



**Samarah:** Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam  
Volume 10 No. 1. March 2026  
ISSN: 2549 – 3132; E-ISSN: 2549 – 3167  
DOI: 10.22373/sjhk.v10.i1.26707

**Understanding The Sexual Violence Reality:  
A Review of Community Perspectives and Legal Aspects**

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**Abstract:** The importance of analyzing sexual violence, which frequently occurs both in the private sphere and in the public sphere where the law does not reach. This paper addresses three questions: (a) How is the low awareness of sexual violence victims manifested in taking legal action, (b) why do sexual violence victims exhibit low awareness in taking legal action, and (c) what is the impact of this low awareness on the law enforcement process. This study uses a normative juridical and empirical legal research approach, combining a statutory and conceptual approach, as well as qualitative methods aimed at identifying obstacles in law enforcement against sexual violence crimes. The findings indicate a lack of legal awareness among victims in making reports, which is influenced by factors such as power relations, the status/identity of children born from the abuse, closeness to the perpetrator, and societal stereotypes that view victims negatively. Aspects of law enforcement have not yet guaranteed justice, as they are affected by law enforcers' professional ethics and legislation that is insufficiently accommodating those issues. It is hoped that this article will contribute to a reduction in cases of sexual violence and the attainment of social justice.

**Keywords:** Sexual Violence, Community Perspective, Legal Aspects

|| Submitted: November 11, 2024 || Accepted: March 16, 2026 || Published: March 25, 2026

<http://jurnal.ar-raniry.ac.id/index.php/samarah>

**Abstrak:** Pentingnya dilakukan analisis atas kekerasan seksual yang sering terjadi baik di ranah privat maupun di ranah publik yang tidak terjangkau oleh hukum. Tulisan ini menjawab tiga pertanyaan: (a) Bagaimana wujud rendahnya kesadaran para korban kekerasan seksual untuk melakukan tindakan hukum, (b) mengapa para korban kekerasan seksual memiliki kesadaran yang rendah untuk melakukan tindakan hukum, dan (c) bagaimana dampak kesadaran yang rendah tersebut terhadap proses penegakan hukum. Penelitian ini menggunakan jenis penelitian hukum Normative Yuridis dan empiris dengan pendekatan Undang-undang dan pendekatan konseptual, serta kualitatif yang bertujuan untuk mengetahui hambatan penegakan hukum terhadap tindak pidana kekerasan seksual. Temuan tulisan ini menunjukkan kurangnya kesadaran hukum bagi korban untuk melakukan pelaporan yang dilatarbelakangi faktor relasi kuasa, status/identitas anak yang lahir, hubungan kedekatan dengan pelaku, serta stereotip masyarakat terhadap korban yang negatif. Aspek penegakan hukum belum menjamin keadilan yang dipengaruhi oleh etika profesi hukum, alat penegak hukum, serta peraturan perundang-undangan yang belum cukup mengakomodasi. Dengan artikel ini, harapannya kasus kekerasan seksual dapat menurun dan keadilan masyarakat dapat diperoleh.

**Kata Kunci:** Kekerasan seksual, perspektif masyarakat, aspek hukum

## Introduction

Sexual violence has recently become a primary concern among both the public and academics. This is due to the increasing rate of sexual violence in terms of number, location, and even the age of victims and perpetrators, many of whom are underage. The reality of sexual violence occurring in households, public spaces, educational institutions, *pesantren*, and universities cannot be separated from public understanding and legal aspects. This analysis examines the background behind the high number of unreported sexual violence cases to the authorities by exploring the social and legal factors that may serve as obstacles. Various regulations have been issued by the government to serve as a legal basis for investigating and prosecuting sexual violence cases. However, in reality, the legal system continues to face obstacles and challenges in addressing such cases, including issues of legal substance, legal structure, and the prevailing legal culture within society. The purpose of this study is to foster public awareness and enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement.

This study aims to address gaps in previous research that have often ignored public awareness of the law and its enforcement in understanding the reality of sexual violence. Earlier studies have tended to focus on other issues, such as: first, the factors contributing to sexual violence against women in higher

education;<sup>1</sup> second, the regulations governing the rights of victims of sexual violence and the legal implications of such regulations;<sup>2</sup> and third, the factors that influence individuals to commit sexual violence, including addiction to pornographic videos, lack of parental supervision, and dysfunctional family environments (*broken homes*).<sup>3</sup>

This paper aims to examine the awareness of sexual violence victims who experience marginalization and, as a result, are unable to take legal action as expected. Specifically, this study seeks to answer three main questions: (a) How does the low awareness of sexual violence victims to take legal action manifest itself? (b) Why do sexual violence victims have low awareness of taking legal action? Moreover, c) How does this low awareness impact the law enforcement process in cases of sexual violence?

This article is based on two main assumptions. *First*, cultural factors in society tend to prioritize concealing shame and concerns about the social status of children born without fathers, rather than pursuing legal action. *Second*, the legal structure, specifically the implementation of professional ethics by law enforcement officials, does not always comply with relevant legislation and technical guidelines, particularly in the resolution of sexual violence cases.

Sexual violence refers to violence involving sexual matters, such as rape or attempted rape, sexual harassment, and molestation. Among these forms of violence, sexual violence tends to have the most dominant impact on victims.<sup>4</sup> In reality, such violence occurs not only against adults but, even more alarmingly, against underage victims, a group for whom the topic is often considered taboo. However, the high number of unreported sexual violence cases to the authorities is influenced by various social and legal factors, which in turn create significant obstacles to effective law enforcement.

Although Indonesia is not among the countries with the highest sexual violence rates in the world, it has experienced a decline in child protection. The National Commission for Child Protection recorded 218 cases of child sexual violence in 2015. In 2016, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) reported 120 cases, and in 2017, there were 116 cases. Teenagers, some of whom

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<sup>1</sup> Rifki Elindawati, "Perspektif Feminis Dalam Kasus Perempuan Sebagai Korban Kekerasan Seksual Di Perguruan Tinggi," *AL-WARDAH: Jurnal Kajian Perempuan, Gender Dan Agama*, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Hasanuddin, "Implikasi Yuridis Pengaturan Hak Korban Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual Dalam Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2022 Tentang Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual," *Jurnal Surya Kencana Dua: Dinamika Masalah Hukum Dan Keadilan*, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Nona Carolina et al., "Strategi Intervensi Untuk Menekankan Kasus Kekerasan Seksual," *Strategi Intervensi Untuk Menemukan Kasus Kekerasan Seksual: Isu dan Tren*, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Yoga Andreas Manarat, Johannis Kaawoan, and Ismail Rachman, "Peran Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak dalam Menangani Korban Kekerasan Seksual Pada Anak di Kota Kotamobagu," *Jurnal Governance*, 2021.

are legally still considered children, remain vulnerable to becoming victims of sexual violence because children are often viewed as weak or considered having limited ability to protect themselves. This vulnerability is primarily due to the lack of information students receive about reproductive health, especially regarding sexual abuse.<sup>5</sup>

The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) reported 123 cases of child sexual abuse in schools in 2019. The rising number of sexual abuse cases against children is a concern in every country. Therefore, preventive measures are essential, one of which is increasing knowledge through sexual health education. Providing such education to elementary school students serves as a preventive strategy against sexual abuse.<sup>6</sup> Crimes of sexual violence require special handling beyond criminal sanctions such as imprisonment. Rehabilitation of perpetrators is also considered an option that is expected to break the cycle of sexual violence, as perpetrators are often themselves victims in the past. Rehabilitation of sexual violence perpetrators is focused on those whom experts have diagnosed as having deviant disorders. The Indonesian criminal justice system allows for the imposition of both criminal sanctions and rehabilitative measures.<sup>7</sup>

A culture of law at the community level must be fostered to prevent sexual violence and deter perpetrators. Community reluctance to report incidents of sexual violence also contributes to obstacles in law enforcement. The incidence of sexual violence experienced by women in Indonesia remains high. However, these numbers represent only a small fraction of the actual cases, as in reality, many women who are victims of sexual violence do not report their experiences to the police or service agencies such as the National Commission on Violence Against Women.

Several factors contribute to the reluctance of female sexual violence victims to report the incidents they have experienced, including the negative stigma attached to victims within society.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, perpetrators of sexual violence are frequently individuals who are close to the victim, including fathers,

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<sup>5</sup> Nurbaya, Nurhaedar Jafar, and Andi Asrina, "Gambaran Pengetahuan Tentang Pencegahan Kekerasan Seksual Pada Anak Remaja Awal di SD Islam Terpadu Nurul Fikri Makassar," *Sinergitas Multidisiplin Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Teknologi*, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Joae Brett Nito, Umi Hanik Fetriyah, and Malisa Ariani, "Sex Education 'Kekerasan Seksual Pada Anak' Upaya Preventif Tindak Kekerasan Dan Pelecehan Seksual Pada Anak," *Jurnal Suaka Insan Mengabdikan (JSIM)*, 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Guruh Tio Ibipurbo, Yusuf Adi Wibowo, and Joko Setiawan, "Pencegahan Pengulangan Kekerasan Seksual Melalui Rehabilitasi Pelaku Dalam Perspektif Keadilan Restoratif," *Jurnal Hukum Respublica*, 2022.

<sup>8</sup> Utami Zahirah Noviani P, et al., "Mengatasi Dan Mencegah Tindak Kekerasan Seksual Pada Perempuan Dengan Pelatihan Asertif," *Prosiding Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, 2018.

uncles, teachers, grandfathers, and other trusted figures.<sup>9</sup> At the societal level, human rights violations affect all subjects of law, including women and children, who are particularly vulnerable, especially to sexual violence. It is evidenced by the increasing number and variety of cases that continue to occur. Likewise, Intimate Partner Abuse (IPA) or Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) affects one in three women worldwide. Although understanding of IPA has improved over time, it remains limited, and new approaches are needed to highlight the experiences of victims and survivors.<sup>10</sup>

Recent studies have demonstrated that women living in highly oppressive environments—characterized by poverty and household instability face an increased risk of experiencing Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). This paper seeks to contribute to the existing literature by examining how intersecting social and structural factors influence the risk of IPV among women who use drugs. Analysis of 16 in-depth interviews with women who use drugs in Uyo, Nigeria, framed through an intersectional perspective, revealed that intimate partnerships are contextualized by socio-economic deprivation, household instability, and drug use. Intimate relationships motivated by women's concerns for meeting their basic survival needs are manifested as unequal exchanges that trap them in violent relationships. Socio-economic deprivation, household instability, and drug use operate at a deeper level, creating unequal relationships characterized by dependence and subordination.<sup>11</sup>

Interventions aimed at reducing the risk of intimate partner violence (IPV) should, in the short term, focus on expanding opportunities for women to negotiate risk within these partnerships. In the long term, efforts should focus on ensuring access to safe household conditions, economic support, and drug treatment services.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, governments worldwide are increasingly involving service users in the reform of public policies and services, thereby enhancing public value. Survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) are a group striving to have their voices heard by the government and are gradually being involved to improve policy outcomes. However, the history of the victims' rights movement and feminist studies in political institutions indicates that survivors

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<sup>9</sup> Manarat, Kaawoan, and Rachman, "Peran Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak dalam Menangani Korban Kekerasan Seksual Pada Anak di Kota Kotamobagu."

<sup>10</sup> K. Tarzia, L., Lamb, K., McKibbin, G., Parker, R., & Hegarty, "Who Have Experienced Intimate Partner Abuse: A Qualitative Exploration of Participant Experiences in Australia," *Journal of Gender-Based Violence* 7, no. 33 (2023), p. 414–34.

<sup>11</sup> L. Nelson, E., & Ireland, "Intersecting Social/Structural Factors and Vulnerability to Intimate Partner Violence: The Experiences of Nigerian Women Who Use Drugs," *Journal of Gender-Based Violence*, n.d., 1–17; Kholik, A., Fauziah, R. S. P., Ramdhani, M. R., & Suharsiwi, S. Developing a Strategic Model of Child-Friendly Pesantren Climate to Prevent Sexual Violence. *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, Vol 13 no. 3, 2025, p. 1831-1858.

<sup>12</sup> Nelson, E., & Ireland.

face significant risks in their engagement with the state. How these risks are experienced and challenged is explored through a case study analysis of the implementation of the Victims Advisory Council.<sup>13</sup>

Law Number 12 of 2022 concerning Sexual Violence Crimes (the TPKS Law) serves to complement existing legislation in the fight against sexual violence. However, challenges persist in enforcing this law, particularly due to factors related to law enforcement agencies and practices.<sup>14</sup> Prior to the TPKS Law enactment, cases of violence against women and children were addressed under the Criminal Code, Law No. 23 of 2004 on the Prevention of Domestic Violence, and Law No. 23 of 2002 in conjunction with Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection. These earlier regulations are now considered inadequate to address the rising number and the increasingly diverse forms of sexual violence cases.

Types of violence that were not addressed in previous regulations, but are now recognized under the Sexual Violence Law, include sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, forced contraception, forced abortion, rape, forced marriage, forced prostitution, sexual slavery, and sexual torture. The scope of regulation regarding the elimination of sexual violence covers prevention, handling, protection, and recovery for victims, as well as prosecution of perpetrators. The elimination of sexual violence, as stipulated in the TPKS Law, elaborates on the state's obligation to prevent and enforce legal measures concerning sexual violence, which often affects women and children. In its implementation, the state is also required to involve law enforcement agencies, as well as families, communities, community organizations, media institutions, and corporations.<sup>15</sup>

Legal protection for sexual violence victims in higher education institutions has also become a significant concern. Sexual harassment occurs in educational institutions at various levels, including schools, universities, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), and even preschool environments. The protection of sexual violence victims in universities is regulated under Article 12 of the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 30 of 2021 concerning the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Violence in Higher Education Institutions (PPKS). Articles 14 and 16 of this regulation also stipulate administrative sanctions to be imposed on perpetrators of sexual violence in higher education. In

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<sup>13</sup> A. (2023) Wheildon, LJ, Flynn, A., Benar, J., & Wild, "Gender-Based Violence Policy Reform: Assessing the Risks and Public Value of Co-Production with Survivors," *Journal of Gender-Based Violence* 7, no. 3 (2023), p. 450–66.

<sup>14</sup> Eko Nurisman, "Risalah Tantangan Penegakan Hukum Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual Pasca Lahirnya Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2022," *Jurnal Pembangunan Hukum Indonesia*, 2022.

<sup>15</sup> Ani Purwanti and Marzelina Zalianti, "Strategi Penyelesaian Tindak Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Perempuan Dan Anak Melalui Ruu Kekerasan Seksual," *Masalah-Masalah Hukum*, 2018..

criminal law, although the Criminal Code does not specifically regulate sexual violence, perpetrators of sexual crimes in higher education institutions are still subject to criminal penalties as outlined in Articles 289 to 296 of the Criminal Code (KUHP).

To enforce the law, legal reform is necessary. Legal reform can be realized by applying Lawrence M. Friedman's Legal Systems Theory, which includes structural aspects (institutions and their apparatus), substantive aspects (the regulation of authority and procedures/mechanisms), and cultural aspects.<sup>16</sup> The legal structure for investigating, prosecuting, and adjudicating sexual violence crimes requires police, prosecutors, and judges who have a gender perspective and demonstrate sensitivity toward victims. The issuance of Supreme Court Regulation No. 3 of 2017 concerning Guidelines for Prosecuting Women in Conflict with the Law aims to protect women who are involved in legal proceedings. However, the implementation of this regulation (PERMA) still shows that judges sometimes make statements that tend to blame the victim, either directly or indirectly. Judges may also intimidate defendants through inappropriate remarks, even while cases are still ongoing and have not yet been decided. Additionally, judges have exercised their authority to reprimand questions or statements submitted by public prosecutors and legal advisors that are considered irrelevant to the case or the charges.<sup>17</sup>

Perpetrators of sexual violence are often individuals close to the victim, such as fathers, uncles, teachers, grandfathers, and others. The role of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency is crucial in protecting children, particularly by protecting them from violence and inhumane treatment by adults, and most importantly, by ensuring that children obtain their rights. Neutralization is an effort to eliminate the harmful effects or consequences experienced by victims of sexual violence. In light of the risks and consequences faced by victims, the Office for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection conducts field assessments and provides comprehensive support. This includes assistance from clinical psychologists and legal experts to ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted in court. Additionally, the agency involves religious leaders in the recovery process for victims and their families.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> M. M. Hutomo, P., & Soge, "Perspektif Teori Sistem Hukum Dalam Pembaharuan Pengaturan Sistem Pemasarakatan Militer," *Legacy: Jurnal Hukum Dan Perundang-Undangan* 1, no. 1 (2021), p. 46-68.

<sup>17</sup> K Faridah, "... Peraturan Mahkamah Agung Nomor 3 Tahun 2017 Tentang Pedoman Mengadili Perkara Perempuan Berhadapan Dengan Hukum Dalam ...," *Sakina: Journal of Family Studies*, 2020.

<sup>18</sup> Manarat, Kaawoan, and Rachman, "Peran Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak dalam Menangani Korban Kekerasan Seksual pada Anak di Kota Kotamobagu."

To obtain data for this study, normative, juridical, and empirical legal research methods were employed, utilizing both legal and conceptual approaches, as well as qualitative methods aimed at identifying obstacles to law enforcement in cases of sexual violence. The goal is to identify the factors that deter victims from reporting their cases, as well as the challenges that arise during the law enforcement process. This study examines several areas where sexual abuse occurs, including educational institutions such as schools, universities, *pesantren*, as well as other public environments and domestic spaces (homes). To supplement the data obtained through the two previous methods, this study also includes a review of documents and literature related to the issues discussed in this article. The document analysis provides data on the number of sexual violence cases. The literature review serves not only to strengthen the arguments presented in this article but also to highlight the distinct focus of this study compared to previous research. The literature search was conducted in a structured manner by mapping literature that has a strong relevance to the core issues examined in this article. The data obtained through the methods described above were first categorized according to emerging patterns. Subsequently, the data were organized based on the research questions formulated in this study. Since two primary questions were formulated, the data were divided into two sections. The first section presents data reflecting the reluctance of victims of sexual violence to report incidents to law enforcement agencies. The second section contains data illustrating the implications of unequal access to justice for victims of sexual violence within the law enforcement process.

### **Community Perspectives on Victims of Sexual Violence**

Empirical findings from a British Academy-funded project explored victim-survivors' experiences within domestic violence disclosure schemes in the UK. The study employs the concept of responsibility as a lens for understanding the reported cases. It also highlights the need for caution in developing similar schemes in other jurisdictions, as failure to consider the voices of victim-survivors has, in some cases, resulted in these individuals being held responsible for outcomes.<sup>19</sup> Many cases of sexual violence remain unreported to the relevant authorities. This study examines the social and legal factors that create obstacles to reporting. These obstacles contribute to the continued occurrence of sexual violence, as underreporting undermines deterrence and fails to discourage perpetrators, as illustrated by the following cases:

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<sup>19</sup> N. Barlow, C., Walklate, S., & Renchan, "Rendering Them Responsible: Victim-Survivors Experiences of Clare's Law and Domestic Violence Disclosure Schemes," *Journal of Gender-Based Violence* 7, no. 1 (2023), p. 163–77.

**Table 1. Summary of Selected Sexual Violence Cases (2020–2023)**

<b>Code and Year of Accident</b>	<b>Name and Age of Victim</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Perpetrator</b>	<b>Description</b>
Case KS 1, 2022	Bunga (14 years old)	Neighbor	Amin (18 years old)	The case was kept quiet to avoid family shame; there was also a familial relationship between the victim and the perpetrator
Case KS 2, 2023	Dewi (15 years old)	Boyfriend	Ryan (19 years old)	Dewi was five months pregnant. Both families arranged for a non-official ( <i>sirri</i> ) marriage because the couple did not meet the legal age requirement for an official marriage and were reluctant to apply for a marriage dispensation at the Religious Court. The case was not reported to the police due to concerns that Dewi's child would be considered fatherless.
Case KS 3, 2021	Akyun (17 years old)	Party friend	Adi (20 years old), Edi (19 years old), Ali (23 years old)	Akyun's parents did not report the case because there was more than one perpetrator of the rape, and determining the biological father of the fetus would require a DNA test.

Case KS 4, 2020	Putri (17 years old)	Boyfriend	Akbar (16 years old)	Both the victim and the perpetrator were underage individuals and engaged in sexual activity that resulted in pregnancy. The perpetrator's family initially refused to take responsibility, so a DNA test was conducted, confirming Akbar as the biological father. Since both parties were underage, the families decided to resolve the situation privately by agreeing to provide child support and cover the child's educational expenses.
Case KS 5, 2023	Siska (20 years old)	College friend	Rony (21 years old)	Siska had been in an intimate relationship with Rony for four years. She was frequently pressured into sexual activity and threatened that videos of their relationship would be made public if she refused. As a result, Siska did not dare report the case due to fear of damaging her reputation.

*Names are initials for confidentiality*

*Source: Regional Integrated Service Unit for the Protection of Women and Children, Pamekasan Regency, 2020–2023.*

The cases presented above represent only a small number of the overall cases, with many cases occurring particularly in educational settings. Below is data on violence against women, including the types of violence, locations of incidents, and reporting rates, sourced from SIMPHONI (Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children, 2025):

**Table 2:**  
**Map of the distribution of violence cases by province in 2025**  
**THE DISTRIBUTION OF VIOLENCE CASES IN 2025 WAS SOURCED**  
**FROM SIMPHONI**  
**(Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children,**  
**2025)**



Table 2 shows that the regions with darker colors represent higher incidences of violence, such as East Kalimantan, South Kalimantan, Madura Island, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and West Nusa Tenggara, followed by several regions outside Papua and Maluku.

**Table 3:**  
**Number of Cases by Location of Incident and Forms of Violence Experienced by Victims**

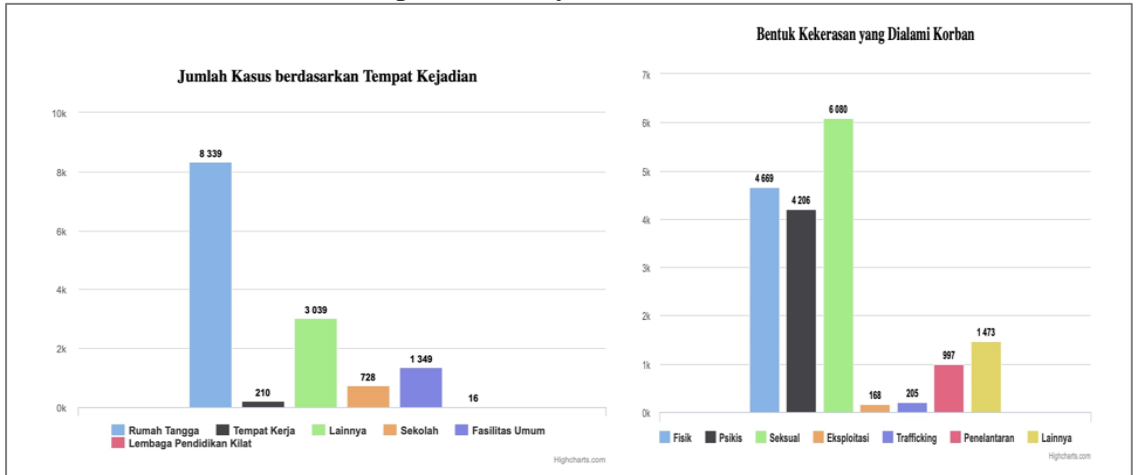


Table 3 demonstrates that the highest violence incident occurs within households, specifically domestic violence, where both the victim and the perpetrator are living in the same home. This violence takes place between spouses (with wives being the most frequent victims), as well as between parents (father or mother) and children. In some sexual violence cases, the perpetrator is a stepfather, and the victim is a stepchild; there are also cases involving biological fathers and their children. The most dominant form of violence is sexual violence, followed by physical abuse and psychological violence.

**Table 4.**  
**Victims by Age and Educational Background**

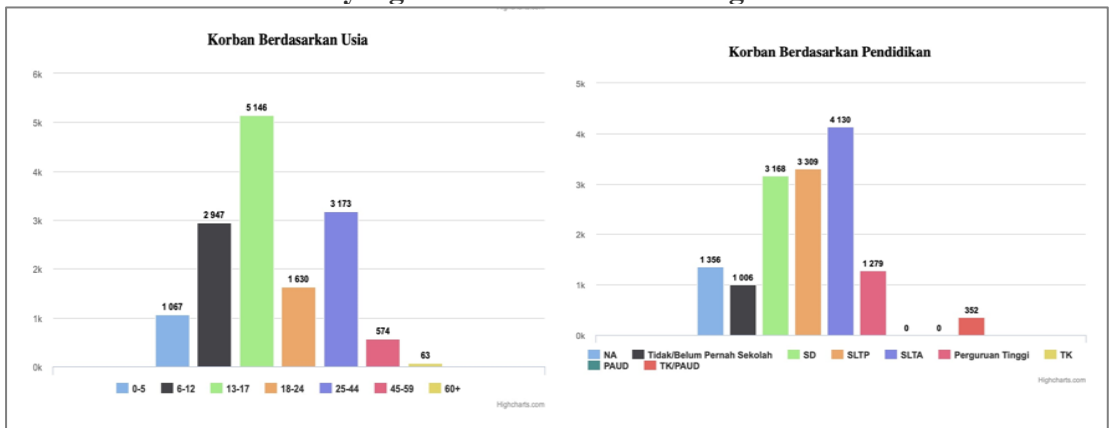


Table 4 indicates that the highest violence incidence occurs among children aged 13 to 17 years, corresponding to those in junior high school (SLTP) and senior high school (SLTA) education levels

**Table 5.**  
**Perpetrators by Gender and Relationship to the Victim**

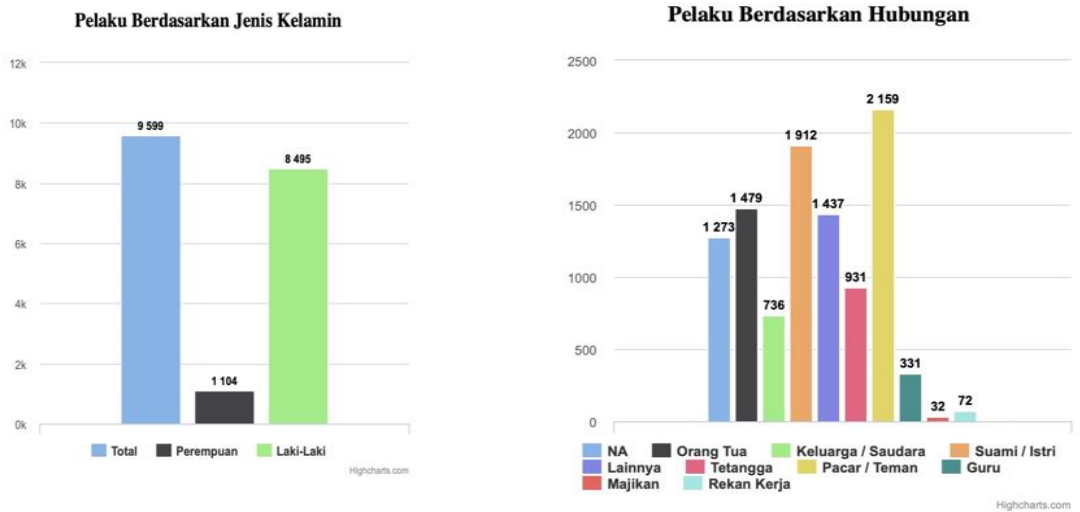


Table 5 illustrates that the majority of violence cases were initiated by males, with a significant disparity: out of 1,194 cases, 1,086 perpetrators were male, and only 108 were female. In terms of the relationship between perpetrator and victim, the highest number of cases involved boyfriends as perpetrators, followed by husbands.

**Table 6**  
**Types of Services Provided**

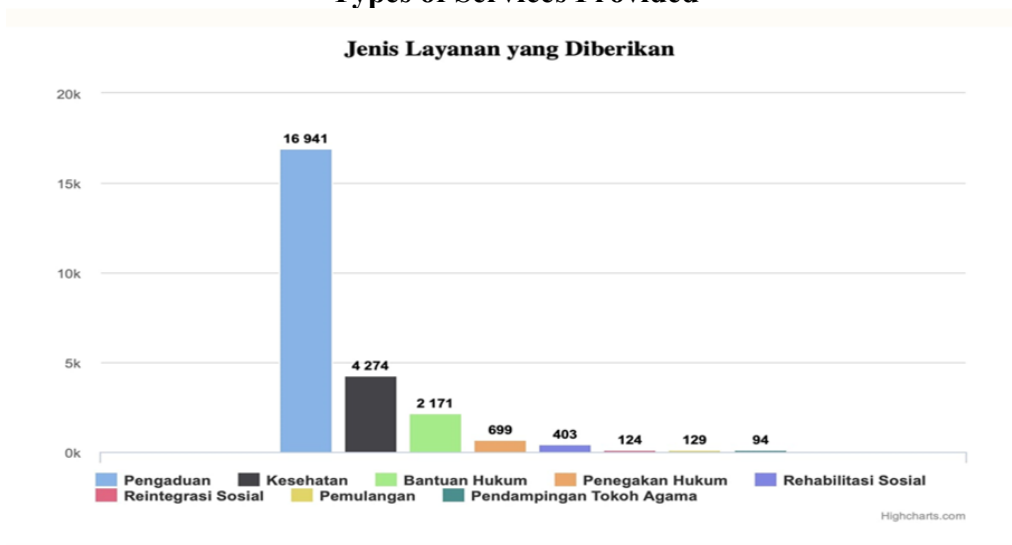


Table 6 shows that the most common service provided is receiving complaints, followed by healthcare services including medical examinations—and only then proceeding to legal processes.

### Law Enforcement Aspects of Sexual Violence Cases

Data collection on aspects of law enforcement was first based on the legal substance in several laws and regulations governing sexual violence crimes, including:

- a. Law No. 12 of 2022 on Sexual Violence Crimes (State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia Year 2022 No. 120, Supplement to the State Gazette No. 6792);
- b. Law No. 23 of 2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence (State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia Year 2004 No. 95, Supplement to the State Gazette No. 4419);
- c. Indonesian Criminal Code (*Kitab Undang-undang Hukum Pidana*);
- d. Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection (State Gazette Year 2002 No. 109, Supplement to the State Gazette No. 4235) as amended by Law No. 35 of 2014 (State Gazette Year 2014 No. 297, Supplement to the State Gazette No. 5606);
- e. Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 30 of 2021 on the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Violence in Higher Education Institutions.

Data collection on the second aspect of law enforcement is based on the legal structure, specifically the role of law enforcement authorities in conducting investigations, adjudicating cases, and issuing decisions in cases of sexual violence. The following data are sourced from the Indonesian National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan RI), as recorded in the 2023 report, which notes:

- a. In general, the number of complaints decreased in 2022 compared to the previous year, from 459,094 to 457,895. This decline is based on data collected from service agencies and the Directorate General of Religious Courts (*Badilag*). However, complaints submitted to the National Commission for the Protection of Women's Rights (Komnas Perempuan) increased to 4,371 cases from 4,322. This means that Komnas Perempuan received an average of 17 complaints per day.
- b. Of the total complaints, 339,782 involved gender-based violence (GBV), with 3,442 cases reported to *Komnas Perempuan*. Violence in the personal/private sphere continued to dominate GBV reports, accounting for 99% or 336,804 cases. Among complaints submitted to *Komnas Perempuan*, personal sphere cases constituted 61%, or 2,098 cases. In the public sphere, a total of 2,978 cases were reported, with 1,276 cases being

- recorded by Komnas Perempuan. Meanwhile, cases of violence occurring in the state sphere were only reported to Komnas Perempuan, showing an almost twofold increase, from 38 cases in 2021 to 68 cases in 2022.
- c. The response rate for the return of Annual Report (*Catahu*) forms increased by 25% (137 institutions), compared to 18% (129 institutions) in 2021, out of the total number of forms distributed;
  - d. In the 2023 Annual Report, efforts were made to collect new data sources from the General Judiciary Agency (*Badilum*) and the Legal Development Agency of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (*BABINKUM TNI*). These data sources were intended to increase the participation of state institutions in providing data on violence against women in the Annual Report. However, the data could not yet be compiled due to differences in information formats.
  - e. Complaint data from *Komnas Perempuan* (the National Commission on Violence Against Women) for 2022 indicate that sexual violence was the most dominant form of violence against women (2,228 cases; 38.21%), followed by psychological violence (2,083 cases; 35.72%). In contrast, data from service agencies were dominated by physical violence (6,001 cases or 38.8%), followed by sexual violence (4,102 cases; 26.52%). A more detailed examination of complaints to *Komnas Perempuan* in the public domain reveals that sexual violence consistently ranked highest (1,127 cases). In contrast, in the personal domain, psychological violence was most common (1,494 cases). By contrast, service-provider data for 2022 indicate that physical violence was the most common form in both the public and personal domains.
  - f. Complaint data submitted to the National Commission on Violence Against Women (*Komnas Perempuan*) are classified into three types: personal violence (2,098 cases), public violence (1,276 cases), and state violence (68 cases). Violence in the personal domain has consistently been the most dominant each year. a) Among personal violence cases, the most frequently reported were perpetrated by ex-boyfriends (713 cases), followed by violence against wives (622 cases), violence in dating relationships (422 cases), violence against girls (140 cases), and other forms of domestic or family violence such as violence against daughters-in-law, cousins, sisters/brothers-in-law, or other relatives (111 cases) as well as violence by former husbands (90 cases). The most common form of violence in the personal sphere is psychological violence. b) Meanwhile, regarding violence in public spaces, the highest number of cases involved cyber violence (869 cases), followed by domestic violence (136 cases), violence in the workplace (115 cases), violence in public places (101 cases), violence in educational institutions (37 cases), violence in medical facilities (6 cases), violence in foreign workplaces (migrant

workers) (6 cases), and other forms of violence (6 cases). The most common form of violence in the public domain is sexual violence. c) In the state domain, the highest number of cases involved women facing legal issues (35 cases), followed by conflicts over natural resources (11 cases); violence against women by state officials, evictions, and agrarian conflicts (5 cases each); discrimination in the selection process for public officials (3 cases); violence against women in civil registration (2 cases); intimidation by local government (1 case); and freedom of religion or belief (1 case).

Several cases decided in the General Court are still perceived as lacking in justice, as evidenced by excerpts from interviews with victims and their parents.

*“As a parent, I deeply regret that the sentence imposed on perpetrators was only five years, even though two perpetrators raped my daughter. When I asked the prosecutor about this, she said, 'Isn't that enough? I have already demanded the minimum sentence according to the law.' This statement was extremely painful for me and my family. When the case was examined at the district police office, my child's rape case was withdrawn without my consent; I was deceived into signing a document, which turned out to be a withdrawal of the case.”* (Ms. Wulan, 45 years old)

*Rika, who was raped by five individuals, shared her experience as well. During the trial, the judge asked, “Where did the rape occur? Couldn't you have screamed, run away, or did you actually enjoy it?”* (Rika, 14 years old)

*Similar to Putri, a rape victim who became pregnant, faced a similar situation. During the investigation, the perpetrator's side requested a settlement by offering compensation, due to concerns about social stigma and the legitimacy of the child (fear that the child would not have legal paternity). Putri and her mother agreed, and the case was closed. However, the compensation of Rp 25,000,000 (twenty-five million rupiah) was never received by Putri or her mother.* (Putri, 16 years old)

The findings of this article demonstrate that many sexual violence cases remain outside the legal system because victims are reluctant to report them to the authorities. This reluctance is based on several considerations from the victims' perspective. **First**, the societal stereotype that blames victims persists, viewing them as the source of fault or misfortune. Victims are frequently blamed for causing sexual violence, such as by wearing clothes that provoke men to commit sexual violence, being outside the home at inappropriate times, or walking alone without a companion. **Second**, victims experience shame over the incident and concerns over the status of a child born without a father. They also worry about

being subjected to ridicule from society for no longer being considered virgins. It further discourages victims from reporting the violence.

Third, perpetrators are often individuals who have blood relations or a close personal relationship with the victim (see Table 6), as well as occupy positions of power over them. In such circumstances, where sanctions should in fact be more severe, they have nevertheless failed to produce a deterrent effect.<sup>20</sup> The legal structure, from the police investigation level to court proceedings, still does not fully support victims, as evidenced by neglect and bias in adjudicating cases involving women in conflict with the law. Furthermore, the legal substance, in the form of legislation, has not been systematically developed to provide clear guidelines or technical instructions for judges in examining cases involving women, nor in imposing sanctions. As a result, the existing regulations remain insufficient in deterring perpetrators and providing adequate protection for victims.

This study employs the perspective of Lawrence M. Friedman's Theory of Legal Systems, which encompasses structural aspects (institutions and their apparatus), substantive aspects (the regulation of authority and procedures), and cultural aspects. A comprehensive approach to addressing sexual violence can be achieved through this framework.<sup>21</sup> From a perspective of legal culture, societal norms have grown and persisted in upholding their principles, often shaping responses to sexual violence cases with various justifying arguments. The factors contributing to violence against women include low legal awareness, patriarchal culture, economic vulnerability or poverty, suspected infidelity, and early marriage.<sup>22</sup>

From the perspective of the objectives of criminal law, involving the protection of individual and collective human rights, the state has an obligation to protect all citizens so that justice can be achieved for everyone. This obligation includes the enforcement of criminal law, particularly regarding accountability for sexual violence offenses. Criminal law enforcement should take into account a sense of justice for the defendant (especially if the perpetrator is an underage), the victim, and society at large. These aspects involve considering justice for victims and society, the psychological and mental health of both the defendant and the victim, as well as educational considerations, religious or moral values, the

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<sup>20</sup> F. C. Barus, D. N., Permana, R., & Fosset, "Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Anak: Bentuk Kekerasan Seksual Pada Anak Dan Pelaku Kekerasan Seksual Pada Anak.," *In Seminar Nasional Hukum, Sosial Dan Ekonomi* 1, no. 1 (2022), p. 400–407.

<sup>21</sup> Mustafa 'Afifi Ab. Halim and Shabrina Zata Amni, "Legal System in the Perspectives of H.L.A Hart and Lawrence M. Friedman," *Peradaban Journal of Law and Society*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.59001/pjls.v2i1.83>.

<sup>22</sup> S. Sulaeman, R., Sari, N. M. W. P. F., Purnamawati, D., & Sukmawati, "Faktor Penyebab Kekerasan Pada Perempuan.," *Aksara: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Nonformal* 8, no. 3 (2022), p. 2311–20.

character of the defendant, and the philosophy of sentencing to achieve justice and avoid sentencing disparities. These considerations are based, for example, on reports from victims and/or their families, as well as confessions from perpetrators.<sup>23</sup>

Victims' reluctance to report sexual violence to the authorities constitutes a form of disappointment or despair in victims, which subsequently becomes embedded in societal culture. This condition allows perpetrators of sexual crimes to continue circulating freely without witnesses or deterrent effects. Accordingly, an appropriate framework for law enforcement is required—specifically, legal reform, which can be implemented by applying Lawrence M. Friedman's Theory of Legal Systems. This theory addresses structural aspects (institutions and their apparatus), substantive aspects (the regulation of authority and procedures), and cultural aspects.<sup>24</sup> Several factors contribute to a societal culture of reluctance to report experiences of sexual violence.

### 1. Patriarchal Culture and Power Imbalances

The patriarchal system puts men as superior and women as subordinates, resulting in deep gender inequality. It creates significant power imbalances, where victims—particularly women and children—feel afraid or powerless to report sexual violence cases because perpetrators often hold higher social status or authority, such as teachers, lecturers, or superiors.<sup>25</sup> In the perspective of contemporary feminism, the space for legitimacy contains the meaning of gender equality, and the patriarchal culture begins to collapse, which has long been attached to the social system of the Madurese community.<sup>26</sup>

### 2. Victim Blaming Culture

Society tends to have a misguided perception that attributes violence to victims by blaming their clothing, behavior, or presence in specific locations as the trigger for violence. This phenomenon is reinforced by the use of rape myths that are still widely believed, causing victims to remain silent to avoid further social stigma.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Sulaeman, R., Sari, N. M. W. P. F., Purnamawati, D., & Sukmawati.

<sup>24</sup> Hutomo, P., & Soge, "Perspektif Teori Sistem Hukum dalam Pembaharuan Pengaturan Sistem Pemasarakatan Militer."

<sup>25</sup> Psikolog Ratna Yunita Setiyani Subardjo, S.Psi., M.Psi., "Marak Kasus Kekerasan Seksual, Didorong Budaya Patriarki Hingga Gangguan Psikologi," *Universitas Aisyiyah Yogya*, 2025.

<sup>26</sup> Maimun, "The Women's Rights in Divorce and Discourse of Gender Equality in the Dynamics of Divorce in Madura," *Samarah : Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 6, no. 1 (2022), p. 468.

<sup>27</sup> Nengah Selandin Tyas Pangesti Latra Wijayanti1, "Fenomena Victim Blaming Pada Korban Kekerasan Seksual: Kajian Literatur," *Psychopolytan : Jurnal Psikologi* 7, no. 1 (2023).

### 3. Concepts of Shame and Taboo

Sexual violence is often viewed as a family disgrace that must be covered to preserve honor or reputation. The cultural taboo against discussing sexuality also causes victims to feel embarrassment and to fear being marginalized by society if their cases are disclosed.<sup>28</sup>

### 4. Permissive Culture and Normalization of Violence

The persistence of a permissive culture leads certain forms of harassment to be considered "normal" or merely jokes, rather than criminal acts that should be reported. A lack of public awareness regarding bodily rights and sexual boundaries often reinforces this.<sup>29</sup>

### 5. Fear of Retaliation and Social Sanctions

Victims often face threats of retaliation from perpetrators, especially when the perpetrator is a close figure such as a family member or neighbor. In addition, victims fear social consequences such as being forced to marry the perpetrator, expelled from school, or difficulties in finding a future partner.<sup>30</sup>

Sexual violence against women also occurs within higher education environments due to power relations that cause victims to be afraid to report incidents, with women often becoming targets of unequal power dynamics and experiencing a culture of victim-blaming, as faced by many previous victims of sexual violence.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, sexual violence occurs within intimate partnerships within households, influenced by factors such as drug use and power relations between husband and wife.<sup>32</sup>

Intimate partner violence (IPV), also known as domestic violence or dating violence, can vary in both frequency and severity and can affect anyone regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. IPV impacts individuals from

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<sup>28</sup> Arsa Ilmi Budiarti, Gladys Nadya Arianto, and Marsha Maharani, "Indonesia's Sexual Violence Data and Facts 2021" (2022).

<sup>29</sup> Isabel Zevanya Gea, "Faktor Sosial-Budaya, Dampak, dan Upaya Pencegahan Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Anak di Indonesia," *JURNAL ABDIMAS INDONESIA* 5, no. 4 (2025).

<sup>30</sup> Sali Susiana and Analis Legislatif Ahli Utama, "Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Perempuan di Dunia Medis," *Badan Keahlian DPR RI*, 2025.

<sup>31</sup> & Agustang Sugirma, S., "Pakaian Terbaik Menurut Al-Qur'an (Telaah Maudhu'i atas Term-Term Bermakna Pakaian dalam Al-Qur'an)," *AL-WARDAH: Jurnal Kajian Perempuan, Gender dan Agama* 16, no. 1 (2022), p. 105–18.

<sup>32</sup> G. Gilchrist, E., Johnson, A., Thomson, K., Stephens-Lewis, D., Henderson, J., Gadd, D., ... & Gilchrist, "Substance Use and Intimate Partner Abuse (IPA), p. A Descriptive Model of the Pathways between Substance Use and IPA Perpetration for Men.," *Journal of Family Violence* 38, no. 5 (2023), p. 855–68.

all socio-economic backgrounds and educational levels. It occurs in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships and can take place between partners who are married, cohabiting, or dating. While IPV can take many forms, the main characteristic is always the same: The perpetrator maintains power and control over their intimate partner through fear and intimidation. IPV not only affects those directly experiencing abuse but also often impacts family members, friends, coworkers, other witnesses, and the broader community.<sup>33</sup>

A study conducted by Elsa Rahayu et al. on *Community Stigma toward Victims of Sexual Harassment: A Phenomenological Study*<sup>34</sup> reveals that stigma toward victims of intra-family sexual harassment in Pariaman remains pervasive and constitutes a significant obstacle preventing victims from reporting incidents and recovering. Addressing this stigma requires education, social support, and comprehensive policies that effectively protect victims. The study identifies several forms of stigma: first, victims are negatively labeled as a family disgrace, which often leads to their marginalization and being blamed for the sexual violence that happens to them. Second, intense social pressure to keep cases out of the public or legal domain in order to preserve the “family’s good name,” resulting in many cases of sexual harassment within families going unreported or being resolved informally. Third, limited public understanding of the psychological impact of sexual harassment leads to victims being perceived as weak, overly sensitive, or seeking attention, which prevents them from receiving adequate social support. Fourth, a strong patriarchal culture in the Pariaman community reinforces power imbalances between perpetrators and victims, especially when the perpetrator is a respected figure within the family or community.

Similarly, research conducted by Ajeng Kristha Sekar Larasati et al., “*Between Campus and Violence: Uncovering Systematic Patterns in Cases of Sexual Violence in Higher Education Institutions in Java*,”<sup>35</sup> concludes that sexual violence in Indonesian higher education is a serious problem that reflects the weakness of existing protection systems and the overall quality of education. The findings indicate that sexual violence is influenced not only by internal individual factors, such as perception and self-control, but also by external factors related to campus culture and the existing regulatory systems. Although efforts have been made to address this issue through the establishment of PPKS (Sexual Violence Prevention Task Force), the implementation of these policies remains suboptimal,

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<sup>33</sup> Gilchrist, E., Johnson, A., Thomson, K., Stephens-Lewis, D., Henderson, J., Gadd, D., ... & Gilchrist.

<sup>34</sup> Elsa Rahayu, “Stigma Masyarakat Terhadap Korban Pelecehan Seksual dalam Keluarga di Pariaman,” *Social Empirical: Prosiding Berkala Ilmu Sosial* 2, no. 1 (2025), p. 87–95.

<sup>35</sup> Ajeng Kristha Sekar Larasati, “Antara Kampus Dan Kekerasan: Mengungkap Pola Sistematis Dalam Kasus Kekerasan Seksual Di Perguruan Tinggi Di Pulau Jawa,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia* 6, no. 7 (2025).

as evidenced by victims' low levels of trust in reporting mechanisms and the lack of clarity in reporting procedures. Analysis of cases in six public universities in Java revealed that power imbalances, a culture of silence, and a lack of education about sexual violence all contribute to the problem. These cases underscore the need for higher education to extend beyond academic achievement to actively cultivate ethical values, empathy, and awareness of human rights among the academic community.

In the context of legal culture, society must uphold the values of justice to prevent negative precedents and ensure a deterrent effect for both perpetrators and the broader community, thereby serving as a form of education. Preventive measures taken by both the community and the government are therefore necessary to reduce sexual violence, along with efforts to increase awareness and education on this issue. In addition, it is also important to evaluate how the media shapes public perceptions of sexual violence and to assess whether the media can function as an effective tool for increasing awareness and support for victims. Moreover, collaboration among government institutions, non-governmental organizations, and the community is crucial in preventing and mitigating sexual violence. From the perspective of legal structure, the investigation, adjudication, and resolution of sexual violence cases require police officers, prosecutors, and judges who possess a gender-sensitive perspective and demonstrate a clear commitment to victim protection. Accordingly, law enforcement officials must receive continuous training and education on gender sensitivity to ensure effective and victim-centered handling of sexual violence cases.

Similarly, within the substantive legal framework, laws or regulations are enacted to guarantee victims' rights and to impose severe sentences on perpetrators. Violence against women constitutes a violation of fundamental women's human rights. There is a need to analyze and pursue legal reforms related to sexual violence to ensure that laws remain relevant in light of social and technological developments and are capable of providing effective protection for victims. The enforcement of women's human rights must be conducted in accordance with the mandate of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which prohibits discrimination against any particular group or individual. This has driven society to urge the government to enact laws that broadly address and eliminate various forms of violence.<sup>36</sup> It is therefore recommended that the Criminal Code (KUHP) include provisions for sanctions against perpetrators of sexual violence and legal guarantees for children as victims. Furthermore, there

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<sup>36</sup> F. Subarkah, A. A. J., & Tobroni, "Urgensi Pengesahan RUU PKS Terhadap Instrumen Penegakan Hak Asasi Perempuan," *Supremasi Hukum: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Hukum* 9, no. 2 (2020).

is a need for uniform regulations defining the legal age of a child to ensure consistent and effective legal protection.<sup>37</sup>

Apart from that, what is also important to do is to implement strategies in the prevention and overcoming of Catcalling Sexual Harassment, reducing gender inequality is through the formation of a law that specifically regulates Catcalling and coordination between the government, society, and campus, including by forming catcalling prevention; social campaigns both through social media and slogans in society and campus.<sup>38</sup>

## Conclusion

The most important finding in this study is that the reluctance of victims of sexual violence to report to the relevant authorities or law enforcement is due to limited public legal awareness. This reluctance is caused by several factors, including the perception that victims are the source of the sexual violence that happens to them, the existence of power relations with perpetrators, the continued existence of a close relationship, concerns about the status of children without a father, and the lack of adequate services to protect the victims' rights. The impact of victims' reluctance and the community's limited trust in law enforcement in the investigation process leading up to a verdict by law enforcement agencies has caused the number of sexual violence crimes to continue to increase because there is no deterrent effect for perpetrators. The results of this study suggest that the dominance of unequal power relations, a patriarchal culture, as well as the inadequate implementation of legal professional ethics, actually create new victims of sexual violence in the process of seeking justice. It is hoped that further research will explore sexual violence from different perspectives and examine its long-term impact on the future well-being of victims.

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<sup>37</sup> Diana Yusyanti, "Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Anak Korban Dari Pelaku Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual," *Jurnal Penelitian Hukum De Jure*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.30641/dejure.2020.v20.619-636>.

<sup>38</sup> Seguito Monteiro NelvitiaPurba, Bahmid, Alkausar Saragih, Ismed Batubara, "Catcalling Prevention Strategies in Handling Forms of Gender Inequality Among Students in North Sumatera Title," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 9, no. 3 (2025), p. 1934.

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## Interviews

- Interview with Putri, 16 years old, (Names are initials for confidentiality)
- Interview with Rika, 14 years old, (Names are initials for confidentiality)
- Interview with Akyun, 17 years old, (Names are initials for confidentiality), 2021
- Interview with Bunga, 14 years old, (Names are initials for confidentiality), 2022
- Interview with Dewi, 15 years old, (Names are initials for confidentiality), 2023
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