



Factors That Influence Sexual Violence Against Children

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Abstract

Sexual violence against minors is a serious challenge in child protection, affecting their well-being, rights, and development. This issue is not only individual but also highlights the need for collective efforts to prevent and address sexual violence. This phenomenon is increasingly worrying, especially in the era of globalization, which facilitates access to information and technology, which also increases the risk of sexual violence against children. Research into the factors influencing sexual violence against children was conducted using library research using Google Scholar. Library research is a method with a focus similar to a literature review. Based on the literature review on the phenomenon of sexual violence, it can be concluded that this issue remains prevalent in society, especially involving children. Sexual violence is usually perpetrated by adults against minors. One of the main factors causing sexual violence against children is their inability to resist, both physically and mentally.

Keywords: *Factors of Sexual Violence, Children*

Introduction

According to language, children are the second offspring as a result of the relationship between a man and a woman as husband and wife with the aim of forming a happy and eternal family or household based on the Almighty Godhead¹. According to Marriage Law no. 1/1974 article 47 paragraph (1) states

¹ Indonesia, P. R., & Bab, I. (1974). Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage. State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia, 1-5.

that a child is "a person who has not reached the age of 18 years or has never been married, is under the authority of his parents as long as they are not deprived of their authority". Based on Law no. 23 of 2002 concerning child protection, says that children are a trust and gift from God Almighty, in whom the dignity and worth of being a complete human being is inherent².

Children are also the embryo of the birth of a new generation which is the successor to the ideals of the nation's struggle and human resources for National Development³. In the process of growth and development, child protection aims to ensure the fulfillment of children's rights so that they can live, grow, develop and participate optimally in accordance with human dignity, as well as receive protection from violence and discrimination, in order to create Indonesian children who are of good quality, have noble character and prosperity⁴. The violence referred to includes all acts of physical, psychological, sexual, and/or neglect causing misery or suffering, including threats to commit acts, coercion, or unlawful deprivation of liberty. This also includes threats of action, coercion or deprivation of liberty⁵.

Children are often considered vulnerable and in need of protection because of their dependence on adults. This vulnerability is related to their stage of development which has not yet reached maturity in physical, mental, moral or spiritual terms. At this age, children are not yet able to think and weigh decisions like adults, so they have difficulty distinguishing between good and bad things. Sexual violence against children who have not yet reached adulthood is one of the most serious challenges in the realm of child protection which concerns aspects of children's welfare, rights and growth and development. This phenomenon is not only an individual problem, but also reflects the urgent need for collective efforts to prevent and overcome sexual violence. The phenomenon of sexual violence in Indonesia is increasingly reaching an alarming level. In this era of globalization, increasingly easy access to information and technology also opens the door to the potential risk of sexual violence against children. Every day, Indonesia reports that around 20 women become victims of sexual harassment or violence. This number does not include children who have not yet reached adulthood, which includes children who are

² Yuniyanti, E. R. N. Y. (2020). Analysis of Factors Influencing Incidents of Sexual Violence Against Children at the Integrated Service Center in Semarang City. Semarang: Postgraduate Public Health Study Program, Semarang State University

³ Yuniyanti, E. R. N. Y. (2020). Analysis of Factors Influencing Incidents of Sexual Violence Against Children at the Integrated Service Center in Semarang City. Semarang: Postgraduate Public Health Study Program, Semarang State University

⁴ Indonesia, R. (2002). Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection. Ministry of Women's Empowerment, Republic of Indonesia

⁵ Prastini, E. (2024). Violence Against Children and Child Protection Efforts in Indonesia. *Journal of Citizenship Virtues*, 4(2), 760-770

boys and are often targets of violence with the number of victims not being documented for various reasons⁶.

According to WHO, sexual violence against children refers to acts of abuse or inappropriate treatment involving physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect of care, and exploitation for commercial gain, these acts, either directly or indirectly, can endanger the health, safety, dignity or development of children⁷. This kind of violence is often carried out by individuals who have responsibility, trust, or authority to protect the child. The issue of sexual violence against minors is increasingly becoming a serious concern because of its ever-growing level of complexity in social and humanitarian aspects. However, there are still many cases that remain unresolved due to various reasons, such as social stigma, refusal to marry, or difficulty accessing protection services⁸.

This situation shows the importance of the role of parents in recognizing signs of sexual violence in children. The most common negative effect felt by victims of sexual violence is psychological damage. The trauma of sexual violence during childhood has been shown to have long-term negative psychological consequences for male and female victims of sexual violence. Short-term psychological effects can be seen immediately after the victim experiences sexual violence, for example depression, depression, emotional disturbance, isolation and anxiety. Meanwhile, long-term psychological effects can be seen in sexual dysfunction, sexual deviation, severe depression, uncontrollable anxiety, fear, excessive suspicion, aggressiveness, antisociality, committing sexual violence because they want revenge and suicidal thoughts. This situation highlights the need to increase public awareness and strengthen protection systems for the entire population, especially women and children, so that they can live in a safe and healthy environment and free from violence.

In its 2021 annual note, Komnas Perempuan received almost more than 8,000 reports of violence against women in 2020. 1 Of this number, Komnas Perempuan recorded that 6,480 of the 8,234 cases of violence that occurred in the household (KDRT) or personal sphere were cases of sexual violence. Meanwhile, sexual violence was also recorded as the highest number of cases reported by women who experienced violence in the public sphere with a total

⁶ Ahsinin, A., & Stiawati, D. (2015). POCKET BOOK: Preventing and Handling Sexual Violence Against Women and Children in Educational Environments. PKWJ UI-MAGENTA LR&A

⁷ Asy'ari, S. (2019). Violence Against Children. *Islamic Journal*, 2(2), 178-194

⁸ Rini, R. (2020). Long-Term Psychological Impacts of Child Sexual Violence (Comparison of Factors: Perpetrator, Type, Method, Openness, and Social Support). *IKRA-ITH HUMANIORA: Journal of Social and Humanities*, 4(3), 1-12.

of 962 cases, either involving sexual intercourse or rape or obscene acts or harassment. Not only adult women, children are also vulnerable to sexual violence. Ironically, the National Commission on Violence Against Women actually recorded 954 cases of violence occurring against girls throughout 2024, which is an increase from 2019, namely 822 cases⁹. Violence against children can occur anytime and anywhere, not only in public places such as streets or quiet locations, but also at home, which should be the safest place for children. The house, which should be a place for children to play, study or read, actually becomes a hidden and safe place for perpetrators to commit violence against children.

Relevant research conducted by Sabda Tuliah "Study of the Motives of Perpetrators of Sexual Violence Against Children Through Modus Operandi in the Family Environment" revealed that in general, some people think that it is unreasonable that parents, uncles or anyone close to victims of sexual violence would be able to do such depraved things¹⁰. However, the facts show that perpetrators of sexual violence against children are often people who have a close relationship with the victim, such as uncles, aunts, biological or step parents, and cousins. It could also be an acquaintance of the victim, such as a neighbor or playmate. The closer the relationship between the attacker and the victim, the more likely the victim is to face psychological problems.

So sexual violence can be categorized into two types; (1) Family Abuse, namely sexual violence committed by someone who is related by blood to the victim or can be interpreted as meaning that the perpetrator is part of the nuclear family. (2) Extra Familial Abuse, namely sexual violence committed by people outside the family environment. Perpetrators from this category are adults who know and are considered close to the nuclear family and have a close relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. Extra Familial Abuse is carried out by other adults who are also called pedophiles and the victims are children¹¹.

Serious psychological impact on victims, especially children who are still developing. The impact of sexual violence on children causes feelings, trauma, anxiety, loss of children's trust in adults, children feel helpless, nightmares,

⁹ Budiarti, A. I., Maharani, M., Tarigan, M., Ashila, B. I., Wicaksana, D. A., & Saputro, A. A. (2022). Reflections on Handling Sexual Violence in Indonesia (Indexation of Court Decisions 2018–2020). Jakarta: Indonesia Judicial Research Society (IJRS).

¹⁰ Tuliah, S. (2018). A Study of the Motives of Perpetrators of Sexual Violence Against Children Through the Modus Operandi in the Family Environment. *E-Journal of Sosiati-Sosiologi*, 6(2), 1-17

¹¹ Azizah, N. (2024). The Role of Sex Education Counseling as an Effort to Prevent Sexual Violence in Early Childhood. *At-Taujih; Journal of Islamic Counseling Guidance*, 2(2), 162-173

phobias and trauma accompanied by the pain felt by children who are victims of sexual violence and other psychological problems often accompany victims of sexual violence, requiring special attention from mental health professionals. Furthermore, the long-term impact on children who are victims of sexual violence during their development is that these children have the potential to become perpetrators of sexual violence in the future, this is generalized to the perception that acts of sexual violence can be carried out against parties who are weak and powerless to fight back¹².

Research Methods

The research method used is Library Research. Library Research has the same focus on literature reviews, research using the literature review method is a research or research method for collecting and evaluating research related to a particular topic focus¹³. Literature review using Google Scholar for the last 10 years from 2015-2025. This method is a method referred to as a library study method which is a technique for collecting data using qualitative methods. In other words, relevant literature is theories, discoveries, information and other related facts that are similar to the research topic being carried out. The analyzed data is displayed in table form which represents the results of the research process and provides findings. These findings are then restated in the conclusion of the research conducted by the author, which is the final result of this research based on data from previous work and research¹⁴

Results and Discussion

This research review outlines various factors that contribute to the occurrence of sexual violence against children. Apart from that, the author also presents several definitions of sexual violence directed at children, which have been collected from various literary sources.

¹² Rahmi, N., & Rasanjani, S. (2023). Strategies for Addressing Sexual Violence Against Children by the Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning Service in Banda Aceh City. *Student Scientific Journal of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences*, 8(1).

¹³ Isfuliah, L., Nasichah, N., Farhanah, K., & Febrianti, F. (2024). The Role of Family Learning Center Counseling Services (PUSPAGA) in Preventing Early Childhood Violence. *Indonesian Education Star Journal*, 2(1), 199-211

¹⁴ Widyastuti, M., Annasai, M. A. A., Maharani, N., & Muzzamil, F. (2024). Literature Review: Factors of Domestic Violence (KDRT) and Its Impact on Children. *Well Being: Journal of Psychology*, 1(1), 1-10, p. 4

Table 1. Research Results from the Literature Review

No	Name of Researcher	Title of Researcher	Results of Review
1	Octaviani, F., & Nurwati, N. (2021)	"Analysis of Factors and Impact of Sexual Violence on Children"	Factors that cause sexual violence against children include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Hormonal changes by the perpetrator. b. Technological development c. Lifestyle changes. d. Social and cultural influences. e. Lack of public knowledge about sexual violence
2	Setiani., <i>et, all.</i> , (2017).	"Phenomenological Study: Factors that Influence the Occurrence of Sexual Violence among Girls in Wonosobo Regency"	Factors that influence the occurrence of sexual violence against children include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family factors 2. Environmental factors 3. c. Value factor 4. Individual factors
3	Magfirah. <i>et, all.</i> , (2023)	"Sexual Violence in Islamic Law Review"	There are two factors that cause sexual violence, namely: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Natural and Biological Factors b) Socio-Cultural Factors
4	Lewoleba, K. K., & Fahrozi, M. H. (2020)	"Study of Factors in the Occurrence of Sexual Violence in Children"	The factors that cause sexual crimes against children are divided into 2 (two) parts, namely: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Internal Factors 2) External Factors

5	Sopyandi, S., & Sujarwo, S. (2023)	“Sexual Violence in Educational Environments and its Prevention”	Factors that can cause sexual violence are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic Factors • Environmental Factors
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According to this research, sexual violence against children is a serious offense that can be caused by various interrelated factors. Some perpetrators of sexual violence against children may have psychological or emotional disorders, such as pedophilic behavior or personality disorders, that make them more likely to commit sexual violence. Violence against children can occur anytime and anywhere, not only in public places such as streets or quiet locations, but also at home, which should be the safest place for children. The house, which should be a place for children to play, study or read, actually becomes a hidden and safe place for perpetrators to commit violence against children.

Sexual Violence Against Children

Sexual violence is a forced action carried out by someone to fulfill their sexual needs in an inappropriate way. When children are victims of sexual violence, this is a very serious form of abuse. In this situation, adults or older individuals force the child to become the target of expressing their desires. These actions are not only physically dangerous, but also have a major impact on children's mental and emotional health, which can continue into adulthood.

Sexual violence against children according to End Child Prostitution In Asia Tourism (ECPAT) is a relationship or interaction between a child and an older person or adult such as a stranger, sibling or parent where the child is used as an object to satisfy the perpetrator's sexual needs. This act is carried out using coercion, threats, bribery, deception and even pressure. Violent activities against children do not have to involve bodily contact between the perpetrator and the child as victim. This form of sexual violence includes carrying out sexual activities, showing indecent behavior or actions using genitals, displaying pornographic content, and making physical contact with genitals, all of which are committed against children.

Sexual violence against children or also often called child sexual abuse is a form of deviant behavior carried out by adults or older people and carried out on children to obtain sexual stimulation¹⁵. The term child abuse is a series of threatening behaviors carried out directly by older people. According to Balck's Law Dictionary, what is meant by Child Sexual Abuse or sexual violence is

¹⁵ Azizah, N. (2024). The Role of Sex Education Counseling as an Effort to Prevent Sexual Violence in Early Childhood. At-Taujih; Journal of Islamic Counseling Guidance, 2(2), 162-173

illegal sexual activity carried out against someone under age by parents, guardians, relatives or people they know¹⁶.

Sexual violence against children includes several actions, such as physical treatment, mental or emotional treatment, sexual treatment, neglect and exploitation of children and results in children's health conditions and can affect the child's level of development. Terry Lawson, a child psychiatrist from America, once mentioned that there are at least four types of violence (abuse) that children often experience, namely, emotional violence (emotional abuse), verbal violence (verbal abuse), physical violence (physical abuse), and sexual violence (sexual abuse). However, according to Terry, only the last case (sexual abuse) often appears and becomes media coverage. Sexual abuse is any act in the form of sexual harassment, forced sexual intercourse, in an unnatural and/or unwelcome manner¹⁷.

Factors That Influence Sexual Violence Against Children

When we hear the term sexual violence, what comes to mind is a very cruel and inhumane act. It is even more terrifying if sexual violence occurs in children who are very young and do not yet understand what is happening. These acts are often carried out in very harmful ways, such as through coercion, threats, bribery, fraud, or psychological pressure. Sexual violence can take many forms, including rape and molestation, both of which have deep and lasting impacts on victims. It is important that we recognize the seriousness of this problem and work to protect children from all forms of sexual violence, as well as provide support to those who have been victims.

There are several factors that can cause children to become sexually abused:

- a. A small child is innocent and helpless. Moreover, you have to deal with adults, especially parents. That is why sexual violence is often perpetrated by fathers, uncles, grandfathers, teachers or close neighbors.
- b. The low morality and mentality of the perpetrator also triggers the emergence of sexual violence.
- c. Children experiencing physical disabilities, mental retardation or behavioral disorders are also causes. Children with disabilities are easy targets for perpetrators of sexual violence, because factors that are considered beneficial are because perpetrators of sexual violence against children with disabilities usually have planned their intentions by taking into account various factors, namely safety when carrying out the act and the weak

¹⁶ Lewoleba, K. K., & Fahrozi, M. H. (2020). A Study of Factors Contributing to Sexual Violence Against Children. *Journal of Legal Essence*, 2(1), 27-48.

¹⁷ DWI, N. A. (2024). *SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN THROUGH A GENDER SOCIOLOGY PERSPECTIVE (A STUDY AT THE UPTD-PPA OF LAMPUNG PROVINCE)* (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Raden Intan Lampung).

evidence that can be sought. Apart from that, the lack of parental love makes children feel neglected. This is what makes children trapped in the seduction of perpetrators who want to take advantage of their innocence¹⁸.

- d. Hormonal changes by the perpetrator.
- e. Technological development.
- f. Lifestyle changes
- g. Social and cultural influences.
- h. Lack of public knowledge about sexual violence¹⁹

The Impact of Sexual Violence on Children

Sexual violence experienced by children can cause traumatic impacts that last a lifetime. When experiencing this violence, they often do not fully understand the situation that occurred and do not realize that they are victims of this painful event. According to Noviana, sexual violence committed against children will have biological and social impacts. From a biological perspective, children will experience problems with vital organs because they have been forced to engage in sexual activity. Then from the social side, children will feel easily intimidated so that children will feel less confident²⁰.

Relevant research conducted by Noviana entitled "Sexual Violence against Children: Impact and Treatment" revealed that sexual violence against children not only affects their health in the future, but also causes trauma that can last a long time, even into adulthood. The impact of trauma resulting from sexual violence experienced by children includes: betrayal or loss of children's trust in adults (betrayal); sexual trauma (traumatic sexualization); feeling helpless (powerlessness); and stigma (stigmatization). Physically, there may be nothing to worry about in children who are victims of sexual violence, but psychologically it can cause addiction, trauma, and even revenge. Other research conducted by Widiyani explains that in the long term, sexual harassment or violence can also increase the risk of children experiencing psychological disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety disorders and mood disorders. Because children's psychology is very weak, unlike adults in general, children who are still unfamiliar with sexual knowledge will certainly not understand what they have experienced and will not even know that they have been victims of sexual abuse.

¹⁸ Suseni, K. A., & Untara, I. M. G. S. (2020). Efforts to Combat Sexual Violence Against Children. *Pariksa: Journal of Hindu Religious Law*, 1(1).

¹⁹ Octaviani, F., & Nurwati, N. (2021). Analysis of Factors and Impacts of Sexual Violence Against Children. *HUMANITAS Journal of Social Welfare Sciences*, 3(2), 56-60.

²⁰ Noviana, I. (2015). Sexual Violence Against Children: Impacts and Management. *Sosio Informa*, 1(1).

Children who experience sexual violence often become more closed and reluctant to talk, because they feel threatened by the perpetrator, they tend to keep this traumatic experience under wraps and do not share it with the people around them. In addition, deep shame makes them reluctant to tell what has happened, and they often attribute the incident to their own fault.

a. Psychological Impact

According to WHO, sexual violence can affect the mental health of children who are victims. This is due to the fact that the perpetrator and victim are often in the same environment, so that children feel they lack the strength to fight back and tend to feel weak both physically and mentally. Sexual violence experienced by children will have a long-lasting impact on their lives. Children will feel insecure due to fear and trauma, easily experience depression, and become very suspicious of the people around them.

b. Physical Impact

When a child is a victim of sexual violence, it can have a significant impact on their physical changes. These children may experience delays in brain development, which can affect their cognitive and emotional abilities. Apart from that, sexual violence can also cause damage to the body's internal organs, which has the potential to result in long-term health problems. These impacts show how serious the physical consequences can be for children who experience this kind of trauma.

c. Social Impact

Apart from affecting physical and psychological conditions, children who are victims of sexual violence will also feel the impact on their social life. This phenomenon is considered unusual in society, so that when sexual violence occurs, various negative views will emerge from society. These views often blame the victim by labeling them as deliberately wearing revealing clothing that triggers the perpetrator's sexual desire. As a result, victims will have difficulty interacting with their social environment, because they tend to be ostracized²¹

Sexual violence tends to have a traumatic impact on both children and adults. Lenore Terr said that the effects of trauma on children can trigger moral behavior that is different from the unpleasant actions they experience. Lenore Terr explains that the effects of this trauma stem from the child's inability to fight back against people who have taken uncomfortable actions against them²². This theory states that sexual violence in children can cause trauma that affects various aspects of the child's life in the future, such as mental health, interpersonal relationships, and sexual function. Trauma can occur because

²¹ Octaviani, F., & Nurwati, N. (2021). Analysis of Factors and Impacts of Sexual Violence Against Children. *HUMANITAS Journal of Social Welfare Sciences*, 3(2), 56-60

²² Maghdalena, F., & Lessy, Z. (2024). Sexual Abuse of Children. *Creative Student Journal*, 2(2), 25-34

children feel threatened and unsafe, feel guilty, or feel helpless because they cannot stop the abuse or violence that occurs. Finkelhor and Browne categorize 4 types of impact of trauma due to sexual violence experienced by children, namely:

1. Betrayal (Betrayal) Trust is the main basis for victims of sexual violence. A child certainly has enormous trust in his parents and that trust is understood and understood. With the violence that befalls him and comes from his own parents, a child feels betrayed.
2. Sexual trauma found that women who experienced sexual violence tended to refuse sexual relations, and as a consequence became victims of domestic sexual violence. noted that victims are more likely to have same-sex partners because they consider men untrustworthy.
3. Feeling of helplessness (Powerlessness) The feeling of helplessness arises because of fear in the victim's life. Nightmares, phobias and anxiety are experienced by victims accompanied by pain. Feelings of helplessness result in individuals feeling weak and feeling less effective at work. On the other hand, there are also victims who have excessive impulses within themselves (Finkelhor and Browne, Briere in Tower).
4. Stigmatization, sexual violence can make victims feel guilty, ashamed, and have a bad self-image. Guilt and shame are formed due to helplessness and feeling that they do not have the power to control themselves. Children who are victims of violence often feel that they are different from other people, there are some victims who are angry about their bodies due to the abuse they have experienced. Other victims use drugs and alcohol to punish their bodies and try to avoid memories of violent incidents that have happened to them²³.

Conclusion

Based on a literature review regarding the phenomenon of sexual violence, it can be concluded that this issue still frequently occurs in society, especially involving children. Sexual violence is usually carried out by adults against minors. One of the main factors that causes sexual violence against children is their inability to fight back, both physically and mentally. The consequences of sexual violence against children can have a significant impact on their future lives.

Children who are victims often feel insecure, experience fear, and experience deep trauma. They are also at risk of experiencing depression and tend to be suspicious of the people around them. Sexual violence against

²³ Saputra, G. Y. (2024). Public Perceptions of Incestuous Sexual Violence in Suka Negara Village, North Bengkulu Regency. DAWUH: Islamic Communication Journal, 5(2), 51-60

children can be understood as an interaction between a child and an older person, who could be a stranger, sibling, or even a parent, where the child is treated as an object to fulfill the perpetrator's sexual needs. Therefore, it is important to increase public awareness about sexual violence against children, provide appropriate education to children regarding personal boundaries, and create a safe and supportive environment for them.

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