

Policy on Child Protection During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The increase in Covid-19 cases in Indonesia was followed by a large-scale social restriction policy that aims to break the chain of distribution. On the other hand, this policy causes violence to vulnerable groups, especially children. Based on data from the Complaints Service section of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, there has been a monthly increase in cases of violence handled since March of 2020. Writing this paper is important because this phenomenon illustrates the efforts of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia to protect children. This paper aims to find out what factors cause violence against children during the Covid-19 pandemic and how the government attempts to protect children from violence during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research was conducted using an empirical juridical method. Based on the results of rapid research, it can be concluded that the main causes of the increase in violence against children during the Covid-19 Pandemic are psychological and economic factors. Meanwhile, the efforts made by the government, in this case, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, are by optimizing community-based integrated child protection.

Keywords: *Children, Violence, Community-based integrated protection.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The increase in Covid-19 cases in Indonesia has led the government to issue recommendations to work, study, and worship from home. This recommendation was followed up with a Large-Scale Social Restriction policy that aims to break the chain of the spreading of Covid-19. This policy has influenced the increase in violence specifically for vulnerable groups such as children during the Covid-19 pandemic. The condition was exacerbated by the fact that many families lost their livelihoods due to layoffs which resulted in increased family economic burdens and stress. Based on data from the PPPA Symphony, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (Kemen PPPA), there was an increase in cases of violence handled in March and after the pandemic, where from January to October 9 of 2020, the number of complaints related to child violence was 6352 reports.

This phenomenon certainly evokes a sense of justice where the position of the child is basically a mandate and gift of God Almighty, and within him is inherent dignity as a whole human being that must be protected by parents, society, and government. Also,

the constitution of the Republic of Indonesia guarantees the protection of children. Article 34 paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution regulates that "The poor and neglected children are cared for by the state". Then the specific protection of children's rights is also regulated in Article 28 B paragraph (2) stating that "Every child has the right to live, grow and develop and has the right to protection from violence and discrimination". Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Amendments to Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection also regulates the protection of children from acts of violence, namely in Article 13 Paragraph (1) "Every child while in the care of a parent, guardian, or another party, any other person who is responsible for the care has the right to receive protection from discrimination, exploitation both economic and sexual, neglect, cruelty, violence and abuse, injustice and another mistreatment"

The number of cases of violence against children that occur in almost every region must be a concern for the Central Government and Regional Governments because it is feared that, if there is no effort to tackle the cases, it will continue to increase and spread to

other areas. Based on this, this paper will discuss the causes and protection

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted using an empirical juridical method that analyzes primary and secondary data. Primary data in the form of data on child abuse were obtained from the Ministry of PPPA while secondary data were in the form of regulations, literature, journals, and dictionaries related to the problems in this study. Thus, this study not only collects material in the form of theories, concepts, principles, and legal regulations related to the topic but also explains the legal reality in society as a legal phenomenon for the subject, namely children who have the right to guarantee protection from violence.

The data is then analyzed qualitatively by conducting an in-depth analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted with informants from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection to obtain the empirical data needed.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Factors causing violence against children during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Based on interviews conducted with the Assistant Deputy for Child Protection from Violence and Exploitation, the Ministry of PPPA [1], In 2019, cases of violence against children in the period January 1 to February 28 were recorded at 2552 cases, while in the same period of 2020 there were 2453 cases. In the period from 29 February to 9 October 2019, 6367 cases were recorded, compared to 3899 cases in the same period of 2020. As in the image below:



Figure 1: Number of violence against children during the Pandemic Period in 2019 and 2020

However, based on complaints submitted to the Complaints Service of the Complaints Division of the PPPA Ministry, there has been an increase in cases of violence handled from March to October 2020, with the following details:

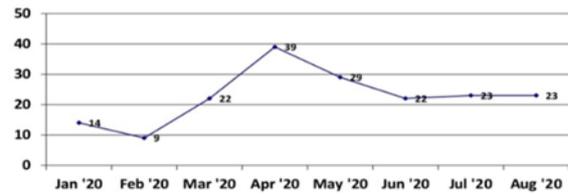


Figure 2: Data on Complaints of Violence Against Children During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Also, data on the Healthy Mental Psychology (Sejiwa) service in anticipation of public psychological pressure during the Covid-19 period show that 13,027 complaints have been served by the Sejiwa Companion Service until 15 September 2020. [2] The increase in cases of complaints of violence against children during the Covid-19 pandemic was influenced by the large amount of time spent by children and parents as a consequence of the government issuing large-scale social restrictions. This section discusses the causes of child abuse during the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.1.1. Economic Factors

The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on the Indonesian economy and the labor sector. Until July 31, 2021, the Ministry of Manpower (Kemnaker) noted that 2.14 million formal and informal workers were affected by Covid-19. [3] When detailed, 383,645 workers in the formal sector had been dismissed and there were 1.13 million formal workers who were dismissed. Meanwhile, 630,905 informal workers lost their jobs or went bankrupt. [3]

Based on a rapid assessment study via telephone interviews on 12-18 May 2020 conducted by World Vision Indonesia on 900 households and 943 children in 10 Provinces; 9 out of 10 households admitted that their source of income was affected by COVID-19 and 70% of them were severely affected. The most affected source of income is agriculture/livestock for rural areas, while employees with regular salaries and daily workers were most affected in urban areas.[4]

The high wave of layoffs resulted in the loss of livelihoods, which resulted in increased family burdens and stress that could potentially trigger domestic

violence (KDRT). The intensity of time spent by children at home due to government policies to do online schooling has resulted in more frequent domestic contact between children and other family members, especially parents.

During the Covid-19 epidemic, learning activities at school were replaced by online learning from home. On the one hand, with the application of home learning system, operational costs increase, especially for financing internet access. On the other, parents are experiencing economic pressure because of losing their jobs.

As a consequence, some parents feel depressed and stressed in the face of Covid-19 and economic problems due to termination of employment. Some of the parents often engage in violence against children, so that children are also affected by the rampant cases of domestic violence that occur during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Based on a survey conducted by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission, which involved 25,164 samples of school-age child respondents from 8 to 14 June 2020, the most frequent form of physical violence against children during the Covid-19 pandemic was pinching and shouting, recorded at 23 percent. [5] Meanwhile, being scolded, as a form of verbal or psychological violence, is most often suffered by children, with a share of 56 percent. [5]

Survey results also found that child abuse occurs mostly when parents assist children in online distance learning. Perpetrators of psychological and physical violence during the pandemic against children are committed by their immediate families, such as mother, father, brother or sister, other siblings, grandparents, and household assistants. [5]

3.1.2. Psychological Factors

Nationally, the spread of the Covid-19 virus has reached all provinces in the country with different levels of impact. From April 2020 until now, the status of non-natural disasters from the spread of Covid-19 as a national disaster by Presidential Decree No. 12/2020 has not been declared over. [4] The determination of the national disaster is based on the consideration of the increasing spread of the Covid-19 virus which has caused victims, property losses, the expansion of the coverage of the affected area, and its broad socio-economic implications.[6]

In breaking the chain of the spread of Covid-19, the central and local governments have issued a Large-Scale Social Restriction (PSBB) policy. This has been recorded in the Minister of Health Regulation No. 9/2020 about the restrictions on schools and

workplaces, religious activities, activities in public places or facilities, socio-cultural activities, transportation, and other activities. People also currently spend a lot of time at home. [7]

The economic burden of the family due to the dismissal of the working relationship that befell the head of the family results in the loss of financial income for the family while the necessities of life must be fulfilled, causing a separate psychological burden for parents, who in turn often express emotions in the form of violence against children.

Then also online school policies that cause parents to act as teachers to assist children when doing online learning. Based on data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission, many women (mothers) are perpetrators of violence against children. This happened because of the heavy burden on the mother during the Covid-19 pandemic which contributed to violence against children. [8] Based on the KPAI survey, more women (mothers) became perpetrators of violence against children because they considered children to be less productive, such as watching TV or (61%), sleeping (60%), and playing games (49%).

Based on the results of interviews in a rapid assessment study conducted by Wahana Visi Indonesia involving 943 children, the learning from home policy also has a psychological impact on children. Learning from home causes boredom in children because they cannot perform outside activities, such as sports, extracurricular activities outside of class or buying food in the canteen during class breaks. Also, survey findings show that, in addition to boredom, one in ten children are worried about their parents' income in this situation and they also worry about a lack of food.

From the results of interviews with P2TP2A in several locations, it was found that almost two-thirds of children admitted to have experienced verbal abuse from their parents even though the results of the survey to parents showed contradictory results. Nearly two-thirds of parents admit to having done positive care without violence. [6]

Psychological factors due to the Covid-19 pandemic not only have an impact on parents who have experienced a decrease in income or have lost their jobs, but also have an impact on the psychology of children who are required to study and do activities at home, which causes boredom for children to be able to concentrate on learning. This can be a trigger for violence against children in the household environment, due to the psychological pressure experienced by both parents and children because their needs are not met.

3.2. Protection of Children from Violence through Integrated Community-Based Protection

Based on a written interview conducted with the Assistant Deputy of Protection, one of the efforts made by the Ministry of PPPA in preventing violence against children during the Covid-19 pandemic was by further intensifying Community-Based Integrated Child Protection (PATBM), in addition to conducting a series of Webinar activities on preventing violence against during the Covid-19 pandemic, the creation of a Protocol for Handling Violence against children during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the Making of IEC (Information and Education Communication) Prevention of Violence Against Children during the Covid-19 Pandemic, protection goals, fostering community initiatives as the spearhead to carry out prevention efforts through promotive actions to build public awareness so that understanding changes, attitudes and behavior towards child abuse. Therefore, child protection, in this case, must be interpreted as an effort to assure that there should be no interference with the child's development (especially psychologically) towards an independent and qualified adult human.[9]

PATBM was initiated by the Ministry of PPPA in 2016 by the mandate of the Law on Child Protection Number 35 of 2014. The PATBM movement at the village level is carried out by village / PATBM is a movement of a network or group of citizens at the community / community level that works in a coordinated manner to achieve child the village of activists, namely people or child assistants. who care for children, work actively and can mobilize community activities at the village or sub-district level, and have been trained with a variety of knowledge about child protection.[9]

PATBM aims to make efforts to prevent and carry out early detection of cases of violence against children in the surrounding environment. Through this PATBM movement, the community is also invited to be more sensitive in realizing the change of behavior patterns and leading to the possibility of violence against children. For this reason, activists play an important role in the PATBM movement so that the ability to understand what, who and how is needed so that PATBM at the village / kelurahan level can work to achieve this goal. [9]

The PATBM movement at the village /sub-district level is carried out by village / kelurahan activists, namely people or child assistants, for example village officials, communities, religious leaders, community leaders, and village children forums. These are people who care for children, work actively and can

drive community activities at the village or kelurahan level, and have been trained with a level of knowledge about child protection. [9]

In the Covid-19 pandemic situation, community participation in the implementation of child protection refers to articles 20 and 25 of Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection. In addition to the Child Protection Law, handling the Covid-19 pandemic in children also has a strong reference from the letter of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemen PPPA) addressed to the Head of the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB-RI) . [10]

PATBM has 2 (two) strategic roles about protecting children from violence during the Covid-19 Pandemic. First, It plays a role in the field of implementation prevention. The focus point of prevention activities is carried out by providing outreach to the community to anticipate and prevent violence against children in their respective environments so that it is expected to produce results, namely increased understanding of community leaders, cadres about child protection, and violence against children. [11]

Also, it is hoped that it can increase community awareness and participation in the prevention and handling of cases of violence against children. The extension participants are expected to be able to socialize again with the community in their respective areas about child protection from violence so that people know how to act in case of cases and can also prevent cases of violence against children. [11]

Second, it plays the role in the handling sector. This is done through a process of legal assistance . The legal assistance and assistance are provided through an advocacy program for families and children who are victims of violence. [11] This assistance is carried out both outside the court and, if the case of violence against the child exists, it is then submitted to the court for legal proceedings. Child victims of violence are given legal assistance to follow up on the violence they have experienced. The legal assistance provided is legal assistance and consultation and follow-up in the handling of victims where the case is deemed necessary to be followed up by the criminal case process. [11]

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the aforementioned explanation and discussion, it can be concluded violence against children committed during the Covid-19 pandemic is caused by different factors, namely economic factors, large number of layoffs, accompanied by increased household needs such as huge spending on internet for

children's learning and life necessities, then psychological factors, the absence of income due to layoffs can cause its psychological burden for parents. Efforts to protect children from violence can be through integrated community-based protection carried out by village / kelurahan activists. The PATBM has a strategic role in child protection and handling of legal aid.

The suggestions that must be carried out by the Ministry of PPPA are as follow:

- a. The Ministry of PPPA can collaborate with other Ministries in conducting community-based integrated child protection socialization so that the public know, understand, and can play an active role in providing protection for children from violence during the Covid-19 Pandemic and forming cadres, volunteers in each village and providing training so that cadres and volunteers can contribute positively in the prevention, handling and referral of cases of child abuse.
- b. Cadres, volunteers, and PATBM activists actively provide understanding to parents that children must be protected from violence in any situation, including in the Covid-19 pandemic, and always improve competence and capacity so that they can be optimal in providing protection and assistance for children from violence. Socialization can also be carried out in ways that are easily accessible to the public, such as through social media, radio, television, public service announcements, as well as collaborating with the public on child figures who can provide socialization on child protection.
- c. Building a child protection system from domestic violence that involves the active role of the family and teachers/teachers in each village/district/city by creating a learning system that does not burden parents. Increase the active role of the teacher/teacher in learning at home in ways that are communicative, creative, and less monotonous. It is necessary to consider creating a separate curriculum related to learning activities outside the home that can be done by parents and children.
- d. Integrating valid data that are accessible to parties playing a role in child protection, both from the government and the private sector, so that an effective and efficient data network is built to map cases and follow up on the protection of violence against children.
- e. Conducting massive outreach to child protection services that have been built such as PATBM, P2TP2A, Sejiwa, and other services so that they are easily accessible by children and the community.

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