

Rural Indonesian women condemned for short ‘pleasure marriages’ with tourists for US\$500

Thursday 9 January 2025, by [ZHANG Zoey](#) (Date first published: 3 October 2024).

Some of country’s poorest young women have dozens of sex-and-chores-for-cash quickie weddings with rich tourists

Poor young women in Indonesian villages are becoming temporary wives for male tourists in exchange for a bride price leading to online condemnation of the practice.

Puncak, in the country’s western region, is home to a village with plentiful supplies of rich Arabian flavours that attracts many tourists from the Middle East.

In the mountain resort of Kota Bunga, male tourists are introduced to local women through agencies which help them to enter into temporary marriages.

Once both parties agree, they hold a quick, informal wedding ceremony, after which the men are required to pay the women a bride price as compensation.

The wife will have sex with the husband and do household chores. When the husband ends his tour and leaves the country, the marriage is dissolved.

Such temporary arrangements, known as “pleasure marriages”, have become a thriving industry in Puncak, boosting tourism and the local economy, the Los Angeles Times reported.

In the early days, girls were introduced to tourists by family members or acquaintances. Nowadays they are handled by agencies.

A woman identified as Cahaya shared her experience of being such a wife since she was 17 years old.

Cahaya told the Los Angeles Times that she has been married more than 15 times and that her “husbands” are all tourists from the Middle East.

Her first temporary husband was a tourist in his 50s from Saudi Arabia.

The man paid an US\$850 bride price, but after the agent and person who conducted the marriage took their cut, she was left with only about half the amount.

Five days after the wedding, the man flew back home and they were “divorced”.

Cahaya said she could earn between US\$300 and US\$500 per marriage, which she uses to pay rent and care for her sick grandparents.

Another woman called Nisa said she had been married at least 20 times and had managed to quit the business.

Nisa met an Indonesian man who worked in an immigration office and they married four years ago and had two sons. She says she will never go back to her previous life.

Such arrangements are called *nikah mut'ah* or "pleasure marriages" and are said to be part of the Shia Islam culture.

However, most scholars, including many of the Shia Islam faith, deem the practice entirely unacceptable.

Pleasure marriages are also not recognised by Indonesian law, as they contradict the fundamental purpose of marriage, which should create a stable, long-term family relationship.

The violation of Indonesia's marriage laws can lead to fines, imprisonment, and social or religious repercussions.

After media outlets in China carried reports about the phenomenon, it quickly trended on Weibo.

"This dark industry of temporary marriages may boost tourism and the local economy, that's why it likely leaves even the government feeling powerless," one person said.

Another said: "This reminds me of the girls in impoverished rural villages in China. To change their fate, they need to be empowered with education and skills to support themselves."

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