



THE ROLE OF THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND CHILD PROTECTION OFFICE OF SOUTHWEST ACEH REGENCY IN HANDLING CASES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

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Abstract

Sexual violence against children is a severe crime that affects their physical, psychological, and social well-being. This study explores the role of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency (DP3A) through a case study approach to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and programs, as well as the challenges faced in child protection efforts. The research aims to analyze DP3A's involvement in addressing cases of sexual violence against children and to identify obstacles encountered in handling such cases in Southwest Aceh Regency. Using qualitative methods, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings indicate that DP3A actively provides psychological and legal support to victims, conducts prevention outreach, and collaborates with police and relevant agencies during case management. However, the study also identifies several challenges, including limited literacy among village officials, a lack of clinical psychologists, budget constraints, and difficulties in reporting cases due to societal stigma. The research recommends enhancing cross-sector coordination, improving human resource capacity, and developing more responsive programs to meet the needs of children and families. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to strengthening child protection efforts in Southwest Aceh Regency and serve as a reference for similar policies in other regions.

Keywords: Sexual Violence, Children, DP3A

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A. Introduction

Child sexual abuse encompasses a wide range of actions by adults against minors, including rape, verbal and nonverbal abuse, and online exploitation. The increasing cases of sexual abuse of children in Indonesia have caused social unrest in society, referring to all forms of sexual activity carried out against children by adults or older individuals, either through coercion, manipulation, or persuasion. This violence can include a variety of actions, such as sexual physical contact, sexual exploitation for commercial purposes, or exposure to pornographic material. Sexual violence is considered to occur when the perpetrator takes advantage of the child's inability to give valid consent, considering that the child does not yet have the cognitive, emotional, and legal capacity to consciously understand or approve the act (Ratna Widiastuti, 2016).

According to *Maidin Gultom*, sexual violence refers to any sexual act, the form can be in the form of assault or no assault. The category of assault causes suffering in the form of physical and emotional injuries. Forms of sexual violence include forcible hugging, forced masturbation, oral sex, anal sex and rape.

Cases of violence and sexual abuse against children, which are increasingly spreading in a number of regions in the country, actually have a phenomenon similar to an iceberg that does not appear on the surface, but in fact there are very many if you look closely which shows a significant increase.

Aceh is one of the provinces in Indonesia that is given special autonomy with authority based on Law Number 11 of 2006 concerning the Government of Aceh. The existence of this law also strengthens the previous law, namely Law Number 44 of 1999 concerning the Implementation of Provincial Privileges of the Special Region of Aceh. Among the privileges given to Aceh, there are privileges: the field of Islamic law enforcement, the field of customs, the field of education, and the role of clerics in the government.

One of the jinayat settings that attracts attention to be studied is about sexual harassment. Where, Article 46 of Qanun Aceh Number 6 of 2014 concerning the Law of Jinayat states: "Every person who deliberately commits Jarimah Sexual Harassment, is threatened with 'Uqubat Ta'zir whipping a maximum of 45 (forty-five) times, or a maximum fine of 450 (four hundred and fifty) grams of pure gold, or imprisonment for a maximum of 45 (forty-five) months.

Even though Aceh already has Qanun Jinayat there are still very many who violate the qanun, such as perpetrators of sexual violence against minors. According to Syahrul, Director of the Legal Aid Institute in Aceh, one of the things that causes sexual harassment to still spread everywhere is because according to him, qanun jinayat does not provide a deterrent effect for perpetrators. The article only regulates how to provide a deterrent effect to the perpetrator, by stating the amount of caning punishment, or

how long the sentence will be served, or how much fine should be paid. In its application, the prosecution only chooses one of the three. If the charges and verdicts are whips, there is no jail sentence or fine. And many of the violations mentioned in this Qanun Jinayat only lead to the punishment of whipping. (Rachmad, Amdani, & Ulya, 2021)

Looking at the length of the prison sentence for sexual violence against children, as mentioned earlier, if the punishment of whipping is used, the sentence will be completed in one day and the perpetrator will be released. Meanwhile, the victim's children are still experiencing deep trauma and fear. If the perpetrator is sentenced to prison, there is a possibility that the child's mental and physical condition can improve because the perpetrator and the victim do not have close physical contact.

Year	Case Categories	Sum
2023	Overall Case	575
2023	Sexual Abuse and Violence Against Children	333
2023	Sexual Harassment and Violence Against Women	242

Table 1 Number of Cases of Violence in Aceh

The Aceh Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office (DP3A) noted that until the end of June 2023, cases of violence and sexual harassment against women and children in Aceh had increased. In total, until June there were 575 cases recorded by DP3A Aceh. Acting Head of DP3A Aceh Meutia Juliana M.Si said that this number has increased when viewed in the last three years. The increase occurred because now victims or victims' families are starting to dare to report incidents of violence and sexual harassment experienced and it is true that these cases are increasing. Data in 2023 from 575 cases occurred, sexual abuse and violence against children dominated with 333 cases and women 242 cases.

At the international level, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has stated the importance of the role of local governments in handling cases of violence against children, including through a community-based approach. This is in line with the concept of community-based child protection adopted by DP3A in several regions, although its implementation still needs improvement. One of the strategic efforts that can be made is to strengthen the synergy between DP3A and other institutions, such as health institutions, and educational institutions. This cooperation is needed to ensure integration between legal handling, health services, and psychosocial recovery for victims. This is in line with the mandate of Law No. 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection which states that child protection must involve all elements of society and the government in a comprehensive protection system.

To strengthen this role, efforts are needed to strengthen the DP3A institution,

including the addition of experts such as social workers, as well as an increase in the budget to support various prevention and recovery programs. In addition, support from the community and inter-institutional synergy are also important factors in realizing a responsive and sustainable child protection system. With an optimal role, DP3A can be at the forefront of breaking the chain of sexual violence against children in Indonesia, including in the Southwest Aceh Regency area.

Southwest Aceh is one of the districts that are indicated to be sexually harassed by children. In May 2023, it was reported that there had been one case of sexual harassment in Cot Mane Village, Jeumpa District. The perpetrator with the initials EF (35) sexually harassed Mtsn students who always commuted to school on the bus. The incident has happened repeatedly up to 5 times, but the victim did not dare to report it to his parents because he was threatened by the perpetrator. Finally, this incident was successfully discovered by the victim's mother and the victim's mother reported to the Abdya Police Headquarters. The police immediately took action by disguising themselves as people who wanted to rent a bus that was hired by the perpetrator for the sake of inter-lininto (bride). After successfully deceiving the perpetrators, the police immediately secured evidence and arrested the perpetrators of harassment. For this depraved act, the perpetrator was subject to article 50 of Qanun Aceh Number 6 of 2014 concerning the Jinayat law with the punishment of uqubat ta'zir 200 lashes in public or a maximum fine of 2000 grams of pure gold.

The rise of sexual harassment cases in Southwest Aceh Regency (Abdya) that has been successfully published has made parents feel worried about the safety of their children. The number of cases of sexual abuse against children in Abdya every year has always increased. The perpetrators of abuse usually do this to minors, with various motives. Ironically, the perpetrators of this sexual harassment themselves are not only carried out by unmarried youths, even now it is very often encountered that the perpetrator of this sexual harassment is someone who is very close and has a blood relationship with a child. Such as the child's father, teacher, uncle or brother, even his own^{age 12}. The Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office (DP3A) is one of the government's forums in security operations to protect and defend the rights of women and children from all forms of violence, discrimination, special protection and other problems. Therefore, DP3A is a way for people, especially women and children, to fight for their rights. DP3A is tasked with carrying out part of government affairs in the field of women's empowerment and child protection. DP3A stands for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office, a government agency in Indonesia responsible for issues related to women's empowerment and child protection. DP3A plays a role in developing policies, programs, and activities that aim to improve women's welfare and protect children's rights, including violence prevention, capacity building, and economic

empowerment. This institution is also often involved in awareness and education campaigns related to women and children's issues in the Southwest Aceh region.

DP3A has a very important role in overcoming cases of sexual violence against children, in this case DP3A involves all agencies, both government and non-government. The goal is that all the information provided is quickly received by the wider community. DP3A also provides support and assistance to assistance programs for victims of sexual violence.

The results of preliminary research on DP3A researchers found accurate data on the number of cases of sexual violence against children from 2021-2023. Where in 2021 there were 4 cases, in 2022 there were 4 cases, and in 2023 there were 5 cases of sexual violence both in the form of harassment and rape of minors. From this data, we can know that cases of sexual violence against children in Abdya are increasing every year. The cases that occurred cannot be said to be few and cannot be said to be many.

B. Method

The research approach used is a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach is an approach that emphasizes a deep understanding of human social phenomena through the collection and analysis of descriptive and interpretive data. The methods commonly used in qualitative research are interview, observation, documentation and informant methods using *purposive sampling* techniques. In this study, the researcher selected 7 informants, 4 from DP3A and 2 from the victim, and 1 from the education recipient community. Data analysis is one of the important stages in a research. Data analysis techniques refer to a set of methods, procedures, or approaches used to analyze data that has been collected in research. The goal of data analysis techniques is to identify patterns, trends, relationships, or meanings from the data collected. All the data that has been collected is then analyzed and conclusions are drawn.

C. Finding and Discussion

1. Research Results

The success of DP3A in handling cases of violence relies heavily on collaboration with various sectors. This includes cooperation with law enforcement agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as medical institutions. By building a strong network among various parties, DP3A can ensure that every aspect of the victim's needs is effectively met. For example, when a victim reports to DP3A, they can be immediately referred to the necessary medical or psychological services.

Talking about the effectiveness of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office (DP3A) in carrying out prevention and assistance tasks, one of the main indicators that can be used is the number of case reports that continue to increase every

year. The increase in reporting of cases of sexual violence against children cannot be interpreted as a failure in public education. Rather, it reflects the courage of the community to report the incidents, showing that they are increasingly aware of their rights and the importance of protecting children from violence.

Through programs such as the Community-Based Integrated Child Protection (PATBM) and the Family Learning Center (PUSPAGA), DP3A has succeeded in educating the public about the importance of reporting cases of violence. These programs serve as an information channel that helps the community understand that there are institutions that are ready to help them in dealing with the problem of violence. With the existence of PATBM, the community is encouraged to actively participate in child protection, build collective awareness about issues related to violence, and provide support to victims.

"Since participating in socialization such as PATBM and PUSPAGA, I have begun to feel a sense of change in the community where I live. In the past, if there were incidents such as sexual violence with children or domestic violence, people here did not dare to report. They are afraid, because they are considered shy by the family. And most people don't know where to report it, so it's just stuck in the gampong device. But since DP3A has been socialized for many years, people are now more daring to report if there is such a case. So it feels different now."

The education carried out by DP3A is not only limited to counseling, but also includes training for parents and adolescents on good parenting and the negative impact of violence. This activity aims to change people's views on violence, as well as provide knowledge on ways to protect children from potential danger.

The Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office or abbreviated as DP3A is a government agency in Southwest Aceh Regency. One of the activities carried out by DP3A ABDYA is to provide assistance and protection to children who are victims of violence. The goal is to ensure that children's rights related to safety and security are met. Therefore, DP3A ABDYA plays a very important role in society. As conveyed by Mrs. Raisa Riska, as follows:

"We carry out socialization and advocacy related to the prevention, assistance, and handling of cases of sexual violence or other violence against children. By forming fields related to prevention, assistance and handling such as the PPPA task force"

Referring to Mrs. Riska's speech, the same statement was conveyed by Mrs. Miftah Karisma, as follows:

"One of our roles in handling cases of violence against children is to form a Task Force that is directly responsible from receiving reports, handling, to resolving cases. Like the PPPA task force, every time there is a case report against both children and women, starting from the mentoring process to the settlement of the

case, it is handled directly by the PPPA task force directly."

From the explanation that has been conveyed above, it can be concluded that the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office (DP3A) has carried out its role in society well. Based on the results of the interviews that the researcher has explained, DP3A is more focused and active in assisting and preventing cases of child victims of violence, both sexual violence and domestic violence. By routinely conducting socialization to schools and the community every year about the dangers of violence and sexual violence against children, through Task Forces in the field such as DP3A and PPPA task forces.

In Article 36 of Qanun Aceh Number 9 of 2019 concerning the Implementation of Handling Violence Against Women and Children it is stated that the duties and responsibilities of the Service as referred to in article 34 Paragraph (2) letter b at least include:

- a. Conducting policy and budget advocacy to optimize the implementation of handling violence against women and children;
- b. Develop norms, standards, procedures and criteria related to the handling of violence against women and children;
- c. Developing cooperation with the Aceh government and Regency/City Governments, private parties, universities, professional organizations and community organizations for the handling of violence against women and children;
- d. Conducting socialization on the implementation of handling violence against women and children;
- e. Strengthening service providers with the assurance of the availability of reliable human resources and adequate budget allocation;
- f. Facilitate the active involvement of community organizations in the implementation of integrated handling of violence against women and children to ensure comprehensive and comprehensive services;
- g. Facilitating the procurement of safe houses and rehabilitation houses for victims;
- h. Socializing the concept of handling violence against women and children to SKPA and cross-sector and community organizations in the procurement of services; and
- i. Build coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the handling of violence against women and children.

The researcher also conducted interviews with other informants, namely with Mrs. Lia Amelia SE who is the Head of the PPPA Division. In the interview he said that:

"DP3A plays an important role in handling cases against children, every case that is reported is immediately received by the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA) team. They handle from the reporting stage until the case is completed, but not all clients ask to be accompanied until the case is completed.

Some clients only make agreements until what stage they need assistance from the PPA. For incoming cases, some of the clients come in person to report directly and sometimes the cases are reported by the local community to DP3A. When an incident like this occurs, the DP3A, especially the PPPA team, conducts direct outreach to the client's location, namely to the Gampong. The PPA team provides direct assistance to the client, but if the client refuses to be accompanied by the PPPA team, we cannot force the client. As a professional we must respect the client's decision".

The Women and Children Protection Office (DP3A) not only plays a role in providing assistance services to victims, but also provides a space for people who have problems in their households and need a place to tell stories and find solutions to the problems they face, without having to be related to reporting or assisting cases. These services reflect a holistic and inclusive approach to DP3A, where people can come up with various complaints or problems, such as conflicts in the family, parenting challenges, or concerns about the social environment. Through this service, DP3A acts as a good listener.

2. Discussion

The Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office (DP3A) plays an important role in efforts to minimize cases of sexual violence against children. DP3A Aceh provides complaint services and handling cases of violence against women and children, and seeks to improve the quality of these services. Through integrated service units or integrated service centers (PPT), DP3A provides various forms of services, such as psychological assistance, legal consultation, and referrals to health institutions and legal institutions. These facilities are designed to ensure that victims of sexual violence, especially children, have easy and sustainable access to recovery.

In addition, DP3A also plays a role in increasing public awareness through socialization and education programs related to children's rights and protection against violence. This program aims to build community collective awareness about the importance of reporting and preventing sexual violence against children. For example, some DP3As at the provincial level have launched community-based campaigns, such as "Rumah Aman Anak" and training of child protection cadres at the village level, which involve the community directly in detecting and dealing with potential cases of violence.

In the context of handling cases, DP3A is also tasked with coordinating with various parties, such as the police, social services, health institutions, and educational institutions. This cooperation is needed to ensure integration between legal handling, health services, and psychosocial recovery for victims. This is in line with the mandate of Law No. 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection which states that child protection must involve all elements of society and the government in a comprehensive protection

system.

To strengthen this role, efforts are needed to strengthen the DP3A institution, including the addition of experts such as social workers, as well as an increase in the budget to support various prevention and recovery programs. In addition, support from the community and inter-institutional synergy are also important factors in realizing a responsive and sustainable child protection system. With an optimal role, DP3A can be at the forefront of breaking the chain of sexual violence against children in the Southwest Aceh Regency area.

From the results of the interview above, we can describe that DP3A employees or the PPPA team have several significant roles in handling cases of sexual violence that occur against women and children, including:

a. Active Role

An active role is a person's direct, consistent, and productive involvement in activities, responsibilities, or decisions that support the institution. An active role is also an obligation that must be carried out by group members.

DP3A has shown its active role in carrying out its duties, although there are several obstacles that cause some aspects to not be carried out optimally. In handling cases, each report received will first be evaluated by DP3A. Some cases can get assistance immediately, especially if reported directly by the victim. However, there are also cases that cannot be accompanied if the victim does not give consent. In addition, there is a review carried out by the police to determine further legal steps. The case title process is often carried out to assess the severity of the violation by the perpetrator, such as whether the action is classified as severe or light, and the magnitude of the impact of the loss experienced by the victim.

b. Participatory Role

Participatory roles are roles that are carried out only at certain times. In this context, DP3A collaborates with Gampong and other institutions to conduct socialization to prevent violence and sexual abuse of children. In its implementation, the participatory role of DP3A is not only limited to socialization, but also involves the active involvement of the community at the gampong level. Based on the results of observations, DP3A often holds community-based activities. The results of interviews with the gampong community show that the collaboration between DP3A and the gampong government has helped increase public awareness of the importance of reporting cases of sexual violence.

However, there are challenges in the implementation of this participatory role, such as the lack of presence of participants in several remote gampongs due to the difficulty of access to transportation. Nevertheless, DP3A continues to try to adjust its strategy, for example by providing socialization materials in digital form or visiting

residents' homes directly in certain areas. This strategy is considered quite effective to expand the reach of sexual violence prevention programs at the community level.

c. Passive Role

A passive role is a role that is not actively performed, where this passive role only functions as a symbol. In this context, the passive role in question refers to rehabilitation and empowerment efforts aimed at women and children who are victims of violence. The benchmark of the success of the treatment provided is measured by the extent to which the victim's condition can recover or return to the condition before becoming a victim of sexual harassment. Until now, the team from DP3A has provided assistance to the victims until the cases are fully resolved. Based on the author's analysis, DP3A has carried out its role well, both in prevention efforts and in handling cases of sexual violence. DP3A has also completed every report received by accompanying the victim until the case reaches the point of completion.

Based on the results of interviews in the field, DP3A officers said that the mentoring process was carried out in stages, starting from providing psychological support to victims to facilitating victims in the legal process. This assistance often takes a long time, especially to ensure that the victim's mental condition is completely recovered and ready to face the existing legal stages. In addition, victims were also given education about their rights and encouraged to participate in rehabilitation programs held by DP3A. Analysis in the field shows that the majority of accompanied victims find this service helpful, although some admit it takes longer to fully recover.

DP3A in Aceh Daya Regency has various sexual violence prevention programs designed to protect and empower women and children in the region. These programs aim to provide legal protection, psychosocial recovery, and prevention against violence and discrimination experienced by women and children. In addition, DP3A also focuses on raising public awareness about the rights of women and children, as well as the importance of a safe and supportive environment for them. Through an integrated approach, DP3A collaborates with various parties, both the government, non-governmental organizations, and local communities to implement programs that can have a positive impact on the welfare of women and children.

D. Conclusion

The role of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office (DP3A) in Southwest Aceh Regency has been carried out quite well, especially in the aspect of preventing sexual violence against children. This is evident from the increasing number of victims who dare to report cases of sexual violence they experience. This increase in reporting reflects DP3A's success in providing equitable education to all communities, so that people are increasingly aware of the importance of reporting cases of sexual

violence and dare to take steps to protect themselves and their families. DP3A has 3 roles that are applied when handling cases, namely Active Role, Participatory Role, and Passive Role. In this study, it is also emphasized that the role of social workers in handling cases of sexual violence against children in Southwest Aceh Regency is very crucial, even though the existence of social workers has not been integrated in the structure of DP3A. Social workers have a strategic role as facilitators, advocates, mediators, and empowerment in providing comprehensive assistance for victims and families. Through a trauma-based approach, social workers can help victims recover from their psychological, social, and emotional state, as well as facilitate collaboration between agencies to create more holistic services. The absence of social workers in DP3A is currently a significant obstacle in creating an optimal child protection system.

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