



## Criminological Analysis of Child Sexual Violence in the Family: An Indonesian Case Study Based on Routine Activity Theory

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### Article Process Abstract

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This research aims to analyze the phenomenon of sexual violence against children committed by individuals from the immediate environment, particularly within the family, using a criminological approach through Routine Activity Theory (RAT). This approach focuses on understanding how criminal opportunities are shaped by the interaction between motivated offenders, vulnerable targets, and the absence of effective guardianship. The method employed is a literature review, utilizing secondary data such as laws and regulations, official documents, state agency reports, and relevant academic literature. The analytical technique applied is descriptive-qualitative and prescriptive analysis, aiming to identify criminogenic factors and power dynamics that enable sexual violence to occur within private spheres. The findings indicate that perpetrators typically possess emotional and structural access to victims and exploit relational inequalities to commit acts of sexual abuse. Weak social control and limited public literacy regarding child protection further increase the opportunity for such crimes to take place. Therefore, enhancing the capacity of community-based supervision and strengthening the legal protection system are essential for effective prevention. This study is significant as it offers a criminological lens that moves beyond psychological or juridical approaches by integrating Routine Activity Theory to explain the structural conditions that facilitate child sexual abuse, especially within familial contexts in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Child Sexual Abuse, Criminology, Routine Activity Theory

### I. Introduction

Humans are social creatures who cannot live alone. Since birth, humans have interacted with other people in an environment called society. In social life, each individual has different needs and interests. Therefore, rules in the form of rules or norms are needed to create an orderly and harmonious life. However, in reality, many norms are no longer obeyed, triggering various violations. To maintain social order, society requires legal sanctions as a means of regulating human behavior. As time goes by, violations of norms, especially legal norms, are increasingly common. This deviation from legal norms is known as crime. Therefore, in order to realize a

peaceful, serene, and secure society, a system of rules is needed that binds every member of society in order to prevent crime and maintain public order.<sup>1</sup>

Crime is a part of social life that cannot be separated from daily human activities. In the perspective of criminology, crime can occur due to various factors, one of which is environmental factors. Associations in a bad environment can shape negative traits and behaviors, especially if individuals have low access to education and a social environment that is not based on moral and religious values. Criminology as a science that studies crime aims to prevent criminal acts. In its study, criminology examines all forms of crime regulated in criminal law with a cause-and-effect or causality approach.<sup>2</sup> This approach seeks to interpret social facts to understand the causes of crime, both individual and broader scale. In the perspective of criminology, crime itself is part of social change that continues to develop along with the times. The forms of crime that occur are increasingly diverse, such as fraud, murder, rape, robbery, and corruption. In addition, victims of crime do not only come from adults, but also children, who are increasingly vulnerable to various criminal acts in this modern era.<sup>3</sup>

Cases of sexual violence against children have increased significantly in recent years, both in terms of number and severity. Over time, these acts of violence continue to occur as more cases are revealed. More concerning, the majority of perpetrators come from the child's closest environment, such as their family, school, and social groups.<sup>4</sup> Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) shows that sexual violence against children is the type of child protection case with the highest rate in the last four years. In 2020, there were 419 cases of sexual violence against children, not including online-based crimes. This figure jumped sharply in 2021 with 859 reported cases. Although there was a decrease to 746 cases in 2022, the number is still relatively high compared to other child protection cases. The downward trend continued in 2023 with 252 cases, but in 2024 this figure increased slightly to 265 cases. This data indicates that sexual violence against children remains a serious problem that requires more effective and sustainable attention and protection efforts.<sup>5</sup>

Quoted from Antaranews.com in 2019, the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK) revealed that the majority of perpetrators of sexual violence against children come from the victim's immediate environment. Based on the reports received, 80.23 percent of the perpetrators were individuals known to the victims, while the remaining 19.77 percent were unknown people. Even more worrying, of this percentage, 32 percent of the perpetrators came from the victim's immediate family, such as biological father, stepfather, grandfather, brother, or sister. This condition is a serious concern for LPSK, considering that these crimes are committed by people who are supposed to provide protection.

According to LPSK Deputy Chair, Edwin Partogi Pasaribu, various factors can trigger sexual violence against children, including low economic conditions, sexual perversion, and exposure to pornographic videos. In families with economic limitations, private space is often not available, so family members are mixed in one room which can trigger a situation that is not conducive. Edwin also highlighted the increasing trend of cases of sexual violence against

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<sup>1</sup> Hudi Yusuf, "Tinjauan Kriminologi Terhadap Kejahatan Kekerasan Seksual Pada Anak-Anak Criminological Review Of Sexual Violent Crimes Against" (2024): 2016–2021.

<sup>2</sup> Chopin, J., & Beauregard, E. (2023). Understanding the sexual victimization of child and elder victims under the lens of interactional victimology: A routine activities theory approach. *Justice Quarterly*, 40(6), 885-907.

<sup>3</sup> Kadek Hendra Wirawan, I Wayan Landrawan, and Si Ngurah Ardhyia, "Tinjauan Kriminologi Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Anak Di Kabupaten Buleleng," *Jurnal Media Komunikasi Pendidikan Panjasila dan Kewarganegaraan* 1, no. 1 (2022).

<sup>4</sup> Yayat Supriatna, Sartika Dewi, and Muhamad Abas, "Kasus Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Anak Dibawah Umur Ditinjau Dalam Perspektif Undang-Undang Perlindungan Anak (Studi Kasus Putusan Nomor 10/Pid.Sus-Anak/2022/PN.Kwg)," *UNES Journal of Swara Justitia* 8, no. 2 (2024), <https://swarajustisia.unespada.ac.id/index.php/UJSJ/article/view/514/376>.

<sup>5</sup> (KPAI Data Bank 2021)

children reported to LPSK, which has continued to increase by 100 percent every year since 2016. In fact, in 2019, the number of reports was higher than the previous year.<sup>6</sup>

Protection of children from sexual violence is a form of state legal response to sexual crimes. In a criminological approach, sexual violence against children is not only seen as a violation of the law, but also as a manifestation of power relations, abuse of authority, and a position of vulnerability that is structurally owned by the victim. Normatively, regulations regarding perpetrators of sexual violence against children have been regulated in various legal instruments in Indonesia. Law No. 12 of 2022 on the Crime of Sexual Violence classifies various forms of sexual violence, ranging from rape, obscene acts, sexual intercourse with children, sexual exploitation, child pornography, to domestic sexual violence. This law also includes non-physical forms of sexual violence and includes derivative crimes such as money laundering derived from sexual violence crimes.

From the perspective of Routine Activity Theory developed by Cohen and Felson (1979), crime occurs when three main elements are present simultaneously:<sup>7</sup> In the context of child sexual abuse, children's daily routines that are not accompanied by effective supervision, such as in educational or domestic settings, create a criminogenic situation. The presence of perpetrators with access to power or authority-such as teachers, caregivers, or even family members-increases the risk of crime when social controls are weak or absent. Therefore, the establishment of strict surveillance systems and the enhancement of institutional safeguards are crucial for prevention.<sup>8</sup>

Law No. 23/2002 on Child Protection, as amended by Law No. 35/2014, affirms that every child has the right to live, grow, develop, and obtain protection from all forms of violence and discrimination (Article 4). The state, family, and community are obliged to provide comprehensive protection, including in situations where children are sexually exploited or become victims of trafficking and violence (Article 59).<sup>9</sup>

Criminal sanctions against perpetrators are explicitly described in articles such as Articles 81, 82, and 88, with prison sentences ranging from 3 to 15 years, and fines of up to one billion rupiah. This approach reflects a law enforcement strategy that is not only retributive but also preventive, emphasizing deterrent effects and protection of vulnerable groups. In addition, Law No. 35/2014 pays special attention to the educational environment, through Article 9A and Article 54, which require the protection of children from sexual violence and crimes by educators, education personnel, and other students. This effort is in line with Routine Activity Theory, which states that increasing formal and informal supervision of children's routine activities can reduce opportunities for perpetrators to commit criminal acts.<sup>10</sup>

Previously, research on sexual violence against children has been studied from various aspects. Such as research conducted by Roy Syahputra in his research entitled "Countermeasures against Child Sexual Violence in Review of the Child Protection Law" but his research focuses on a juridical review of the child protection law itself. Then the discussion of sexual violence against children has also been reviewed in empirical research conducted by Argo Putra Setyawan and Nadia Utami Lestari with the research title "Analysis of Routine Activity Theory on the Vulnerability of Children who are Victims of Sexual Violence" but this research focuses on how the chances of sexual violence can be greater when viewed from the perspective of routine activity theory. Then research on sexual violence against children was also conducted by Hadi Machmud

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<sup>6</sup> Antara Kantor Berita Indonesia Pamela Sakina and Antara Kantor Berita Indonesia Eddy K Sinoel, "LPSK Nyatakan Pelaku Kekerasan Seksual Anak 80 Persen Dikenal Korban," *Antara Kantor Berita Indonesia*, July 24, 2019, <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/974290/lpsk-nyatakan-pelaku-kekerasan-seksual-anak-80-persen-dikenal-korban>.

<sup>7</sup> Yusnarida Eka Nizmi, "Analisa Routine Activity Theory Dalam Perdagangan Seks Di Thailand, China Dan Vietnam," *Journal Unair* (2011): 186–200, <https://journal.unair.ac.id/download-fullpapers-jgs9b345b5c312full.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Argo Putra Setyawan and Nadia Utami Larasati, "Analisis Teori Aktivitas Rutin Terhadap Kerentanan Anak Yang Menjadi Korban Kekerasan Seksual," *Deviance Journal Kriminologi* 5, no. 2 (2021), <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/5c5c/3a266016d97c3361c77762b3a80c1a374a52.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Supriatna, Dewi, and Abas, "Kasus Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Anak Dibawah Umur Ditinjau Dalam Perspektif Undang-Undang Perlindungan Anak (Studi Kasus Putusan Nomor 10/Pid.Sus-Anak/2022/PN.Kwg)."

<sup>10</sup> Nizmi, "Analisa Routine Activity Theory Dalam Perdagangan Seks Di Thailand, China Dan Vietnam."

regarding the Impact of Mahram's Inces on Children (Study of Sexual Violence on Children) in which the author emphasizes the impact of sexual violence committed by Mahram where the role of mahram should be as a protector for children but in this case it becomes the perpetrator of sexual violence itself. With this in mind, the author intends to examine sexual violence against children through the perspective of criminology, especially from the perspective of routine activity theory.

This research was analyzed using Routine Activity Theory, which explains that the opportunities available in an environment can indirectly increase a person's risk of becoming a victim of crime. This theory highlights how structural conditions and situations can increase a person's vulnerability to crime. Thus, the high crime rate is not solely due to the increase in the number of criminals, but because of the more open opportunities for them to commit criminal acts.<sup>11</sup>

According to Cohen and Felson, there are three main factors that influence crime rates based on changes in a person's routine activity patterns. First, motivated offenders, which are individuals or groups who not only have the ability to commit crimes, but also have the intention and strategy to do so. Second, suitable targets, namely individuals who have the potential to become victims due to their vulnerability. This vulnerability can be influenced by routine activity patterns, habits, location, environmental conditions, lifestyle, and social interactions that allow exploitation by the perpetrator. Third, the absence of capable guardians, which refers to the lack of protection or supervision that can prevent crime. This can include supervision from parents, neighbors, as well as other prevention strategies such as the use of security technology. By understanding how these factors contribute to crime, effective prevention strategies can be implemented, including increasing surveillance, educating the public about the risks of crime, and strengthening protections for individuals who are vulnerable to crime.<sup>12</sup>

Based on the above explanation, this research offers a novelty by examining sexual violence against children through a criminological approach focused on Routine Activity Theory – an analytical lens that has not been extensively explored in the context of child sexual abuse within close environments. This approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of the contributing factors to crime, not only from the offender's side but also by analyzing the vulnerability of the victim and the absence of effective guardianship as key elements that create criminogenic conditions. The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute both theoretically and practically to efforts in preventing sexual violence against children by strengthening surveillance systems, raising public awareness, and formulating child protection policies that are more responsive to children's routine activities and social interactions in everyday life.

## II. Research Problems

Based on the background described above, this study focuses on two main problems related to sexual violence against children. The first concerns the factors and conditions that cause children to become vulnerable targets or victims of such crimes. This includes examining the psychological, social, familial, and environmental aspects that increase a child's risk of exploitation and abuse. The second problem lies in exploring the efforts that can be made to address and prevent cases of sexual violence against children. This involves analyzing existing legal frameworks, preventive strategies, community roles, and mechanisms for protection and rehabilitation to ensure children's safety and well-being.

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<sup>11</sup> Leclerc, B., Chiu, Y. N., & Cale, J. (2016). Sexual violence and abuse against children: A first review through the lens of environmental criminology. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 60(7), 743-765.  
McKillop, N., Brown, S., Wortley, R., & Smallbone, S. (2015). How victim age affects the context and timing of child sexual abuse: Applying the routine activities approach to the first sexual abuse incident. *Crime science*, 4(1), 17.

<sup>12</sup> Setyawan and Larasati, "Analisis Teori Aktivitas Rutin Terhadap Kerentanan Anak Yang Menjadi Korban Kekerasan Seksual."

### **III. Research Methods**

This research uses a literature review approach that focuses on examining secondary data to understand and analyze the phenomenon of sexual violence against children committed by individuals from the immediate environment, especially families. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to examine in depth various sources of information that are already available and relevant, such as laws and regulations, scientific journals, state institution reports, online media news, and related legal and policy documents. The main legal sources used include Law No. 23/2002 on Child Protection in conjunction with Law No. 35/2014, Law No. 12/2002 on Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence (TPKS Law), as well as provisions in the Criminal Code (KUHP) relevant to child protection. In addition, statistical data from institutions such as KPAI, LPSK, and Simfoni-PPA were also used to strengthen the empirical picture. The data collection technique was carried out by inventorying and classifying the documents according to their relevance to the research topic. A systematic literature search was conducted to identify patterns, trends and findings relating to the causative factors and characteristics of perpetrators of sexual violence against children in the domestic sphere.

The analysis techniques used were prescriptive and descriptive qualitative analysis, with the aim of describing phenomena based on criminological theory, particularly Routine Activity Theory. This analysis allows researchers to map the relationship between crime opportunities, power relations, and the weak social supervision system for children. From this process, it is hoped that a formulation can be obtained that can provide strategic direction in efforts to prevent and overcome sexual violence against children.

### **IV. Result and Discussion**

#### **1. Children as Vulnerable Targets: Opportunities and Factors Causing Sexual Violence**

Sexual violence against children can be analyzed through the Routine Activity Theory approach by Cohen & Felson in 1979, which emphasizes that crime occurs when three crucial elements meet in time and space, namely: motivated perpetrators, suitable targets, and the absence of capable guardians. In the context of child sexual abuse, their daily routines-whether at home, school, or in the community-often create a vulnerable situation when supervision from authorities who should be present is weak or ineffective. Children as a social group in a subordinate position have limitations in detecting and responding to potential threats. When the element of guarding is replaced by figures who have power relations, such as parents, educators, or other closest individuals, this situation creates criminogenic conditions that increase the chances of sexual violence.<sup>13</sup>

From a criminological perspective, perpetrators of sexual violence against children are often individuals who have emotional relationships or authority structures towards victims (for example; parents, grandparents, brothers/sisters, uncles/aunts etc.). This phenomenon reflects the dynamics of deviance in social structures and power relations, where perpetrators exploit their trust and dominant position to commit criminal acts. Factors that can contribute to the occurrence of sexual violence by a close person include abuse of authority, weak informal social control, unequal relationships between children and adults, and the existence of social norms that tend to cover up or tolerate deviant behavior in private spaces. Perpetrators take advantage of hierarchical relationships and emotional closeness to manipulate and silence victims, often through threats, psychological pressure, or normalization of predatory behavior. Therefore, the analysis of perpetrators is not only limited to individual psychopathological aspects, but must include structural and situational dimensions that facilitate criminal acts in domestic and institutional spaces.

Based on data from the Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children (Simfoni-PPA), which is managed by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

Child Protection (PPPA), noted that during the period January 1 to February 2, 2025, there were 1,062 cases of violence against women and children. Of the total report, sexual violence ranks highest with 663 cases, followed by physical violence with 561 cases, and psychological violence with 535 cases. When viewed by age group, the most victims came from the age range of 13 to 17 years, consisting of boys at 46.1 percent and girls at 29.1 percent. Meanwhile, the age group of 6 to 12 years also showed significant numbers, with the proportion of boys at 33.3 percent and girls at 18.1 percent. Interestingly, the majority of the victims recorded in this data are students, which indicates the high vulnerability of children in educational and social settings to various forms of violence, especially sexual violence.

Quoted from the news released by Kompas.id on February 3, 2025 written by Sonya Hellen Sinombor regarding a case of sexual violence that occurred in Ciledug, Tangerang City, Banten, involving 19 boys as victims and a Quran teacher with the initials W (40) as the perpetrator, reflects the complexity of cases of sexual violence against children in the context of power relations and social trust. Based on the Metro Jaya Regional Police and the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA) report released on January 31, 2025, it is known that this incident has been going on since 2017 and was only revealed after one of the victim's parents reported it. The modes used by the perpetrators include giving children access to electronic devices and Wi-Fi networks, as well as providing monetary rewards after committing acts of harassment.

Based on the results of research conducted by Hadi Machmud entitled "the impact of incest on children" describes data on cases of sexual violence against children by mahrams that occurred in the city of Kendari, South Sulawesi, taken from data from the Kendari City Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, which shows that cases of sexual violence against children by close relatives or biological families show a very concerning incest phenomenon. Some of the cases that occurred showed that the perpetrators, consisting of grandfathers, biological fathers, stepfathers, and uncles, committed acts of rape against girls who were still in elementary school age to adolescence. Victims between the ages of 6 and 13 are targeted because they are under the supervision of the perpetrators when their parents are working or not at home. The modus operandi of the perpetrators involves coercion, threats, and the use of drugs or sleeping pills to immobilize the victim. The impact of these crimes is very serious, ranging from physical injuries such as bleeding and infection, to severe psychological trauma, even causing pregnancy at an early age.<sup>14</sup>

In the Routine Activity Theory approach, crime can occur when there are three main elements that meet each other in the same space and time, namely: motivated offender, suitable or vulnerable target, and absence of capable guardians.<sup>15</sup> This case shows that the perpetrator had high motivation and opportunity to commit the crime, especially because of his presence in a social environment that provides moral legitimacy, namely as a religious figure. Children who become victims are in a vulnerable position, both in terms of age, social status, and psychology, and are accustomed to regular interaction with the perpetrator without strict supervision from parents or related institutions.

The unequal power relations between perpetrators and victims are crucial factors that facilitate sexual exploitation. The perpetrator's position as a respected Quranic teacher in the local community increases the opportunity for abuse of trust, where the perpetrator abuses his authority to gain control over children. Not only that, weak parental supervision and social institutions, as well as the assumption that religious environments are completely safe spaces, also contributed to the protracted nature of this case for more than five years. Thus, this case is

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Stadnicki, I., Corsini, M., & Szulkin, M. (2024). Application of criminology in urban ecology and evolution: Routine Activity Theory and field equipment disappearance dynamics. *Ecological Indicators*, 165, 112095. Li, J. C., Jia, C. X., & Mlyakado, B. P. (2024). Assessing online sexual exploitation among secondary school students in Tanzania from a routine activity theory perspective. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 147, 106597. Griffith, C. E., Tetzlaff-Bemiller, M., & Hunter, L. Y. (2023). Understanding the cyber-victimization of young people: A test of routine activities theory. *Telematics and Informatics Reports*, 9, 100042.

clear evidence that sexual crimes against children can occur even in spaces that are considered sacred or highly moral, if social supervision is weakened and power dynamics are not systematically criticized.

Perpetrators of sexual violence against children often show complex characteristics, which are not only influenced by personality factors but also by the surrounding social and relational context. In the case of sexual violence in Ciledug, the perpetrator W was a Quranic teacher who had a strategic position in the social structure of his community. This status provides moral legitimacy and symbolic authority that makes it easier for the perpetrator to build emotional closeness as well as dominance over the victim. This phenomenon is in line with the concept of "power and control" in criminological theory, emphasizing that sexual crimes often occur in unequal social relations, in which the perpetrator has the power to control the victim. In the case of sexual violence in Ciledug, the perpetrator W is a Quranic teacher who has a strategic position in the social structure of his community. This status provides moral legitimacy and symbolic authority that makes it easier for the perpetrator to build emotional closeness and dominance over the victim. This phenomenon is in line with the concept of "power and control" in criminological theory, emphasizing that sexual crimes often occur in unequal social relations, where perpetrators take advantage of structural and symbolic power to exploit weaker individuals.<sup>16</sup>

In general, perpetrators of sexual violence against children often do not show characteristics that are easily recognized by the naked eye. Many appear to be trusted, respected figures who have regular access to children-such as educators, religious leaders, or family members. In this case, grooming is a manipulative technique often used by perpetrators, which gradually builds a close relationship with the child to lower vigilance, normalize deviant interactions, and minimize resistance.<sup>17</sup> This mode is reinforced by the perpetrator's distorted mindset, such as feeling in control of the child's body or believing that their actions are not a crime. Perpetrators can also take advantage of lax parental supervision and the absence of early detection systems in the social environment, so that deviant behavior can continue for a long time without being detected.<sup>18</sup>

Sexual violence against children often does not occur in explicitly violent spaces, but through unequal and manipulative power relations mechanisms. In the case of the Quran teacher in Ciledug, the perpetrator used his religious authority and social status to build trust, not only with the children, but also with the victim's family. This kind of relationship creates emotional dependence and trust that can be easily abused. From a critical criminology perspective, sexual crimes like this are not simply the result of individual impulses, but rather a manifestation of a social structure that allows for systematic abuse of power.<sup>19</sup> This abuse of authority shows how social position can be a tool of covert criminalization. Perpetrators not only utilize formal power (religious authority), but also symbolic power such as personal charisma, social relations, and economic dependence or facilities (such as the provision of Wi-Fi, money, or gifts). Thus, power relations are not only the background of sexual violence, but also an effective instrument in subduing victim resistance and covering up the traces of crime in a sustainable manner.

Sexual crimes against children are often not only the result of the individual intentions of the perpetrator, but are also influenced by weak supervisory systems in the child's social environment. In many cases, including the case in Ciledug, suboptimal supervision from family, community and religious institutions has created a gap that allows perpetrators to carry out their

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<sup>16</sup> Sumintak and Abdullah Idi, "Analisis Relasi Kuasa Michel Foucault : Studi Kasus Fenomena Kekerasan Seksual Di Perguruan Tinggi," *Jurnal Intelektualita: Keislaman, Sosial, dan Sains* 11, no. 1 (2022), <https://jurnal.radenfatah.ac.id/index.php/intelektualita/article/view/11117>.

<sup>17</sup> Anna Maria Salamor et al., "Child Grooming Sebagai Bentuk Pelecehan Seksual Anak Melalui Aplikasi Permainan Daring," *SASI* 26, no. 28 (2020): 490-499, <https://fhukum.unpatti.ac.id/jurnal/sasi/article/view/381>.

<sup>18</sup> Sabda Tuliha, "Kajian Motif Pelaku Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Anak Melalui Modus Operandi Di Lingkungan Keluarga," *Sosiatri-Sosiologi* 6, no. 2 (2018): 1-17, [https://ejournal.ps.fisip-unmul.ac.id/site/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/01\\_format\\_artikel\\_ejournal\\_mulai\\_hlm\\_Ganjil-1 - Copy \(04-24-18-12-08-10\).pdf](https://ejournal.ps.fisip-unmul.ac.id/site/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/01_format_artikel_ejournal_mulai_hlm_Ganjil-1 - Copy (04-24-18-12-08-10).pdf).

<sup>19</sup> Hijrani et al., "Developmental Criminology Theory Critical in Criminal Law," *Journal Sultra Research of Law* 5, no. 1 (2023): 25-31, <http://ojs.pascaunsultra.ac.id/index.php/surel/article/view/39/23>.

actions without detection over a long period of time. In the framework of Routine Activity Theory, this condition shows the absence of capable guardians-both in the form of physical, social, and institutional supervision-that should be able to prevent risky interactions between perpetrators and victims.<sup>20</sup>

Factors such as the lack of communication between children and parents, excessive trust in authoritative figures, and the limited capacity of informal institutions in building child protection systems also increase children's vulnerability to exploitation. On the other hand, people tend to still have the perception that religious or educational environments are morally safe spaces, so they tend to lower their awareness of the possibility of sexual violence in them. This view makes it difficult to identify crimes that occur in these spaces, even when there are initial suspicious signs.

In addition, stigma and shame from victims' families often inhibit reporting, allowing perpetrators to continue operating without legal or social intervention. These factors indicate that children's social safeguards are not only weakened structurally, but also culturally. Therefore, efforts to prevent sexual violence against children cannot be separated from increasing the capacity of community-based supervision, empowering families, and establishing a reporting system that is sensitive to child victims."

The analysis of child sexual abuse through the lens of Routine Activity Theory reveals how structural vulnerabilities, unequal power relations, and the absence of capable guardians converge to create criminogenic environments that facilitate exploitation. Sexual violence against children is rarely a random or isolated act—it is embedded within social structures that grant perpetrators access, trust, and opportunities. The recurring involvement of authority figures such as parents, teachers, and religious leaders underscores how symbolic and relational power can be manipulated to subdue victims and silence disclosure. These dynamics are further intensified by cultural norms that inhibit open discussion, stigmatize victims, and prioritize social reputation over justice.

To address this multifaceted issue, a systemic and intersectional approach is required, one that transcends individual-level interventions. Strengthening community-based surveillance, promoting child rights education, empowering families to recognize signs of abuse, and dismantling the cultural taboos surrounding sexual violence are essential steps. Moreover, institutions, especially those grounded in moral or educational authority, must be held accountable and equipped with child protection mechanisms, including regular oversight, mandatory reporting systems, and training to detect grooming behavior. Only through such comprehensive and culturally sensitive strategies can society reduce children's vulnerability and ensure safer environments for their development.

## **2. Efforts to Mitigate and Prevent Cases of Sexual Violence against Children**

Children who are victims of rape often feel confused and depressed, so they tend to make the wrong decisions to overcome the pain and trauma experienced. Therefore, they really need help from various parties, such as the government, non-governmental organizations that care about children and women's issues, psychologists, and the wider community. Handling cases of sexual violence against children is very important, because they are still in a period of growth that determines their future. The approach taken must be comprehensive and not differentiate the background of the child, taking into account the child's right to live, grow, and express their opinions. Child protection is also an important part of efforts to build social justice. In this case, social workers have a crucial role in dealing with child victims of sexual abuse, such as being a service liaison, child rights advocate, companion, mediator, and provider of education and motivation. Age's opinion emphasizes that protecting children means

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<sup>20</sup> Setyawan and Larasati, "Analisis Teori Aktivitas Rutin Terhadap Kerentanan Anak Yang Menjadi Korban Kekerasan Seksual."



protecting the future of the family, society, and even the country. This means that if children are protected, the future of the nation will be more secure.<sup>21</sup>

Tackling child sexual abuse requires a comprehensive, sustainable approach that involves all elements of society, from legal institutions to organized child protection systems. To build an effective protection system requires strong social supervision and informal community-based control. Children who experience sexual violence and do not receive proper treatment are at risk of experiencing various adverse impacts. They may self-harm, abuse alcohol or drugs, or try to forget the trauma in unhealthy ways. In fact, the impact can continue into adulthood, such as developing eating disorders, becoming a victim of violence again, or experiencing mental health problems. These conditions indicate that safe environments for children are diminishing, so protection and recovery efforts must be a shared responsibility.<sup>22</sup> In this case, the Routine Activity Theory-based approach emphasizes the importance of the presence of capable guardians, namely figures or systems that are able to protect children physically and educationally. These guardians are not only expected to be physically present, but also to act as facilitators in providing an understanding of healthy and safe physical boundaries for children, especially through age-appropriate sexual education.<sup>23</sup>

Sexual education in early childhood in Indonesia is still at a very low level. involved approach This low level of education is correlated with the social construction that considers discussions about sexuality as taboo and not worth talking about openly, especially to children. The results of research conducted by Wahyuni et al. revealed that both educators and parents show resistance in delivering reproductive health-related material to children because it is considered not in accordance with the norms of modesty. In addition, parents' understanding of sexual education still tends to be limited to biological aspects, especially sexual relations between men and women. In fact, sexual education covers a broader and essential dimension as part of preventive efforts to protect children from the risk of sexual violence.

Another study conducted by Kartikasari and Setiawati reinforced these findings by showing that communication between parents and teenagers about sexuality is still very limited. Parents are more likely to discuss general issues such as friendship or puberty, while topics such as pregnancy, contraception, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are still considered too sensitive.<sup>24</sup> This taboo is actually dangerous, because without the right information from parents, children and adolescents will seek their own information from sources that are not always reliable, such as the internet or peers, which has the potential to mislead and encourage deviant sexual behavior and increase the risk and opportunity for grooming and sexual violence by perpetrators. The view that sexual education is something taboo needs to be changed immediately so as not to cause wider negative impacts. Without this change, Indonesia could potentially experience a crisis in sexual education, which could lead to an increase in sexual violence cases and a decline in the quality of future generations. Parents, as the first educators for children, need to have sufficient understanding and communication skills that are appropriate to the age and needs of children. When parents feel uncomfortable or reluctant to talk about these topics, children will lack important information, making them more vulnerable to sexual abuse.

Educational institutions have a strategic position as the closest environment to children in supporting efforts to prevent sexual violence through the delivery of sexual education that is in accordance with the developmental stage of students. One of the main challenges often faced is the incompatibility of the material with the age of the child, so that the information provided is

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<sup>21</sup> Setyawan, Argo Putra, and Nadia Utami Larasati. "Analisis Teori Aktivitas Rutin Terhadap Kerentanan Anak Yang Menjadi Korban Kekerasan Seksual." *Deviance Journal Kriminologi* 5, no. 2 (2021). <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/5c5c/3a266016d97c3361c77762b3a80c1a374a52.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> Hardiman, F. M., & Saefudin, Y. (2023). Pertanggungjawaban Pelaku Tindak Pidana Pelecehan Seksual Secara Verbal Terhadap Perempuan Di Muka Umum. *Amerta Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 3(1), 33-40.

<sup>23</sup> Kadek Hendra Wirawan, I Wayan Landrawan, and Si Ngurah Ardhya, "Tinjauan Kriminologi Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Anak Di Kabupaten Buleleng."

<sup>24</sup> Kartikasari, A., & Setiawati, N. (2020). Bagaimana komunikasi orangtua terkait pendidikan seks pada anak remaja mereka. *Jurnal of Bionursing*, 2(1), 21-27.

less effective in shaping understanding and awareness of self-protection. Adjustment of sexual education content based on age is important so that the messages delivered can be well received and have a positive impact. Yafie suggests that there are stages of delivery of sexual education that are tailored to the development of children's age. Children aged 7-10 years need to be given a basic understanding of modesty and maintaining body privacy. Entering the age of 10-11 years, children need to be protected from exposure to information or content that can arouse sexual urges.<sup>25</sup> At the age stage of 14-16 years, it is important to educate students about the ethics of associating with the opposite sex and emotional readiness before marriage. After adolescence, children also need to understand the importance of restraint if they are not ready for marriage, and learn to sort out sexual information that is appropriate to share, especially with younger children. With a structured approach that is sensitive to child development, educational institutions can play an active role as capable guardians in preventing sexual violence from occurring early on.<sup>26</sup>

Victims of incest are often afraid to share their painful experiences because they are under pressure and threats from their perpetrators. Fear, sadness and trauma make them tend to close themselves off. In this situation, family and the closest environment have an important role to play in providing attention, psychological safety, and understanding that not everyone will easily accept the victim's condition. Many victims are worried about being considered to have defamed the family, being shunned by friends, or being the subject of ridicule, especially for children who are still in school. According to Agaid, victims of incest face a double burden - not only experiencing sexual violence, but also having to hide the incident from others. In the recovery process, support from various parties is needed. Warshaw emphasizes the importance of emotional support that can strengthen the mental state of victims and help them accept reality and get back on their feet. Among all parties, the family - especially parents - plays the most important role as the closest party to the child. They need to create a safe space that encourages children to express feelings and experiences that may not be easily expressed. This openness is the first step in the process of recovering from the trauma of sexual violence.<sup>27</sup>

Law No. 12 of 2022 on the Crime of Sexual Violence (UU TPKS) and the new Criminal Code (KUHP) provide an important legal basis for the protection of children as victims of sexual violence. The TPKS Law brings a victim-oriented approach, with a broad scope covering 19 forms of sexual violence, clarifying definitions, and adding categories of perpetrators including the closest people such as parents and guardians. In addition, this regulation also emphasizes child protection through guarantees of confidentiality of identity, assistance during the legal process, and the right to psychological and physical recovery. Not only that, this law also prioritizes preventive efforts through education, public campaigns, and the formation of a culture that rejects sexual violence.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile, the new Criminal Code also strengthens legal protection for victims of child sexual abuse through increased criminal sanctions, aggravated punishment for certain perpetrators, and restitution obligations as a form of perpetrator responsibility towards victims. The Criminal Code focuses on deterring perpetrators by providing maximum penalties such as life imprisonment and high fines. However, the Criminal Code approach tends to be repressive and still follows traditional patterns of legal handling, in contrast to the TPKS Law which is more progressive and oriented towards the interests of victims as a whole.

Public awareness of the importance of reporting cases of sexual violence against children is still relatively low. Low levels of education, lack of access to information, and strong cultural and patriarchal norms mean that many cases go undiscovered. Social stigma against victims and

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<sup>25</sup> Yafie, E. (2017). Peran orang tua dalam memberikan pendidikan seksual anak usia dini. *Jurnal CARE (Children Advisory Research and Education)*, 4(2).

<sup>26</sup> Nuke Rouffiyanti Abdillah and Oci Senjaya, "Tinjauan Kriminologis Pada Pelaku Tindak Pidana Eksploitasi Seksual Terhadap Anak Dibawah Umur," *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan* 8, no. September (2022): 437-443.

<sup>27</sup> Ahmad Jamaludin, "Legal Protection of Child Victims of Sexual Violence Perlindungan Hukum Anak Korban Kekerasan Seksual" 3, no. 2 (2021): 1-10.

<sup>28</sup> Abdillah and Senjaya, "Tinjauan Kriminologis Pada Pelaku Tindak Pidana Eksploitasi Seksual Terhadap Anak Dibawah Umur."

their families exacerbates the situation, making them feel ashamed or afraid to report. On the other hand, people also often do not understand the reporting flow and lack information about support services such as P2TP2A. Even so, various efforts such as awareness campaigns, public education, and the role of social media and mass media have contributed to improving public understanding of the importance of reporting.

The role of law enforcement officials is key in handling cases of sexual violence against children. They are required to work professionally with a child-friendly approach, starting from the investigation stage to the court. Law enforcement also plays a role in prevention through public education and inter-agency cooperation, as well as providing comprehensive protection for victims, including psychological assistance and access to rehabilitation services. Nevertheless, big challenges such as the high number of violence and the limited capacity of the authorities are still obstacles that need to be overcome immediately so that the protection of children as victims of sexual violence can be optimally implemented.<sup>29</sup>

Addressing sexual violence against children requires more than just a legal response, it demands a holistic, multi-sectoral strategy rooted in prevention, protection, and recovery. Families, schools, communities, and the government must actively collaborate to build environments where children are educated about their rights, protected from potential harm, and supported in the healing process. Legal frameworks such as the TPKS Law and the new Criminal Code are essential milestones, but without strong implementation, cultural shifts, and public awareness, their impact remains limited. A child-centered approach that combines law enforcement with education, psychological support, and social empowerment is key to ensuring that every child grows in a safe and dignified environment, free from fear and violence.

## V. Conclusion

Sexual violence against children is a serious crime that not only affects the physical and psychological well-being of victims, but also illustrates the failure of the immediate social environment in carrying out protective functions. Through the Routine Activity Theory approach, this research shows that crimes occur because of the confluence of motivated perpetrators, children as vulnerable targets, and the absence of adequate supervision from those who should play a protective role. In many cases, the perpetrators come from the nuclear family or authoritative figures in the child's environment, who abuse their position and trust to commit acts of sexual exploitation.

Structural factors such as weak informal social control, lack of sexual education, cultural stigma, and unequal power relations increase the opportunity for sexual violence in the private sphere. The analysis also shows that prevention cannot only rely on a repressive legal approach, but must be accompanied by a community-based protection strategy, education for families, and the establishment of a child-friendly reporting and victim assistance system. Thus, efforts to overcome sexual violence against children need to be carried out comprehensively, through a synergy between strong regulations, effective social supervision, and strengthening the role of families and educational institutions as capable guardians. Effective prevention can only be achieved if society no longer tolerates violence in any form and begins to build a culture of protection that favors child safety.

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<sup>29</sup> Fian Agung Wibowo and Indra Surya Permana, "Legal Study On Handling Cases Of Sextortion Involving Minors As Perpetrators And Victims In Indonesia," *Jurnal Hukum Sehasen* 11, no. 11 (2025): 45-50.

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