
ABDIMAS

Jurnal Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat
<https://journal.unnes.ac.id/journals/abdimas/>

Efforts to Improve Education to Protect Children from Sexual Violence

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Abstract

The phenomenon of child victims of sexual violence increased during COVID-19 from 2021 to 2022. This indicates that COVID-19 is a vulnerable and dangerous situation because children live near their families and interact with social environments outside of school. Child victims of sexual violence are often difficult to obtain information about the legal incidents that befell them. This is due to the limited vocabulary of children and their vulnerability to threats from perpetrators, which can result in psychological trauma for the victims. The objectives of this community service program are: first, to map the types of violence affecting child victims; second, to prevent and address child victims of sexual violence. The community service methods used include: a pre survey of the locations and situations that will be the target of community service; second, observation and interviews with neighborhood and local residents' association officials who include young families with children; and third, offline community service and discussions with young families with children. The results obtained include a diversity of types of violence against child victims, and, fundamentally, children's mental and physical development can be affected in the future. Efforts to prevent and handle child victims of sexual violence require obtaining statements from child victims in a language that children understand and involving parties who are trusted and competent in addressing the basic needs of child victims of sexual violence.

Keywords: efforts, education, children, sexual violence

INTRODUCTION

Children are a source of hope for families and a vital asset for the nation. In Indonesian society, having children is generally considered a goal of marriage, both as a way to strengthen patriarchal ideology and as a source of pride for the nuclear family's socioeconomic status. According to data from the Indonesian Commission for Child Protection and Women's Protection, violence against child victims during COVID-19 increased in 2021-2022, a matter of deep concern for observers, academics, and practitioners of child and women protection. During COVID-19, children spent more time with their parents, relatives, and their surrounding social environment because schools were conducting online learning. While online learning facilitates and saves energy for parents and children, it also increases the vulnerability of child victims to cases of violence from their immediate environment because perpetrators are often present in the children's social environment. According to data from the Indonesian Commission for Child Protection, perpetrators generally still have kinship, emotional, and social ties with their children and parents.

The government has enacted the 2014 and 2016 Child Protection Laws, which basically require all parties to protect children physically and mentally, as well as the condition of children with disabilities. This is also guaranteed by Article 34 of the 1945 Constitution, which states that the state protects and guarantees a prosperous life for children. ¹Due to this condition, the entire community

¹ Iza Agna Batian and Hartanto, "Sexual Violence Against Children: Impact and Protection Efforts," *IJOLARES: Indonesian Journal of Law Research* 2, no. 2 (2024): 32–41, <https://doi.org/10.60153/ijolares.v2i2.48>.

service team has a moral obligation and prepares the implementation of community service, a team of lecturers and a team of students targeting young families of productive age who still have children. The location of the service was carried out in the hall of Tunas Harapan Vocational School, Salatiga City, which was attended by 20 productive-age mothers. The formulation of the problem in this service article is what are the forms of violence against child victims and what efforts are there to prevent and handle victims of sexual violence against children?

METHOD

The devotee carries out the following methods: first, a pre-survey was conducted on the locations and situations of the community service targets, particularly for all young, productive-age families with children. Second, the community service team conducted observations and interviews with neighborhood and community unit officials to determine and map the population of young, productive-age families with children offline. Third, the community service team conducted education and open discussions with all young, productive-age families to map and analyze the community service materials.



Figure 1. Pre-survey

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forms of violence against child victims

Child abuse is any act or behavior that causes physical or psychological harm to a child. Child abuse can occur anytime and anywhere, including at home, at school, and in social settings.

Some forms of violence against children include physical neglect, psychological violence, and sexual violence:²

- a. Physical neglect: Physical neglect usually occurs in the form of neglecting a child's needs for nutritious food, clothing, and health. Neglecting a child's needs can hinder their growth and development.
- b. Psychological violence: Psychological violence against children is a form of treatment that can damage a child's mental and emotional development, even if it doesn't leave physical scars. This form of violence can take the form of insults, threats, neglect, or excessive pressure continuously applied by parents, caregivers, or the surrounding environment. The impacts can be very serious, including decreased self-confidence, anxiety disorders, and depression at an early age. Therefore, it is important for adults to create a safe, supportive, and loving environment so that children can grow and develop healthily, both physically and mentally.
- c. Child sexual abuse is a highly damaging act that violates a child's fundamental rights to grow up in a safe and protected environment. This act includes all forms of sexual abuse, both physical and non-physical, perpetrated by adults or older children. The impact of sexual abuse on children is profound, not only physically but also psychologically, such as long-

² Tri Sella Margareta and Melinda Puspita Sari Jaya, "Violence in Early Childhood (Case Study of 6-7 Year Old Children in Kertapati)," *Wahana Didaktika: Journal of Educational Sciences* 18, no. 2 (2020): 171, <https://doi.org/10.31851/wahanadidaktika.v18i2.4386>.

term trauma, fear, impaired self-confidence, and even mental disorders later in life. Therefore, it is crucial for society to raise awareness, prevent sexual violence, and provide appropriate protection and support for victims so they can recover and move on with their lives.

According to Black's Law Dictionary, child sexual abuse is illegal sexual activity committed against a minor by a parent, guardian, relative, or acquaintance. The child victim is weak and helpless, making them highly vulnerable to sexual violence. Sexual violence is a crime against morality that occurs not only nationally but also as an international problem. This crime is not limited to lower-middle-class communities but has spread to all social strata.

Forms of violence against child victims

| Regarding | Law No. 23/2004 | Information |
|------------------|--|---|
| Form | A. Physical | A. Physical violence is violence that can cause pain to a person's body. |
| | B. Verban | B. Verbal violence is violence that can cause feelings of fear. |
| | C. Domestic neglect | C. Economic neglect is the act of neglecting people within the household. |
| | D. Sexual violence | D. Sexual violence is the forced sexual intercourse of another person which can cause physical or psychological pain. |
| Causative factor | A. The mindset of society regarding the strengthening of patriarchal ideology | - |
| | B. The mindset of society strengthens the differences in roles and responsibilities based on gender differences. | - |

Characteristics of perpetrators of violence against children from the perpetrator's side are having a superior power relationship while from the victim's side they are in an inferior position and have a narrow and limited power relationship towards the perpetrator and the social environment, the victim has limitations in the economic, social and cultural fields as well as advocacy. Social control is a very important part in overcoming sexual violence against children. From an academic perspective, education and literacy must be carried out through community service with the aim of raising awareness and sparking the silence of victims and victims' families to immediately take legal action and provide systematic assistance to explore the traumatic silence according to the language understood by the victim. From a psychiatrist's perspective, providing reinforcement, direction and awareness to victims to immediately take legal action that is brave accompanied by the victim's parents and advocacy team. From the government's side, opening offline and online services for complaints of cases of violence against child victims with the aim of immediately following up and providing protection through shelters.

Galtung broadly defines violence as an obstacle that should be avoided, preventing individuals from effectively realizing themselves. According to Galtung, these obstacles can actually be overcome, and violence can be avoided by removing them.

In short, violence encompasses a variety of physical, emotional, verbal, institutional, structural, or spiritual conditions, as well as behaviors, attitudes, policies, or situations that demean, dominate, or harm ourselves and others around us. Johan Galtung defines direct violence as a disturbance that needs to be eliminated, which is related to the basic human need to live well, which causes dissatisfaction with needs that should be met according to one's potential.³

³ Linda Dwi Eriyanti, "Johan Galtung's Thoughts on Violence from a Feminist Perspective," *Journal of*



Figure 2. Community service seminar activities

Efforts to prevent and handle victims of sexual violence against children

Child protection is the state's obligation to guarantee and protect children's rights so they can live and grow optimally and prosperously and be protected from violence. ⁴Child protection is a very important effort in creating safe and supportive conditions for every child to grow and develop optimally, in accordance with their rights and potential. Child protection needs to be carried out starting from the family environment to the social environment through various prevention and handling efforts. The goal of preventing acts of sexual violence against children is first, to prevent the development or spread of the problem of sexual violence against children in community life, second, to prevent the recurrence of sexual violence against children.⁵

Article 1 paragraph (2) of Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection provides a broader definition of child protection, which includes all activities to guarantee and protect children and their rights. This includes efforts to ensure that children can live, grow, develop, and participate optimally in accordance with human dignity, and are free from violence and discrimination. With a comprehensive understanding of child protection, including an understanding of its legal aspects, it is hoped that we can together create a safer and more supportive environment for every child to be able to develop their full potential, without fear or unfair restrictions. This is an important step in building a more just and sustainable society for all children.

Article 69A of Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection establishes a clear legal basis for providing special protection to children who are victims of sexual violence. This protection includes education on reproductive health, religious teachings, and ethical values to provide children with a deeper understanding. Furthermore, social rehabilitation is essential to help children overcome the psychological and social effects of the sexual violence they experience.

Psychosocial support is also crucial in the recovery process for child victims of sexual violence, from treatment to comprehensive recovery. Finally, providing protection and assistance at every step of the legal process, from the investigation to the trial, is crucial to ensure that the interests and needs of child victims are always considered and prioritized. Victims of sexual violence often become socially isolated, a situation that must be avoided, as victims undoubtedly need motivation and moral support to recover and live their lives.

International Relations 6, no. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.18196/hi.61102>.

⁴ Yayan Agus Siswanto, Fajar Rachmad Dwi Miarsa, and Research Article, "Preventive Efforts as a Form of Legal Protection Against Crimes of Sexual Violence in Children," *Journal of Collaborative Science* 7, no. 5 (2024): 1651–67, <https://doi.org/10.56338/jks.v7i5.5313>.

⁵ Penny Naluria Utami and Yuliana Primawardani, "Efforts to Prevent Violence Against Indonesian Children," *Jurnal Sentuhan Keadilan*, no. Semnaskum (2022): 1–6.

Table 2. Efforts to prevent and handle child sexual violence victims

| Regarding | Prevention | Handling |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Effort | A. Leading opinion to pay attention to child violence laws | A. Ignore bad news |
| | B. Hold seminars or scientific exchanges | B. Focusing on self-interest |
| Legal/non-legal consequences | A. Provide actual legal complaints | |
| | B. Raising legal awareness among the public | A. Easily falls into the criminal law category |
| | C. Competing to gain access to justice | B Provides a deterrent effect for perpetrators |
| | D. Saving energy, manpower and costs for interested parties | |
| | D. Reduce the number of violent crimes against children | |

The risk in carrying out efforts to prevent and handle acts of sexual violence is that it is easy for certain communities to reject it due to the strengthening of patriarchal ideology against violence against children.

Efforts to prevent violence against children must involve a holistic approach, encompassing education, understanding children's rights, family strengthening, social support, and firm law enforcement against perpetrators of violence. This ensures that violence against children can be minimized, and every child can grow and develop in a safe and supportive environment. Child protection is a shared responsibility of all members of society, including families, the government, and other social institutions. Children are highly vulnerable to various forms of exploitation and violence, both within the family and in the wider community. Therefore, it is crucial for all of us to ensure that children receive adequate protection.⁶

CONCLUSION

Forms of violence against child victims include physical violence, verbal/psychological violence, domestic neglect, and sexual violence. Efforts to prevent and address child sexual violence include: first, mobilizing public opinion to review child abuse laws; second, holding seminars or scientific exchanges; and third, strengthening law enforcement.

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⁶ Desita Sari et al., "Education and Efforts to Prevent Sexual Violence in Adolescents," *Journal of Community Empowerment Learning (JP2M)* 4, no. 1 (2023): 48–59, <https://doi.org/10.33474/jp2m.v4i1.19818>.

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