

Economic Exploitation of Children: An Integrated Handling Model for the Protection of Children's Constitutional Rights (Study in Pati Regency)

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Abstract

Economic exploitation of children is still a serious problem that occurs in various regions, including in Pati Regency, and has a direct impact on the violation of children's rights. This problem is generally triggered by the socio-economic conditions of vulnerable families and low legal awareness of the community, that children are often used as a means to gain economic benefits. This study to analyze law enforcement against the crime of economic exploitation of children in Pati Regency and formulate an integrated handling model in the context of protecting children's constitutional rights. The method used is sociological juridical with a qualitative approach, through the collection of primary data obtained from the public and law enforcement officials, as secondary data sourced from laws and regulations and literature studies. The results of the study show that normatively the legal apparatus for child protection has been adequate, its implementation at the regional level has not been running optimally. Law enforcement is still dominated by preventive efforts, while repressive actions against exploiters have not been carried out firmly and consistently. Low legal culture of the community is also a factor that inhibits the effectiveness of child protection. This study concludes that it is necessary to strengthen fair law enforcement, increase cross-sector coordination, and



build community legal awareness as part of an integrated handling model to suppress the practice of economic exploitation of children and ensure the protection of children's constitutional rights in a sustainable manner.

KEYWORDS

Law Enforcement, Child Economic Exploitation, Child Protection, Integrated Handling Model

Introduction

Children are the next generation of the nation who have a strategic role in determining the direction and sustainability of the nation's future, because in children are inherent potentials, abilities, and ideals that continue to grow and develop. Therefore, children have the right to get the widest opportunity to develop optimally, both in terms of physical health, mental strength, social relationships, and the formation of moral values.¹ In this phase, children are still in a growth phase that has not reached physical, psychological, or social maturity, so they have a high level of vulnerability to various negative influences. At this stage, children urgently need guidance, attention, and protection from adults so that their growth and development process can take place in a reasonable and balanced manner, and be able to prepare children to become independent and responsible individuals in the future.²

Child protection is a fundamental issue that is closely related to basic human values, legal norms, and the dynamics of social life in a society. The protection of children cannot be seen solely as a government program or policy, but as a tangible manifestation of respect and enforcement of human dignity and dignity that must be guaranteed in a sustainable manner.³ Every child is attached to human rights as well as constitutional rights guaranteed in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, so that the state and all elements of society have an obligation to respect, protect, and fulfill it. Therefore, previous generations bear moral and legal responsibilities to

¹ Mila Agustin, "Pemenuhan Hak Pendidikan Anak Terlantar Menurut Undang-Undang Nomor 35 Tahun 2014 Tentang Perlindungan Anak Dan Siyasah Dusturiyah," 2022.

² Hema Dayita et al., "Mendidik Anak Dengan Aman Dan Bahagia Di Era Digital 4.0," *Dharma Publika: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat* 2, no. 2 (2024): 56–66.

³ Alvian Tri Ramadhan and Muhamad Chaidar, "PERLINDUNGAN ANAK DALAM PERSPEKTIF HAK ASASI MANUSIA," *HUKMY: Jurnal Hukum* 5, no. 1 (2025): 906–21.

guarantee, maintain, and protect the best interests of children. This responsibility is mainly on the family as the closest environment in the parenting process, because the family has a major role in providing the affection, guidance, and protection necessary for children to grow and develop optimally in physical, mental, and social aspects.⁴

Legal protection for children can be understood as any form of effort to maintain and guarantee the basic rights of children, including their freedoms and human rights. This protection also includes the fulfillment of various interests of children related to their welfare, such as the right to education, health, a sense of security, and the opportunity to grow and develop properly in accordance with their dignity and dignity.⁵ In Article 28B paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, it is affirmed that "Every child has the right to survival, growth, and development and has the right to protection from violence and discrimination". Which means that every child's right to get this protection must be fulfilled and upheld because it is written in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia as the holder of the highest hierarchy in the order of laws and regulations written in Article 7 paragraph (1) of Law No. 12 of 2011 jo. Law No. 13 of 2022.

In addition to being regulated in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, child protection is specifically regulated in Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning amendments to Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection. In Article 1 paragraph (2) of Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, it is emphasized that "Child Protection is all activities to guarantee and protect children and their rights so that they can live, grow, develop, and participate optimally in accordance with the dignity and dignity of humanity, as well as receive protection from violence and discrimination.". This shows that child protection is not only a constitutional mandate, but is also concretely realized through laws and regulations. However, in practice, there are still many children in Indonesia who experience rights violations, one of which is child exploitation.⁶

⁴ Razita Hanifah and Nur Aini Farida, "Peran Keluarga Dalam Mengoptimalkan Perkembangan Anak," *Az-Zakiy: Journal of Islamic Studies* 1, no. 01 (2023): 23–33.

⁵ Andik Prasetyo, "Perlindungan Hukum Bagi Anak Pelaku Tindak Pidana," *Mizan: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 9, no. 1 (2020): 51–60.

⁶ Kristiawan Putra Nugraha, "Perlindungan Hukum Dan Hak Asasi Manusia Bagi Pekerja Anak Berdasarkan Konteks Undang-Undang Perlindungan Anak: Suatu Kajian Terhadap Implementasi Dan Tantangan," *Lex Sharia Pacta Sunt Servanda: Jurnal Hukum Islam Dan Kebijakan* 1, no. 1 (2023): 7–13.

Child exploitation is an act that cannot be tolerated under any conditions because it includes arbitrary acts that can be committed by both the family and the community against children. This practice of exploitation is generally in the form of coercion on children to work or do certain activities for the economic, social, and political interests of other parties.⁷ In reality, these actions clearly ignore children's rights to protection and do not pay attention to their physical, mental, and social status who are still in the stage of growth and development. Every parent or any party who exploits a child can be subject to legal sanctions as stipulated in Article 88 of Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, which emphasizes that the state provides legal protection guarantees against all forms of actions that harm children.

Various previous studies have shown that child exploitation is a multidimensional problem influenced by social, economic, cultural, and legal factors. An initial study by Muhamad Andi Akbar (2020) which examined child exploitation by parents who make children beggars in Yogyakarta through the perspective of legal sociology emphasizes the factors that cause and prevent child exploitation from a social perspective.⁸ These findings show the strong influence of social and cultural conditions on child exploitation practices, but do not deeply touch on the effectiveness of criminal law enforcement and the role of local governments in building an integrated handling system.

In line with the focus on the role of parents, Siti Hariyanti Hafid T.'s research (2023) examines parental accountability for early childhood exploitation in meeting the economic needs of families in Pare-Pare City from the perspective of sharia economic law.⁹ This research enriches the understanding of the forms of exploitation, the driving factors, and the moral and legal implications of parental actions, but the study is still normative and ethical. As a result, positive aspects of law enforcement and government involvement in cross-sector child exploitation handling policies have not been the main focus.

⁷ Andi Irma Ariani, Andi Saiful Alimsyah, and Andi Ikramullah, "Eksplorasi Anak Di Kota Makassar: Studi Kasus Anak Dipekerjakan Paksa Orangtua," in *Indonesian Annual Conference Series*, 2022, 122–26.

⁸ Muhamad Andi Akbar, "Eksplorasi Anak Oleh Orangtua Menjadi Pengemis Di Yogyakarta Menurut Perspektif Sosiologi Hukum," 2020.

⁹ Siti Hardiyanti Hafid, "Pertanggungjawaban Orang Tua Terhadap Eksplorasi Anak Usia Dini Dalam Pemenuhan Kebutuhan Ekonomi Keluarga Di Kota Parepare (Analisi Hukum Ekonomi Syariah)" (IAIN Parepare, 2024).

The normative approach is also seen in the research of Kamila Nur Cahyani (2023) which analyzes the economic factors that cause child exploitation through a normative juridical approach from a human rights perspective.¹⁰ This study emphasizes that poverty, environment, culture, and the role of parents are the dominant factors in the occurrence of child exploitation, and examines the legal arrangements and the threat of criminal sanctions in the Child Protection Law. Although it provides a strong normative foundation, the study has not empirically examined the implementation of law enforcement at the local level and has not highlighted the concrete role of local governments in addressing child economic exploitation.

The focus on the aspect of criminal responsibility is also reflected in research conducted by Evangeline Ruth Berlianta G. and Rocmad Dwi Riwayanti (2025) which examines the phenomenon of the silver man as a form of economic exploitation of children.¹¹ The research uses a normative juridical approach by focusing on the analysis of the criminal responsibility of parents and the responsibility of the state in providing legal protection to children. Although it makes an important contribution to understanding the construction of legal norms and criminal liability in cases of child economic exploitation, the research is still limited to normative studies and has not yet reviewed in depth the reality of law application in the field. In contrast to this research, the research conducted by this author adopts a sociological juridical approach that not only examines the applicable legal provisions, but also examines the implementation of law enforcement at the regional level in a contextual manner, so as to be able to illustrate the gap between legal norms and law enforcement practices in protecting children from economic exploitation.

Meanwhile, research by Dessy Rakhmawati, Nelly Herlina, and Evalina Alissa (2022) in Jambi City uses an empirical juridical approach with an emphasis on the legal protection of children victims of economic exploitation and the role of child protection institutions.¹² Although the study provides an overview of legal protection practices at the city level, the study has not specifically analyzed criminal law enforcement and the

¹⁰ Kamila Nur Cahyani, "Faktor Ekonomi Penyebab Eksploitasi Anak Dalam Tinjauan Hak Asasi Manusia," *LEX et ORDO Jurnal Hukum Dan Kebijakan* 1, no. 1 (2023): 61–67.

¹¹ Rocmad Dwi Riwayanto, "Fenomena Manusia Silver Sebagai Tindak Pidana Eksploitasi Ekonomi Anak: Analisis Pertanggungjawaban Pidana Dan State Liability," *Jurnal Hukum Lex Generalis* 6, no. 7 (2025).

¹² Dessy Rakhmawati, Nelly Herlina, and Evalina Alissa, "Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Anak Sebagai Korban Eksploitasi Ekonomi Di Kota Jambi," *Jurnal Karya Abdi Masyarakat* 6, no. 2 (2022): 302–14.

integration of local government roles. Thus, this research is here to complete this gap through the analysis of law enforcement of child economic exploitation in Pati Regency with a sociological juridical approach, while offering novelty in the form of the formulation of an integrated handling model involving local governments, law enforcement officials, and the community as a systematic and sustainable effort in protecting children's constitutional rights.

In line with several previous studies, this research exists because when viewed based on facts in the field, especially in the Pati Regency area, there is still a phenomenon of child exploitation that takes advantage of the family's socio-economic vulnerability. The forms of child exploitation that occur are varied, such as children who are used as beggars in public places such as at red lights and markets, and even economic exploitation of children in the form of compassion which takes advantage of the condition of young children to be invited to beg for the mercy of the surrounding people. This condition certainly shows that there are serious problems in law enforcement and a weak supervision system for child exploitation practices. Although normatively there are legal instruments that prohibit and sanction perpetrators, implementation in the field often faces obstacles such as lack of coordination between agencies and limited resources.

This problem puts children in a very vulnerable position, as their fundamental rights to protection, affection, and a proper education are often neglected and even deprived. Various reports submitted by the public through government complaint channels, such as the Central Java LaporGub portal, show that the practice of child exploitation as beggars continues to occur and is reported in a number of regions. This condition reflects that the problem of child exploitation is not an incidental phenomenon, but a structural problem that is still recurring. This reality indicates that there is a significant gap between the normatively established legal framework and the effectiveness of law implementation and enforcement in the field, so that the protection of children guaranteed by laws and regulations has not been fully realized.

The rise of cases of economic exploitation of children raises fundamental questions about the extent to which law enforcement has run optimally. An in-depth analysis is needed to identify how law enforcement against child exploitation crimes is currently carried out and what steps can be taken by relevant parties to address this problem comprehensively so that children's rights can be fulfilled in accordance with the mandate of the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia in 1945 and the mandate of Law

Number 35 of 2014 concerning Amendments to Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection. Based on the phenomenon described above, the researcher is interested in conducting a research entitled "Economic Exploitation in Children: An Integrated Handling Model for the Protection of Children's Constitutional Rights (Study in Pati Regency)".

Methods

This research uses a sociological juridical method with a qualitative approach. The research was carried out in Pati Regency, with the consideration that the area is still found to be a practice of economic exploitation of children and has relevance to the focus of the study. The juridical approach is used to examine legal rules and regulations related to child protection and law enforcement against child economic exploitation. Meanwhile, the sociological approach is carried out by examining the reality of the application of law in society. The research data consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through interviews and observations of law enforcement officials, relevant local government agencies, and parties related to the handling of child economic exploitation cases. Secondary data was obtained through literature studies which included laws and regulations, legal doctrines, previous research results, and relevant scientific literature. The data analysis technique is carried out qualitatively by processing and interpreting data in a descriptive-analytical manner to obtain an overview of the law enforcement process and formulate an effective integrated handling model in an effort to reduce the number of economic exploitation of children in Pati Regency.

Results and Discussion

1. Law Enforcement Against Economic Exploitation of Children in Pati Regency

Child exploitation in Pati Regency is still a problem that continues to arise in various regions. This phenomenon was identified in a number of public spaces, including traffic light areas and traditional markets, indicating that the practice took place openly and repeatedly. The existence of children who are employed as beggars, or brought to carry out begging activities, is a form of violation of children's rights that should be protected by the state. This condition not only reflects weak social supervision, but also demands serious attention from local governments to carry out more

comprehensive prevention, law enforcement, and protection efforts for children as a vulnerable group.

The Pati Regency Government through related agencies has implemented various programs to deal with the practice of economic exploitation of children. These efforts include socialization activities regarding the importance of child protection and the implementation of patrols in public spaces and public facilities that have the potential to be locations for exploitation. Although these preventive measures have been implemented, the reality on the ground shows that the practice of economic exploitation of children is still found in several areas in Pati Regency. This condition indicates the need to strengthen the strategy of handling and supervision so that every child can obtain his or her full rights, as guaranteed in the constitution and laws and regulations regarding child protection.

The role of the government is a very essential aspect in efforts to overcome child exploitation cases, considering that the state has established regulations that clearly regulate the protection of children's rights. These provisions are contained in the 1945 Constitution and clarified through Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, which affirms that every child has the right to protection and the fulfillment of other basic rights. Therefore, the presence of the government is not only limited to the function of legislation as a rule-maker, but also includes responsibility for ensuring the effectiveness of law enforcement on the regulations that have been formulated, so that its implementation is in line with the direction and objectives of the constitution and is able to provide optimal protection for children.

Article 28B paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution affirms that *"Every child has the right to survival, growth, and development and has the right to protection from violence and discrimination"*, which is the constitutional basis for the implementation of child protection in Indonesia.¹³ Child protection is essentially a series of efforts to create conditions that support the normal growth and development of children from physical, mental, and social aspects. These efforts reflect the principles of social justice and must be implemented in all sectors of life. Every action in the context of child protection carries legal consequences, so its existence requires a clear legal basis as a form of guarantee for the fulfillment of

¹³ Sarah Epafras Ronauli Nainggolan, "KAJIAN YURIDIS TERHADAP EKSPLOITASI ANAK OLEH ORANG TUA DITINJAU DARI UNDANG-UNDANG NOMOR 35 TAHUN 2014 TENTANG PERLINDUNGAN ANAK," *LEX PRIVATUM* 15, no. 5 (2025).

children's rights. The protection must be provided from the time the child is in the womb until he reaches the age of 18, guided by the principles of non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to live and develop, and respect for the opinion of the child in accordance with the definition of the child as described in Article 1 number (1) of Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection.

Based on Article 20 of Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, it is explained that the protection of children is a responsibility inherent in five main pillars, namely parents, family, community, government, and the state, which are jointly obliged to ensure the fulfillment of children's basic rights.¹⁴ Legal protection is provided as a mechanism to safeguard the existence and rights of children. Children are seen as legal subjects who have human rights and are bound by laws and regulations. In this framework, children are seen as having the same rights and obligations as adults according to the applicable legal provisions, even with special treatment that is in accordance with their growth and development needs. Externally, child protection is supported by the principle of *equality before the law* and the privileges guaranteed by the 1945 Constitution.

In contrast to the ideal responsibility that should be carried out by the five main pillars of child protection, namely parents, family, society, government, and state, the reality on the ground shows that parents are often the main factor that encourages a child to be employed as a beggar or involved in beggar activities. These actions are generally carried out with the aim of utilizing the compassion of the community to gain economic benefits, thus placing children in situations that are contrary to the principles of protection and fulfillment of children's rights. This condition reflects the failure of the first pillar, namely parents, who actually have a fundamental obligation to ensure that children's growth and development take place safely, with dignity, and free from all forms of exploitation.

In addition, society and the state also have a strategic role in preventing economic exploitation of children in order to create social conditions that allow every child to carry out his rights and obligations in a proper and dignified manner.¹⁵ Community involvement is needed to build a culture of social supervision and strengthen support systems that can

¹⁴ Putu Yurika Marta Prasetya, Made Sugi Hartono, and Ni Ketut Sari Adnyani, "Analisis Yuridis Frasa Membiarkan Dalam Pasal 76C Undang-Undang Nomor 35 Tahun 2014 Tentang Perlindungan Anak," *Jurnal Ilmu Hukum Sui Generis* 3, no. 3 (2023): 15–24.

¹⁵ Tiffanny Stella Watulingas, "Penegakan Hukum Terhadap Tindakan Orang Tua Yang Mengeksploitasi Anak," *Lex Crimen* 9, no. 2 (2020).

prevent harmful practices to children, while the state is responsible for providing adequate policies, monitoring mechanisms, and legal instruments. Child protection is basically a legal action that has juridical consequences, so it is necessary to guarantee clear and firm legal certainty so that the implementation of child protection can run effectively.

In general, protection can be interpreted as a series of efforts made to protect individuals from various forms of threats or situations that have the potential to pose a danger to their safety, welfare, and rights. Protection not only includes precautions against physical or psychological risks, but also reflects the provision of security, assistance, and support to individuals or groups who are in a weak or vulnerable position. In the social and legal context, protection is an important instrument to ensure that everyone, especially vulnerable groups such as children, has a safe environment and the opportunity to grow and develop optimally.¹⁶

According to Satjipto Rahardjo, legal protection is an effort made to maintain and secure a person's interests through the existence of rules that ensure the fulfillment and respect for human rights. Within this framework, every individual, including children, is placed as a legal subject who has the position to exercise his rights, authority, and capacity in a reasonable and proportionate manner in social life. Its relevance to child exploitation cases can be seen from the fact that the practice of exploitation is a form of conflict of interest, especially when the economic interests of adults ignore the best interests of children. Satjipto Rahardjo emphasized that various interests in society must be regulated systematically and proportionately so as not to cause conflict or waste, so that in the context of child protection, legal arrangements function to prevent and crack down on acts of exploitation.¹⁷

Children are a gift as well as a mandate from God Almighty which must be taken care of and protected at all times. In a child, there are inherent dignity, dignity, and basic rights as human beings that must be respected and fulfilled. Law Number 35 of 2014 explains that what is meant by *a child* is any individual who is not yet 18 years old, including babies who are still in the womb. Therefore, the protection of children must have begun even before they are born, because they are the generation that must grow up in a safe, dignified, and loving environment. Children are sectoral

¹⁶ Dewi Asri Puannandini et al., "HAK ASASI ANAK DALAM REALITAS KEHIDUPAN SEHARI-HARI: STUDI KASUS ANAK SEBAGAI PENGAMEN JALANAN," *Jurnal Media Akademik (JMA)* 3, no. 7 (2025).

¹⁷ LILI RAHMAYANA HARAHAHAP, "PERLINDUNGAN HUKUM TERHADAP ANAK KORBAN EKSPLOITASI SEBAGAI PENGEMIS (STUDI PENELITIAN DI KOTA LHOKSEUMAWE)" (Universitas Malikussaleh, 2025).

subjects who have a very important position in the life of society, the nation, and the state, considering that they are prospective leaders who will become the next generation of the nation. As the next generation, children need to receive coaching, protection, and improvement of welfare optimally so that they can grow and develop according to their potential.¹⁸ These efforts are important to ensure that children are able to form personalities, develop abilities, and hone the skills needed to carry out their social roles and functions in the future.

Economic exploitation of children is carried out solely to obtain economic benefits without considering the value of propriety, sense of justice, or the provision of appropriate compensation for the welfare of the exploited party, in this case, namely children. Unintentionally, this act of exploitation ignores the rights and needs of children in pursuit of material benefits for those who take advantage.¹⁹ Economic exploitation of children can be identified through a number of indicators that describe the existence of working conditions that are not in accordance with the stages of child development. One of the main indicators is when children start working at a very young age, even from an early age, thus reducing or eliminating their opportunities to participate in formal education, socialize, and develop emotionally and psychologically. In addition, the involvement of children in work for a long duration, or the placement of children in one work site for a long time without access to adequate playtime or rest, is also a form of exploitation that violates the basic rights of children.²⁰

Article 59 paragraph (2) letter d of Law Number 35 of 2014 emphasizes that children have the right to receive special protection from various forms of exploitation, both economic and sexual. This provision shows the state's serious concern in ensuring that every child is protected from practices that are detrimental and hinder their growth and development process. Thus, the protection of children from economic exploitation is not only a moral responsibility, but also a legal mandate that is expressly guaranteed by laws and regulations, so the state is obliged to provide prevention, prosecution, and recovery mechanisms for child victims.

¹⁸ Eka Aulia Novianti, Ida Budhiati, and Diana Fitriani, "Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Anak Jalanan Sebagai Korban Eksploitasi Ekonomi," *Journal of Law and Nation* 3, no. 1 (2024): 155–64.

¹⁹ Rakhmawati, Herlina, and Alissa, "Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Anak Sebagai Korban Eksploitasi Ekonomi Di Kota Jambi."

²⁰ M H Darmini, "Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Eksploitasi Pekerja Anak Dibawah Umur," *QAWWAM: Journal for Gender Mainstreaming* 14, no. 2 (2020): 54–76.

It is further regulated in Article 66 which reads "Special Protection for Children who are economically and/or sexually exploited as referred to in Article 59 paragraph (2) letter d is carried out through:

- a. dissemination and/or socialization of the provisions of laws and regulations related to the Protection of economically and/or sexually exploited children;
- b. monitoring, reporting, and sanctioning; and
- c. the involvement of various companies, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, and communities in the elimination of economic and/or sexual exploitation of children."

It can be understood that child exploitation is an act of child exploitation, both economically and sexually, that places children as objects to obtain benefits for other parties without considering the rights, dignity, and welfare of children. This exploitation is seen as a serious violation of children's rights, so special protection is needed through various structured efforts, such as the dissemination of legal information, monitoring and reporting of cases, the imposition of sanctions, and the involvement of various parties including companies, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, and the general public in efforts to eliminate the practice.

2. Integrated Model for Handling the Crime of Economic Exploitation of Children to Provide Effective Protection of Children's Constitutional Rights

Efforts to counter child exploitation in Indonesia have a relatively strong legal and policy foundation through various laws and regulations, one of which is Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection which expressly regulates the obligations of the state, government, and society in preventing and handling all forms of exploitation of children. The law not only emphasizes the aspect of legal protection, but also mandates preventive and repressive efforts to ensure the full fulfillment of children's rights. In addition to these legal instruments, the government also implements policies in the field of social welfare as a supporting step, including through the Family Hope Program and Non-Cash Food Assistance. These programs aim to reduce the vulnerability and economic pressure of families which are often a driving factor for child exploitation, so that it is expected to be able

to create social conditions that are more conducive to the fulfillment of children's rights and protection in a sustainable manner.²¹

The Pati Regency Government, especially through the Social Service, Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, and Family Planning, has initiated and implemented various preventive programs that aim to increase the awareness of parents, families, and the community regarding the importance of protecting and fulfilling children's rights. These programs are designed as an early prevention effort against various forms of child violence and exploitation by emphasizing educational and participatory approaches. One of the strategic initiatives developed is the establishment of the Women and Children Protection House, which is a collaborative forum between local governments, communities, and related institutions in handling cases of gender-based violence and child protection in an integrated manner. Through the existence of the Women and Children Protection House, not only are mentoring, protection, and referral services provided for victims, but empowerment programs are also implemented that encourage children to become active, critical, and brave subjects to voice and fight for their rights, so as to create a safer and more responsive environment to the best interests of children.

In order to carry out preventive efforts against the economic exploitation of children, the Social Service for Women's Empowerment Child Protection and Family Planning also conducts gathering and dialogue activities through a children's forum with the Children's Forum. This activity aims to provide an understanding that children are the main foundation in human development that must be cared for and protected with full attention and affection. Children's forums are positioned not only as a formal forum, but as a participatory bridge that allows the growth of children's courage to express their opinions, aspirations, and ideas. Through these activities, children are encouraged to realize their role as development subjects, so that this awareness cultivation is expected to be able to prevent the occurrence of children's economic exploitation and affirm that children are not only the next generation, but future owners whose rights must be guaranteed and protected.

The Social Service, Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, and Family Planning shows a strong commitment to efforts to combat child exploitation through the implementation of the institutional vision and

²¹ Sri Damayanti et al., "Implementasi Program Kesejahteraan Sosial Studi Penanggulangan Eksploitasi Anak Sebagai Pengemis," *Journal of Politics, Governance, and Administration* 1, no. 2 (2025): 69–79.

mission that is the direction of its policies and work programs. The vision of *"Improving Community Welfare and Public Services"* is used as a strategic foundation in the implementation of various child protection programs that are oriented towards improving the quality of life of the community as a whole and sustainably. The vision is then elaborated into a number of missions, including improving the quality of human resources through optimizing access and quality of services in the fields of education and health, as well as strengthening community empowerment as part of poverty alleviation strategies. This empowerment effort is important considering that poverty is one of the structural factors that often encourage the practice of child exploitation, so that through an integrated social welfare approach, it is hoped that it can minimize the risk of exploitation and ensure the optimal fulfillment of children's rights.

In addition to the Social Service for Women's Empowerment, Child Protection and Family Planning, the Pati Regency Pamong Praja Police Unit also carries out its duties and authorities in accordance with the provisions of Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government and Government Regulation Number 16 of 2018 concerning the Pamong Praja Police Unit. In its implementation, the Pati Regency Pamong Praja Police Unit conducts routine patrols both in the Pati area as part of efforts to enforce local regulations and public order. The patrols are generally focused on strategic locations and public spaces, such as Pati Square, traffic light intersections, markets, and city icons such as the Milkfish Monument and Joyokusumo Stadium. The main target of this patrol activity is groups of People with Social Welfare Problems, especially beggars, homeless people, and displaced persons, who have the potential to involve children in economic exploitation activities. In addition to field patrols, the Pati Regency Pamong Praja Police Unit also opens a public complaint mechanism both online and offline, with online complaint services through the SIAPAK platform, as a form of responsiveness of local governments in handling public order and child protection issues in a sustainable manner.

In fact, various policies and programs that have been implemented by the government have not been able to fully overcome the problem of child exploitation, especially economic exploitation of children which is still found in social practices in society. This condition shows that there is a gap between policy formulation at the normative level and the effectiveness of its implementation in the field, both in terms of supervision, interagency coordination, and law enforcement. This situation is a strong basis for the government to evaluate and reassess the programs that have been implemented, including assessing the extent to which the applicable policies

are actually realized optimally. In addition to strengthening preventive aspects and social welfare, it is also necessary to strengthen repressive measures through tightening law enforcement against perpetrators of child economic exploitation, so that existing policies do not only stop at the normative level, but are also able to provide a real and sustainable deterrent effect and legal protection for children as a vulnerable group.

Lawrence M. Friedman stated that the effectiveness of law enforcement is not only determined by the existence of laws and regulations, but is influenced by three main elements that are interrelated, namely legal substance, legal structure, and legal culture²²

1. Legal Substance

The legal structure in this context refers to all law enforcement officials and related institutions that have the authority and responsibility to implement, supervise, and enforce the applicable legal provisions. Judging from the aspect of legal structure, the Social Service, Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, and Family Planning and the Pamong Praja Police Unit have basically carried out their functions and authorities through various efforts, such as patrols in public spaces, socialization activities regarding perlint children, as well as handling reports submitted by the community. However, the implementation of these tasks has not been fully carried out optimally because it still focuses more on preventive measures, while repressive law enforcement against child economic exploitation perpetrators has not been carried out firmly, consistently, and sustainably. This condition has an impact on the lack of a deterrent effect, so that the practice of child exploitation is still found in the community.

2. Legal Structure

The substance of the law includes the entire set of laws and regulations that function as a normative basis in regulating public behavior as well as a guideline for law enforcement officials in exercising their authority. In the context of child protection, the existing legal framework is basically adequate, especially Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection which expressly prohibits the practice of economic exploitation of children and regulates the threat of criminal sanctions for the perpetrators. With this regulation, normatively there is no legal

²² Fara Rizqiyah Sari and Rayno Dwi Adityo, "Efektivitas Alat Bukti Elektronik Pada Praktik Beracara Perspektif Teori Sistem Hukum Lawrence M. Friedman," *Sakina: Journal of Family Studies* 8, no. 2 (2024): 244–57.

vacuum that hinders the handling of child exploitation cases. However, the weak implementation and lack of strict enforcement of applicable legal provisions have caused these legal norms to not be able to provide an optimal deterrent effect, so that the practice of economic exploitation of children still continues to occur in society.

3. Legal Culture

Legal culture can be understood as a law that lives and develops in people's lives (*living law*), which is reflected in the values, attitudes, mindsets, and behaviors of the community towards the application of the law. In the context of child protection, there is still a growing view in some communities that tolerate children's involvement in begging activities or working in public spaces, citing family economic pressure and compassion, indicating a low level of legal awareness. This condition reflects that the values of child protection have not been fully internalized as part of the legal culture that lives in society. As a result, even though there have been legal rules that prohibit the economic exploitation of children, the practice still continues because there is no conformity between the written legal norms and the attitudes and behaviors of the community in daily life.

The legal structure can be analogized as a machine that functions to run and operationalize the substance of the law so that the legal provisions that have been formulated can be applied in a real and effective manner in practice. Legal substance is likened to the result or product produced by the machine, which is manifested in the form of substantive policies and applicable policies, both those outlined in writing in laws and regulations and those developed in unwritten legal practice. Meanwhile, legal culture plays a role as a determining factor that turns on and moves the machine, namely in the form of attitudes, awareness, values, and behavior of the community and law enforcement officials in understanding, obeying, and implementing the law. The three elements of the legal system proposed by Lawrence M. Friedman must be integrated and run in harmony, because weaknesses in one of the elements will have an impact on the non-optimal overall law enforcement. Thus, the integration of legal substances, legal structures, and legal culture is the main prerequisite for the realization of

an effective, comprehensive, and comprehensive legal system in achieving legal goals, namely justice, legal certainty, and benefits for society.²³

The disharmony between the elements of the legal structure, the substance of the law, and the legal culture shows that the existence of relatively adequate regulations and the efforts of law enforcement officials in exercising their authority have not been fully supported by a strong legal culture of the community. The low level of awareness and compliance of the community's law, accompanied by unfirm and consistent law enforcement against perpetrators, is the main factor that hinders the effectiveness of child protection from economic exploitation practices in Pati Regency. This condition confirms that the success of child protection does not only depend on normative and institutional aspects, but is also highly determined by the extent to which legal values, especially the principle of child protection, are internalized in people's lives. Therefore, despite the relatively comprehensive legal framework, without adequate law enforcement and increased public awareness of children's rights, the practice of economic exploitation of children has the potential to continue and is difficult to eradicate sustainably.²⁴

In the context of economic exploitation of children, parents play the main role and responsibility in ensuring the fulfillment of children's rights and ensuring that the child's growth and development process takes place optimally, both physically, mentally, and socially. Parents are an important part of the legal culture, because the mindset, attitudes, and values they adopt in educating and raising children are very influential in the formation of individual behavior as well as social practices in the community. When parents deliberately make their children beggars or involve children in begging activities, these actions not only reflect economic problems, but also show a low level of awareness and understanding of the law. This condition is mainly related to the lack of knowledge of parents about the legal obligations inherent in their role and the rights of children that should be protected and fulfilled by the family, society, and the state.²⁵

²³ Japansen Sinaga et al., "ELEMEN-ELEMEN SISTEM PERADILAN PIDANA YANG MEMPENGARUHI KEBERHASILAN PENEGAKAN HUKUM," *Jurnal SOMASI (Sosial Humaniora Komunikasi)* 6, no. 1 (2025): 220–32.

²⁴ Indah Sri Utari et al., "Legal Protection for Children as Victims of Economic Exploitation: Problems and Challenges in Three Major ASEAN Countries (Indonesia, Vietnam and Philippines)," *Lex Scientia Law Review* 7, no. 2 (2023): 771–842.

²⁵ Muhammad Arifin, "Potret Pekerja Anak Di Jalanan Kota Samarinda (Studi Kasus Pekerja Anak Di Simpang Lampu Merah Kecamatan Samarinda ULU)," *Jurnal Sosial Dan Humaniora* 2, no. 02 (2025): 74–82.

The theory of legal liability put forward by Hans Kelsen emphasizes that everyone who legally commits an act that is contrary to the provisions of the applicable law is obliged to account for his actions. In line with this view, Soeroso stated that every action of a legal subject, both an individual and a legal entity, that violates the law must be sanctioned because the act is considered a conscious will of the perpetrator. In the context of economic exploitation of children, although various preventive efforts have been made by the government and related parties, the reality is that the practice is still found in society. Therefore, it is necessary to implement strict repressive measures through law enforcement and the provision of proportionate sanctions to have a deterrent effect on perpetrators, while ensuring effective legal protection for children as victims.²⁶

Legal accountability in cases of economic exploitation of children is not only interpreted as the obligation of the perpetrator to receive sanctions, but also as an instrument to uphold justice and ensure legal certainty for children. Children as legal subjects who have constitutional rights to protection, welfare, and proper development, must be placed as parties to the maximum protection by the state.²⁷ Therefore, any form of violation that is detrimental to the best interests of the child must be seen as a serious and intolerable act against the law. The application of criminal, administrative, and social sanctions against perpetrators of child economic exploitation is important to show the law's alignment with the protection of children's rights and strengthen the legal norms that apply in society.

The effectiveness of legal accountability is highly dependent on the consistency of law enforcement officials in implementing laws and regulations related to child protection. Firm and fair law enforcement is expected not only to function as a means of enforcement, but also as a preventive effort through the formation of public legal awareness.²⁸ Thus, countering economic exploitation of children cannot be done partially, but requires synergy between legal policies, responsive law enforcement, and social support oriented towards fulfilling children's rights and best interests in a sustainable manner.

²⁶ Fazindra Adiansa, Cicilia Julyani Tondy, and I Wayan Karya, "Tanggungjawab Notaris Terhadap Akta Yang Dibatalkan Oleh Pengadilan," *ARMADA: Jurnal Penelitian Multidisiplin* 2, no. 1 (2024): 42–55.

²⁷ Kristiawan Putra Nugraha, "Perlindungan Hukum Dan Hak Asasi Pekerja Anak: Kajian Implementasi Dan Tantangan Dalam Konteks Undang-Undang Perlindungan Anak," *IN RIGHT: Jurnal Agama Dan Hak Azazi Manusia* 12, no. 2 (2023): 191–218.

²⁸ Ach Fadlail, "Membangun Kesadaran Hukum Bagi Masyarakat Dan Pengak Hukum Agar Tercipta Penegakan Hukum Yang Berkeadilan," *HUKMY: Jurnal Hukum* 3, no. 1 (2023): 330–45.

Conclusion

Law enforcement against the crime of economic exploitation of children in Pati Regency basically has a strong normative foundation through the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection. However, the implementation of law enforcement at the regional level has not been running optimally. The efforts made by the Pati Regency Government tend to still focus on preventive measures, such as patrols and socialization, while repressive legal enforcement against exploiters has not been implemented firmly and consistently. This condition is exacerbated by weak coordination between institutions and low legal awareness of the public, especially parents, who still view children's involvement in economic activities as something that can be tolerated. Therefore, repressive measures are needed that can disharmonize the elements of legal structure, legal substance, and legal culture as stated by Lawrence M. Friedman as the main factor that hinders the effectiveness of protecting children's constitutional rights from economic exploitation practices in Pati Regency. The Pati Regency Government is expected to strengthen law enforcement against the crime of economic exploitation of children through the implementation of strict and fair repressive measures, especially by imposing criminal sanctions on perpetrators, including parents who deliberately exploit children for economic interests. In addition, it is necessary to improve cross-sector coordination between , the Social Service for Women's Empowerment Child Protection and Family Planning, the Pati Regency Pamong Praja Police Unit, law enforcement officials, and community institutions in order to realize an integrated handling model oriented towards prevention, prosecution, and victim recovery. The government also needs to intensify legal education and socialization programs to the public to build a legal culture that upholds the principle of the best interests of children. With strong synergy between legal policies, institutions, and public awareness, it is hoped that the protection of children's constitutional rights from economic exploitation can be realized effectively and sustainably.

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