

Education strategies to prevent child abuse in Aceh, Indonesia: Women and Child Empowerment Center and Protection Unit



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Abstract This study seeks strategies to educate and prevent child abuse in Aceh. The research was a qualitative study with thirty purposively selected subjects who were officers at the Integrated Service Center for Women and Child Empowerment (P2TP2A) and the Technical Implementing Unit-Protection of Women and Children (UPTD-PPA) in Aceh province. Data were collected via interviews, observation, and documentation. There were three stages of data analysis, i.e., organizing, summarizing, and interpreting. The study discovered that implementing Sharia and Aceh Qanun supported the role of P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA in protecting and preventing child abuse. The P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA have socialized the Qanun on child protection to the community by collaborating with educational institutions in Aceh, organizing parenting training for parents, and developing self-protection skills for children. Qanun applications on child protection prioritize humanist and Islamic principles. Child abuse in Aceh varied, including psychological and physical abuse. Internal and external factors, such as mobile phones as a technology media, parenting, economy, broken home, and lack of religious education, caused child abuse. P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA experienced problems carrying out their duties due to the community's close-mindedness and lack of trust in both institutions. Moreover, the facilities and child psychologists were still limited. However, P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA have carried out their duties effectively.

Keywords: education strategies, qanun implementation, violence, protection, prevention constraints

1. Introduction

Children are the most beautiful gift and mandate from Allah Almighty to parents. Parents highly anticipate the existence and birth of a child to complement family happiness because it feels lonely and less beautiful without children. Law Number 35 of 2014 defines a child as someone under 18 years old, including unborn babies.

Children need guidance and protection because their understanding and perception of the life facts remain minimal. Adults and parents are supposed to protect children; however, some abuse the children (Krisna et al 2021; Nashriyah et al 2021).

Acts of violence against children are a legal event that frequently occurs in Aceh, either in families, communities, or educational institutions (Ilham et al 2023; Kasim et al 2022; Sarong 2019). A study found that some children in Aceh experience physical and psychological abuse (Puteh et al 2023). In 2019, there were 1,044 cases of violence against children and women (Muhammad 2023). Meanwhile, the Aceh UPTD-PPA data showed 671 child abuse cases in 2020.

Furthermore, sexual violence still occurs in Aceh. In 2021, a 14-year-old child was raped by her stepfather fifteen times. In another case, a 15-year-old girl was held in a cafe and gang-raped by fourteen men. In addition, twenty students were sexually harassed by their teachers from 2021 to March 2023 (Zulkarnaini 2023).

Ideally, these cases do not occur in the jurisdiction of the Aceh government because the province has implemented Qanun Number 11 of 2018 concerning child protection; however, there are still many cases in Aceh found based on the data provided. Due to the issue, researchers are interested in conducting an in-depth study on optimizing the role of P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA, as well as exploring the factors, educational strategies, and obstacles in preventing violence against children in Aceh.

2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative method. It intends to understand the phenomenon experienced by research subjects, for example, behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, and many more (Creswell 2014; Moleong 2019). This study was conducted in three regencies and cities in Aceh province: Benar Meriah, North Aceh, and Banda Aceh. There were thirty research subjects, including ten officers from the Benar Meriah P2TP2A, ten from the North Aceh P2TP2A, and ten from the



Aceh Provincial UPTD-PPA. Subjects were selected using a purposive technique (Arikunto 2003). The consideration was that the subjects understood the field situation related to child abuse cases; therefore, they could provide correct data for the study.

There were three data analysis stages: organizing, summarizing, and interpreting. Data were collected by interview, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with officers at P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA regarding education and protection strategies, as well as child abuse cases. Observations were made on the protection and abuse prevention carried out by P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA. Meanwhile, written and image documentation was used as supporting data related to the Aceh Qanun implementation, education strategies, as well as protection and prevention of child abuse.

3. Results

Aceh is one of the provinces in Indonesia with special autonomy status in Sharia implementation. The Aceh government implements the Islamic Sharia system, including child protection, through Qanun Number 11 of 2008. The Aceh government has formed P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA institutions whose duties are to protect, prevent, and assist children who experience violence in Aceh.

Implementing Sharia and Aceh Qanun have optimized the role of P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA in protecting and preventing child abuse in Aceh. These institutions have taken steps to prevent violence against children through strategies such as socialization of the Qanuns, working with schools, madrasas, and dayahs (Islamic Traditional Institutions) in Aceh, providing proper and Islamic parenting training to parents, as well as developing self-protection skills for Acehnese children. However, child abuse cases still happen in Aceh due to internal and external factors, including poverty, improper parenting, and using sophisticated mobile phone technology among children, which lacks parental supervision.

4. Discussion

4.1. The Roles of P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA on Child Protection in Aceh

P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA, formal government institutions in all regions of Indonesia, provide protection and prevent violence against children (Salami et al 2020). In Aceh, both institutions have strong support from the Aceh provincial government through Qanun Number 11 of 2008 concerning child protection. Anyway, there was KPPAA (Acehnese Children Protection and Supervising Commission), the only board of children protection, in Aceh was disbanded by the Governor of Aceh, Nova Iriansyah, on 22 February 2022 at the insistence of several people from DP3A (Aceh Women's Empowerment and Children Protection Office). They considered the existence of KPPAA are overlapping with P2TP2A and DP3A.

P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA in Aceh assist child victims of violence, either sexual violence or other forms of violence. Optimizing the role of these institutions aims to prevent cases of child abuse in Aceh. The existence of the institutions has made it easy for Acehnese people to report cases of child abuse and receive legal justice.

P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA in Aceh also assist in the judicial process to obtain fair legal treatment. In addition, psychological assistance for children is also carried out intensively by psychologists from both institutions. P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA also provide educational assistance to children who experience violence so that children can access the right to education. Optimizing the role of P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA is a form of protection for children in the context of implementing Sharia and the Aceh Qanun.

4.2. Educational Strategies to Prevent Child Abuse in Aceh

P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA in Aceh carried out four educational strategies to protect and prevent child abuse, as presented in Figure 1.

The Sharia application in Aceh has implications for various aspects of life in Aceh, particularly in child protection (Nasution et al 2022). Therefore, the Aceh government has given authority to P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA to optimize their roles following Qanun Number 11 of 2008 concerning child protection.

Research data shows that P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA have made efforts to prevent violence against children by socializing the child protection Qanun to the people of Aceh and educational institutions to improve their knowledge in protecting and preventing child abuse.

P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA cooperate with educational institutions, such as schools, madrasas, and dayahs, to prevent violence against students in the educational setting. P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA actively conduct monitoring to ensure that the education process in Aceh takes place humanely and prohibits violent approaches. It follows the Islamic teaching, *rahmatan lil'alam* (mercy for all of the universe).

P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA also provide Sharia-based parenting training to the people of Aceh. Parents are expected to treat children politely and avoid violence so children can grow and develop to reach their future. Parents are also responsible for providing education to children.

Self-protection skills for children are the primary key to preventing violence. Children are taught to recognize situations with potential violence or harassment, immediately avoid them, and seek protection (Juarni et al 2020). Training on self-

protection skills for children is also part of P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA's strategy to prevent violence against children. Both institutions carry out this activity at schools and madrasas in Aceh routinely.

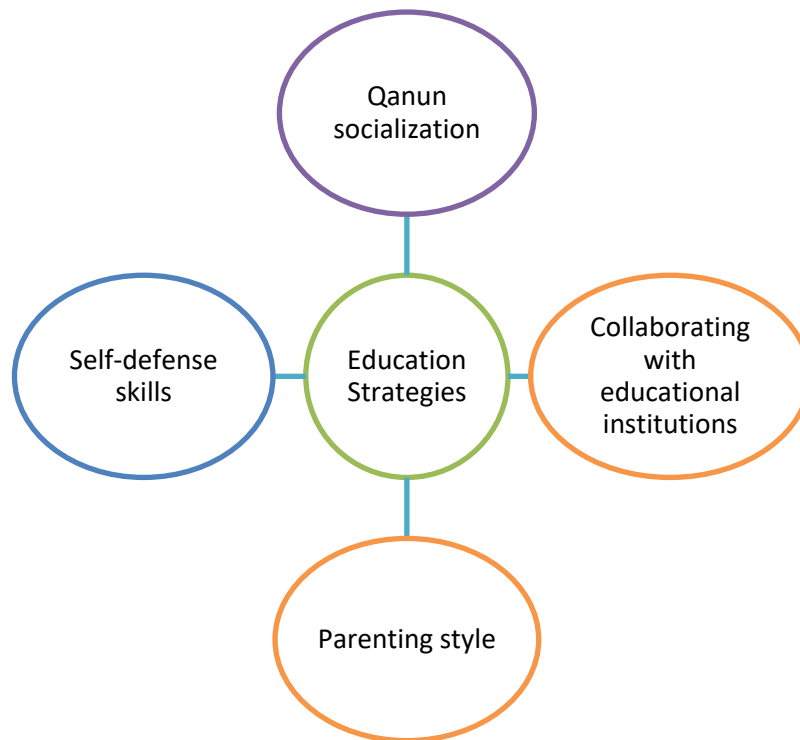


Figure 1 Educational Strategy of P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA.

4.3. Implementation of the Child Protection Qanun in Aceh

As a regional government, Aceh has a distinctive character with a solid Islamic culture; therefore, it received special privileges and autonomy from the Indonesian government (Sulaiman, 2018). Based on the special autonomy, the Aceh provincial government is given the authority to regulate and manage its government based on Islamic law, including implementing Qanun Number 11 of 2008 concerning child protection, a series of Sharia implementations in Aceh.

In carrying out their roles and duties, P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA refer to the following principles set out in Article 2 of the Qanun:

- (1) Child protection is applied by considering the community's religion, customs, and socio-cultural aspects by prioritizing the basic principles of children's rights.
- (2) As referred to in paragraph (1), the basic principles of children's rights include non-discrimination, the child's best interests, the right to live, survival and development, and respect for children's opinions.

Child protection aims to guarantee the fulfillment of children's rights to live, grow, develop, and participate optimally following human dignity and to receive protection from exploitation, violence, and discrimination to realize quality, noble, and prosperous children. This statement is based on the Aceh Qanun provisions. Based on the research data, implementing the Aceh Qanun has positive implications for child protection in Aceh and the optimization of P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA's role in providing assistance and preventing violence against children in Aceh.

4.4. Child Abuse in Aceh

The study shows that violence against children in Aceh, which is still happening, it is caused by internal and external factors. Internal factors come from children who have experienced violence (Hasritawati et al 2022). Many child abuse cases in Aceh were not revealed because children lack the awareness to disclose them to their parents or closest person. As a result, the perpetrators repeatedly commit the violence. Therefore, the socialization of the Aceh Qanun to provide anti-violence education must be carried out continuously.

Meanwhile, various external factors cause child abuse in Aceh. The sophisticated mobile phone technology equipped with various applications provides benefits; however, it impacts the children's moral degradation, causing various forms of violence, such as bullying friends at school, child rape, and sexual harassment via mobile phones. Many such cases were processed at P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA. Another factor is broken home issues. Some children become targets of violence because their parents are not harmonious; thus, they become victims and are ostracized. The next factor is inappropriate parenting style and harsh attitude to children. Economic condition is also a main factor why it is occurring. Some Acehnese still lives under

the poverty line; as a result, some children do not go to school and have to work as laborers to help their parents to earn. Furthermore, education is also a factor. Several cases handled by P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA in Aceh were caused by uneducated perpetrators who do not understand Islamic law and child protection regulations. Based on the P2TP2A and Aceh UPTD-PPA data, there are numerous child abuse cases. Table 1 presents the data.

Table 1 Child abuse cases in Aceh.

No	Forms of Child Abuse	Year 2021	Year 2022 (January-October)	Year 2023 (January-February)
1	Psychological Abuse	143	106	40
2	Physical Abuse	108	103	30
3	Sexual Harassment	131	125	44
4	Sexual (Incest)	8	8	0
5	Sodomy	4	8	3
6	Trafficking	1	0	0
7	Abandonment	81	25	9
8	Economic Exploitation	0	2	0
9	Sexual Exploitation	1	0	1
10	Domestic Violence	136	104	15
11	Rape	100	110	35
12	Children facing the law	33	16	20
13	Child Custody	0	2	1
13	Other Forms	70	14	3
Total		816	623	201

Source: Aceh UPTD-PPA, 2022 and 2023.

Until recently, P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA have made every effort to optimally carry out the roles and duties of protecting and preventing violence against children as stipulated by the Aceh Qanun. The table shows that child abuse cases in Aceh have decreased from 816 cases in 2021, 623 cases in 2022, and 201 cases between January and February of 2023.

4.5. The constraints on preventing child abuse in Aceh

The Aceh provincial government has formally delegated child protection authority to P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA, supported by implementing Islamic law and Qanun Number 11 of 2008 concerning child protection (Muhammad, 2020). However, the study found that P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA were still experiencing problems in protecting and preventing violence against children in Aceh.

One of the obstacles is that the Acehnese people's mindset is still not open enough to provide information and reports to P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA when there are cases of child abuse, such as sexual harassment. They perceive that reporting such cases is a disgrace to the family, so they prefer not to report them. Furthermore, some child abuse cases in Aceh were resolved amicably, which can potentially be unfair to children.

Another obstacle faced by P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA in Aceh is the limited number of facilities and professional resources, such as psychologists and pediatricians; at the same time, many child abuse cases need to be resolved. However, P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA in Aceh have carried out their duties well so far.

5. Final Considerations

Applying Islamic law in the province of Aceh has encouraged the government to implement Qanun Number 11 of 2008 to protect Acehnese children as a realization of a Sharia-based government system. Through P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA, the Aceh provincial government has been taking strategic approaches through the socialization of the Aceh Qanun, cooperation with educational institutions, workshops on Islamic parenting, and training children on self-protection skills. Implementing the Aceh Qanun and optimizing the role of P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA have contributed positively to preventing child violence in Aceh. Nonetheless, P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA still experience problems in carrying out their task of preventing child abuse in Aceh because the community is not open to providing information, some people do not understand the contents of the Qanun, and the facilities, as well as the number of psychologists and pediatricians in P2TP2A and UPTD-PPA, is still limited.

Ethical Considerations

The authors state that every respondent concurred with this research.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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