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Topic: *Strengthening Legal Frameworks for Combating Human Trafficking and Enhancing Protection of Women and Children*

Strengthening The Protection of Women and Children as a Shared Responsibility to Create a Higher-Quality Generation

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Abstract. *Women and children constitute the fundamental pillars supporting the future and civilization of a nation. The quality of future generations largely depends on the extent to which the state and society can provide a safe, violence-free, and non-discriminatory environment. This article aims to examine the urgency of strengthening the protection of women and children and to formulate a concept of shared responsibility among the government, families, and society. This study employs a normative juridical research method using a library research approach. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively. The findings reveal that although Indonesia possesses a relatively comprehensive legal framework for the protection of women and children, its implementation continues to face significant challenges, particularly due to deeply rooted patriarchal cultural norms and the lack of effective cross-sectoral collaboration. The physical, mental, and psychological well-being of women and children is directly correlated with the quality of future human resources. Therefore, the protection of women and children should not be viewed solely as the responsibility of the state. Rather, it requires active public participation, social awareness, and strengthened family resilience to foster a generation that is competent, morally grounded, and of high quality.*

Keywords: *Family Resilience; Human Rights; Protection of Women and Children; Quality Generation; Shared Responsibility.*

1. Introduction

The progress and civilization of a nation are not measured solely by economic achievements or physical infrastructure development, but also by how it treats vulnerable groups, particularly women and children. Sociological and psychological literature widely recognizes women as the

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first educators of their children, while children represent the nation's future, potential, and the successors of its aspirations, playing a strategic role in shaping the future of society.

Unfortunately, contemporary social realities continue to demonstrate high levels of violence, discrimination, and exploitation against women and children. Various forms of domestic violence, sexual violence, and child neglect persist despite the existence of legal instruments designed to address these issues. This indicates that legislation alone is insufficient to eliminate threats against women and children without a comprehensive transformation of public awareness and social attitudes.

The State has provided constitutional guarantees through the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which affirms that every child has the right to survival, growth, and development, as well as protection from violence and discrimination.

Creating a higher-quality generation is impossible if it is built upon family environments characterized by violence or societal indifference. Trauma experienced by women as mothers, as well as by children during their developmental years, can have long-term and intergenerational consequences affecting cognitive, emotional, and social development. Therefore, the paradigm of protecting women and children must shift from being viewed merely as a “state responsibility” to becoming a “shared responsibility” among all elements of society.

2. Research Methods

This study employs a normative juridical research method using a library research approach. The primary focus of this method is to examine the application of legal principles and norms within positive law, as well as relevant concepts in the sociology of law.

Data collection was conducted through the inventory and examination of primary legal materials, including legislation concerning Human Rights, Child Protection, and the Elimination of Sexual Violence.

In addition, secondary legal materials consisting of academic books, scholarly literature, and scientific journal articles were utilized to strengthen the analysis. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively to formulate a holistic protection framework based on cross-sectoral collaboration aimed at creating a high-quality future generation.

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3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Urgency of Protecting Women and Children in Creating a High-Quality Generation

The development of a nation should not be measured solely by the grandeur of its physical infrastructure or the rate of its economic growth. Rather, it begins with the quality of its human resources, particularly those who will constitute future generations. The quality of future generations is largely determined by the quality of the microenvironment in which they are born and raised, namely the family. It is within this smallest social unit that the foundations of cognitive intelligence, emotional maturity, and character development are established from an early age. Therefore, creating a harmonious, safe, and threat-free family environment is not merely an option but an essential prerequisite that must be fulfilled by all elements of society if a nation aspires to build a prosperous and civilized future.

Within the process of child development and character formation, women particularly mothers play an irreplaceable role. Women serve as the primary pillar in ensuring adequate nutrition, providing fundamental character education, and maintaining the mental well-being of children within the family. The close psychological bond between mothers and children allows values, emotions, knowledge, and habits transmitted by mothers to be absorbed directly by their children. Consequently, a child's intellectual capacity and resilience depend significantly on the extent to which mothers have access to information, physical well-being, and freedom from fear in performing their caregiving responsibilities.

Unfortunately, this vital role can be severely undermined when women are subjected to structural inequalities or various forms of gender-based violence. When mothers become victims of physical, verbal, or psychological abuse, their ability to nurture and educate their children is significantly diminished. Emotional trauma, depression, chronic anxiety, and loss of self-confidence resulting from violence deprive women of the positive energy necessary to provide adequate care and attention to their children. Under such circumstances, childcare is often neglected, children's nutritional needs may be overlooked, and the emotional bond between mother and child may deteriorate, ultimately jeopardizing the child's future development.

The harmful effects of domestic violence extend beyond mothers and directly impact children. Children who are exposed to violence—whether as direct victims or as witnesses to abuse suffered by their mothers—are more likely to experience severe neurobiological and

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psychological developmental disorders. Accumulated trauma can trigger aggressive behavior, impair memory and academic performance, and perpetuate cycles of violence across generations. As a result, children may internalize violence as a normal or acceptable means of resolving conflicts later in life.

Understanding these destructive consequences requires a shift in societal perspectives regarding gender-based violence. Protecting women and children from all forms of exploitation and violence is not merely a matter of fulfilling legal obligations or safeguarding human rights. More importantly, it constitutes a strategic long-term investment in the nation's future. Protecting women means protecting families, and healthy, peaceful, and equitable families are more likely to raise children who are mentally resilient, physically healthy, and intellectually capable of becoming future leaders of the nation.

3.2. Evaluation of Indonesia's Legal Protection Framework

From a juridical perspective, Indonesia has demonstrated a strong and progressive commitment to protecting women and children from various forms of violence and crime. Over time, the national legal paradigm has evolved from viewing domestic violence as a private family matter to recognizing it as a public issue that requires state intervention. This commitment is reflected in a series of complementary legal instruments designed to protect victims and ensure justice. These legal frameworks demonstrate the state's presence in addressing the suffering of individuals who have long lived under fear and lacked safe avenues for seeking legal protection.

One of the most significant milestones in Indonesia's legal history was the enactment of Law Number 23 of 2004 concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence. This legislation was revolutionary because it transformed domestic violence from a private matter into a public legal issue, thereby preventing perpetrators from justifying abusive behavior under the guise of family discipline or household authority.

This protection was further strengthened through Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, which assigns responsibility to the state, government institutions, society, and parents to ensure the fulfillment of children's rights, enabling them to live, grow, and develop optimally without discrimination or violence.

The most recent and highly anticipated legal development was the enactment of Law Number 12 of 2022 concerning Sexual Violence Crimes. This legislation represents a major legal breakthrough, providing comprehensive protection for victims of sexual violence. Beyond

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imposing criminal sanctions on perpetrators, the law adopts a victim-centered approach by simplifying evidentiary procedures, guaranteeing psychological recovery services, and ensuring victims' rights to restitution in the form of financial compensation derived from the perpetrators' assets.

Despite the existence of this comprehensive legal framework, significant challenges remain in its implementation. One of the primary obstacles is the persistence of deeply rooted patriarchal cultural norms throughout many regions of Indonesia. These social structures often position men as superior to women and view women and children not as independent legal subjects but as subordinate members of the family. Consequently, cases involving domestic violence, child marriage, and sexual abuse are frequently resolved informally through family settlements rather than legal proceedings, often at the expense of victims' rights and well-being.

Such cultural barriers contribute to what is commonly referred to as the "iceberg phenomenon" in cases of violence against women and children. Official reports received by law enforcement agencies represent only a small fraction of the actual incidents occurring within society. Many victims remain silent due to fear of divorce, social stigma, community judgment, or victim-blaming attitudes, including those sometimes encountered within legal institutions that lack gender-sensitive perspectives.

At this point, written legal provisions often become ineffective when confronted with social structures that continue to tolerate or normalize violence. Consequently, legal reform alone is insufficient without corresponding changes in societal attitudes and cultural values.

3.3. Synergy and Shared Responsibility in Building a Safe Ecosystem

Given the complexity of existing challenges, efforts to eliminate violence against women and children cannot be borne solely by law enforcement agencies. Limited institutional capacity, lengthy bureaucratic procedures, and evidentiary challenges require a fundamental reconceptualization of protection mechanisms. The protection of women and children must be understood as a shared responsibility involving all components of society. Therefore, reactive approaches that focus only on responding after violence has occurred must be replaced by preventive strategies aimed at creating a safe and supportive social ecosystem.

The first pillar in building such an ecosystem is Family Resilience. Protection must begin within the home. Premarital education programs and parenting initiatives that promote gender equality and nonviolent child-rearing practices should be strengthened and expanded,

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including in rural communities. Families represent both the first line of defense and the first educational institution for children. When parents adopt democratic, affectionate, fair, and nonviolent parenting practices, they foster children with strong emotional intelligence and resilience. Such children are less vulnerable to external threats and are more likely to develop respect for human dignity and social justice.

The second pillar is Community Awareness and Social Responsibility. Communities constitute the closest layer of protection beyond the family environment. Local residents, community leaders, religious figures, neighborhood associations, and educational institutions should develop effective early warning systems to identify signs of violence or neglect. Teachers who observe behavioral changes in students or neighbors who witness suspicious incidents should be encouraged to report their concerns. Such proactive social engagement narrows opportunities for perpetrators to operate undetected and strengthens community-based protection mechanisms.

Strengthening community involvement also requires a transformation of prevailing social attitudes. Society must abandon the perception that domestic violence, sexual abuse, or child abuse are private family matters that should remain hidden. The belief that violence within households is solely an internal family affair must be replaced with an understanding that such acts constitute serious criminal offenses and violations of human rights. Public awareness campaigns should encourage individuals to report incidents of violence without fear or hesitation.

The third and most crucial pillar is the Optimization of the State's Role. The government must move beyond legislative enactment and ensure the effective delivery of accessible public services for victims. Relevant ministries and institutions should facilitate integrated reporting systems, increase the availability of safe houses and shelters throughout the country, and provide comprehensive medical and psychological recovery services free of charge.

Furthermore, judicial institutions must impose effective sanctions that create a strong deterrent effect against perpetrators. Through comprehensive and coordinated efforts from prevention to enforcement, the state can establish a sustainable ecosystem that effectively protects women and children.

4. Conclusion

Creating a high-quality, competitive, and resilient future generation is impossible without ensuring the maximum protection of women and children today. Although Indonesia's legal

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framework provides a solid foundation, law alone cannot function effectively in isolation. The future quality of the nation largely depends on guaranteeing women's safety in fulfilling their strategic roles within society and ensuring that children can grow and develop free from discrimination and violence. Efforts to protect women and children should be implemented through a pentahelix approach involving government institutions, law enforcement agencies, communities, educational institutions, and the mass media. Continuous and large-scale campaigns are needed to challenge patriarchal norms and foster greater social awareness. Through such collaborative efforts, the protection of women and children can be transformed from a legal obligation into a shared moral responsibility aimed at creating a golden generation for the future of the nation.

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