

## IDENTIFICATION OF RISK FACTORS AND CONSEQUENCES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CHILDREN: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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### **ABSTRACT**

*An increase in cases of sexual violence against children triggers various health problems in children, both physical, psychological and social. This paper aims to explore the sexual violence on children, risk factors and the impact of sexual violence on children. This study of sexual violence in children refers to various empirical literature studies. Furthermore, the collection of information was analyzed using the problem tree analysis approach to find out the risk factors and their impact on children. Cases of sexual violence in the community are difficult to detect because of the lack of recognition from victims. This is because the offender called pedophile comes from within the family (familial abuse) or can come from outside the family environment (extra-familial abuse) who have established close relationships with children. Sexual violence is generally motivated by the problem of weak protection from parents which is also strengthened by socio-economic problems, low access to reproductive health education and less optimal law enforcement. Therefore, children who have experienced sexual violence find it difficult to avoid physical, biological, psychological and social risks. Children who have experienced sexual violence find it difficult to avoid physical, biological, psychological and social risks. Therefore, it is necessary to increase the capacity of parents in the prevention of sexual violence against children and law enforcement needs to complete the system of early detection and rapid response to the incidence of sexual violence against children.*

**Keywords:** *Children, sexual violence, risk factors, impact*

### **ABSTRACT**

Peningkatan kasus kekerasan seksual pada anak memicu berbagai permasalahan kesehatan pada anak baik fisik, psikis maupun sosial. Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi kejadian kekerasan seksual pada anak, faktor risiko dan dampak kekerasan seksual pada anak. Kajian kekerasan seksual pada anak ini merujuk kepada berbagai studi literatur empiris. Selanjutnya kumpulan informasi tersebut dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan *problem tree analysis* untuk mengetahui faktor risiko dan dampaknya pada anak. Kasus kekerasan seksual di masyarakat sulit untuk dideteksi karena minimnya pengakuan dari korban. Hal ini disebabkan karena pelaku yang disebut *pedhophile* berasal dari dalam keluarga (*familial abuse*) atau bisa berasal dari lingkungan luar keluarga (*extra-familial abuse*) yang telah menjalin hubungan akrab dengan anak. Kekerasan seksual secara umum dilatarbelakangi oleh masalah lemahnya proteksi dari orang tua yang juga diperkuat oleh masalah sosial ekonomi, rendahnya akses pendidikan kesehatan reproduksi dan penegakan hukum yang kurang optimal. Oleh sebab itu, anak yang memiliki pengalaman kekerasan seksual sulit untuk terhindar dari risiko fisik, biologis, psikologis dan sosial. Anak yang memiliki pengalaman kekerasan seksual sulit untuk terhindar dari risiko fisik, biologis, psikologis dan sosial. Oleh karena itu, perlu peningkatan kapasitas orang tua dalam pencegahan kekerasan seksual kepada anak serta penegak hukum perlu melengkapi sistem deteksi dini dan respon cepat terhadap kejadian kekerasan seksual pada anak.

**Kata Kunci :** Anak-anak, kekerasan seksual, faktor risiko, dampak

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Sexual violence can occur anywhere including the scope of the household, community, and country. In 2015, there were 11,207 cases of domestic violence, 30% of which were cases of sexual violence. The forms of sexual violence that occurred included 72% of cases of rape, 18% of cases of sexual abuse and 5% of cases of sexual harassment. Meanwhile, violence occurred in the scope of the community as many as 5,002 cases, with the percentage of sexual violence reaching 61%. The types of sexual violence in the community were more diverse including 33.13% rape, 21.27% sexual abuse, 5.36% sexual harassment, 2.6% other sexual violence, 0.98% escaping girls and 0.12% attempted rape. Meanwhile, cases of violence at the country level were only 8 because they tended to be not reported.<sup>1</sup>

In recent years, sexual violence that has caught the attention of various parties is a case of sexual violence against children. In essence, children are assets as well as future generations of a nation and state. The population in the category of children (aged up to 18 years) is quite large, reaching 37.66%.<sup>2</sup> 58% of cases of child violations included sexual crimes with characteristics of victims coming from middle-low-income families.<sup>3</sup> Other study identified that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the total sexual violence experienced by girls with an average age below 10 years.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, this group should receive protection for their rights, including survival, growth and development and the right to protection from violence and discrimination according to the 1945 Constitution, Article 28B paragraph 2, Republic of Indonesia Law No. 4 of 1979 concerning Child Welfare, articles 2 paragraph 1-4, Law Number. 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection and Presidential Decree Number 36 of 1990 concerning Ratification of the Convention on The Rights of the Child.<sup>2</sup>

Sexual violence against children is a condition that shows the relationship of a child with an older person or an adult where the child is used as an object of satisfying the sexual needs of the offender.<sup>5</sup> Specifically, various forms of coercion of sexual relations in an unnatural and/or unwelcome manner and the imposition of sexual relations with others for commercial purposes and/or specific purposes are part of sexual violence against children. The way adults play an important role in helping a child's growth and development.

Most people are aware of the risk of sexual violence perpetrated by adults on children. Perpetrators of sexual violence against children are usually someone they know or trust including family, teachers or neighbors.<sup>4</sup> It does not even rule out the possibility that children and adolescents under the age of 18 also have the potential to become perpetrators of sexual violence.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, sexual violence can be categorized into familial abuse and extra-familial abuse.<sup>7</sup>

The experience of experiencing sexual violence has direct consequences for children. If this happens early in childhood, it can harm the lives of victims in the future. Broadly speaking, this sexual violence will have an impact on the child's health status both physically, biologically, psychologically and mentally. Damage to the tissues/organs of the body as well as the onset of chronic diseases is a clear physical consequence seen in victims.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, it can result in early menarche, early pregnancy, reproductive organ infections and STD/HIV infections.<sup>4,9</sup> If viewed from a psychological aspect, the victim will feel a deep trauma that causes several disturbances in daily activities while sleeping, eating or other activities.<sup>10</sup> Whereas socially the victim will experience social dysfunction when interacting with others and experience changes in behavior towards risky behavior.<sup>11,12</sup> This paper aims to explore the sexual violence on children, risk factors and the impact of sexual violence on children.

## **METHOD**

The study in this scientific work uses the method of literature review (literature review) with analysis of various sources that show gaps or similarities in theories and facts in describing the phenomenon of sexual violence against children that occurs in the community. Reference sources used include legislation, textbooks and scientific articles in both national and international journals. Specifically, the authors use the analysis tree approach in elaborating findings from various references

## **RESULT**

The analysis of the phenomenon of sexual violence in children in this article used the problem tree analysis approach. Problem tree analysis consists of 3 parts, namely a trunk, roots, and branches. The trunk is the main problem, namely the incidence of sexual violence in children. The roots represent the causes of the core problem, namely risk factors that trigger sexual violence in children. Finally, the branches represent their effects, namely the impact experienced by victims of sexual violence. The following illustration illustrates the problem tree analysis relating to sexual violence in children.

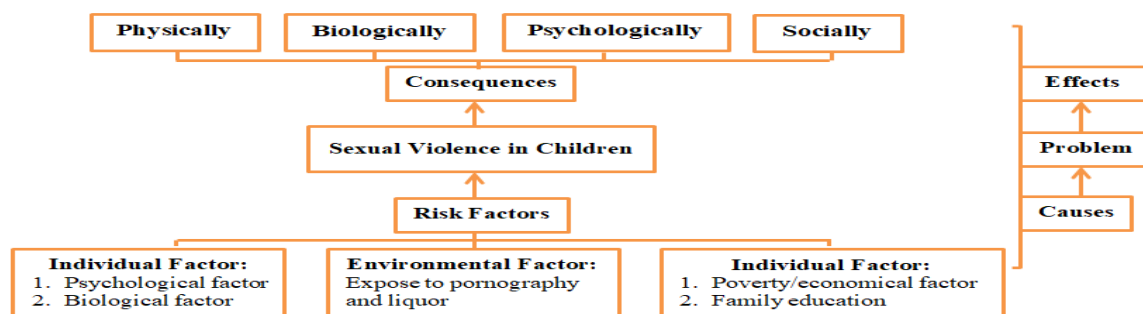


Figure 1. Problem Tree Analysis

## DISCUSSION

Children are a group under the age of 18 who are at risk of experiencing sexual violence. 58% of all cases of violations against children are acts of sexual violence. By law, various laws have governed the provisions of the protection of these groups including the rights to survival, growth and development and protection from violence and discrimination (1945 Constitution, Indonesian Republic Law Number. 4 of 1979, Indonesian Republic Law Number 23 of 2002 and Presidential Decree Number 36 of 1990). The implementation of these various provisions does not appear to be optimal in line with statistical data that consistently show an increase in the number of cases of violence against children in the 2010-2014 period.<sup>3</sup>

Cases of sexual violence that occur in children regardless of gender, men and women have the risk to experience it.<sup>12</sup> Ministry of Social and Women's Empowerment Survey found that women and men (ages 18-24 years) had at least once experienced sexual violence before 18 years of age with almost the same percentage (6,36% in men and 6,28% in women).<sup>1</sup> When looking at the phenomenon of cases, in many findings the number of cases of violence against girls tends to be higher. This is made possible by considering the ratio of girls more than boys.<sup>4,13</sup>

Sexual violence is found in almost all provinces in Indonesia as reported in various mass media. Empirically, study in four provinces namely Aceh, Papua, Central Java, and East Nusa Tenggara show that young people claim to have experienced sexual violence. All environments become a place that is at risk for children not only outside the family environment (schools and public places) even within the family environment (home). Families which are expected to be the main refuge for children are instead places where violence begins. On the other hand, schools as educational facilities for children also sometimes become locations of sexual violence against children and do not even look at the school category public, private or religious-based schools.<sup>14</sup> One very phenomenal example is sexual violence that occurred at the Jakarta International School.

Based on the analysis of the incidence of sexual violence in children, it can be concluded that there is diversity in the perpetrators. The violence that occurs in the home environment can be done by family members stabbed by parents, relatives, substitute parents (stepparents, parents' lovers, caregivers or people who are believed to care for children), hereinafter referred to as familial abuse. Meanwhile, violence that occurs outside the home environment is done by adults who have close relationships and are known by children (including teachers), hereinafter referred to as extra-familial abuse. In general, adults who have an interest in channeling sexual desires to minors are called pedophiles.<sup>7</sup>

A pedophile can come from various circles both the educated (an educated) or uneducated (an uneducated). As in many case findings, the backgrounds of perpetrators of sexual violence vary from those who do not go to school to those who have attained a high level of education. From ordinary people, educators, officials, and even law enforcement. Facts show that sexual assault is also carried out by teachers and government officials.<sup>15</sup> This picture should be a concern for the government and related parties to provide extra protection for children.

The Indonesian Child Protection Commission notes an increasing trend in cases of sexual violence against children. In the four years of 2011-2014, the number of cases of sexual violence increased 2.5 times. This figure also shows an increased risk of sexual violence in children. The forms of sexual violence that occur include abuse, rape, and commercial sexual exploitation of children. Sexual exploitation of children found in the form of pornography, cases of network violence (cyber), trafficking and child prostitution online.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to increase the vigilance system for child sexual abuse.

Violence against children is one of the crucial problems when it comes to health. Acts of sexual violence are included in the category of health problems both for victims and perpetrators referring to the concept of health proclaimed by WHO, namely the state of physical, mental, social and economic prosperity. Sexual violence is motivated by a variety of risk factors that can affect anyone. Based on research, both boys and girls are at risk for sexual violence. Also, finding cases came from various backgrounds and made children without parents' supervision (street children, orphans) as well as children who experienced family economic problems became the group most at risk of sexual violence.<sup>13,16</sup>

One of the risk factors for sexual violence in children is the parent factor. This is consistent with the finding that the perpetrators of sexual violence may come from close relatives, including parents. Parents who have a history of being victims of sexual violence may vent their sexual desires to children. This can also happen if parents are under the influence of drugs so they are not aware of their

behavior. Besides, acts of sexual violence committed by parents are psychologically triggered by a lack of respect for themselves while socially due to exclusion by the surrounding community.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, parents or adults who commit sexual violence have poor knowledge and perceptions regarding their health impacts (one of which is STI/HIV transmission).<sup>13</sup>

Familial abuse is an indication that the trigger for sexual violence in children is due to family conditions.<sup>17</sup> Family harmony becomes a protection system against violations of children's rights. If there is a rift in the relationship between husband and wife who are married, then most of those who will suffer the impact are children, including victims of sexual abuse. Meanwhile, one of the triggers for family disharmony is economic pressure. Another factor that also experiences sexual violence is education in the family, where the inculcation of moral values is the key.<sup>18</sup>

Sexual violence that occurs in the community indicates an individual's weak defense system.<sup>17</sup> Children with emotional and psychological conditions that are less stable or physically challenged will become easy targets for perpetrators of sexual violence. The powerlessness to fight when violence occurs and the lack of social skills to refuse makes the health burden for children higher not only physically, mentally but also socially.

Sexual predators for children also come from extra-familial or other environments other than home.<sup>17</sup> This further increases the vulnerability of sexual violence to children. Children's play environment and school environment with a negative atmosphere can be a place for sexual violence. It is not uncommon this is done by individual educators in schools (teachers). Actors who are adults usually approach children first, for example by meeting the needs of children who cannot be met by parents because of their socioeconomic status. After the child feels comfortable then the perpetrators commit sexual violence.

Cases of child sexual abuse show the phenomenon of the iceberg because it is difficult to get recognition from the victim. Sometimes this problem is considered as part of the family's internal problems that must be kept secret from others.<sup>16</sup> However, the experience of experiencing sexual violence has a great impact on children physically, biologically, psychologically and socially. This is in line with the scientists' assumption that sexual violence is an impact of the failure of parents/guardians to protect children resulting in fatal effects (death), physical damage/disability, sexual and emotional violence and ultimately increases the risk of growth, health and well-being on victims.<sup>19</sup>

Impacts that are felt physically and biologically by children due to experiences of sexual violence can last for a long period time. Damage to children's body tissues due to violence and exploitation will have an impact until adulthood. Sexual violence was significantly related to the emergence of diseases such as arthritis, back problems, high blood pressure, headaches/migraines,

chronic bronchitis/emphysema/COPD, cancer, stroke, intestinal disease, and syndromes chronic fatigue in adulthood.<sup>8</sup> Sexual violence also affects early menarche.<sup>9</sup> Other physical and biological impacts caused by sexual violence at a young age are early pregnancy and PMS/HIV infection.

As a continuation of physical and biological impacts, sexual violence will be a trigger factor for psychological and social problems. Children and adolescents who experience sexual violence mostly experience depression and dysthymia, mental disorders, sleep disorders (somatization disorder), drug consumption disorders, eating disorders (bulimia nervosa), trauma and even high stress levels will trigger suicide. Trauma due to sexual violence in childhood has an impact on sexual dysfunction in adulthood such as fear, shame and dissatisfaction when engaging in sexual relations. Socially, the experience of sexual violence at a young age will change behavior patterns in a deviant direction in adolescence or adulthood. For example, victims are often involved in delinquency in school, risky sexual behavior or other criminal acts.<sup>12</sup> Most teenagers (young adults) who have sexual deviations such as lesbian or gay are victims of sexual violence.<sup>11</sup> In conclusion the socio-psychological impact of sexual violence in the form of feelings of betrayal, traumatic sexualization, powerlessness, and stigmatization.

Physical, biological/sexual, psychological and social impacts due to sexual violence that develop among the community are evidence of the lack of awareness of all parties to detect and prevent earlier, the development of taboos related to sex and sexuality in certain areas, the lack of strong aspects of legal protection for victims and negative stigma given by the community to victims.<sup>13</sup> This should be overcome by early recognition to children about sex education. Although there is still debate between the parties, especially those who think that education can trigger children in risky sexual behavior. Educational activities, one of which can be done at the school level, especially in primary schools with the application of a curriculum for preventing sexual violence against children. This program is intended to increase students' knowledge of sexual violence as well as to strengthen the aspects of students' efficacy in dealing with sexual violence. Besides, a multisectoral approach is needed in drafting the needs of sexual violence prevention programs, especially in emergencies including identifying actions that must be carried out in the preparation phase, implementing all minimum preventive and treatment measures during the initial stages of an emergency and recognizing comprehensive actions that can be taken at more stable stages and during the recovery and rehabilitation process. Strict and strict legal guarantees as a form of support from the community are steps to strengthen the rescue of children from the threat of perpetrators of sexual violence. The elements incorporated in the partnership should include government aspects such as the Ministry of Social Affairs and parents/community groups.<sup>20</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Sexual violence against children is a form of human rights violations as regulated in various laws and regulations. However, cases of sexual violence in the community are difficult to detect because of the lack of recognition from victims. This is because the offender called pedophile comes from within the family (familial abuse) or can come from outside the family environment (extra-familial abuse) who have established close relationships with children. Sexual violence is generally motivated by the problem of weak protection from parents which is also strengthened by socio-economic problems, low access to reproductive health education and less optimal law enforcement. Therefore, children who have experienced sexual violence find it difficult to avoid physical, biological, psychological and social risks.

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