

GENDER INEQUALITY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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Abstract

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign serves as a critical moment to raise awareness about violence against women. This article explores the connection between gender inequality and violence against women, as well as measures to address the issue. Data from the National Commission on Violence Against Women, the Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children (SIMFONI-PPA), and the 2024 National Women's Life Experience Survey (SPHPN) reveal high incidences of violence, particularly in domestic settings, with sexual, physical, and psychological violence being the most common forms. The analysis highlights that gender inequality, rooted in patriarchal culture, disparities in education, and weak law enforcement, are key contributors to violence against women. Comprehensive solutions are essential, including enhancing gender education, empowering women, strengthening legal frameworks, and providing robust victim support services. The DPR RI, particularly Commission VIII and Commission III, need to ensure adequate budget allocations, effective oversight of law implementation, and strict law enforcement. Collaboration among the DPR RI, the government, and civil society is crucial to achieving a more equal and violence-free society.

Introduction

Since 2001, the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign has been organized in Indonesia by the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) to address and eliminate violence against

women (Komnas Perempuan, 2024). Held annually, the campaign begins on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and concludes on December 10, International Human Rights Day.

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This year, the global campaign carries the theme “UNiTE to End Violence against Women,” while Indonesia has chosen the theme “Protect All, Fulfill Victims’ Rights, End Violence against Women.” This national theme emphasizes the importance of protecting women, upholding victims’ rights, and ending gender-based violence (Hutasoit, 2024).

The phenomenon of violence against women persists across all backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses, presenting a complex social issue influenced by various factors (Kumari et al., 2009). One primary contributing factor is gender inequality, which this article examines in detail, along with strategies to address and mitigate its impact.

Cases of Violence Against Women

Violence against women is one of the most pervasive human rights violations, depriving women of equality, security, dignity, and fundamental rights (Kumari et al., 2009). In Indonesia, violence against women remains a pressing issue that occurs throughout the year.

According to the 2024 Annual Report of the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Catahu), there were 289,111 reported cases of violence against women in 2023. The incidents occurred in various locations, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Further data from SIMFONI-PPA, managed by the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection (Kemen PPPA), recorded 25,375 violence cases throughout 2024 (January 1 to December 10). Among these, female victims ac-

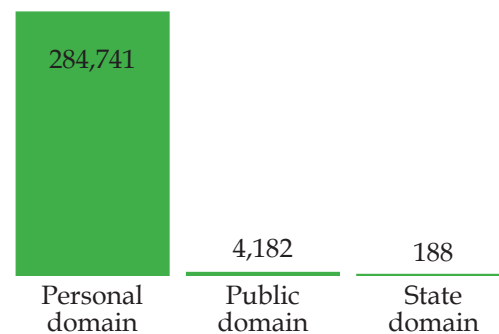


Figure 1. Cases of Violence Against Women in 2023

Source: Komnas Perempuan Press Release, November 25, 2024.

counted for 21,990 cases, far exceeding the 5,540 cases involving male victims. The data also revealed that households were the most common setting for violence, with 13,307 reported cases. The most frequent types of violence included sexual violence (10,475 cases), physical violence (6,420 cases), and psychological violence (6,292 cases) (Kemen PPPA, 2024).

The 2024 National Women’s Life Experience Survey (SPHPN), conducted by the Kemen PPPA, the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), and the Demographic Institute (FEB LD UI), revealed that one in four women aged 15–64 years has experienced physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lives. Additionally, one in five women in the same age group reported being victims of domestic violence (KDRT) within the past year.

The survey categorized violence into six types, with the highest prevalence being activity restrictions (21.5 percent), followed by economic violence (5.3 percent), emotional violence (4.1 percent), physical and sexual violence (3.0 percent), sexual violence (1.9 percent), and physical violence (1.8

percent). Most perpetrators were men with close relationships to the victims, such as husbands or boy-friends.

Gender Inequality

Socio-cultural factors are the primary drivers of violence against women, as evidenced by data from the Rifka Annisa Women’s Crisis Center. These factors are rooted in unequal power relations between men and women (Farid, 2019). Gender inequality creates a power hierarchy that positions women as subordinate to men, both in domestic and public spheres. A deeply entrenched patriarchal culture perpetuates male dominance, viewing women as the weaker party, thereby making them more vulnerable to violence.

The lack of education and public awareness about women’s rights and the consequences of gender-based violence further reinforces a permissive attitude toward such acts. In response, UN Women (2021), in its report *Awareness Raising to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls*, underscores the need for comprehensive public awareness campaigns. These initiatives should include educational programs aimed at transforming social norms, increasing understanding of women’s rights, and promoting effective actions to prevent violence against women.

Weak law enforcement against perpetrators exacerbates the issue. A study by the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK), titled *Implementation of Law Number 12 of 2022 on Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence in the Protection of Witnesses and Victims*, reveals

that many cases of violence against women are resolved outside formal judicial processes. Customary resolution mechanisms, such as monetary compensation to the victim’s family, are often employed in lieu of proper legal action, undermining justice and accountability (LPSK, 2024).

Efforts to Eliminate Violence Against Women

Addressing violence against women rooted in gender inequality requires comprehensive actions involving individuals, communities, and state institutions. Beyond the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign, empowering women through education and skills training is crucial to strengthening their position in society. Expanding women’s access to formal education and vocational programs can create equal opportunities across economic and social sectors, reducing economic dependency—a common factor contributing to violence. Furthermore, education equips women to understand and advocate for their rights.

Strengthening policies and law enforcement is equally vital in preventing and addressing violence against women. Indonesia has established legal frameworks such as Law Number 23 of 2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence (PKDRT Law) and Law Number 12 of 2022 on Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence (TPKS Law). However, effective implementation requires enhancing the capacity of legal institutions to handle cases swiftly and fairly. According to LPSK (2024), some cases of sexual violence remain inadequately addressed due

to non-compliance with the requirements outlined in Article 21 of the TPKS Law. For instance, some cases are handled by local police stations unequipped to manage sexual violence cases involving women and children. Collaboration among the government, non-governmental organizations, communities, and the private sector is essential to ensure consistent victim support, protection, and recovery efforts.

Improving support services for victims is another critical component. Data from the National Commission on Violence Against Women (2024) reveals that Regional Technical Implementation Units for the Protection of Women and Children (UPTD PPA) face significant challenges, particularly in access and infrastructure. As of June 2024, only 333 UPTD PPA units exist across Indonesia's 514 districts/cities. Furthermore, the availability of professional staff, including counselors, clinical psychologists, social workers, and legal advisors, remains insufficient.

The government needs to allocate adequate budgets for programs aimed at preventing violence, protecting victims, and strengthening gender-responsive policies. These efforts are essential for enhancing services, conducting educational campaigns, and minimizing violence against women. Through these actions, Indonesia can move toward creating a more equitable and just society.

Violence against women remains prevalent, particularly within households. Gender inequality, rooted in a deep-seated patriarchal culture, lack of public awareness, and weak law enforcement, per-

petuates these acts of violence. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that includes raising awareness, empowering women, and strengthening legal frameworks and victim support services.

Commission VIII of DPR RI plays a crucial role in ensuring adequate budget allocations for programs aimed at prevention, empowerment, victim protection, and recovery. Additionally, through its oversight function, Commission VIII needs to ensure that policies and programs are effectively implemented and achieve their intended targets.

Collaboration among DPR RI, the government—particularly Kemen PPPA—and the community is essential to tackling the root causes of violence against women, especially gender inequality and patriarchal cultural norms. Furthermore, DPR RI, through Commission VIII and Commission III, should seek detailed explanations from the government regarding the implementation of the Domestic Violence Law (PKDRT Law) and the Sexual Violence Law (TPKS Law). By addressing these challenges collaboratively, Indonesia can move closer to creating a society that is equitable, inclusive, and free from violence against women.

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