# INTEGRATING ISLAMIC VALUES, CHILD RIGHT, AND POLICIES IN CARING FOR NEGLECTED CHILDREN

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**Abstract:** The issue of caring for neglected children represents a civilizational challenge, as the quality of a nation is measured by how it treats children who have lost parental care. This requires a childcare system rooted in moral values, human rights, and sustainable social policies. The aim of this study is to examine the care of neglected children through three main perspectives: Islam, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and national as well as regional policies. The study employs a literature review method with a descriptive-analytical qualitative approach, analyzing texts and official documents such as the Qur'an, Hadith, national legislation, international conventions, national regulations, academic studies. The findings reveal a convergence among the three perspectives, namely the recognition of children's dignity, the protection of rights, and the emphasis on the best interests of the child. However, remain, including institutional limitations, challenges adaptation to digital disruption, and cultural contextual differences. This article concludes that integrating Islamic

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values, CRC principles, and national-regional policies is essential to developing a holistic, sustainable, and contextual childcare system for neglected children. The practical implications highlight the need to strengthen Child Welfare Institutions (LKSA), empower communities based on religious values, and harmonize regulations with child rights principles to ensure more effective protection of neglected children

**Keywords:** Neglected children; childcare; Islamic perspective; Convention on the Rights of the Child; social policy

#### Introduction

The phenomenon of neglected children remains a persistent social issue worldwide, including in Indonesia. Neglected children are defined as those whose basic physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs are not met due to the loss of parental care or the absence of an adequate family environment (Republic of Indonesia, 2014). The presence of neglected children is often caused by structural factors such as poverty, divorce, natural disasters, social conflicts, and the weakening of family functions (Suvanto, 2019; Susilowati, 2020). In Indonesia, data from the Central Bureau of Statistics estimate that more than 4.2 million children live in conditions of potential neglect (BPS, 2023). This situation demands the establishment of a childcare system that is not only short-term but also comprehensive, sustainable, and rooted in socio-cultural values (UNICEF, 2021).

In the context of Islamic civilization, the care of neglected children is not a new issue. Since the early development of Islam in the seventh century, concern for orphans, poor children, and neglected children has been an integral part of moral and social teachings. The Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes the importance of caring for

orphans, both in fulfilling their basic needs and in protecting their rights (Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 220; Q.S. Ad-Dhuha: 9). The Prophet Muhammad reinforced the position of orphans in society, saying, "I and the one who cares for an orphan will be in Paradise like this" (Sahih al-Bukhari, No. 5304). This teaching shows that the care of neglected children in Islam is not merely an act of charity but part of a civilizational system that integrates spiritual, social, economic, and political dimensions (Al-Ghazālī, 2019; Hasan, 2019).

Throughout Islamic history, various institutions have played significant roles in the care of neglected children. The Bait al-Mal functioned as a state financial institution that allocated resources for public welfare, including the maintenance of orphans and neglected children (Islahi, 1992). The waqf or endowment system also developed as a sustainable philanthropic mechanism supporting education and child care for those without family support (Kahf, 2003). The concept of kafalah, which refers to the care of children without biological lineage, serves as concrete evidence of the existence of a legal and social framework that provides protection and assurance for neglected children (Ali, 2006). These values reveal that Islamic civilization possesses a rich historical and normative foundation for addressing the issue of neglected children.

Islamic concern for children aligns with the development of modern international law, which positions children as subjects of human rights. The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) marked a milestone in global civilization by ensuring that children are treated as individuals with full rights rather than as mere objects of protection. The CRC emphasizes four core principles: non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to survival and development, and the participation of children in social life (United Nations, 1989). These principles

represent a universal agreement that the protection of children serves as a key measure of a nation's progress.

Tobin (2019) asserts that the CRC has shifted the paradigm of children from being passive recipients of compassion to citizens with full rights. Archard and Skivenes (2009) further explain that the best interests of the child cannot be separated from the child's participation in decision-making processes. This perspective reflects the modern understanding that children must be recognized as active participants in society. Such a view is consistent with the Islamic perspective that upholds human dignity from an early age.

As the largest Muslim-majority country in the world, Indonesia bears both moral and constitutional responsibilities to guarantee the fulfillment of children's rights. The ratification of the CRC through Presidential Decree No. 36 of 1990 commits Indonesia to integrating child protection principles into national legislation. This commitment is reflected in Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection, Law No. 11 of 2009 on Social Welfare, and Regulation of the Minister of Social Affairs No. 5 of 2024 concerning the Accreditation of Child Welfare Institutions.

Despite these legal frameworks, various studies reveal a significant gap in implementation, particularly in handling neglected children affected by structural poverty, weak family support, and limited institutional capacity (Suyanto, 2019; Anshor and Sumarlan, 2021). As a result, cases of child neglect continue to occur, including violence, exploitation, and mistreatment both within institutional and family-based care.

This condition is further complicated by digital disruption, which has created new forms of child vulnerability. Children are now at risk not only of physical neglect but also of digital, social, and emotional neglect. A UNICEF report shows that more than 36 percent of children in Southeast Asia face the risk of online neglect or abuse

(UNICEF, 2022). This finding indicates that while the principles of childcare in Islam remain relevant, they require adaptation to respond effectively to contemporary challenges (Alkhudairi, 2021).

Cultural barriers and social stigma further aggravate the situation of neglected children. In some communities, they are still perceived as social burdens rather than as individuals with inherent rights. The Prophet Muhammad emphasized the importance of compassion toward children when he said,

"He is not one of us who does not show mercy to our young and respect to our elders" (Sunan al-Tirmidhi, No. 1919).

This Hadith underscores that compassion toward children serves as a moral indicator of a community's integrity and a foundation for the continuity of civilization. This article departs from the assumption that the legacy of Islamic civilization can serve as an inspiration for developing a sustainable system of childcare for neglected children in the modern era. Islamic civilization has not only bequeathed normative values but also institutional practices that can be adapted within the framework of a modern state, particularly in the integration of broader social welfare systems (Hasan, 2019; Tobin, 2019). This perspective is crucial because many Muslim-majority countries, including Indonesia, continue to face gaps between formal policy frameworks and the implementation of childcare programs for neglected children in the field (Anshor and Sumarlan, 2021; Kholifah and Purwanti, 2022).

The objectives of this study are threefold. First, to examine the normative and institutional foundations of childcare for neglected children within the framework of Islamic civilization. Second, to explore the relevance of

these concepts to contemporary challenges. Third, to offer a critical reflection on the potential integration between Islamic legacies and modern policy approaches.

Furthermore, this article aims to stimulate academic connects Islamic civilization contemporary social issues. This is important because Islamic heritage is often discussed only within theological and normative domains, while its practical civilizational dimensions remain underexplored in academic discussions (Reynaert et al., 2012). In fact, the legacy of Islamic civilization contains valuable lessons on how classical Muslim societies addressed social welfare concerns, including the care of neglected children (Islahi, 1992). Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap and to argue that the Islamic perspective can coexist and interact with multidisciplinary approaches in modern social sciences (Archard and Skivenes, 2009).

Ultimately, the discourse on childcare for neglected children from the perspective of Islamic civilization is not merely a historical study but an alternative paradigm for constructing an inclusive social welfare system. Islamic civilization, grounded in the values of compassion (*rahmah*), justice, and collective responsibility, offers both ethical and practical foundations for responding to global challenges (Tobin, 2019). Accordingly, this study is not only academically relevant but also practically significant for social policy development, particularly in Muslim-majority countries striving to achieve social justice for all citizens, including neglected children.

This article employs a library research approach using a qualitative, descriptive-analytical method (Snyder, 2019; Grant & Booth, 2009). The literature review method was chosen because the study focuses on comparing and analyzing Islamic perspectives, the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and national

as well as regional policies related to the care of neglected children.

This research is both normative and analytical in nature. It is normative because it is grounded in authoritative texts and official documents such as the Qur'an, Hadith, national legislation, and international conventions (United Nations, 1989; ASEAN Secretariat, 2004, 2017; Republic of Indonesia, 2009, 2014; Ministry of Social Affairs, 2024). It is analytical because it examines the interrelations, convergences, and distinctions among these perspectives to construct a comprehensive conceptual framework (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The data used in this study consist of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include religious texts (the Qur'an and Hadith concerning children, orphans, and caregiving) (al-Bukhārī, 1997; al-Tirmidī, 1975), the international document Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989), Indonesian legislation such as Law No. 35 of 2014, Law No. 11 of 2009, and Ministerial Regulation No. 5 of 2024, as well as ASEAN policy documents including the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration (ASEAN Secretariat, 2004) and the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Children (ASEAN Secretariat, 2017). The secondary sources comprise classical Islamic literature such as *Ihya Ulumuddin* (al-Ghazālī, 2019), academic works on Islamic parenting (Alkhudairi, 2021; Hasan, 2019), studies on international law and child rights (Tobin, 2019; Archard & Skivenes, 2009; Reynaert et al., 2012; Susilowati, 2020), research on neglected children in Indonesia (Suyanto, 2019; Anshor & Sumarlan, 2021; Kholifah & Purwanti, 2022), and reports from international and national organizations (UNICEF, 2021; Save the Children, 2019; KPPPA, 2023; BPS, 2023).

Data collection was conducted through a systematic review of reputable international and national journals

(Scopus, DOAJ, Sinta), academic books, reports from international institutions, and official documents from government and ASEAN bodies (Page et al., 2021). Literature selection followed inclusion criteria, namely relevance to the issue of child care and neglect, inclusion of Islamic, CRC, or national/regional policy perspectives, and publication within the last ten years (2014–2024), except for classical Islamic sources. The collected data were then organized thematically into three main categories: Islam, CRC, and regional/national policy (Booth et al., 2016).

The data analysis process involved several stages, including data reduction, thematic categorization, comparative analysis, and integrative synthesis (Miles et al., 2014; Braun & Clarke, 2021). The validity of this study was ensured through source triangulation, contextual critical analysis, and a conceptual audit trail based on the criteria of trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017).

Through this methodological framework, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of child care for neglected children from three major perspectives and to produce policy and practical recommendations that are contextually relevant and applicable.

## The Islamic Perspective on the Care of Neglected Children

From its earliest teachings, Islam emphasizes that children are a divine trust (amanah) from Allah SWT who must be protected and nurtured. The Qur'an explicitly reminds believers of the importance of caring for orphans and other vulnerable groups. Surah Al-Ma'un (107:1–3) states, "Have you seen the one who denies religion? That is the one who repulses the orphan and does not encourage the feeding of the poor." This verse illustrates that compassion toward orphans and neglected children is a true measure of faith and moral integrity. It also serves as a

foundational principle for child care practices administered by institutions such as Lembaga Kesejahteraan Sosial Anak (LKSA) or children's orphanages.

Furthermore, Surah An-Nisa (4:9) declares, "And let those fear Allah who, if they left behind weak offspring, would be afraid for them. So let them fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice." This verse provides a normative foundation that neglecting a child's well-being constitutes a violation of both spiritual and social responsibility.

In the Hadith, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "The one who looks after an orphan and I will be together in Paradise like this," while holding his index and middle fingers close together (Narrated by al-Bukhari, No. 5304). This hadith affirms the high spiritual rank of those who care for orphans, a category that in the modern context extends to neglected children.

Classical scholars such as al-Ghazālī emphasized that child upbringing is an essential component of building Islamic civilization. Contemporary studies (Alkhudairi, 2021; Hasan, 2019) reinforce that Islamic principles of child care remain highly relevant today, as they highlight compassion (rahmah), justice, and social protection. Therefore, Islam not only provides a religious and moral framework but also offers a social ethic that can serve as a foundation for modern child protection policies.

### The Perspective of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) represents the most comprehensive international legal framework for the protection and welfare of children. The CRC establishes four fundamental principles. The first is non-discrimination, which ensures that every child is entitled to protection regardless of origin, social status, or family condition. The second is the best interests of the child, which mandates that all policies and decisions concerning children must prioritize their well-being above all other considerations. The third is the right to life, survival, and development, which obliges states to guarantee the fulfillment of children's basic needs to ensure their holistic growth and development. The fourth is child participation, affirming that children have the right to express their opinions on matters that affect their lives (United Nations, 1989).

Scholarly discussions emphasize that the CRC marks a significant paradigm shift from a charity-based approach to a *rights-based approach* (Tobin, 2019). Archard and Skivenes (2009) highlight the importance of giving children a voice in decision-making processes, while Reynaert et al. (2012) underline the necessity of cultural transformation to recognize children as active rights holders rather than passive recipients of care.

In the context of neglected children, the CRC provides international legitimacy for the state's responsibility to ensure *alternative care* when parental care is unavailable. This may take the form of foster families, social care institutions, or adoption arrangements, provided that such measures uphold the child's best interests (Susilowati, 2020).

## National (Indonesia) and Regional (ASEAN) Policies

Indonesia has ratified the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) through Presidential Decree No. 36 of 1990 and has since integrated its principles into various national regulations. *Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection* affirms that neglected children are entitled to special protection from the state. *Law No. 11 of 2009 on Social Welfare* identifies neglected children as one of the primary target groups for social welfare services. In addition, *Government Regulation No. 44 of 2017 on Child Care* outlines state responsibilities regarding the care of neglected children, while *Minister of* 

Social Affairs Regulation No. 30 of 2011 establishes national standards for child care within Child Welfare Institutions (Lembaga Kesejahteraan Sosial Anak or LKSA), including provisions for alternative care in orphanages and similar facilities (Susilowati, 2020). More recently, Minister of Social Affairs Regulation No. 5 of 2024 on the Accreditation of Social Welfare Institutions emphasizes the importance of maintaining high institutional standards to ensure quality child care services within LKSAs.

Despite these regulatory frameworks, implementation remains a significant challenge. Suyanto (2019) found that many neglected children are still beyond the reach of social protection programs due to limitations in data accuracy, human resources, and financial capacity. Similarly, Anshor and Sumarlan (2021) highlight weak inter-agency coordination as a barrier to providing effective alternative care services.

At the regional level, ASEAN has also demonstrated its commitment to child welfare. The *Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration* (2004) recognizes the family as the cornerstone of social development. Furthermore, the *ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Children* (2017) reinforces member states' commitment to building a comprehensive, community-based, and responsive child protection system (ASEAN Secretariat, 2018). These regional initiatives reflect a shared civilizational consensus that children represent a vital foundation for sustainable development.

#### **Integrative Synthesis**

The findings of this study reveal several points of convergence among the Islamic perspective, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and national as well as regional policies. All three perspectives emphasize that children are subjects possessing inherent dignity and human rights. Islam highlights the spiritual and social

dimensions of caregiving, the CRC stresses the international legal and human rights framework, and national and regional policies provide the practical mechanisms for implementation. Despite using different terminologies, each framework upholds the best interests of the child as its central principle, expressed as *rahmah* (compassion) in Islam, *the best interests of the child* in the CRC, and social protection in national and regional policy contexts.

Nevertheless, several challenges and distinctions remain. In practice, the universal principles of the CRC often encounter tension with local cultural and religious interpretations, underscoring the need for contextualization. The implementation of national policies remains weak, particularly in reaching neglected children in remote and impoverished areas. Child Welfare Institutions (LKSAs) continue to face limitations in accreditation, human resource quality, and financial capacity, preventing them from fully meeting the standards set by both the CRC and Islamic teachings on compassionate care.

From an integrative standpoint, the care of neglected children in Indonesia and Southeast Asia requires a multi-level approach that strengthens three key dimensions: the moral foundation provided by Islamic values, the legal foundation offered by the CRC, and the practical foundation established through national and regional policy frameworks. Such integration enables child care to be seen not only as a social agenda but also as part of a broader civilizational project.

# Intersection of Islamic Values, the CRC, and National Regulations

The study highlights the intersection of Islamic principles, the CRC framework, and regional or national policies, yet it also calls for deeper discussion on their theoretical, practical, and policy implications.

From the perspective of Islamic civilization, caring for neglected children is both a social and a spiritual responsibility. Islam teaches that the moral quality of a society is reflected in how it treats orphans and vulnerable children. This implies that child welfare policies should not be driven merely by administrative logic but should be grounded in moral, ethical, and spiritual values. Islam thus provides a value-based care framework that strengthens the social legitimacy of child protection policies.

The CRC, meanwhile, establishes a global legal framework that defines the child as a rights-bearing individual. The principle of the best interests of the child in the CRC closely parallels the Islamic concept of rahmah (compassion), though they arise from distinct normative traditions. A critical question emerges in the Indonesian context: how can CRC principles be harmonized with Islamic values to prevent social resistance? Scholars such as Revnaert et al. (2012) argue that the success of CRC implementation often depends on its cultural and religious adaptation. Therefore, integrating Islam and the CRC is not only possible but essential to ensure policy legitimacy and cultural resonance.

National and regional policies reflect a strong political commitment to child protection. However, a remains between regulation gap persistent implementation. Suyanto (2019) observes that neglected children often fall through bureaucratic cracks due to weak coordination and limited funding. At the regional level, ASEAN's efforts, including collective commitments and shared frameworks, still depend on the institutional capacity of individual member states. This calls for stronger governance and collaboration among multiple actors, including government agencies, civil society, religious organizations, and local communities.

Practically, this synthesis carries implications for social workers, welfare institutions, and the broader community. Social workers should integrate Islamic ethics and CRC principles into daily practice, combining rights-based and value-based approaches. Child Welfare Institutions (LKSAs) must be strengthened through capacity-building, improved accreditation, and sustainable funding to ensure quality alternative care. Muslim communities, in turn, should be encouraged to revive the tradition of *kafalah* (non-biological guardianship) as a socially embedded practice consistent with CRC principles.

Theoretically, this synthesis reaffirms that the issue of neglected child care must be understood as a matter of civilization. Islam frames caregiving as a form of social worship, the CRC defines it as a fundamental human right, and national as well as regional policies view it as part of social development. Together, these frameworks constitute the moral and institutional foundation of a modern civilization centered on human dignity. Failure to protect neglected children, therefore, is not merely a shortcoming of social policy but a moral and civilizational failure.

#### Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the care of neglected children is firmly grounded in three major frameworks: Islamic teachings, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and national as well as regional policies. In Islam, caring for neglected children is viewed as both a divine trust and a civilizational responsibility. The Qur'an and Hadith emphasize the duty of the community to safeguard the dignity of orphans and children who have lost parental care, guided by the principles of compassion (*rahmah*), justice, and social solidarity.

The CRC, on the other hand, establishes that every child is a rights-bearing individual whose welfare must be guaranteed by the state and society. Its core principles—non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to life and development, and the right to participation—

align closely with Islamic values, though articulated through the normative language of international law.

At the national and regional levels, Indonesia and ASEAN have developed a comprehensive regulatory and policy framework to ensure alternative care for neglected children. Nevertheless, implementation continues to face major challenges, including limited resources, weak interagency coordination, and persistent social stigma. These issues highlight the gap between normative frameworks and on-the-ground realities.

Therefore, integrating Islamic values, CRC principles, and national as well as regional policies is essential for establishing a holistic framework of child care. Each perspective contributes distinct yet complementary strengths: Islam offers moral and spiritual legitimacy, the CRC provides international legal legitimacy, and national-regional policies ensure institutional and operational mechanisms for implementation. Together, they form a unified vision of child care that upholds human dignity and advances the ideals of a compassionate and just civilization.

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