Community Support System-Based Health care for Children as Violence Victims during Pandemic

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: The Republic of Indonesia’s 1945 Constitution Article 28B and the Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection Article 13 clause (1) state that children have the right for protection against discriminative behaviors, economic and sexual exploitation, neglect, cruelty, violence, torture, injustice, and other wrongful treatments. AIM: This research aims (1) to describe the violence to children and (2) to describe the community support system-based health-care policy concept for children as violence victims.

METHODS: This is a normative legal research which is carried out by literature review and by analyzing secondary data. The approaches used are the statute approach and the conceptual approach. It uses the descriptive method, as it aims to clearly describe the various things related to the analyzed objects. The policies proposed in this research are those which are analyzed using the fishbone model. The identification process is carried out by finding the main problem which affects the legal protection for children as violence victims in the COVID-19 pandemic era which is not yet optimum. It uses some indicators, which are as follows: (1) policies; (2) regulations; (3) family; (4) education institutions; and (5) the society which are described as small bones. Then, the big bones are the analysis which is not yet optimum. RESULTS: The research results show that during this pandemic, the violence toward children has drastically increased. On June 2020, there were 3.555 cases, which increased to 4.928 cases on July 2020. CONCLUSION: Because of that, the government needs to formulate an intersectoral child protection.

Introduction

In facing the COVID-19 pandemic, the world does not only face a global health emergency, but it is also facing a great decrease of global economy [1]. The first COVID-19 case in Indonesia was announced on March 2, 2020. Based on the data released from the Republic of Indonesia’s Ministry of Health, until December 29, 2020, there are 719,219 positive cases of COVID-19 in Indonesia. Thus, all sectors are impacted, even though the impact is not prevalent in all systems. The education sector is one which is impacted by the increasing COVID-19 cases in Indonesia [2]. Apart from that, there is also the economic sector, especially the restaurant and hotel industries, which is followed by recreation and tourism [3]. It must be noted that the Ministry of Labor stated that 2.8 million workers have lost their jobs in Indonesia during this pandemic, since the beginning of April, and there must be more who do not report nor confirm [4].

Some studies state that the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to increase the poverty rate. A study from Sumner et al. (2020) estimates the increase of the global poverty rate using the three per capita household income and expenditure contraction scenarios, which are 5%, 10%, and 20% [5]. According to the Ministry of Finance, 3.78 million people in Indonesia are threatened to become new poor people. Meanwhile, the worst scenario from the study results of the SMERU research institution estimates that there may be an increase of 8.5 million poor people. At present, there are 24.79 million poor people in Indonesia or 9.22% of the total population [6].

The COVID-19 also has microimpacts on families, stress, and uncertainty, which brings bad impacts to parents. Such condition happens simultaneous with the physical and psychological burdens experienced by the children due to the situation during the COVID-19 pandemic [7]. Around 50% of parents are worried that they cannot pay for their bills and 55% are worried that they are going to run out of money. The frequency of shouting, screaming, and yelling to children has increased, with four out of 10 parents admitting that they have done these things several times or often in the past 2 weeks. When asked whether that action is an increase from their usual behavior, 19% answered that the frequency of yelling or screaming increased,
and 15% admit to have increased the punishments they give to children since the pandemic [8]. This is in line with the many countries which report that there is an increase of domestic violence cases during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the US, after several months of the stay-at-home policy, it is reported that there was a 20% to 30% increase on the calls services on domestic violence in nine metropolitan cities [9]. It is not seldom that the perpetrators of the domestic violence target the children at home as a way to increase control to their households. The researchers estimate that the children who stay at home have a 60-fold risk of experiencing violence [10].

Through the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Republic of Indonesia stated that there was a drastic increase in the trend of violence to children during the COVID-19 pandemic. On June 2020, there were 3,555 cases, which increased to 4,928 cases on July 2020 [11]. This information becomes part of the complaint report cases of the Indonesian Commission for Child Protection (Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia/KPAI) in the past 5 years (2016–2020), with 24,650 victims of human rights violation, and the highest percentage is on 2020 [12]. To protect children from acts of violence and to make sure so that the cases on violence toward children do not increase, there needs to be an intervention of a protection program from the government. The things which are not less important are how to revitalize the roles of the various socioreligious institutions, the participation of secondary groups in the society, and the involvement of the groups who are aware of children’s rights and child protection, which may be called the community support system approach. This may be specially established during the COVID-19 pandemic as a program which aims to prevent physical, psychological, and sexual domestic violence [13].

**Methods**

**Research type and approach**

This is a normative research.

The focus of this research is to formulate a community support system-based child protection policy for children as violence victims during the COVID-19 pandemic. The approach used is the juridical-philosophic approach, which uses secondary data as the main source.

The child protection policy formulation to achieve the children’s sustainability of life is carried out by analyzing the series of the child protection processes. The process of analysis is carried out by criticizing these following things: (1) The legal stipulations which become the child protection guidelines from its levels of regulation and technical guidelines, for example, the constitution, the governmental decrees, the presidential decrees, the regional regulations, and the other basic regulations; (2) the policies of issuing/rejection/revocation such as the mechanism, the process, and the bureaucracy of child protection; and (3) the presence of the opportunity of the society’s role as a community support system in participating in child protection.

**Discussion**

**The child protection policy during the COVID-19 pandemic**

Children are also humans, thus, respecting their rights is the same as respecting the human rights [14]. Smith even emphasizes that, the whole instrument of the international human rights actually perfectly resides in the “heart” of the human rights. Unfortunately, the fact still shows that children are part of the group which is prone to become victims of violence. Every child has basic rights, as the rights owned by adults. Not many people are involved in thinking and in carrying out concrete steps to protect the children’s rights. A child is an individual who is not yet physically, mentally, nor socially mature [15]. Children are part of the family and are a mandate and a blessing of God the Almighty, who must be protected, as they own the rights and the dignities of the human beings which must be highly respected [16].

The policy on child protection is marked by the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which by the United Nation’s General Assembly on November 20, 1989. It started to be entered in force on September 2, 1990. This convention on the children’s rights is an instrument which formulates the universal principles and legal norms on the position of the children. Because of that, this convention on the children’s rights is an international agreement on the human rights which inserts the political, economic, and cultural rights [17]. Indonesia has ratified this Convention on Children’s Rights through the Presidential Decree No. 36 of 1996. The President of the Republic of Indonesia and the Republic of Indonesia’s People’s Representative Assembly issued the Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection. This law has holistically guaranteed, respected, and protected the children’s rights. The Indonesian government has formed the Ministry of Women and Children Empowerment as a coordinative and an advocate institution of child protection in Indonesia. This ministry has the role to formulate Action Plans of National Development in the Children’s Sector. Finally, Indonesia has formed the Indonesian Commission for Child Protection (KPAI) [18].

The government, through the Law No. 35 of 2014 on the Change of the Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection, gives a mandate to the Indonesian
Community support system-based health-care policy for children as violence victims in the COVID-19 pandemic

Child protection is the responsibility of all parties (the government, the community, and the family). The family is the first and the foremost important party which is responsible for child protection [27]. The concept of child protection includes a wide scope. It means that the child protection is not only about the protection of the physical and the psychological aspects of the children but it also includes the health aspect. It is hoped that the Indonesian people may develop to become people who are able and capable

Education and Culture No. 4 of 2020 which contains the guidelines of studying from home through long-distance learning [23]. However, the implementation level of the long-distance learning policy is still not yet optimum due to the bad communication method between the ministry and the regional government [24]. This is because the understanding on the hybrid model or the school learning management system is not yet prevalent and there are some obstacles which emerge in the application of the long-distance learning, including the difficulties of the teachers in managing this method of learning and that they are still focused on completing the curriculum [25].

During this COVID-19 pandemic, the children are highly dependent on the family. Psychologists and education experts believe that the family is the main factor which may give influence toward the children’s formation and development of good behavior in all aspects and condition, including during this time where the whole world is facing the COVID-19 pandemic. This condition of pandemic forces the change of the children’s interaction, from learning at school to learning from home through internet (e-learning). The e-learning is hoped to minimize the risk of being infected by the virus, and the students may also obtain as much information as possible with various models [26].

However, this condition also has impacts, especially to the family. Stress and uncertainty caused by the coronavirus pandemic have brought bad impacts toward parents. This condition is simultaneous with the physical and the psychological burdens which the children start to feel due to the pandemic. The intense presence of children at home often causes violation of their rights, as reported by the Ministry of Social Affairs, that there was a drastically increasing trend of violence towards children during the COVID-19 pandemic: On June 2020, there were 3.555 cases of violence, which increased to 4.928 cases during the COVID-19 pandemic; On June 2020, there were 3.555 cases of violence, which increased to 4.928 cases on July 2020 [11]. This information becomes part of the complaint report cases of the Indonesian Commission for Child Protection in the past 5 years (2016–2020), with 24,650 victims of human rights violation, and the highest percentage is on 2020 [12].

The world is suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has undermined all sectors of life, including education, as the impacts are at the same scale as the World War II [22]. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), more than 91% of the world student population has been impacted by the closing of schools due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This reality shows that the society is suffering from concerns, which causes the government to suggest them to carry out activities at home and to work and study from home.

Through the Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia, has issued the Decree of the Ministry of

Commission for Child Protection/KPAI to receive community complaints on the violation of children's rights. To carry out this mandate and to ease its service to the people, the KPAI technically provides three forms of complaint services, which are direct complaint, online complaint, and complaints from letters. From the complaint system, KPAI recorded that by August 31, 2020, there was a total of 4,734 complaint cases, from the previous year of 4,369 complaint cases on 2019, with the details as follows:

Based on the Figure 1, it is shown that on 2020, there was a decrease of cases in certain clusters, such as the religion, social, health, civil rights, cyber, and trafficking clusters. On the contrary, there was an increase of complaint cases on the clusters of family and education. This cannot be separated from the condition of the COVID-19 pandemic which has currently impacted the criminal rate [19]. Marcus Felson argued that the main reason for this change is that the government has issued the obligation for the people to stay at home, which impacts the routine activities of the whole population [20]. The government’s policy to decrease social activities during the pandemic has great impacts toward the stress levels of the society. This is in line with the perspective of Merton through his strain theory, which states that humans are inherently good, but there are some social conditions which cause pressure or stress, causing strains [21].

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Figure 1: Complaints based on the Child Complaint Clusters in 2019–2020
of making contributions to achieve, to maintain, and to form the national development in the future. Thus, it is clear that the child protection also regards the aspect of guiding the young generation and the national issues which require a well-integrated and a well-coordinated management system [28].

Bagong Suyanto, a professor from the Faculty of Social Sciences and Politics, Universitas Airlangga, opines that the Ministry of Social Affairs is reported to currently open a counseling and health-care desk for women and children who are victims of domestic violence. Apart from that counseling desk, other local-level organizations such as NU, Muhammadiyah (Islamic organizations), Koran recitation groups, Islamic boarding schools, church groups, PKK (The Family Welfare Movement), Dharma Wanita (Women’s Duties), and other sociocultural institutions have the role in participating as a network which may be invited to work together to increase the health-care service and benefits for children, which is called the community support system. The formation of the community support system-based counseling and health-care desk is hoped to treat the suffering of the children who are violence victims during the COVID-19 pandemic [29].

The Community Support System has an important role in campaigning child protection with counseling and health-care desk to prevent and healing for children in the increase of cases on violence toward children; to increase the condition of children’s physic and mental health, and also to make the society has the awareness in handling the issues of children which may disturb their physical, mental, and health developments [30]. Instrumental support is in the form of direct support such as money, time, and energy through activities which may helm an individual; (1) informative support, which includes giving advices, guidelines, suggestions, or feedback on what is carried out by an individual and (2) network support, by giving the feeling of being part of a group [31].

The action of prevention may be carried out through socializations and campaigns to develop the awareness of the children and the society on the children’s health rights. As victims of violence, children have the right to obtain: (1) Protection from family, the society, and the government and also other parties; (2) adequate health/medical services; (3) legal support and assistance; (4) spiritual support; (5) therapy of mental recovery; and (6) confidentiality of identity.

The government is not alone in protecting the children, but they also work together with other parties. Some of the services provided are as follows: (1) Medical services (consultation, medical treatment, health nursing, laboratory tests, postmortems, etc.); (2) psychological services (counseling, therapy, and psychological assistance); and (3) legal services (investigation, consultation, legal process assistance, etc.). These actions of protection are carried out by some institutions/instances/organizations as a community support system which is adapted with their main tasks and functions [32].

Figure 2 shows that the intersectoral coordination becomes the key in the child protection policy. The coordination with the medical service providers is with the health workers in hospitals or in community health centers, with the aim to become a reference in giving medical services in the forms of consultation, treatment, health, postmortem, etc. Then, the coordination with the community organizations, especially those which provide psychological/mental healing services, may become a reference for those who require consultation and may be adapted with the needs of the children who wish to consult.

Figure 2: Community support system-based child protection

Seeing the trend of the increasing violence cases toward children during the COVID-19 pandemic, the government needs to insert the prevention and the healing from violence toward children in their agenda. The governmental agenda is understood as a list of subject to which officials are paying some serious attention at during a given time [33]. The problem lifted in the study is related to the counseling and health care toward children as violence victims during the COVID-19 pandemic which is not yet optimum because the dramatically increased cases, which encourages the formulation of a community support system-based health care for children. The aforementioned problem may be included in the governmental agenda, if it fulfills at list there three requirements, as stated by Cobb and Elderr [34]:

a. This issue obtained an extensive attention, or at least, it had caused the society’s awareness. In general, all children require protection from the parents, the society, and the government. However, in some cases, children require special protection. The problem faced by the children is the violation of children’s rights carried out by other people, whether by adults or by peers, whether the violators are close to them or not [35].
b. There is an extensive perception or perspective of the public that some actions are required to solve that problem. An effective child protection system requires interrelated components. These components include the health care on the welfare system for the children and the family, and the mechanism to encourage the right behaviors of the society. Apart from that, there needs to be a supporting legal and policy framework and also the information and data system on child protection [36].

c. There is the mutual perception of the society that this problem is the rightful obligation and responsibility of the government to resolve [37]. Because of that, the government needs to formulate a child protection policy which pro-actively involves all components of the society as a part of the issued public policies.

The policy proposed in this research is one which is analyzed using the fishbone model which sequentially helps to explain a visual list which is arranged structurally to illustrate the various causes which influence the process by separating and connecting one cause with another (Figure 3). Every influence will be arranged based on its causes, and it is aimed to group some causes categorically. The identification process is carried out by finding the root causes which influence the legal protection of children as violence victims in the COVID-19 pandemic era which is not yet optimum, using these following indicators: (1) Policies; (2) regulations; (3) family; (4) education institutions; and (5) the health institution which are visualized as the small bones. Meanwhile, the large bone is the analysis results of the root problems from these five indicators, which is the counseling and health-care protection for children during the COVID-19 pandemic era which is not yet optimum. This instrument may be used by the governmental institutions to identify and to explore the causes of the problem or to look for the factors which may be directed to a solution or an improvement. If the “problem” and the “cause” are found for sure, thus the solution and the steps of improvement will be easily carried out. This is the fishbone diagram on the causes, impacts, and also solution.

Based on the fishbone diagram above, it can be concluded that the government is still not yet optimum in carrying out counseling and health care for children as violence victims during the COVID-19 pandemic era. This is due the lack of the facility, medical staff, and psychiatric to fulfill this concept and its need the community support system, Apart from that, there is the family condition which has minimum knowledge on raising a child and the low socioeconomic conditions which influence the protection of children healing physically and mentally as violence victims in the COVID-19 pandemic era to not yet be optimum. The community support system-based child protection policy formulation arrives as a solution which involves the community organizations and the parties which have awareness on children’s issues to come together and resolve these issues during the COVID-19 pandemic. The efforts which may be taken include by increasing the awareness on child protection to all elements of the society, by increasing the cooperation with other parties, and by optimizing the socialization of activities which are related to children’s issues, in the sectors of child protection, health, education, and also child participation.
Conclusion

The counseling and health-care protection toward children during the COVID-19 pandemic is based on the Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection. The child health rights protection provided by the government is carried out through all activities which guarantee and protect the children’s health rights so that they may live, grow, develop, and participate optimally according to the humane dignity. However, in the implementation level, on 2020, there had been an increase of the violence cases toward children in the family and education clusters. This cannot be separated from the COVID-19 pandemic which has now impacted the increase of crime around the household and children.

The protection policy toward counseling and health-care children as violence victims in the COVID-19 pandemic era does not run optimally. Because of that, the community support system-based child health rights protection policy formulation arrives as a solution which involves the community organizations and the parties which have awareness on children’s issues to come together and resolve these issues during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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