

Children as Victims and Objects of Crime: A Criminological Analysis of Economic Exploitation in Urban Environments

Anak-anak sebagai Korban dan Objek Kejahatan: Analisis Kriminologi Eksploitasi Ekonomi di Lingkungan Perkotaan

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Abstract

Economic exploitation of children in urban environments is a complex form of social crime that is often hidden behind the dynamics of city life. Children are not only victims of family economic pressures, but also become objects of crime by parties who take advantage of their vulnerability. This article aims to analyze the phenomenon of child exploitation from a criminological perspective, highlighting how social structures, economic inequality, and weak legal protection systems contribute to the rampant practice of exploitation in urban areas. Using a qualitative approach and critical criminology theory, this study examines the patterns of exploitation that occur, including the involvement of children in informal work, forced labor, and other forms of hidden exploitation. The results of the analysis show that child exploitation is not only triggered by economic factors, but also by the cultural normalization of child labor, lack of legal awareness at the community level, and

minimal community-based state intervention. This article emphasizes that child exploitation must be understood as a structural crime that requires an interdisciplinary and collaborative approach. Prevention and handling efforts are not enough only through law enforcement, but also through community empowerment, social policy reform, and strengthening child protection systems that are responsive to the urban context. Thus, protecting children from economic exploitation must be a priority agenda in criminal and social policies in urban areas.

Keywords Child Exploitation, Criminology, Social Crimes, Urban Society, Child Protection

Penggunaan ekonomi terhadap anak di lingkungan perkotaan merupakan bentuk kompleks dari kejahatan sosial yang sering tersembunyi di balik dinamika kehidupan kota. Anak-anak bukan hanya korban dari tekanan ekonomi keluarga, tetapi juga menjadi objek kejahatan oleh pihak-pihak yang memanfaatkan kerentanan mereka. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis fenomena eksploitasi anak dari perspektif kriminologi, menyoroti bagaimana struktur sosial, ketimpangan ekonomi, dan sistem perlindungan hukum yang lemah berkontribusi pada maraknya praktik eksploitasi di wilayah perkotaan. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan teori kriminologi kritis, penelitian ini mengkaji pola-pola eksploitasi yang terjadi, termasuk keterlibatan anak dalam pekerjaan informal, kerja paksa, dan bentuk-bentuk eksploitasi lain yang tersembunyi. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa eksploitasi anak tidak hanya dipicu oleh faktor ekonomi, tetapi juga oleh normalisasi budaya terhadap tenaga kerja anak, rendahnya kesadaran hukum di tingkat masyarakat, serta minimnya intervensi negara yang berbasis komunitas. Artikel ini menegaskan bahwa eksploitasi anak harus dipahami sebagai kejahatan struktural yang membutuhkan pendekatan lintas disiplin ilmu dan kerja sama berbagai pihak. Upaya pencegahan dan penanganan tidak cukup hanya melalui penegakan hukum semata, tetapi juga melalui pemberdayaan masyarakat, reformasi kebijakan sosial, serta penguatan sistem perlindungan anak yang responsif terhadap konteks perkotaan. Dengan demikian, melindungi anak dari eksploitasi ekonomi harus menjadi agenda utama dalam kebijakan kriminal maupun sosial di wilayah perkotaan.

Kata Kunci Eksploitasi Anak, Kriminologi, Kejahatan Sosial, Masyarakat Perkotaan, Perlindungan Anak.

Introduction

The phenomenon of economic exploitation of children in urban environments is a complex form of social crime and is often hidden behind the dynamics of city life. Children are not only victims of an unequal system, but are also made objects of crime by individuals or networks who exploit their vulnerability. From a criminological perspective, child exploitation cannot be excluded from structural factors such as poverty, social inequality, weak law enforcement, and a permissive culture towards child labor.

This article aims to examine the economic exploitation of children as a form of crime against humanity, by placing children as subjects who experience double losses—both physically, psychologically, and socially. Through a critical and social criminology approach, this paper will describe how social systems and public policies contribute to the rampant exploitation of children in urban areas, as well as the role of society and the state in preventing and handling it.

Phenomenon child exploited economy in a way quantitative increase, matter This seen the rise child the streets. Data Ministry Social Which taken from Dashboard Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) SIKS-NG as of December 15 2020, the number of child displaced Street in Indonesia as much as 67,368 person.¹

Children should receive protection, affection and supervision. from person parent, educated And fostered in a way Good in accordance with Copyright as child so that No happen toilet in time its growth² The fact is moment This, In several areas in Indonesia, including Central Java and East Java, many discussing the problem of exploitation of children, one form of which is is exploitation economy.

Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the population aged 10-17 years who become workers in the country amounting to 1.17 million people in 2020, an increase of 320 thousand people compared to the previous year. The percentage also increased from 2.37% in 2019 to 3.25% compared to last year. The highest increase came from child labor which aged 10-12 year. On In 2019, the percentage recorded only 1.83 million person.

¹ <https://www.kemerkopmk.go.id/penanganan-anak-terlantar-butuh-komitmen>

² North 2021. Social Control and Trends in Children's Deviant Behavior in Criminology Studies. Semarang

Temporary, there were 3.6% of child workers aged 10-12 years in 2020. The number of child workers aged 13- 14 year too experience increase of 2.07% to 3.34%.

Seeing this social reality is very concerning, because children are The next generation of the nation has an important meaning for national development in carrying out national and state life (Manon, A. T, 2019) Law Article 28B paragraph (2) of the Basic Law of the Republic of Indonesia explicitly regulates every child's right to survive, grow and develop and has the right to protection from violence and discrimination. The mandate of the basic law manifested in Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection Chapter 23 paragraph (1) Which containing: "Country And government ensure protection, care and welfare of children by taking into account the rights and obligations of parents parent, guardian, or other person who is legally responsible for the child. the reality quantity child Street Which is exploited economy Good from family or from other people towards children is increasing.

Urgent Study is:

1. *First time* sinking family who carry out economic exploitation towards children so that Lots Showing child phenomenon the street that happened on time Now
2. *Second* Not yet The existence of Handling child victim exploited economy Which Done in a way official both formal and non-formal Java Central and Java East
3. *Thirdly* , the government and informal social institutions have not yet determine the right method to solve the problem of street children because No see root problem from existence child Which become victim exploited
4. *Fifth*: The mandate of the law is that State, Government and Local Government obliged and responsible to provide Children's Rights without distinguish between tribes, religions, races, groups, genders, ethnicities, cultures and languages, status law, birth order, and physical condition and/or mental.
5. *Sixth*: The State, Government and Regional Governments have obligations and responsibilities answer give support means, infrastructure, And availability source Power man in the implementation of Child Protection.

Sixth need looking for a model solution as action countermeasures.

Method

Economic Exploitation of Children: Legal Protection Models

and Their Implications for the Fulfillment of the Rights of Child Victims will be assessed using a qualitative approach with the type study *socio-law study*. As consequence approach qualitative, study This rely on first-hand information (primary data) in the field. Secondary data (from statistics and documents) are used to complement the analysis of data from the field with a knife Analysis of Child Exploitation Theory by Terry E Lawsen And Tharmmapornphilas³ for that variables Study empirical Which relate with decision child For Work divided into four groups; namely: (1) characteristics of children including gender, aged, And order birth, (2) characteristics House ladder Which covering income, education parents, and number of children, (3) school characteristics including the distance from home to school and school quality, and (4) community characteristics including location, infrastructure, and environment(Edmonds, EV (2007)

With use method on, will chosen six region environment/region Which diverse, that is prayer district/city in Java Middle And Java East. Java Middle: Semarang, And Regency Grobogan whereas Java East: Surabaya And The From each district/city That, chosen each One subdistrict And prayer village/sub-district case in it. The process of selecting regional samples was carried out through a *purposive sampling procedure*. Data will language dug up from hand First (informant And (respond) in village, subdistrict, And regency case study cannot be cancelled figure public, official government, spawner religion, and community members from village, sub-district and district levels as well as police from police agency public local. They not self-medicated as informant or respond case, but Also followed in in all over cycle activity study: Meeting information, conclusion of results Study temporary, confirmation/ validation data, as well as determine conclusion end. It means, through interview (repeat) And seminar (group), each hug make correct (on results invention time researcher), involved analyze And conclude data study so that can Obtained a level generalization Which can accepted, applicable in level village, subdistrict, And regency which become location study.

Technique Meeting data Which will used For gather data from informant And respond, is:

1. Observation, to capture situations, conditions, real behavior, and events. that occurs around an event (Moleong, 1987:112).

³ Chakrawati, F.2015. Bullying Siapa Takut Solo: Tiga Ananda

This observation strategy will also be utilized for orientation in a general field study/area case, which is based on the meeting of secondary data and documents conducted.

2. In-depth interviews (*in-depth interviews*), to reveal further things which are not so clear which are obtained through observation. The general impression captured in the examination will be followed up with an in-depth interview to obtain clarity about the actual situation. On the other hand, through this in-depth interview, it is attempted to gain an understanding of meaning, symbols, language, or expressions of other symbols. At this stage, the visit will be more intensive, intimate, and personal with informant/respondent. Have been done, so that can disclose "logic" in return a phenomenon.
3. Discussion group focused, achieved for finding trends- tendencies and patterns on an issue. A systematic analysis of the discussions that take place will provide some clues and descriptions of what the participants want to discuss (DL Morgan, 2011). Thus, the largest part of the data collection results will be in the form of thick field notes, so that it will produce a research report with a description which is thick too (C. Geertz, 1973)

Data which is collected is analyzed in a qualitative way. On the stage beginning, data is grouped according to the elements of the study with the use of model coding *open coding* and *axial coding*.⁴ The second stage continues with the setup of relationships between elements of the study. The next stage is to draw conclusions about the relationships between elements of the study with informants/respondents. Then continued with discussions with the competent experts regarding the researcher's provisional conclusions.

Results And Discussion

A. Children as Victims and Criminals in Economic Exploitation Practices from a Criminological Perspective

This study found that children in urban areas, especially from marginalized families, experience economic exploitation in various

⁴ (A. Strauss and J. Corbin, 2000:58).

forms that are systematic and repeated. They are not only victims of family economic pressures, but also become objects of crime by parties who exploit their vulnerability for economic gain.

1. Forms of Economic Exploitation

Children are involved in informal work such as buskers, scavengers, street vendors, and laborers in the household sector and small industries. Many of them work in unsafe conditions, without legal protection, and with long working hours. Several cases show hidden exploitation, such as children being "lent" by parents to third parties to work, with an imbalance that is not comparable.

Children work as buskers, scavengers, or street vendors. The Criminology Perspective in Strain Theory (Robert K. Merton) can be said that children experience structural pressure due to the inability of families to meet economic needs through legitimate means, so they are driven to seek alternatives, including street work. In Strain Theory developed by Robert K. Merton, the condition of children who are victims of economic exploitation can be explained as a result of the mismatch between expected cultural goals (such as economic success) and legitimate ways to achieve them (such as education and formal employment).

1) Cultural Objectives

In society, there is an expectation that every individual, including children, will grow up to achieve success—whether in the form of education, decent work, or economic well-being.

2) Limited Access to Legitimate Means

Children from marginalized families often lack access to adequate education, supportive environments, or social protection. They live in poverty, with parents who also lack steady employment or sufficient income.

3) Emergence Strain (Pressure)

When children (or their families) realize that they cannot achieve these goals through legitimate means, social and psychological pressures arise. In this context, the family or the child themselves may feel "forced" to seek alternatives to survive.

4) Adaptation to Strains

Merton identified five forms of adaptation to strain. In the case of child exploitation, the most relevant forms of adaptation are: Innovation: Children (or their families) seek alternative ways to earn money, such as working on the

streets, becoming child laborers, or doing other informal work. Although not legally permissible, these methods are considered practical solutions to meet basic needs.

5) Exploitation as Structural Progressive

Child exploitation in this theory is not only the result of the evil intentions of individuals, but is a consequence of an unjust social structure, where children from poor groups have no choice but to work, and the social system fails to provide adequate protection or alternatives.

Thus, in the perspective of Strain Theory, economic exploitation of children is a form of adaptation to the social and economic pressures experienced by marginal families. When access to legitimate means of achieving well-being is closed, children become victims of a system that pushes them into situations of forced labor or exploitation.

Subcultural Theory: In marginalized communities, working from childhood is considered normal and even becomes a social norm, which reinforces the cycle of exploitation.

2. Subculture Theory and Child Exploitation

On the other hand, the Subculture Theory in criminology explains that certain groups in society develop values, norms, and behaviors that are different—even differentiated—from the dominant values of the general public. This theory is widely used to understand deviant behavior that is considered “normal” in certain groups, including the practice of child exploitation.

1) Normalization of Child Labor in Marginalized Communities

In many marginalized communities, the practice of child labor has become part of the accepted social reality and is even considered normal. In limited economic conditions, children are often seen as part of the family's survival strategy. They not only help meet household needs, but are also considered a form of satisfactory contribution. This view indirectly forms social norms that tolerate, even encourage, children's involvement in the world of work from an early age. This phenomenon is known as a form of normalization of child labor, where hidden exploitation is no longer considered a violation, but rather as part of the local culture. To understand its roots and impacts, it is important to explain how these subcultural values are formed and how they reinforce the cycle

of exploitation in marginalized communities. In marginalized communities, working from an early age is not only considered normal, but is also a form of children's contribution to the family economy. In this context:

- a. Children who work are seen as “responsible children”.
- b. Parents feel proud if their children can “help” earn a living.
- c. The surrounding community does not view this as a violation of children's rights, but rather as part of the harsh reality of life.

2) Formation of Subculture Exploitation

Child exploitation in marginalized communities occurs not only because of economic pressures, but also because of the formation of a value system that indirectly justifies the practice. When child labor practices continue and are accepted by the social environment, what is known as subcultural exploitation is formed. In this subculture, values that deviate from legal norms and children's rights become part of everyday life. Children who work are considered normal, even as a form of maturity and responsibility. This view not only enforces the boundary between work and exploitation, but also reinforces the cycle of injustice that is passed down from one generation to the next. To understand these dynamics, it is important to explain how subcultural exploitation occurs, is sustained, and impacts child protection efforts.

As these practices continue and become socially accepted, a subculture of exploitation is formed, which is a value system that:

- a. Ignoring the importance of formal education.
- b. Consider children's work as necessary and normal.
- c. Tolerating and even encouraging children to work at an early age.

This subculture reinforces the cycle of exploitation because:

- a. Children grow up in an environment where there is no alternative to work.
- b. When they grow up, they tend to reproduce the same patterns towards their children.
- c. External interventions (e.g. government or NGOs) are often rejected because they are considered to “not understand the real conditions”.

3) Criminological Implications

In the perspective of subculture theory: Child

exploitation is not solely a result of poverty, but also the result of social values that deviate from legal norms and human rights; Addressing child exploitation must include cultural and value change at the community level, not just law enforcement; Public education and community empowerment are key to shifting subcultural values towards more child-protective norms.

Subcultural theory helps explain why child exploitation persists despite legal prohibitions. In marginalized communities, local values shaped by economic pressures and limited access often create justifications for the practice. Therefore, a criminological approach that is sensitive to local culture is essential in designing effective and sustainable interventions.

3. Child Labor in the Informal Sector

Children work in workshops, stalls, or home industries with long working hours and without protection. Criminological Analysis:

- 1) Conflict Theory (Karl Marx): Child exploitation is seen as a result of class inequality, where children from the lower classes are used as cheap means of production by capital owners.
- 2) Labeling Theory (Howard Becker): Working children are often labeled as "naughty" or "out of school," which reinforces the stigma and hinders their access to protection.
- 3) Domestic Exploitation: Children, especially girls, work as domestic helpers in closed conditions and are vulnerable to violence.

Criminological Analysis:

1) Feminist Criminology Theory

This exploitation reflects gender and power inequalities, where girls are more vulnerable to exploitation due to their weaker social position. In the understanding of Feminist Theory, Feminist Criminology Theory emerged as a critique of traditional criminology theories that were considered too masculine and failed to understand women's experiences in social and legal systems. In the context of child exploitation, this theory highlights how gender inequalities and power relations play a major role in making girls more vulnerable to

exploitation, both economically and sexually.

2) Gender Inequality as the Root of Exploitation

In many societies, including marginalized communities in Indonesia, girls are often placed in a lower social position than boys. They consider:

- a. More “obedient” and “easier to manage.”
- b. Responsible for domestic work from an early age.
- c. No need to get higher education because you will “get married and take care of the house”.

This view opens up the possibility of exploitation because it is considered “normal” for girls to help with household chores, work as maids, or even be used as objects of disguised forced labor.

3) Domestic and Sexual Exploitation

Girls are more often exploited in the form of:

- a. Domestic work (housemaids, nannies) carried out in closed spaces and with minimal supervision.
- b. Covert sexual exploitation, especially in cases of child trafficking or early marriage for economic reasons.
- c. Feminist criminological theory emphasizes that these forms of exploitation are not only unlawful, but are also manifestations of patriarchal control over women's bodies and labor.

4) Invisibility in the Legal System

Exploited girls are often invisible in the legal system because:

- a. They do not report because of shame or fear.
- b. Society considers exploitation as part of “cultural normality.”
- c. The legal system is not gender sensitive and less responsive to the specific needs of girls.

5) Solutions in the Perspective of Feminist Criminology

This theory encourages an approach that:

- a. Based on gender equality, by strengthening the social position of girls through education and legal protection.
- b. Acknowledge women’s specific experiences, including the trauma and barriers they face.
- c. Push for legal and social reforms that not only punish perpetrators, but also change the cultural norms that normalize exploitation.

Therefore, it can be said that in the perspective of feminist criminology, exploitation of girls is not only a legal issue, but also a

patriarchal social structure issue. Therefore, protection of girls must include an intersectional approach that considers gender, class, and cultural factors simultaneously.

4. Child Trafficking for Economic Purposes

Children are sold or moved to work in other places. In Criminology Analysis, through Organized Crime Theory: This exploitation often involves criminal networks that take advantage of weak supervision and law enforcement, and when understood within the framework of Social Control Theory (Travis Hirschi): it is said that the weak social relationships of children with their families, schools, and communities make them more vulnerable to exploitation. Through a criminological approach, economic exploitation of children can be understood as a structural crime that involves not only individual perpetrators, but also a social system that fails to protect children. Therefore, the solution must include structural reform, community empowerment, and strengthening the child protection system.

1) Children as Objects of Crime

From a criminological perspective, children in this situation are not only positioned as passive victims, but also as objects of crime that are systematically exploited by adult perpetrators, both from the family environment and outside. This exploitation is often not reported because it is considered part of "normalcy" in poor families, thus strengthening the cycle of structural violence.

a. Driving Factors

The main factors driving this exploitation include poverty, low levels of parental education, weak law enforcement, and a permissive culture towards child labor. In addition, the lack of access to social services and child protection exacerbates the situation.

b. Community and State Response

The study also found that the community's response to child exploitation is still low, due to the lack of legal

awareness and the normalization of the practice. On the other hand, state policies tend to be reactive and have not touched on the root of the problem, namely community empowerment and strengthening of locally-based protection systems.

c. Criminological Implications

From a critical criminology perspective, child exploitation is a form of structural crime that arises from social inequality and systemic failure to protect vulnerable groups. Therefore, handling child exploitation must involve an interdisciplinary approach that includes legal, social, economic, and cultural aspects.

B. Effectiveness of Existing Legal Protection Policies and Systems in Supporting Child Exploitation in Urban Environments

Indonesia has a number of laws and regulations aimed at protecting children from exploitation, including:

- 1) Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Amendments to Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection: This law specifically regulates the prohibition of child exploitation, both economic and sexual, and provides criminal sanctions for perpetrators. Article 88 specifically criminalizes child exploitation.
- 2) Law Number 21 of 2007 concerning the Eradication of Criminal Acts of Human Trafficking (TPPO): This law is relevant because child exploitation is often related to human trafficking.
- 3) Criminal Code (KUHP): Several articles in the Criminal Code can also be applied in cases of child exploitation, especially those related to crimes against morality and other general crimes.
- 4) Regional Regulations (Perda): At the regional level, there are often regional regulations that specifically regulate child protection and handling of social problems including the exploitation of street children. For example, Semarang City Regulation Number 5 of 2014 concerning Handling of Street Children, Vagrants, and Beggars.

Effectiveness Policy and Legal Protection System: Although legal and policy frameworks are in place, their effectiveness in

addressing child exploitation in urban settings still faces several challenges:

- 1) Suboptimal Implementation:
 - a. Law Enforcement: Law enforcement against perpetrators of child exploitation is often not optimal. The process of uncovering cases, investigations, terminations, and imposing sanctions is sometimes slow and has not provided a significant deterrent effect.
 - b. Inter Agency Coordination: Handling child exploitation requires good coordination between various parties, such as the police, social services, women's empowerment and child protection services, and non-governmental organizations. Ineffective coordination can hinder comprehensive handling.
 - c. Resources: Limited resources, whether budget, personnel, or supporting facilities (such as safe houses or rehabilitation centers), are also obstacles to policy implementation.
- 2) Factors Causing Complex Exploitation:
 - a. Poverty: Urban poverty often forces children to work or become victims of economic exploitation.
 - b. Lack of Parental Supervision: Unstable family conditions or lack of parental supervision can increase the risk of children becoming victims of exploitation.
 - c. Urbanization and Migration: Urbanization and migration flows can leave children vulnerable due to lack of supportive social and economic networks.
 - d. Demand for Exploitation: The demand for cheap child labor or child sexual exploitation is also a driver of exploitation.
- 3) Awareness and Reporting:
 - a. Lack of Public Awareness: Communities may not be fully aware of the definition and impacts of child exploitation, so cases of exploitation are not always identified and reported.
 - b. Facts and Stigma: Victims or witnesses of child exploitation may be afraid or embarrassed to report the incident.

Efforts to Increase Effectiveness: To increase the effectiveness of legal protection policies and systems, several things that can be done include:

- 1) Strengthening Law Enforcement: Increasing the capacity of law enforcement officers in handling child exploitation cases, including special training and improving coordination.

- 2) Enhanced Protection Services: Strengthening support services for child victims of exploitation, such as psychological assistance, legal assistance, and social reintegration.
- 3) Prevention: Carrying out more intensive prevention efforts through outreach, education for the community and families, and poverty alleviation programs.
- 4) Strengthening the Role of Local Governments: Local governments need to have specific regulations and programs to address child exploitation in their areas, in accordance with the characteristics and challenges of urban environments.
- 5) Community Participation: Increasing community awareness and active participation in identifying, reporting and preventing child exploitation.

Policies and legal protection systems related to child exploitation in urban environments are in place, but their effectiveness still needs to be improved. Challenges such as suboptimal implementation, complexity of causal factors, and lack of awareness and reporting need to be addressed through more comprehensive and coordinated efforts.

C. The Role of Society, Government and Child Protection Institutions in Encouraging and Supporting Sustainable Economic Exploitation of Children

1. Role of Society

The community has a very significant role in efforts to prevent and handle economic exploitation of children in a sustainable manner. These roles include:

- 1) Raising Awareness:
 - a. Raising awareness of oneself and others regarding the definition, forms, causes, and negative impacts of child economic exploitation. This can be done through discussion, dissemination of information, and positive use of social media.
 - b. Recognizing signs of economic exploitation of children in the surrounding environment, such as children working at an early age with long working hours, not attending school, or appearing neglected.
- 2) Reporting:

Dare to report suspected or cases of economic exploitation of children to the authorities (e.g. RT/RW,

police, social services, or child protection agencies). The confidentiality of the reporter needs to be guaranteed to encourage active participation.

- 3) Creator of a Supportive Environment:
 - a. Creating a social environment that rejects and does not exploit children economically. This includes not providing work to underage children and educating others about the dangers.
 - b. Supporting community initiatives aimed at improving family well-being and providing alternative positive activities for children (e.g., peer learning activities, arts and sports activities).
- 4) Social Control:
 - a. Conducting social supervision in residential areas regarding potential child exploitation.
 - b. Providing moral and social support to vulnerable families so that they are not forced to exploit their children.
- 5) Involvement in Advocacy:
 - a. Participate in advocacy activities to encourage policies that better protect children from economic exploitation.
 - b. Supporting civil society organizations working on child protection issues.

2. Role of Government

Governments have primary responsibility for creating strong and sustainable protection systems to prevent and address the economic exploitation of children. These roles include:

- 1) Formulation and Implementation of Policies and Laws:
 - a. Create and strengthen laws and regulations that explicitly prohibit and impose severe sanctions on the economic exploitation of children.
 - b. Translating the implementation of these policies and laws effectively through law enforcement agencies.--Allocate sufficient budget for child exploitation prevention and handling programs.
- 2) Prevention:
 - a. Implement poverty alleviation programs that target vulnerable families so that they do not use children as a source of income.
 - b. Improving access and quality of education so that children are not forced to work.
 - c. Conducting massive socialization and campaigns about the

dangers of economic exploitation of children and children's rights.

- d. Monitor and take action against illegal child labor practices.
- 3) Handling and Protection of Victims:
 - a. Providing support services, psychological support, health, legal support and social reintegration for children who are victims of economic exploitation.
 - b. Building and managing safe houses for child victims of exploitation.
 - c. Rejecting the legal process that is in the best interests of the child victim.
 - 4) Inter-Sector Coordination:
 - a. Building effective coordination between related ministries/institutions (for example, Ministry of PPPA, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Manpower, Police).
 - b. Involving local governments in the implementation of policies and programs at the local level.
 - 5) Capacity Increase:
 - a. Improving the capacity of government officials (law enforcers, social workers, etc.) in handling child exploitation cases.
 - b. Support research and collection of accurate data on the economic exploitation of children to inform policy making.

3. Role of Child Protection Agencies

Child protection agencies (both governmental and non-governmental) play a specific and crucial role in preventing and addressing the ongoing economic exploitation of children:

- 1) Advocacy and Socialization:
 - a. Advocating to the government and other stakeholders to strengthen policies and programs to protect children from economic exploitation.
 - b. Conducting outreach and education to the community about the issues of child exploitation and children's rights.
- 2) Report Receipt and Outreach:
 - a. Provide safe and accessible reporting mechanisms for communities and child victims of exploitation.
 - b. Conduct active outreach to identify children who are victims of economic exploitation, especially in vulnerable places (e.g., streets, markets).
- 3) Legal Assistance and Support:

- a. Providing psychological, social and legal assistance to child victims of exploitation and their families.
 - b. Purchase of child victims to gain access to justice.
- 4) Rehabilitation and Reintegration:
- a. Designing and implementing rehabilitation programs to restore the physical and psychological condition of child victims of exploitation.
 - b. Facilitating the social reintegration of children back into their families, schools and communities.
- 5) Monitoring and Evaluation:
- a. Conduct monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of policies and programs to protect children from economic exploitation.
 - b. Providing input to the government based on monitoring and evaluation results.
- 6) Strengthening Institutional Capacity:
- a. Improving the internal capacity of institutions through staff training and resource development.
 - b. Building a network of cooperation with various parties.

With strong synergy and collaboration between the community, government, and child protection institutions, prevention and handling of economic exploitation of children in a sustainable manner can be realized, creating a safer environment and providing better opportunities for the growth and development of children in urban environments.

Conclusion

Economic exploitation of children in urban environments is a complex and multi-layered form of social crime. Children are not only victims of economic pressure and social inequality, but are also made objects of crime by individuals and systems that exploit their vulnerability. From a criminological perspective, this exploitation cannot be understood only as a violation of the law, but as a result of an unequal social structure, a permissive culture, and a weak child protection system.

Through the approach of criminology theory such as strain theory, subculture, feminist criminology, and conflict theory, it can be concluded that child exploitation is a consequence of the failure of the social system in providing fair access to education, employment, and legal protection. Children from marginalized communities are

often trapped in a cycle of exploitation that is normalized by their social environment, reinforced by cultural values that deviate from the norms of children's rights.

Handling child exploitation in urban areas requires a holistic and interdisciplinary approach. Law enforcement alone is not enough; there needs to be social transformation through empowerment communities, legal education awareness, gender and child-sensitive policy reforms, and strengthening synergies between society, government, and child protection institutions. Thus, children are no longer positioned as passive victims, but as subjects who have the right to protection, education, and a decent future.

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