



THE ROLE OF THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND CHILD PROTECTION SERVICE IN HANDLING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

PERAN DINAS PEMBERDAYAAN PEREMPUAN DAN PERLINDUNGAN ANAK DALAM PENANGANAN KEKERASAN TERHADAP ANAK DI KABUPATEN GOWA

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of the Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DP3A) in handling cases of child abuse in Gowa Regency. The research employs a qualitative approach, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The focus of this study is to examine how DP3A carries out its role in addressing child abuse in Gowa Regency and to identify the inhibiting factors it faces in handling such cases. The findings reveal that DP3A Gowa Regency plays a strategic role in addressing child abuse through preventive measures such as community outreach and education, case handling through the UPTD PPA with legal and psychological services, and child recovery programs including counseling, therapy, and social reintegration. Collaboration with schools, the police, the Social Affairs Office, NGOs, and the establishment of a Children's Forum further strengthens the child protection system in the region. However, the study also identifies several inhibiting factors, including a shortage of professional human resources, limited operational funding, and low public awareness influenced by patriarchal culture and the normalization of violence. These obstacles result in limited services, delays in case handling, and a large number of unreported cases. In conclusion, DP3A Gowa Regency plays an essential role in creating a comprehensive child protection ecosystem, although it still requires greater support in terms of human resource capacity, funding, and shifts in societal paradigms to ensure optimal child protection.

Keywords: Child Protection, Child Abuse, DP3A, Gowa Regency

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis Peran Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak Dalam Penanganan Kekerasan Terhadap Anak di Kabupaten Gowa.



Penelitian ini menggunakan jenis pendekatan kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini yaitu teknik observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi. Fokus dalam penelitian ini adalah bagaimana peran dinas pemberdayaan Perempuan dan perlindungan anak dalam penanganan kekerasan terhadap anak di Kabupaten Gowa serta apa saja faktor penghambat yang dihadapi Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak dalam Menangani Kekerasan Terhadap Anak di Kabupaten Gowa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa DP3A Kabupaten Gowa memiliki peran strategis dalam penanganan kekerasan terhadap anak melalui upaya pencegahan berupa sosialisasi dan edukasi masyarakat, penanganan kasus melalui UPTD PPA dengan layanan hukum dan psikologis, serta pemulihan anak korban melalui konseling, terapi, dan program reintegrasi sosial. Kolaborasi dengan sekolah, kepolisian, Dinas Sosial, LSM, serta pembentukan Forum Anak turut memperkuat sistem perlindungan anak di daerah ini. Namun, penelitian juga menemukan beberapa faktor penghambat, antara lain keterbatasan sumber daya manusia profesional, minimnya anggaran operasional, serta rendahnya kesadaran masyarakat yang masih dipengaruhi oleh budaya patriarki dan normalisasi kekerasan. Kendala ini berdampak pada keterbatasan layanan, keterlambatan penanganan, serta masih banyaknya kasus yang tidak terlaporkan. Dengan demikian, DP3A Kabupaten Gowa berperan penting dalam menciptakan ekosistem perlindungan anak yang komprehensif, meskipun masih memerlukan dukungan peningkatan kapasitas SDM, anggaran, serta perubahan paradigma masyarakat agar perlindungan anak dapat terwujud secara optimal.

Kata Kunci: Perlindungan Anak, Kekerasan terhadap Anak, DP3A, Kabupaten Gowa.

1. INTRODUCTION

Children are the future generation of the nation and the successors of the ongoing struggle for progress. Children are both a trust and a gift from God Almighty that we must always protect because they embody dignity, honor, and human rights that must be upheld. Children are an important stage in human development because they learn and develop socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically. Children can be the subject of attention in various fields, including education, psychology, health, and public policy. Protection of children is implemented through the enactment of Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning Amendments to Law No. 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection, Article 1 Paragraph (15) states that “Special protection is a form of protection received by children in certain situations and conditions to obtain a sense of security against threats that endanger themselves and their souls in their growth and development”. (Sulaiman, 2024)

In addition, children have specific rights that are protected by legal and ethical norms to safeguard their welfare and interests. In the life of the nation and state, children are the future of the nation and the aspirations of the next generation. Every child has the right to survival, growth, development, participation, freedom from violence and discrimination, as well as civil rights and freedoms. Article 28B paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution emphasizes this: “Every child has the right to survival, growth and development, and the right to be free from violence and discrimination”. (IBRAHIM, 2023)

Violence against children remains a major problem in Indonesia. Violence against children includes all forms of physical, mental, and sexual abuse, including neglect and abuse. According to Law No. 35 of 2004 on Child Protection, violence is any act against a child that



results in physical, psychological, sexual, and/or emotional distress or suffering, including threats to commit such acts, coercion, or deprivation.

Regardless of the form of violence experienced by women and children, this issue has become the focus of attention in almost all countries around the world, because cases like this do not only occur in developing countries, but also in developed countries. Several international organizations and non-governmental organizations or foundations concerned with the issue of violence against women and children will always speak out to stop such violence. Programs and policies that are in line with the protection of women and children will always be encouraged and implemented throughout Indonesia. (Mallawi, 2022).

Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi, is an area with a concerning number of cases of violence against children. Based on reports from the Gowa Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency (DP3A), in recent years, the number of cases of violence against children has fluctuated but remained high, with a predominance of sexual and physical abuse and neglect.

Every year, violence against children increases, making Indonesia one of the countries with an emergency situation regarding violence against children. The issue of child protection is not only the responsibility of the government, but also of parents and the community. Given the limited budget and human resources available to the relevant agencies, it is hoped that the community and parents can also increase their awareness in providing protection for children so that children can obtain their rights. Child protection is closely related to five pillars, namely parents, family, community, government, local government, and the state. All five are interconnected as child protection providers. In its simplest form, child protection seeks to ensure that every child's rights are not violated.

It is important to remember that many countries have laws that prohibit and provide protection for children against violence. These laws often cover preventive measures, legal processes, and sanctions for violations of children's rights. For example, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a global convention that regulates children's rights. This convention emphasizes the right of children to be protected from all forms of violence and stresses the importance of special protection for children who are at risk, such as refugee children or children under legal protection (Aryani, 2024).

The form of protection for children plays an important role because violations of child protection are essentially violations that are prohibited in human rights. It seems that violations of children's rights will be a major obstacle to the survival and development of children, as children will experience violence, exploitation, neglect, and mistreatment and will be at risk.

For example, a shorter life span, poorer mental and physical health, problems related to education (including dropping out of school), poor parenting skills, homelessness, feeling displaced from their place of residence, and not having a home. However, on the other hand, successful protection will provide opportunities for the child to grow up healthy physically, mentally, confident, and with self-esteem, and less likely to abuse or exploit others, including their own children. (Mahka, 2020)

Looking at the conditions of society in Gowa Regency, reality shows that the number of cases of violence against children is increasing due to low public understanding of the fulfillment of children's rights. Many factors contribute to violence against children, including the mistaken paradigm that children are the property of their parents or family, so parents have the right to treat their children however they want in the name of education, morals, obsession,



or to make children more obedient. Violence against children also often occurs due to the influence of parental stress. (Ilham, 2020)

Law No. 9 of 2015 concerning the revision of Law No. 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government requires the implementation of child protection. Kolaka Regency Regulation No. 3 of 2016 concerning the implementation of Child Protection explains that the scope of child protection in Kolaka Regency includes prevention, risk reduction, handling, and a child data information system (article 13).

Children are often victims of severe psychological abuse. Many children experience psychological abuse at home at the hands of their own parents. As a result, children suffer psychological damage that will interfere with their mental development in the future. Psychological abuse can be carried out in various ways, whether subtle or harsh, or even subtle. However, regardless of the method used, the impact remains the same, namely causing mental damage to the child.

Trauma resulting from violence against children can increase a person's risk of developing asthma, depression, coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, obesity, and a tendency to consume excessive amounts of alcohol and use drugs. A study noted a fairly high prevalence of suicide attempts among adults who had been victims of childhood violence. In addition, there are other risks from Victims of child abuse when they reach adulthood, such as depression, eating disorders, panic attacks, suicidal tendencies, and domestic violence in childhood, are also at greater risk of depression after becoming parents later in life.

The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) also records data on child protection violations from all over Indonesia, spread across various provinces, cities, and regencies throughout the country. The 10 provinces with the highest number of reported child rights violations are West Java with 929 cases, DKI Jakarta Province with 769 cases, East Java Province with 345 cases, Banten Province with 312 cases, Central Java Province with 286 cases, North Sumatra Province with 197 cases, South Sumatra Province with 62 cases, South Sulawesi Province with 54 cases, Lampung Province with 53 cases, and Bali Province with 49 cases (AI Maryati Solihah, Chair of KPAI, 2022). Based on this data, it can be explained that Indonesian children are vulnerable to becoming victims of crime due to various backgrounds, situations, and conditions in which they find themselves. (IBRAHIM I. M., 2023)

To address issues related to women and children who are victims of violence, a Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children (UPT PPA) has been established under the Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DPPPA), which provides services for women and children who are victims of violence in Gowa Regency. The Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children (UPT PPA) was formed based on Gowa Regent Regulation Number 14 of 2021 concerning the Organization and Work Procedures of the Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children at the Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection. The Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children (UPT PPA) is led by the Head of the UPT who is subordinate to and responsible to the Head of the Agency. The function of the Technical Implementation Unit for Women and Children (UPT PPA) is to provide services such as public complaints, reaching out to victims, case management, temporary shelter, mediation, and victim assistance.

Preventive, curative, and rehabilitative theories were not specifically proposed by any one individual, but rather are concepts that have developed within the field of public health and



have been implemented in various policies, such as those regulated by Law No. 36 of 2009 concerning Health.

Based on the issues described above, the researcher is interested in conducting research with the title **“The Role of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency in Handling Violence Against Children in Gowa Regency.”**

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a qualitative, descriptive approach. This approach aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the role of the Gowa Regency Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency (DP3A) in handling cases of violence against children through data collection in the form of words, actions, and relevant documents. This approach was used to explore the complexity and nuances of human experiences. Qualitative research produces analytical descriptions or meanings derived directly from participants, thus not the result of manipulation of the variables involved. (Mustafa, 2022)

The research was conducted at the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service (DP3A) of Gowa Regency, Jln. Beringin No. 03, Tombolo, Somba Opu District, Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi 92113. because this agency has the main authority in the prevention, handling, and recovery of victims of violence against women and children, as well as managing the UPT for the Protection of Women and Children (UPT PPA) as a technical service unit.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Children are a national asset that must be safeguarded, protected, and given the space to grow and develop optimally, free from all forms of violence. However, the reality on the ground shows that cases of violence against children remain a serious problem that requires comprehensive attention and handling. In Gowa Regency, various forms of violence against children still occur, both in the household, school, and other social environments. The violence experienced by children not only leaves physical wounds but also psychological trauma that has long-term impacts on their growth and development. The Gowa Regency Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency (DPPPA) has a history rooted in government efforts to improve women's welfare and child protection in the region. This agency is responsible for formulating policies, implementing programs, and coordinating with various relevant parties to realize effective women's empowerment and child protection.

Main Functions of the Gowa Regency DPPPA Referring to the main tasks and functions (tupoksi) which are usually stated in the Gowa Regent Regulation No. 40 of 2016 and reinforced by the 2021–2026 Renstra document and the OPD profile document, the Gowa Regency DPPPA has the following functions: First, Formulating technical policies to prepare regional policies in the field of women's empowerment, child protection, and gender equality in accordance with national policy directions and regional priorities. Second, Implementing regional government affairs implementing programs and activities for women's empowerment and child protection, such as: Increasing women's participation in development, Preventing and handling violence against women and children, Fostering women's organizations, Strengthening child protection institutions and networks. Third, Implementing Coordinating with central government agencies, related OPDs, the police, the business world (through APSAI), NGOs, and the community in efforts to fulfill the rights and protection of women and children. Fourth, Implementing Guidance and Supervision Guiding villages or sub-districts,



schools, and work environments to be friendly to women and children, and supervising the implementation of policies and programs. Fifth, Public Service Implementation provides complaint services, legal assistance, and psychosocial support for victims of violence against women and children. Sixth, Implementation of Other Duties: Carrying out additional duties assigned by the Regent in accordance with policy developments and regional needs.

Figure 1.1 Front View of the Office of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service in Gowa Regency



Vision, Mission of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service in Gowa Regency The vision of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service in Gowa Regency is: Realizing independence, justice, and gender equality as well as child protection in Gowa Regency. (This vision is in line with the policy direction of the Gowa Regency Government which prioritizes improving the quality of human resources, gender equality, and improving public services). **Mission of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service in Gowa Regency** The following are three main mission points of the DPPPA, in line with the Makassar regional government and generally the DPPPA of districts/cities in South Sulawesi. The missions are: First, Increasing community and institutional participation in development, especially women and children. Second, Formulating and implementing policies that are gender responsive, in favor of gender justice, and gender equality. Third, Organizing the protection and fulfillment of children's rights, including preventive efforts and handling in the event of rights violations. These three points substantially support Gowa's vision to create a quality, independent, and competitive society.

The Regional Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children (UPTD PPA) in Gowa Regency is a technical unit under the Department of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DPPPA), tasked with providing direct services to women and children who are victims of violence, discrimination, and other rights violations. **Functions and Services of the UPTD PPA:** Based on Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 12/2017 and Ministerial Regulation No. 4/2018, the Gowa UPTD PPA carries out the following functions: Public Complaints, Victim Outreach, Case Management, Temporary Shelter, Mediation, and Victim Assistance (legal and psychosocial).



Structure and Personnel of the Gowa UPTD PPA Structurally (referring to UPTD PPA in general), this unit is led by the Head of the UPTD and supported by the Administration Sub-Section, Complaints Section, Follow-up Section (mediation and legal/psychosocial assistance), and Functional Position Groups (psychologists, legal counselors, mediators). Its partners include the Health Office, Gowa Police/Sector Police, Puspaga, Social Services, and Education Office, all of which contribute to the repatriation and reintegration of victims. The Gowa Women and Child Protection Unit (UPTD PPA) spearheads the technical implementation of the Gowa Regency DPPPA (Empowerment and Child Protection Agency) in addressing issues related to women and children who are victims of violence. This unit provides a one-stop shop for integrated services, from complaints to legal and psychological assistance, collaborating closely with various relevant agencies to ensure recovery and guarantee the rights of victims.

The purpose of the establishment and operation of the UPTD PPA (Regional Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children) of Gowa Regency, which is in line with national regulations (PPPA Ministerial Regulation No. 4 of 2018) and the Gowa Regency DPPPA Strategic Plan. The objectives of the UPTD PPA of Gowa Regency are: First, Providing fast, precise, integrated, and comprehensive protection services to women and children who are victims of violence, discrimination, or mistreatment. Second, Increasing access for victims so they can easily obtain legal, psychosocial, medical, and social rehabilitation assistance. Third, Creating a professional, integrated, and victim-perspective case handling system so that victims' rights are protected and the recovery process runs optimally. Fourth, Supporting prevention efforts by increasing community education, outreach, and cross-sectoral cooperation in Gowa Regency. Fifth, Assisting the local government in realizing Gowa Regency as a Child-Friendly Regency (KLA) and a gender-responsive region. UPTD PPA is a "frontline" technical unit that directly handles complaints, assistance, and handling of victims, so that the Gowa Regency Government not only formulates policies, but also provides real services to the community.

Amidst these conditions, the Gowa Regency Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency (DP3A) serves as a crucial pillar in providing real protection for children who are victims of violence. DP3A not only carries out administrative duties, but is also directly involved in prevention efforts, case handling, and recovery for child victims of violence. By building cross-sectoral collaboration and actively involving the community, DP3A strives to create a responsive and rights-based protection system. The Gowa Regency Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency (DP3A) is a regional government agency tasked with implementing government affairs in the field of women's empowerment and child protection. DP3A has several divisions, one of which is the Child Protection Division, which is at the forefront of handling cases of violence against children.

The Gowa Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency (DP3A) has a rapid response service unit, the Regional Technical Implementation Unit for Women and Children Protection (UPTD PPA), which handles case reporting, psychological support, and legal proceedings. This unit also collaborates with various agencies, such as the Social Services Agency, the Police, and non-governmental organizations. Research shows that the Gowa Regency Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency (DP3A) plays a crucial and comprehensive role in addressing cases of violence against children.



Table 1. Based on Type of Violence

No	Type	Children Man	Children women	Amount children	Mature man	Mature women	Amount mature	Amount
1	Child violence	27	57	84	0	0	0	84
2	Domestic violence	0	0	0	0	20	20	20
3	Child face the law	0	0	0	21	6	27	27
4	Violence against women	0	0	0	0	32	32	32
5	Disability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	Drug victim	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	Children in emergency situations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	Registered nurse	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	Other	0	13	13	0	10	10	23
	Total	57	77	134	52	52	104	186

Table 2. Based on the Form of Violence

No	Form of violence	Children man	Children women	Amount children	Mature man	Mature women	Amount mature	Jumlah
1	Physique	1	9	10	0	22	22	32
2	Psychic	14	16	30	16	2	18	48
3	Sexual	43	2	45	13	0	13	58
4	Trafficking	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
5	Neglect	3	1	4	0	1	1	5
6	Exploitation	0	3	3	0	1	1	4
7	Bullying/Intoleransi	0	2	2	0	0	0	2
8	Kidnapping	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	Fraud	0	0	0	3	0	3	3



10	Children as physical perpetrators /sharp weapons	23	3	26	0	0	0	26
	TOTAL	57	77	134	52	52	104	186

Source: UPTD PPA Gowa Regency as of May 10, 2023

Based on data from the Makassar City UPTD PPA as of May 10, 2023, there were 186 cases of violence recorded, with 134 cases involving children and 52 cases involving adults. Among children, the most prevalent form of violence was violence against children (84 cases). Among adults, the most common cases were violence against women (32 cases) and domestic violence (20 cases). This indicates that children are the most vulnerable group, while women are the most frequently affected group. By type of violence, the most common cases were sexual violence with 58 cases, followed by psychological violence with 48 cases, and physical violence with 32 cases. In addition, there were also cases of neglect (5 cases), exploitation (4 cases), bullying/intolerance (2 cases), and fraud/theft (3 cases). Interestingly, there were 26 cases of children as perpetrators of physical violence/sharp weapons, indicating a shift in social problems affecting children. This data confirms that the most concerning form of violence is sexual violence against children, while psychological and physical violence is more prominent among adults.

The Role of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service in Handling Cases of Violence Against Children Preventively means prevention, namely efforts made to anticipate or prevent the occurrence of something undesirable, bad, or problems before they occur. Preventive actions are proactive and aim to reduce risks or negative impacts by conducting socialization, education, or arrangement. Socialization and Education DP3A plays an active role in providing counseling and socialization to the community regarding children's rights in accordance with Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection. Forms of violence against children, such as physical, psychological, sexual violence, and neglect. How to report cases of violence, including through the UPTD PPA or hotline services. The goal is to increase public awareness so that they are able to recognize, prevent, and reject all forms of violence against children. Strengthening Institutions and Child Protection Networks. DP3A forms and coordinates various community-based child protection institutions, such as the Family Learning Center (PUSPAGA) which provides counseling and education services for parents and children. The Regional Children's Forum (FAD) is a forum for children's participation in voicing their opinions. Child Protection is a community-based movement at the village/sub-district level to prevent violence against children. The goal is to strengthen the role of communities and families as the frontline in preventing violence.

Training and Capacity Building DP3A conducts training for officials, teachers, health workers, and community leaders, such as Training on early detection of violence against children Training on victim assistance and reporting of violence Guidance for educational institutions and places of worship to become "child-friendly schools and homes" The goal is to ensure that all parties have the ability to prevent and handle potential violence from an early age. Strengthening the Role of the Family. Through the Family and Women's Empowerment program, DP3A Provides positive parenting guidance to reduce harsh parenting patterns and domestic violence. Encourage gender equality in the family, so that children grow in a safe and fair environment. The goal is to create a family environment that is conducive to child growth and development.



From a preventive perspective, the role of the DP3A in handling violence against children is not only focused on responding after an incident occurs, but also on creating a safe, friendly social, family, and educational environment that supports children's growth and development. In terms of prevention, the Gowa Regency DP3A regularly conducts outreach and education activities for the public, schools, and communities. This program aims to increase public understanding of the importance of child protection and the dangers of violence in various forms. This outreach is carried out through direct counseling, social media campaigns, and training for parents and teachers. As stated by NW, Head of the Special Child Protection Section of the Gowa DP3A:

"We actively promote the Child Protection Law at various opportunities, particularly in schools and the community. We want the public to know that children have the right to feel safe and grow up without violence."

This prevention program includes parenting training, legal counseling, and public campaigns such as "Child-Friendly Gowa," which began in 2022. According to internal data from the Gowa Regency Development Planning Agency (DP3A), outreach activities in 2023 reached 26 schools, 17 villages/sub-districts, and 8 youth communities in Gowa Regency. However, challenges remain, particularly in remote areas, where limited access to information makes communities less aware of the importance of reporting cases of child abuse.

Specific studies, such as in Somba Opu, demonstrate a mentoring model, but detailed public reports on mass education programs or regular outreach across Gowa's sub-districts remain scarce. It is unclear to what extent educational materials have reached schools, teachers, health workers, and community leaders throughout Gowa. In strengthening its role in protecting children, the Gowa Regency DP3A recognizes that efforts to address cases of child abuse cannot be limited to legal aspects and psychological rehabilitation alone. A comprehensive and collaborative approach involving all components of society, including village governments, schools, community organizations, and families, is needed.

One of the DP3A's flagship programs is "Child-Friendly Schools," which was initiated in 2022 in collaboration with the Gowa Regency Education Office. Under this program, schools are not only places of learning but also safe spaces for children to protect themselves from violence, discrimination, and bullying. The Head of DP3A Gowa Regency, AS, explained in an interview:

"We have collaborated with more than 40 schools to implement child-friendly school indicators. We train teachers to recognize signs of violence and how to report it. We want children to feel safe and comfortable in the school environment."

For example, at SMPN 4 Somba Opu, guidance and counseling teacher AS stated:

"Since collaborating with DP3A, we have actively monitored children's behavior and established a complaint box. It turned out that in one semester, there were three cases of verbal and physical violence that had previously gone undetected. We referred all of them to the Gowa UPTD PPA."

Collaboration with schools is crucial because the majority of cases of violence are first detected in the educational environment. Based on 2023 data from the UPTD PPA, 53% of initial reports of violence against children came from teachers, homeroom teachers, or school counselors. This demonstrates that empowering schools as partners is highly effective in accelerating case detection and resolution.

The role of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency (DP3A) in handling violence against children curatively (Tindakan) focuses on concrete steps to assist



victims after the violence occurs, including complaint services, legal assistance, and psychological support. The DP3A, through the Integrated Service Center for the Empowerment of Women and Children (UPTD PPA), serves as the first point of contact for complaints regarding cases of violence against children. The first step is to receive reports or complaints directly from the community, victims, families, or other institutions. Second, to conduct an initial assessment to identify the type of violence, the perpetrator, and the victim's needs (physical, legal, or psychological). Third, to provide 24-hour service or a complaint hotline in several areas, including collaboration with the police or social institutions. The goal is to ensure that cases of violence are handled quickly and appropriately without increasing trauma for children.

Figure 1.2 Mechanism of women's and children's protection services



The success of handling violence against children in Gowa is inseparable from the cross-sectoral collaboration established by the DP3A. This agency actively collaborates with the police, the Social Services Department, and community organizations. In an interview with FY, the head of the NGO Mitra Anak Gowa, he stated:

"DP3A is very open to collaboration. If we find a case in the field, they quickly follow up. Their service has improved year after year, especially since the establishment of a dedicated Technical Implementation Unit (UPTD)."

The Women and Children Protection Service Vehicle (MPPPA) is a mobile service unit owned by the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service (DP3A) at the provincial and district/city levels. This vehicle serves as a proactive means of providing fast, easy, and direct service to women and children who are victims of violence, human trafficking, or exploitation.

Figure 1.3 Women and Children Protection Service Vehicle (MPPPA)



In other words, MPPPA is a form of mobile, integrated protection service, enabling victims to be reached even in remote areas or unable to visit the PPA office/UPTD.

The DP3A Legal and Psychological Assistance program collaborates with the police, prosecutors, and legal aid institutions to ensure victims receive justice. The actions taken include: First, providing legal assistance during the reporting and investigation process. Second, protecting the identity of child victims in accordance with the Child Protection Law. Third, overseeing the legal process to ensure that perpetrators of violence receive sanctions in accordance with statutory regulations. The goal is to protect the rights of children as victims and ensure the legal process is fair and child-friendly. The LPSK (Lembaga Penitaan Perempuan) is an institution obligated to provide protection to witnesses and victims of sexual violence, including providing a sense of security, in accordance with Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence (UU TPKS).

Psychological assistance in handling cases of violence against children by the Department of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DP3A), including examples in Gowa Regency. Psychological assistance is a form of professional assistance provided to child victims of violence to restore their mental and emotional condition due to the trauma experienced. This service is usually carried out by psychologists, counselors, or professional social workers who work under the Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children (UPTD PPA) belonging to DP3A. This assistance not only focuses on the victim, but also the victim's family, in order to create an environment that supports the child's recovery process. The objectives of Psychological Assistance are to help children overcome trauma and fear due to violence, to increase children's sense of security and self-confidence, to help children express their feelings in a healthy and positive way, to provide emotional support to families, so that they are able to accompany children well, and to prevent long-term impacts such as depression, anxiety, or behavioral disorders.

Forms of Psychological Assistance by the DP3A/UPTD PPA Individual Counseling include: First, child victims of violence will receive private counseling sessions with a psychologist or counselor. This will be conducted in a child-friendly space or safe house. The sessions will use age-appropriate approaches (e.g., playing, drawing, storytelling). The focus



will be on emotional recovery and self-confidence. For example, a child who experiences physical violence will be helped to understand that the incident was not their fault and that they deserve protection. Second, Family Counseling, in addition to the victim, also provides psychological assistance to parents or guardians. The goal is for families to provide appropriate emotional support to their children. Psychologists help parents understand how to communicate positively without violence. For example, parents are encouraged to understand child-friendly parenting styles and avoid violent parenting practices.

The Role of the Gowa Regency DP3A in Psychological Assistance. In Gowa Regency, the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office (DP3A), through the UPTD PPA, provides integrated psychological services, including:

- 1) Providing accompanying psychologists at the UPTD PPA office for victims of violence against women and children.
- 2) Conducting mobile counseling using the Women and Children Protection Service Vehicle (MPPPA) to schools and villages.
- 3) Collaborating with the Gowa Police, Community Health Centers, and the Social Services Department to provide comprehensive care for victims of violence (physical, legal, and psychological).
- 4) Providing a child-friendly space at the UPTD PPA office for counseling to ensure children feel safe and comfortable. All psychological services are free of charge and confidential to protect the identity of victims.

Before conducting the interview, the researcher ensured that the child was calm and ready to share her experience. The interview took place in the counseling room of the Gowa Regency Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office, accompanied by a psychological support officer.

Researcher : *Can you tell us how this incident began?*

PR : *"Initially, my father often scolded me, but over time, I was beaten for the slightest mistake. My mother often told the neighbors, but she was still afraid. Finally, a neighbor helped report it to the office."*

Researcher : *After reporting the incident, what was the process like for you?*

PR : *"At that time, my mother took me to the Gowa Regency Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office. There, I was greeted by officers and taken to the counseling room. There, a psychologist listened to my story carefully. Then, they left me alone for a few days."*

Researcher : *How did you feel while at the shelter?*

PR : *"At first, I was scared and sad, but over time, I felt safe." The officers were kind, and I was able to go to school. Sometimes I still remember and am traumatized. But the officers talked to me so I wouldn't be sad anymore and forget about the incident."*

Researcher : *Are you still receiving support now?*

PR : *"Yes, they said the office is still monitoring me and you."*

The interview revealed that the child experienced physical and emotional violence within the family. This report was submitted through the community channel and has been followed up by the DP3A (Regional Child Protection Agency). The Gowa Regency DP3A provides services in the form of psychological support, temporary shelter protection, and follow-up monitoring through the Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children (UPTD PPA) so that the child feels safe and emotionally supported during the recovery process.



The role of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency in handling cases of violence against children through rehabilitation (the recovery process) is the stage of recovery for victims after experiencing violence, whether physical, psychological, social, or economic. This stage is carried out after initial legal and medical measures, with the goal of helping victims recover from trauma, return to normal functioning, and lead a safe and dignified life. Victim Recovery: Regarding the recovery and social reintegration of child victims of violence, the Gowa DP3A provides follow-up counseling services, psychological therapy, and life skills training for children who have overcome crises. These efforts are intended to enable victims to return to normal social and educational lives. According to MR, a child psychologist from the DP3A:

"We strive to rebuild children's self-confidence. Providing them with more than just temporary housing isn't enough; we also provide long-term therapy to help them recover from their trauma."

This recovery program has proven to have a positive impact. According to DP3A records, 58 of the 78 child victims of violence returned to school in 2023, and 12 of them participated in vocational training programs. Children who cannot return to their biological families are referred to Child Welfare Institutions (LKSA) and continue to be monitored regularly. However, DP3A also faces various obstacles, such as a shortage of professional support staff (child psychologists and advocates), a limited budget, and a community culture that still tends to blame victims and cover up cases of violence. Therefore, DP3A proposes that each village establish a Village-Level Child Protection Task Force (SATAPAD) to expand the scope of monitoring and reporting.

In addition to schools, the role of families is also a crucial focus. The Child Protection and Empowerment Agency (DP3A) actively provides parenting training, particularly in areas categorized as "violence-prone zones" based on internal mapping. In Bontonompo Village, for example, a parent training session entitled "Becoming a Protective Parent" was attended by over 100 housewives and community leaders. One participant, Mrs. Hasriani, revealed:

"I used to think that hitting children was normal, a form of discipline. After participating in the DP3A training, I learned that it constitutes violence and can negatively impact a child's development. I began to change."

The main objectives of the Rehabilitative Approach are to restore the physical and mental health of child victims, restore self-confidence and a sense of security, assist victims in reintegrating into social and educational environments, prevent re-traumatization, and empower families to become key supporters of recovery. The Role of the PPPA Office in Rehabilitative Handling: The following are some concrete examples of DP3A's role in the recovery process for victims of violence children.

First, Psychological Recovery and Advanced Counseling. Second, DP3A provides long-term psychological assistance through psychologists at the UPTD PPA. Third, several counseling sessions are carried out to overcome deep trauma. Fourth, Psychologists monitor the child's development until they fully recover. Fifth, if necessary, victims are referred to safe houses or advanced psychological rehabilitation facilities. For example, in Gowa, the UPTD PPA of Gowa Regency provides child-friendly spaces and accompanying psychologist services that help child victims through play therapy, drawing, and individual counseling. Counseling services for victims of violence against children are carried out by the Gowa Regency Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service (DP3A), including the form, purpose, implementation, and process. Counseling services are one form of psychological recovery



provided to child victims of violence by DP3A through the Regional Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children (UPTD PPA). The goal is to help victims overcome trauma, fear, and psychological stress due to violence, restore children's sense of security and self-confidence, and help children adapt to their social and family environment in a healthy manner.

Based on interviews, observations, and documentation conducted by researchers at the Gowa Regency Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency (DP3A), several significant inhibiting factors were identified in handling cases of violence against children. These factors stem from various aspects, both internal to the institution and external to the community and social environment. The following is a description of the research findings:

1) Limited Human Resources

One of the main obstacles faced by the Gowa Regency DP3A in handling cases of violence against children is the limited number and quality of available human resources. Handling violence against children requires not only an adequate number of personnel but also professionals with specialized expertise in psychology, child law, social protection, and medical and psychological rehabilitation.

In practice, many DP3A staff must take on multiple duties or perform roles beyond their competence due to the lack of experts specialized in handling specific cases. For example, in cases of sexual violence against children, victim support should ideally be carried out by experienced child psychologists and counselors. However, due to limited human resources, these duties are often delegated to general staff who do not necessarily possess specialized expertise.

This situation results in suboptimal victim support. Victims experiencing severe trauma often do not receive intensive and ongoing psychological support. This has the potential to hinder the victim's mental recovery and can even lead to prolonged trauma.

Furthermore, limited human resources also result in delays in case handling, as one staff member must handle multiple cases simultaneously. In the long term, this risks reducing service quality, increasing employee burnout, and tarnishing the institution's image in the public eye.

Therefore, regular recruitment of professional staff, capacity building through ongoing training, and providing adequate incentives and work support for DP3A human resources are necessary to ensure they can perform optimally in assisting victims of child violence.

2) Inadequate Budget

The second factor that poses a serious obstacle to child protection efforts in Gowa Regency is budget constraints. The funds allocated to child protection programs by the local government remain very limited compared to the needs on the ground. In a single year, the DP3A must handle dozens to hundreds of reports of violence against children, but the operational funds available for outreach activities, case investigations, counseling, and victim rehabilitation are often insufficient.

This minimal budget has a direct impact on several crucial aspects. For example, there are limited shelter facilities for victims who need physical protection from perpetrators of violence, a lack of transportation for officers to reach remote areas, and the lack of supporting tools and infrastructure such as computers, emergency service hotlines, or digital-based reporting systems.



Furthermore, many designed prevention programs, such as educational campaigns, school seminars, and teacher and parent training, cannot be implemented optimally due to budget constraints. Yet, prevention is a crucial part of breaking the chain of violence against children.

In an interview with a DP3A official, it was revealed that planned activities often have to be canceled, postponed, or reduced in scale due to lack of funding. This situation highlights the need for serious attention from both regional and central governments to proportionally increase budget allocations, particularly in the area of child protection, which concerns basic human rights and the future of the younger generation.

3) Lack of Public Awareness

A third, equally important factor is the low level of public awareness of the issue of violence against children. Many people in Gowa Regency still do not fully understand that acts of violence, whether physical, psychological, sexual, or neglect, constitute a violation of the law and a violation of children's human rights. In some cases, violence is even considered part of a child's "education" or "character building."

Patriarchal cultural views and values also exacerbate the situation. For example, when children are victims of violence by family members, people tend to remain silent and resolve the matter amicably, without involving law enforcement or child protection agencies. Reasons often cited include protecting the family's reputation, fear of public disgrace, or because the perpetrator is a respected community figure.

This situation results in many cases of violence against children going unreported or being handled late. In fact, victims often experience pressure from their environment not to disclose their experiences. This lack of reporting certainly hinders early intervention efforts, which are crucial in addressing cases of violence.

Furthermore, the public's limited knowledge about service institutions such as the Women and Children Protection Unit (DP3A), the Women and Children Protection Unit (PPA) within the police, and the Legal Aid Institute (LBH) leaves victims and their families unsure where to turn. Socialization efforts that have not yet reached all areas also contribute to this low level of public understanding.

To address this, massive and ongoing public education is needed through various media, including social media, schools, places of worship, and community activities. Collaboration with community leaders, religious figures, and youth organizations is also crucial to shaping public opinion in favor of child protection and encouraging the reporting of all forms of violence.

Overall, these three factors are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, resulting in less than optimal handling of cases of violence against children. Therefore, concrete and collaborative steps are needed between the government, the community, and non-governmental organizations to strengthen institutions, increase budgets, and build collective awareness to ensure comprehensive protection of children's rights in Gowa Regency.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings on the role of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency (DP3A) in handling cases of violence against children in Gowa Regency,



as well as the inhibiting factors encountered in its implementation, two main points can be concluded:

1. The Role of the Gowa Regency Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency in Handling Cases of Violence Against Children. Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the Gowa Regency Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency (DP3A) has played a strategic role in addressing violence against children through three main aspects: prevention, response, and recovery. In prevention, DP3A actively educates the community through outreach, the Child-Friendly Regency campaign, and parenting training. In response, DP3A, through the UPTD PPA (Regional Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Unit), provides integrated services such as legal assistance, psychological assistance, and 24-hour complaint handling. During the recovery phase, counseling and training are provided to help children recover from violence. However, the success of this role is still influenced by limited human resources, budget, and public awareness.
2. Obstacles faced by the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service in Handling Cases of Violence Against Children in Gowa Regency are: First, limited human resources, both in terms of number and professional expertise, which results in suboptimal assistance and handling of victims. Second, inadequate budget, thus limiting the implementation of prevention, protection, and recovery programs for victims, and. Third, low public awareness, which causes many cases of violence to remain unreported or resolved informally without legal intervention. These three factors are interrelated and require an integrated solution so that child protection can be realized comprehensively and sustainably in Gowa Regency.

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