

## REVIEW ARTICLE

### Description of cases of child sexual violence in indonesia from 2018 to 2022 (literature review)

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#### ABSTRACT

Sexual violence against children in Indonesia has been a pervasive issue that largely remains concealed, resembling the phenomenon of an iceberg. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) reported that there was a significant increase in the number of children who were victims of sexual violence in 2020. Children are particularly vulnerable to such violence, as they are often perceived as weak or powerless and are highly dependent on the adults in their environment. This study aims to describe cases of sexual violence against children in Indonesia from 2018 to 2022. The type of this research is a descriptive study, using a literature review approach by searching for various relevant sources through Google Scholar and Publish or Perish databases. The keywords used in the research for relevant articles include violence, sexual violence, child sexual violence, victims, perpetrators, risk factors. A total of 17 articles were selected for analyses using a synthesis matrix, obtaining following results: (1) The majority child victims of sexual violence were aged 12 to under 18 years old and were predominantly female; (2) Most perpetrators of sexual violence were over 18 years of age and predominantly male; (3) A significant number of perpetrators were part of extra-familial groups; (4) The most prevalent form of sexual violence was penetration, (5) Most the risk factors for sexual violence were associated with familial aspects.

**Keyword:** Child sexual violence, Indonesia, Perpetrator, Risk factor, Victim.

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## INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence can affect anyone, including children. According to the data from the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2022, it is estimated that 1 billion children worldwide experience sexual violence. This figure includes cases of sexual violence against children in Indonesia, which shows a very concerning situation, where data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) shows a significant rise in the number of reported cases, increasing from 188 cases in 2017 to 419 cases in 2020.<sup>1</sup> This condition highlights the urgent need for enhanced child protection, considering that children are a precious gift from God, with essential dignity, and are the future successors of the nation's ideals.<sup>2</sup> In addition, data from the Center for Education and Empowerment of Women and Children (PUPA) in Bengkulu recorded 113 cases of violence against women and children, mostly involving sexual violence, from January to October 2018 alone. This shows that the problem of sexual violence against children does not only occur at the national level, but also in various regions. The monthly report from the Regional Child Protection and Supervision Commission (KPPAD) of West Kalimantan Province for the period from January to August 2021 recorded 49 cases of child victims of sexual violence.<sup>3</sup> This data further emphasizes the seriousness of the problem of sexual violence against children in Indonesia and the need for concrete measures to protect them.

Notably, the prevalent underreporting of such cases paints a dire picture, with an estimated ratio of six unreported victims for every reported case. This phenomenon may be attributed to multifaceted factors, including shame, fear of reprisal, psychological trauma, and a lack of awareness regarding avenues for reporting. Consequently, the idyllic realm of childhood, envisioned as a sanctuary of innocence and nurture, has been tragically

overshadowed by the spectre of sexual violence.<sup>4,5</sup>

The repercussions of such atrocities, as elucidated by scholars such as Finkelhor and Browne, encompass manifold dimensions, including betrayal, traumatic sexualization, powerlessness, stigmatization, and the disconcerting prospect of victimized individuals becoming perpetrators themselves.<sup>6,7</sup>

Research conducted by Wismayanti et al.<sup>8</sup> revealed that knowledge about child sexual abuse (CSA) in Indonesia remains limited. The societal taboo regarding discussions of sexual issues is a significant factor that hinders the reporting of CSA cases. In addition, poverty also increases the risk of children becoming victims of sexual violence. There is relatively less attention given to CSA occurring within the family than cases that occur outside the family environment. The study also found that conflicting legal definitions of children exacerbate their vulnerability to CSA, especially girls. Current child protection strategies, including both prevention and intervention efforts, lack a specific focus on CSA cases. Therefore, further research is essential to develop evidence-based approaches that align legal and policy frameworks with current knowledge on CSA.

Meanwhile, research by Rumble et al.<sup>9</sup> shows that research on child sexual violence (CSV) is still very limited, with only one study providing national prevalence estimates. Differences in CSV definitions, survey methods, and sample characteristics limit the generalizability of existing data. Available evidence highlights a significant risk of sexual violence against both girls and boys across various geographic and institutional settings. Married girls are vulnerable to sexual violence from their partners at home, while children at school setting face risks of sexual violence from peers and adults. Victims rarely disclose such incidents and rarely seek support. In addition, childhood experiences of trauma

are often associated with later sexual violence and revictimization behaviours. Information on protective factors is also scarce. This review collates evidence on current understanding of childhood sexual violence (CSV) in Indonesia and identifies the strengths and weaknesses of existing research. A more comprehensive database on CSV is essential to support policy development and direct investment in more effective prevention programs.

Sexual violence against children in Indonesia is a pervasive issue, often described as an iceberg phenomenon. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) reports a significant increase in the number of children who were victims of sexual violence in 2020. Children are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, as they are often perceived as weak or powerless and are highly dependent on the adults in their lives. This study aims to describe cases of sexual violence against children in Indonesia from 2018 to 2022.

## METHODS AND SUBJECT

The methodology adopted in this investigation adheres to a descriptive paradigm with a qualitative orientation. Employing a literature review strategy, data collection is conducted by mining scholarly databases, notably Google Scholar and Publish or Perish, followed by theoretical analyses pertinent to the research theme. This study constitutes a comprehensive literature survey, drawing from diverse scholarly sources including research articles, healthcare literature, governmental health publications, and

datasets pertaining to the portrayal of child victims of sexual violence.

Data for this study were sourced from a diverse array of relevant literature that align with predetermined inclusion criteria. These data were not considered samples. Literature retrieval was conducted through online platforms, notably Google Scholar and Publish or Perish, using specific keywords such as "violence," "sexual violence," "child sexual abuse," "victim," "perpetrator," and "risk factors."

The literature review process in this study began with an initial inquiry utilizing keyword 1 within the journal publication timeframe spanning 2018 to 2022, employing search engines such as Google Scholar and Publish or Perish. The researcher iteratively conducted six rounds of searches and meticulously applied inclusion and exclusion criteria to select pertinent data, resulting in an aggregate of 408 articles. Subsequently, a subsequent search was conducted employing keyword 2, iterated over four search cycles, yielding 123 articles. This was followed by a further search utilizing keyword 3, executed through five search iterations, yielding 17 articles. Subsequent to rigorous screening, seventeen articles meeting the stipulated inclusion criteria underwent meticulous data analysis employing a synthesis matrix.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The investigation culminated in the acquisition of seventeen articles, whose data underwent rigorous analysis and were subsequently presented in tabular and narrative forms.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Victim Based on Age

No	Age Group	Number of Victims	Number of Victims
1	<5 years		3
2	6-12 years		9
3	13- <20 years		14
	Total		26

Note: The table 1 presents the categorization of victims according to age groups and the corresponding number of articles addressing each group.

In accordance with the findings from the literature review regarding the age distribution of sexual violence victims, it was discerned that individuals aged 12 to 17 years were the most affected group. This age group represents a particularly vulnerable to external influences, as minors are more likely to become targets of sexual violence due to their reliance on adult

caregivers. Consequently, this dependency dynamic may serve as a significant point of exploitation for perpetrators seeking to commit acts of sexual violence.<sup>10</sup>

The tabulated outcomes derived from data analysis of relevant literature concerning the gender distribution of victims of child sexual violence are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Characteristics of Victims Based on Gender

No.	Gender	Number of Victims
1.	Male	4
2.	Female	15
	Total	19

Note: Table 2 illustrates the gender distribution of victims and the corresponding number of articles addressing each gender.

According to the findings from the literature review concerning the gender demographics of sexual violence victims, it was observed that females constituted the largest group of victims. This enduring prevalence of sexual violence against females is supported by societal constructs that perpetuate the perception of women as

inherently vulnerable and subordinate to males. Furthermore, entrenched attitudes persist, portraying women as inherently nurturing and unlikely to engage in acts of sexual violence.<sup>11</sup>

Characteristics based on the perpetrator status of sexual violence against children are illustrated in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Characteristics Based on Perpetrator Status

No.	Perpetrator Status	Number of Perpetrator
1.	Intrafamilial	8
2.	Extrafamilial	14
	Total	22

Note: Table 3 outlines the distribution of cases based on perpetrator status and the corresponding number of articles addressing each category.

According to the findings obtained from the literature review regarding the perpetrator-victim relationship status in instances of child sexual violence, it was revealed that the predominant status of perpetrators was extrafamilial. This observation is consistent with research conducted by Aditya et al. in

2020, which found that the prevailing perpetrator-victim relationship status was characterized by extrafamilial ties, notably originating from acquaintances.<sup>12</sup>

Characteristics based on the age of perpetrators of sexual violence against children are detailed in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Age Groups of Perpetrators

No.	Age Group of Perpetrator	Number of Articles
1.	< 18 years	4
2.	> 18 years	14
	Total	18

Note: Table 4 illustrates the distribution of perpetrator age groups and the corresponding number of articles addressing each group

According to the findings derived from the literature review concerning the age distribution of perpetrators of sexual violence, it was discovered that individuals aged over 18 years, categorizing them as adults, comprised the prevailing demographic among perpetrators. This concurs with research conducted by Joko et al. in 2019, which revealed that

perpetrators of sexual violence against children encompassed not only adult age cohorts but also minors. Nonetheless, the adult age bracket emerged as the predominant cohort among perpetrators.<sup>13</sup>

The data processing outcomes from the literature regarding the gender of perpetrators of sexual violence against children are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Characteristics of Perpetrators Based on Gender

No.	Gender	Number of Articles
1.	Male	17
2.	Female	0
	Total	17

Note: Table 5 illustrates the distribution of perpetrators based on gender and the corresponding number of articles addressing each category.

Based on the findings gathered from the literature review concerning the gender demographics of sexual violence perpetrators, it was discerned that male perpetrators predominated. This phenomenon may be attributed to prevailing societal norms, which often socialize male children to embody traits

such as strength and courage. Consequently, this gendered upbringing perpetuates disparities between genders, fostering patriarchal ideologies that grant men authority and control over women.<sup>11</sup>

Detailed characteristics of the various types of sexual violence against children are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Characteristics of Different Types of Sexual Violence

No.	Type of Sexual Violence	Number of Articles
1.	Penetration	15
2.	Physical Contact	3
3.	Non-Physical Contact	1
	Total	19

Note: Table 6 presents the distribution of different types of sexual violence against children and the corresponding number of articles addressing each type.

Based on the findings derived from the literature review regarding the typology of sexual violence, it was determined that penetration is the most predominant form of sexual violence. This prevalence can be attributed to the tendency of victims to report incidents of sexual violence primarily when they have experienced penetrative acts. Conversely, cases of sexual violence involving physical or non-physical contact typically exhibit lower reporting rates. Overview of Risk Factors for Child Sexual Violence.

The research conducted by Joko et al. in 2019 unveiled significant risk factors associated with incidents of sexual violence against children, including factors such as familial disharmony, deficient parental nurturing, economic deprivation, adverse social environments, inadequate parental oversight, negative influences stemming from improper utilization of social media, psychological instability, and deficiencies in comprehension and behavioral regulation.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Afi et al.'s investigation in 2021 elucidated the detrimental impact of poor familial cohesion and imprudent use of social media on the occurrence of sexual violence targeting children.<sup>14</sup>

Peni et al.'s study in 2018 underscored a convergence of risk factors, including familial discord, economic hardship, unfavorable social environment, insufficient parental supervision, negative consequences of inappropriate social media use, psychological instability, and deficiencies in both understanding and behavioral conduct among perpetrators.<sup>10</sup> Consistent with these findings, Sulastri et al.'s research in 2019 shed light on the correlation between parenting practices, parental attentiveness, children's lifestyles, and socioeconomic status with the occurrence of sexual violence against children.<sup>15</sup>

Berliana et al.'s 2020 inquiry highlighted the role of familial psychological dynamics on children's self-awareness and their perceptions as victims, often leading them to comply even in discomfoting

circumstances.<sup>16</sup> Betra et al.'s comprehensive analysis in 2021 discerned a multifaceted array of risk factors, including victims' apprehension of reporting, exposure to incentives, substance or visual stimuli, socioeconomic disparities, dysfunctional perpetrator-victim relationships, deviant sexual tendency among perpetrators, and a lack of impulse control regarding sexual urges.<sup>17</sup>

Irvan et al.'s examination in 2021 identified socioeconomic vulnerability and parental neglect as pivotal factors contributing to inadequate supervision and diminished parent-child interaction.<sup>18</sup> Zuri et al.'s investigation in 2019 underscored the detrimental effects of low socioeconomic status, familial discord, insufficient parental supervision, victims' feelings of powerlessness, and perpetrators' consumption of pornographic materials.<sup>19</sup> In contrast, Darmayasa et al.'s recent study in 2022 delineated risk factors, including victims' cognitive and developmental challenges, familial dysfunctionality, and economic adversity as prominent precursors to the occurrence of sexual violence.

Research by Octaviyanti & Khusen<sup>20</sup> describes a case of sexual harassment involving a 15-year-old girl who was targeted by members of her local community. Initially, the victim hesitated to disclose the incident, which reflects the common fear and embarrassment individuals often experience when confronting sexual violence. The parents' suspicions eventually led to a forensic medical examination through a post-mortem, which became the first step in the disclosure of the case. The findings highlight that the role of parents is crucial in detecting signs of sexual violence, especially when the victim is unable or afraid to report the incident directly.

Herlianto<sup>21</sup> conducted research at Sanglah Hospital in Denpasar to analyze the characteristics of child victims of sexual violence. Of the total 88 cases studied, the majority of victims were girls (82%), while the remaining 18% were boys.

This data shows that girls are more vulnerable to sexual violence than boys. In terms of age, adolescents aged 13–17 years experienced the highest incidence of sexual violence, indicating that adolescents are the most vulnerable age group, possibly due to their transitional period of physical and emotional development.

Additionally, this study demonstrated that victims experienced both physical and verbal forms of violence. Specifically, 47% of victims reported experiencing physical violence, while 56% experienced verbal violence. This indicates that the forms of child sexual abuse can vary, and the psychological impact of verbal abuse can be significant in the long term.

Another important finding was that the majority of perpetrators of sexual violence were individuals known to the victim (84%). This emphasizes that the threat of sexual violence often comes from the victim's immediate environment, such as family, friends, or people in their community. In the adolescent age group (13–17 years old), physical violence was notably more prevalent, at 57%, indicating a higher potential for physical exploitation in this age group.

Sumampouw<sup>22</sup> conducted research that reviewed the characteristics of child sexual abuse (CSA) cases and the factors that influence the successful prosecution of these cases in Indonesia. The study analyzed a total of 179 cases, with the majority of victims being female (168 people), and only 11 being male. The ages of the victims ranged from 2 to 17 years, with an average age of 12.4 years. Most of the victims were from the adolescent age group (13–17 years old), which accounted for 64% of the total cases. Meanwhile, 25% of the victims were school-age children (7–12 years old), and another 11% were preschoolers under 6 years old. These findings suggest that adolescents are the most vulnerable group to sexual violence, possibly due to their increased interactions with perpetrators outside the home

environment and may have lower awareness of the potential risks.

environment and may have lower awareness of the potential risks.

The study also identified that the majority of sexual violence against children occurred outside the family environment (extra-familia), with 150 reported cases, while the remaining 21 cases occurred within the family environment (intra-familia). This highlights the importance of being alert to potential threats from outside environments, such as friends, neighbors, or adults who are around the victim. In terms of forms of violence, penetration was the most common form of sexual violence, accounting for 135 cases, followed by cases involving fondling and exposure, which comprised 14 cases, and cases involving oral sex and masturbation, totaling 29 cases. This diversity of forms of violence shows how complex the dynamics of sexual violence against children are, which requires an appropriate legal and psychological approach in dealing with each type of violence.

Sumampouw<sup>22</sup> also identified cultural factors that influence the level of prosecution of child sexual abuse cases. In the Indonesian context, certain social norms and cultural values, such as shame and social pressure, often impede the legal process, preventing victims or their families from reporting cases of sexual violence. However, the study also highlighted some universal factors that can increase the likelihood of successful prosecution, such as confessions from suspects and strong medical evidence. Medical evidence, such as post-mortem results, plays a key role in strengthening a case in court, while a confession from the perpetrator can speed up the legal process and provide clarity regarding the events that occurred.

Research by Urbayatun et al.<sup>23</sup> identified 17 cases of sexual abuse involving

children in Indonesia. Most of the perpetrators were aged between 12 and 16 years (75%), while the remaining 25% were 17 years old. The majority of victims were children aged 6-11 years (58.8%), followed by those in the 0 to 5 years age group (23.58%) and the 12 to 16 years age group (17.65%). The research highlights that one of the main factors driving children to become perpetrators is imitation, fueled by exposure to adult content online and access to “adult groups” through social media. Such exposure triggered a curiosity, leading some children to commit acts of sexual abuse.

Most of the cases found involved acts of sodomy, which resulted in various psychological impacts on the victims. These effects include trauma, excessive fear, and behavioral changes, such as increased sensitivity and moodiness. Children aged 6 to 11 years often exhibited symptoms of trauma and heightened sensitivity, while adolescents aged 12–16 years tended to become moodier and more fearful in their interactions with others. These findings underscore the important role of the environment and the regulation of online media access in preventing child sexual abuse, as well as the need for psychological support to help victims in their recovery process.

This research emphasizes that a deeper understanding of the influence of the digital environment and the need for appropriate education on media use for children can help reduce the risk of sexual abuse among children and adolescents.

Siburian & Maendrofa<sup>24</sup> research underscores the escalating incidence of sexual violence against children in Indonesia, demonstrating the ineffectiveness of the punishments meted out to perpetrators as a deterrent. Their research emphasizes the important role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in addressing cases of sexual violence against children. NGOs support child

victims of sexual violence by advocating for their rights throughout the legal process.

Additionally, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provide counseling services to victims as a form of assistance. These counseling services are designed to help victims overcome the trauma associated with sexual violence while also offering a much-needed sense of security and emotional support. This assistance is very helpful in restoring the mental condition and confidence of the victims, facilitating a more effective recovery process. These findings emphasize the important role of NGOs in supporting victims of sexual violence through an approach that focuses not only on the legal aspects but also on the psychological recovery of victims.

Research by Awaludin Rahmansyah et al.<sup>25</sup> discusses the legal handling of cases of sexual abuse involving children in the pesantren environment, particularly emphasizing cases that have become more visible due to the courage of the students in reporting such incident. This research highlights the important role of the Child Protection Law, the Criminal Code (KUHP), and the Criminal Procedure Code (KUHP) in providing legal protection for child victims of sexual abuse.

In addressing cases of child sexual abuse, law enforcement officials, particularly the police, play a crucial role in ensuring the prosecution of perpetrators and providing a sense of security for victims. Additionally, parents play an essential role in providing emotional support to their children. Children rely on their parents to be a source of calm and motivation, which help prevent the long-term effects of abuse-related trauma on their psychological condition. This research shows that collaboration between law enforcement and family support is necessary to ensure victim recovery and success in the legal process.

Research conducted by Richardo Napitupulu & Astro Julio<sup>26</sup> examined cases of sexual abuse against minors in Indonesia. This study found four cases of sexual abuse involving children aged 3 to 9 years, as well as two cases of sexual violence in dating relationships involving adolescents aged 15 to 16 years. Typically, children who are victims of sexual abuse are enrolled in primary school. Perpetrators tend to choose children as victims because they are considered easier to manipulate and less capable of resisting the perpetrators' demands.

In cases of sexual violence against adolescents aged 15 to 16 years, the victims are generally still students in junior or senior high school. These cases often occur in the context of promiscuity or juvenile delinquency, where the perpetrator uses more elaborate deception to manipulate the victim. The perpetrator is often the victim's boyfriend or neighbor, who takes advantage of emotional closeness to the victim to achieve his or her goals.

The psychological impact of sexual violence against children is significant. Victims often experience depression, phobias and nightmares, leading to long-lasting distrust of others. In addition, many victims feel restricted in their social relationships and experience fear when it comes to sexual intercourse, especially regarding the fear of pregnancy a result of the sexual violence they experienced. These findings show the importance of special attention to child protection and prevention of sexual violence, both in the family environment and in schools.

Research by Septiawan et al<sup>27</sup> examined case of the victim was a 14-year-old girl who claimed to have been sexually assaulted by a stranger on two occasions, with only a few hours between the first and second assaults. The victim suffered bruises on her neck, chest, and breasts, as well as a laceration to her hymen. A vaginal smear examination revealed the presence of sperm, which was consistent with signs of sexual intercourse. These findings also

indicate that the sexual intercourse experienced by the victim is categorized as sexual assault.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Trends and Patterns of Child Sexual Abuse**

Trends in child sexual abuse in Indonesia show that most victims are girls, particularly within the 13-17 age group, which is the most vulnerable to this violence. This data suggests that girls are at a more greater risk of sexual violence compared to boys, making them the primary targets of perpetrators. According to findings from Herlianto<sup>21</sup>, 82% of victims of sexual violence were girls, while only 18% were boys. This disparity reflects that women face a higher risk, perhaps due to gender stereotypes and social norms that portray women as weaker or more susceptible to manipulation by perpetrators.

Adolescents aged 13 to 17 years frequently targeted for sexual violence. This period represents a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood, during which individuals begin to experience significant physical, emotional, and social changes. Adolescents often seek for social recognition and emotional closeness, which makes them more vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation by those in their environment.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, they may also not have enough awareness of boundaries in social interactions, which makes them easier targets for perpetrators.

Furthermore, the fact that the perpetrators of sexual violence are often people known to the victim, such as friends, family members, or neighbors, shows that the threat of sexual violence does not only come from strangers but also from the victim's immediate surroundings. This data underscores the alarming fact that homes, schools, or communities, often perceived as safe havens for children, can also become sites for sexual violence. Perpetrators who are familiar to the victim have easier access and can utilize relationships of trust to commit acts of violence.<sup>29</sup>

This also leads to victims feeling afraid or embarrassed to report the incident, as they feel confused about how to deal with a situation involving someone they know and may trust.

This situation emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive prevention approach to address sexual violence against children. This approach must involve various layers of society, including parents, educators, and law enforcement officials, to create a safe environment for children. Education about the risks of sexual violence should be extended not only to children but also to parents and educators, enabling them to identify the signs of violence and take preventive measures before situations escalate.<sup>30</sup> This educational initiatives aims to empower them to recognize threats from any source, including those closed to them.

This comprehensive educational program should include counseling on the importance of maintaining personal boundaries, recognizing inappropriate behavior, and building the courage to report suspicious events. Additionally, this program must consider local cultural aspects that often hinder the reporting of sexual violence cases, such as the shame or social stigma associated with the victims. By raising awareness of the risks and signs of sexual violence, both children and the adults around them can become more proactive in protecting themselves and preventing such incidents.<sup>31</sup>

Public policies that enhance the legal protections for child victims of sexual violence and ensure the fairness and responsiveness of the law enforcement system are necessary to support this approach. The role of law enforcement and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in providing legal and psychological support to victims is also crucial.<sup>32</sup> By creating a safer environment and a supportive system, it is hoped that cases of sexual violence against children can be reduced, and children who are victims can get the protection and recovery they need.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, the trends and patterns of child

sexual abuse in Indonesia not only reflect the level of vulnerability of girls and adolescents but also highlight the need for broader collaboration between families, communities, and the government to prevent and deal with such cases more effectively. These efforts are crucial in safeguarding children's rights to safety and well-being, as well as fostering a societal awareness and concern regarding children's safety.

### **Barriers to Reporting and Handling Cases**

One of the most significant obstacles in addressing cases of sexual violence against children in Indonesia is the cultural norm that considers discussions about sexual issues as taboo. This culture of silence often makes people feel uncomfortable when discussing the topic of sexual violence openly.<sup>33</sup> When violence occurs, victims or their families may feel ashamed and fear negative stigma from their social environment, leading to reluctance in reporting the incident. This is especially true in cases that occur within the family, where talking about sexual violence is often perceived as bringing the family into disrepute. The study by Wismayanti et al.<sup>8</sup> indicates that this cultural taboo can prevent victims from disclosing their experiences and seeking the help they need, whether medical, legal, or psychological. As a result, many cases of child sexual abuse go undetected and untreated, leaving victims with prolonged trauma without adequate justice or support.

In addition to cultural factors, handling cases of sexual violence against children in Indonesia is further complicated by legal issues.<sup>34</sup> Existing laws often have different definitions of sexual violence, including differing criteria for who is considered as a minor and what types of violence are classified as sexual abuse or violence. For example, there are differences in the interpretation of the age of a child who is entitled to special protection under certain laws. These differences create confusion

and hesitation among law enforcement officials when applying the appropriate rules, potentially reducing the effectiveness of law enforcement. This can also lead to inconsistencies in the investigation and prosecution process, which can ultimately harm victims. The lack of clear standards also allows perpetrators to use legal loopholes to avoid punishment.

Various parties, especially the government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), need to intensify their efforts to address these critical issues. First, both the government and NGOs should promote a broad public awareness campaign to encourage changes in people's perceptions of the issue of sexual violence. This campaign should focus on removing the negative stigma associated with victims of sexual violence and encouraging the community to be more open in talking about the issue.<sup>35</sup> For example, outreach initiatives in schools, community programs, and social media platforms can be used to provide information regarding children's rights, reporting process for violence, and the importance of support for victims. Additionally, campaign can educate the public on the importance of actively listening to and supporting victims of sexual violence, empowering them to overcome feeling of shame or fear when disclosing their experiences.

In addition, training for law enforcement officials is essential to ensure that they can handle cases of child sexual abuse with sensitivity and victim-center approach.<sup>36</sup> This training should include an understanding of the trauma experienced by victims of sexual violence, safe interviewing techniques that do not pressure victims, and strategies for creating a safe environment where victims feel comfortable sharing their experience. By so implementing these practices, law enforcement officials can respond more effectively to reports of sexual violence cases and ensure the protection of victims' rights throughout the legal process.

Reforms in the legal system are also needed to harmonize legal definitions and procedures related to child sexual abuse. This can be achieved by drafting clearer guidelines for handling sexual violence cases and making consistent regulations across the relevant laws. By harmonizing these regulations, it is expected that the law enforcement process will become more efficient and effective, ultimately providing better justice for victims.

### **Long-term Impact on Victims**

The impact of child sexual abuse is significant and can be long-lasting, encompassing a range of psychological issues such as trauma, depression, anxiety, and behavioral changes. Research conducted by Urbayatun<sup>23</sup> showed that children aged 6 to 11 years who were victims of sexual violence often showed symptoms such as excessive fear, increased sensitivity, and behavioral changes that lead them to become more withdrawn or introverted. Meanwhile, adolescents who are victims of sexual violence tend to show more complex symptoms, such as moodiness and increased sensitivity.<sup>37</sup> These effects are caused by traumatic experiences that are difficult for children to process, especially as they are still in the stage of emotional and psychological development. Therefore, integrated psychological interventions are necessary to support victims' recovery.<sup>38</sup> Services such as counseling, trauma therapy, and emotional support from family and the community can help victims overcome fear and rebuild their confidence.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, the availability of adequate mental health services in remote areas is a challenge that must be addressed immediately, ensuring that all child victims of sexual violence in Indonesia have equal access to support their recovery process.

Although Indonesia has established laws to protect children from sexual violence, the implementation of these regulations faces numerous challenges.

Regulations such as the Child Protection Law and the Criminal Code provide a legal framework to protect victims of sexual violence. However, in practice, law enforcement is often hampered by lack of evidence, victims' fear testifying, and protracted legal processes. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play important role in filling the gap between victims and access to justice. They not only provide legal advocacy and assistance during the legal process, but also provide counseling services to victims to help overcome the trauma they have experienced.<sup>40</sup>

According to research by Siburian and Maendrofa<sup>24</sup>, this role is very helpful for victims to feel safer and get proper justice. The existence of counseling services is very helpful to recover mentally and restore the victim's confidence. However, to create a more effective child protection system, closer collaboration among the government, NGOs, and communities is essential for developing prevention programs and counseling in schools. Additionally, legal reforms are also necessary to create a system that is more responsive to the needs of victims. This includes simplifying reporting procedures and providing security guarantees for witnesses and victims, enabling them to feel safer when speak out and reporting their cases.<sup>41</sup> Thus, comprehensive support from various parties can improve protection for children and promote fairer law enforcement for victims of sexual violence in Indonesia.

These studies emphasize that child sexual abuse in Indonesia is a complex issue, influenced by cultural, social and legal factors. A holistic approach, including raising public awareness, effective legal responses, and appropriate psychological support, is the key to addressing this issue.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the literature review of research in Indonesia, it can be concluded

that children who are victims of sexual violence are predominantly aged between 12 and 17 years old, which places them in the early adolescent group, and the majority being female. Meanwhile, perpetrators of sexual violence against children are primarily adults over the age of 18 and are predominantly male. The majority of cases of sexual violence occur in relationships outside the family (extrafamilial). The most common type of sexual violence experienced by victims is penetration. The primary risk factors contributing to cases of sexual violence against children stem from family aspects, including low family economic status, insufficient parental supervision and attention, inappropriate use of social media, and family disharmony.

## DECLARATION OF INTEREST

It is imperative to note the absence of any conflicts of interest in the formulation of this scholarly article or in the execution of the research endeavors.

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