda Imron )

“The law only applies to pimps who are subject to a one-year prison sentence, while for commercial sex workers (CSWs), they are only required to attend rehabilitation for approximately three to five months. This shows that there is a difference in treatment between pimps and prostitutes, with pimps receiving harsher sentences, while prostitutes get a chance to recover through rehabilitation programs.” (Interview wit Aipda Imron )

The perspectives of Ustad, who denounces prostitution and labels commercial sex workers as "community trash," and Sumarna's assertion that prostitution sullies the reputation of Eretan Kulon Village, reflect a moral and social repudiation of the phenomenon. Similarly, Tabita's view that prostitution is a negative practice that should not be accepted in society demonstrates an opposition grounded in moral and social values. These viewpoints can be associated with Émile Durkheim's theory of social structure. Durkheim posited that every society upholds norms and values to maintain social stability. In this context, prostitution is perceived as a deviation from prevailing social norms that potentially undermines societal integrity and unity. The rejection of prostitution, as articulated by Ustad, Sumarna, and Tabita, signifies the community's endeavor to preserve social stability and morality by upholding values deemed essential for social harmony. In essence, prostitution is viewed as a threat to social structures that should be founded on shared norms and morality, which could ultimately result in social tension and dysfunction (Durkheim, 1912).

The midwife's perspective, which posits that prostitution has detrimental effects on both social and health dimensions, alongside Robiatul's assertion highlighting the risk of transmitting sexually transmitted diseases and the negative influence on social norms, can be associated with Emile Durkheim's theory of social structure. Durkheim contends that the preservation of social stability necessitates the maintenance of shared norms and values. In this context, prostitution is perceived as a form of deviance that disrupts the social

structure by adversely affecting public health and eroding the comprehension of existing social norms, particularly among the younger generation.

Prostitution not only affects the individuals directly involved but also exerts significant impact on the broader community. These impacts include the proliferation of sexually transmitted diseases, which can compromise public health and influence children's perceptions of social norms. The perspectives of midwives and Robiatul highlight concerns regarding the social dysfunction engendered by prostitution, which can disrupt social structures and weaken social cohesion in the community. In contrast to these critical views, there are more neutral perspectives, such as Amin's, who perceives prostitution as an ingrained societal practice, albeit not a positive one. Meanwhile, Wamin acknowledges the negative aspects of prostitution but advocates for a more open approach to finding solutions without overemphasizing moral judgments (Durkheim, 1912).

While numerous perspectives on the issue stem from moral, social, and health considerations, economic factors are frequently identified as the primary causes. Community leaders, such as Polisi and Robiatul, assert that the lack of adequate employment opportunities is the principal catalyst for prostitution. This indicates that addressing prostitution requires not only legal enforcement and adherence to social norms but also a focus on enhancing economic opportunities and improving community welfare.

## **Community and Community Leaders' Efforts to Prevent Prostitution**

Within the framework of Emile Durkheim's social structure theory, community leaders' initiatives to address prostitution can be interpreted as efforts to preserve equilibrium and integration within the social structure. Durkheim posited that society is composed of interconnected social structures, each playing a role in maintaining order and stability. In this context, prostitution, as a social issue, poses a threat to the equilibrium of the social structure by potentially undermining the norms and values of the community.

Community leaders, including religious figures, village officials, and law enforcement personnel, play a crucial role in reinforcing the existing social framework by upholding established norms. They are instrumental in educating the community to comprehend and adhere to social regulations that can mitigate prostitution incidence. As integral components of the social structure, community leaders also contribute to the formulation of policies aimed at reducing social and

economic disparities, which are often the underlying factors that exacerbate prostitution.

According to Durkheim (1933), social structures possess mechanisms to uphold order, including the implementation of relevant laws and norms. The equitable enforcement of laws by law enforcement officials constitutes a component of this mechanism aimed at ensuring that individuals adhere to societal norms. Consequently, the initiatives undertaken by community leaders to address prostitution align with Durkheim's objective of preserving a stable and harmonious social structure, wherein each societal element functions effectively to maintain social equilibrium (Durkheim, 1912).

### 1. Efforts by the Police

The police have implemented various strategies to combat prostitution, one of which involves conducting regular raids in areas identified as being vulnerable. These operations are carried out periodically, typically every few months, to curtail the practice of prostitution by targeting direct participants, such as sex workers and pimps. Beyond addressing offenders, these raids aim to establish order and security within the community and serve as a deterrent to those contemplating prostitution. The police collaborate with relevant entities, including Satpol PP, to enhance surveillance and close locations that are susceptible to being used for prostitution.

In addition to conducting raids, the police engage in intensive community outreach by collaborating with Satpol PP and village governments. This outreach is implemented through counseling, discussions, and meetings designed to enhance public awareness of the legal and health-related dangers of prostitution. During these activities, the police disseminate information on the adverse effects of prostitution, such as the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, and educate offenders and pimps about the risks they face. This collaboration with various societal elements is anticipated to yield a more effective strategy for eradicating prostitution at the local level in the future. Furthermore, as part of their efforts to support HIV-infected Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs), the police provide treatment at the Bayangkara Hospital. This initiative aims to offer medical care and support to prostitutes diagnosed with HIV, assisting them in their physical and mental rehabilitation, thereby enabling them to leave the prostitution network and pursue a healthier and more productive life.

### 2. Efforts by Civil Service Police Unit

The Civil Service Police Unit in the Kandanghaur Sub-district of Indramayu Regency plays a crucial role in maintaining order and security in the village area. The initial measure undertaken by Satpol PP involved monitoring and investigating activities that potentially contravene local regulations, such as prostitution and other criminal acts. This process is essential for acquiring accurate data on violations, which subsequently serves as the foundation for enforcement actions. However, due to the limited number of Satpol PP personnel in this sub-district, comprising only three to five individuals, enforcement efforts can only be executed effectively with the involvement of the central government to bolster these initiatives.

Following the enforcement action, individuals found in violation, including Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs) and pimps, will be systematically recorded and documented for administrative purposes and subsequent follow-up, in accordance with relevant regulations. Furthermore, the Civil Service Police Unit of the Kandanghaur Sub-district collaborates with the Civil Service Police Unit at the Indramayu Regency level to enhance oversight and regulatory enforcement across a broader area. This collaboration aims to augment the effectiveness of enforcement measures and ensure coordination among stakeholders.

In addition to its law enforcement responsibilities, the Satpol PP engages in community development initiatives. By collaborating with village officials, the police, military, and other relevant institutions, they implement activities designed to enhance public awareness of the significance of maintaining order and adhering to local regulations. This developmental effort aims to foster synergy among various agencies to mitigate violations and criminal activities within the villages of the Kandanghaur Sub-district.

The fluctuations in the number of Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs) in Indramayu from 2021 to 2023 were influenced by various factors, including social, economic, and government policies (Table 1). In 2021, the number of CSWs declined due to social restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, following the relaxation of these restrictions from 2022 to 2023, an increase in the number of CSWs is anticipated, although precise data remain elusive due to the clandestine nature of the work. Governmental and social agencies continue to address this issue with a more compassionate approach, offering access to education, skills training, and economic empowerment for those affected by the disease.

**Tabel 1.** *Number of Commercial Sex Workers*

No	Year	Total
1.	09 Desember 2021	22
2.	02 Februari 2022	44
3.	05 Mei 2023	34

### **3. Efforts by village officials**

Village officials play a crucial role in maintaining order and enforcing regulations concerning prostitution by providing guidance to the community, including the stall owners. This guidance aims to impart an understanding of the negative impacts of prostitution, encompassing its social, moral, and legal dimensions. Furthermore, village officials educate the community on the importance of upholding public order and supporting government efforts to eradicate prostitution. In this process, they elucidate the relevant regulations and sanctions that may be imposed on individuals found to be involved in this illegal activity.

Following the completion of the coaching sessions, the village officials persistently monitored locations suspected of being involved in prostitution activities. Upon identifying any violations, these officials promptly coordinate with Satpol PP and other relevant authorities to implement measures in accordance with existing regulations. One potential course of action includes the closure of business establishments found to be engaged in prostitution or in breach of established rules. This measure is undertaken to ensure that the village remains free from disruptive activities and to uphold the overall comfort and safety of the community.

### **4. Efforts by the Social Service Office**

The Indramayu District Social Service has implemented several initiatives to address the issue of prostitution in the Kandanghaur Sub-district, notably through a rehabilitation program targeting individuals involved in prostitution, including Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs) and their pimps. This program is designed to offer these individuals opportunities to enhance their lives and reintegrate into society. The Social Affairs Office collaborates with a rehabilitation institution in Cirebon, where participants undergo a recovery process that lasts several months. During this period, they receive psychological support, life skills training, and vocational training, which are intended to assist them in establishing a more constructive life after exiting prostitution.

In addition to the rehabilitation program, the Social Affairs Office has implemented an empowerment initiative for families affected by HIV. This initiative offers skills training to family members, enabling them to earn sustainable and independent incomes. By

empowering families, the program aims to reduce the likelihood of family members re-engaging in prostitution or other adverse behaviors in the future. Furthermore, the Social Service actively engages in community outreach to raise awareness of the dangers of prostitution and the importance of supporting victims in building a better life. Through these comprehensive efforts, the Social Service is committed to fostering a safe, healthy, and dignified environment for all residents of the Kandanghaur District.

### **5. Efforts by Midwives**

Midwives in the Kandanghaur Sub-district actively contribute to the Mobile Clinic HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and STI (Sexually Transmitted Infection) programs organized by the health center. This initiative is conducted biannually to deliver more accessible health services to high-risk community groups, such as Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs). As healthcare professionals, midwives participate in the process of conducting regular health assessments, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and STI testing. Furthermore, they play a crucial role in educating individuals about the importance of using protective measures and adopting a healthy lifestyle to prevent the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases. Through Mobile Clinic activities, midwives help mitigate barriers faced by high-risk communities, such as stigma or access limitations, thereby enabling these groups to receive necessary health services in a more comfortable manner.

In addition to conducting medical examinations, midwives are instrumental in offering psychological counseling to participants, including sex workers, to mitigate the stigma or shame that often hinders access to healthcare services. They provide education on HIV and STI prevention and emphasize the importance of early detection to prevent severe complications. The program enables participants to acquire accurate information about their sexual and reproductive health. Through a humanistic and empathetic approach, midwives contribute to fostering a safer and more supportive environment for vulnerable populations, thereby enhancing their quality of life by reducing the rates of HIV and STI. This program aspires to foster improved collaboration among Puskesmas, non-governmental organizations, government entities, and the community to address sexual health issues more comprehensively.

### **6. Efforts by Religious Leader**

Religious leaders in the village have undertaken initiatives to conduct regular recitations in several

nearby mosques. These recitations aim to enlighten the community about the significance of safeguarding themselves from detrimental behaviors, including prostitution and other negative actions. In each lecture, religious leaders frequently convey messages to parents, particularly those with daughters, urging them to remain vigilant regarding the potential for their children to engage in prostitution. Furthermore, religious leaders underscore the importance of providing children with a robust religious education to help them avoid the adverse effects of promiscuity, which often leads to prostitution.

Religious leaders not only focus on the education of girls but also emphasize the education of boys, ensuring that they are instilled with appropriate values to prevent juvenile delinquency, such as alcohol abuse, fighting, and drug use. This routine recitation occurs four times a week—on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday—with the aim of positively influencing community behavior. Through these recitations, religious leaders endeavor to cultivate a deeper awareness and understanding within the community regarding the significance of upholding morality, discipline, and behavior in alignment with religious teachings, thereby fostering a better life and deterring harmful actions.

## **7. Efforts by the Community**

The Eretan Village community has undertaken various initiatives to address prostitution, including organizing protests and demonstrations. In 2016, local residents, such as Tabita and Sumarna, orchestrated a rally to express their concerns about the presence of commercial sex workers in the neighborhood. The primary objective of this rally was to remove prostitutes, who were perceived as a disturbance to the community, particularly in the Eretan Kulon area. This action underscores the community's sense of responsibility in fostering a safer and more orderly environment, independent of direct government involvement.

Following the eviction, the community actively ensured that individuals engaged in prostitution did not resume their activities in the area. Although these individuals initially adhered to the directive to cease their activities, they eventually resumed them, citing their limited capacity to secure alternative employment to meet their needs. The community remains vigilant in maintaining order by consistently monitoring the neighborhood and expressing objections when violations occur. However, the challenge of finding a permanent solution to this issue persists in the field.

The persistence of prostitution in Eretan Kulon Village, despite various interventions by relevant

stakeholders, can be analyzed using Emile Durkheim's theory of social structure. According to Durkheim (1933), society comprises interconnected elements that function to maintain social stability. Despite efforts in law enforcement, community empowerment, and moral and health education, the social, economic, and cultural disparities in the village have not been fully addressed. Consequently, prostitution continues to be a response to these imbalances within the social structure.

Durkheim posits that imbalances within social structures, such as economic and social inequality, can foster conditions conducive to deviant behavior, including prostitution. This observation indicates that, despite various interventions, the social structure in Eretan Kulon Village remains inadequate for mitigating the factors contributing to prostitution. Consequently, to effectively address this issue, a comprehensive enhancement of the social structure is imperative, focusing on reducing social and economic disparities and bolstering social solidarity within the community (Durkheim, 1933).

Contrary to prior research, this study not only investigates the motivations behind individuals' decisions to engage in prostitution but also expands the scope by examining community perspectives on the prevalent practice of prostitution in Eretan Kulon Village. The author underscores the significant role of community leaders in curbing the persistence of prostitution by analyzing how social interactions and community policies shape perceptions and collaborative efforts to address the issue. This emphasis on the community's role offers a more comprehensive understanding of and approach to addressing prostitution within the community.

Upon conducting the research, the author discovered several noteworthy aspects of the phenomenon of prostitution in Eretan Village. Notably, insights were gathered from the community, community leaders, and prostitutes themselves. It was revealed that the women involved in prostitution are not solely from the local community; a significant number originate from other regions, such as East Java, Central Java, and other areas. These individuals migrate to the village and choose to establish their residence there. This fact is often overlooked by those who merely pass through or lack a comprehensive understanding of the situation in Eretan, leading to the misconception that all prostitutes and pimps in Eretan Village are natives of Indramayu. In reality, while some individuals hail from the local community, the majority are from outside the area and have opted to settle and engage in prostitution there. This phenomenon indicates that prostitution in Eretan

involves not only the local community but also serves as a destination for many women from other regions seeking to earn a livelihood in this manner.

The persistence of prostitution in Eretan Kulon Village can be attributed to insufficient follow-up actions after the evictions. Several community leaders have contended that, subsequent to the evictions, the authorities, particularly the social service agency, failed to implement concrete measures to address the issue. Aipda Imran, a community leader, has advocated for a more proactive approach by social services in offering guidance and rehabilitation programs for individuals involved in prostitution. He emphasized that social services should extend long-term support, including economic assistance, education, and skills training, to enhance employment opportunities and prevent a return to prostitution.

Aipda Imran further asserted that rehabilitation efforts alone are insufficient to address the issue. He posited that it is crucial to consider repurposing vacated areas, such as transforming them into tourist attractions or other productive enterprises that offer greater benefits to the community. This approach aims to provide a viable alternative to establishing prostitution venues, thereby enhancing the local economy. Nevertheless, this initiative faces challenges due to inadequate coordination and attention from the social affairs office and other relevant entities, which perpetuates the unresolved issue of prostitution in the village itself.

*Table 2. Key Findings From the Research*

Key Findings	Description
Prostitute	Women involved in prostitution do not only come from local communities, but many also come from outside areas such as East Java, Central Java, and several other regions.
Prostitution still exists in the Eretan Kulon Village area	lack of follow-up after the eviction that was carried out.
Prevention Efforts by Community Leaders	Community leaders carry out raids, counseling, rehabilitation programs, religious studies, and demonstrations to prevent prostitution, although they have not yet completely eliminated it.
Inter-Institutional Collaboration	Cooperation between the police, Satpol PP, religious leaders and village government is important in reducing prostitution through joint operations and outreach..

Table 2 show key finding of this research. Research examining the role of community leaders in the prevention of prostitution in Eretan Kulon Village reveals parallels with a study conducted by [Nuroktaviani \(2016\)](#) on the involvement of community leaders in

Cibitung Village, West Java. Wulandari's findings indicate that although community leaders actively engage in counseling, coaching, and various social activities, the primary obstacles to successful prevention are insufficient active participation from the community and lack of support from local government authorities. Similarly, the study in Eretan Kulon Village demonstrates that despite initiatives such as raids, routine religious gatherings, and HIV testing, the reduction of prostitution remains incomplete due to economic challenges and entrenched social customs in the area. Therefore, while there are similarities in the preventive measures implemented, the differences are primarily attributed to the level of community engagement and support from governmental agencies, which significantly influence the program's effectiveness.

## CONCLUSION

Despite concerted efforts by community members to eradicate prostitution through regular raids, educational initiatives, and counseling on its adverse effects, the issue persists in the Eretan Kulon Village. However, these initiatives have successfully reduced the incidence of prostitution, demonstrating that community awareness and participation, along with collaboration among the police, Satpol PP, midwives, religious leaders, community leaders, and the village government, can positively influence the mitigation of this problem. Nonetheless, this study has certain limitations. Notably, it does not adequately elucidate the external factors affecting the efficacy of interventions implemented by local community leaders. Although preventive measures employing social and cultural strategies have been optimized, the determinants of their success or failure remain uncertain, whether due to internal factors related to commercial sex workers (CSWs) or unidentified external influences. Additionally, the study's reliance on a limited number of informants and qualitative methodology restricts the generalizability of its findings to other village communities or regions, necessitating further research.

To effectively address the issue of prostitution in various regions, several concrete policy recommendations are proposed. First, a comprehensive intervention model encompassing social, economic, and health dimensions is imperative. Economic empowerment initiatives, such as skills training and enhanced access to education, are crucial for offering viable employment alternatives to individuals involved in prostitution. Additionally, the provision of adequate health services to mitigate the health impacts of

prostitution, including sexually transmitted infections (STIs), should be prioritized. Second, collaboration among local governments, social institutions, religious leaders, community leaders, and the private sector must be strengthened to develop sustainable and effective solutions. Third, policies that avoid stigmatizing commercial sex workers should be implemented, adopting approaches grounded in a broader social and economic understanding and prioritizing humane solutions. Finally, further research is urgently required to identify external factors influencing the effectiveness of prevention efforts and gain a comprehensive understanding of the social and economic dynamics at the local level. This study provides a robust foundation for formulating more targeted and applicable policies to address prostitution in diverse regions.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

The first author conducted the research, collected the data, and drafted the manuscript. The second author supervised the research process, provided academic guidance, and contributed to the critical revision and final approval of the manuscript.

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## INFORMED CONSENT

The authors have obtained informed consent from all participants.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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