

Public Policy, Patriarchal Culture, and Feudalism: Challenges in Combating Sexual Violence against Women in Indonesia

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Abstract. Sexual violence against women in Indonesia remains a serious issue despite the enactment of various regulations, including the Law on the Crime of Sexual Violence (UU TPKS). This study aims to evaluate the challenges and formulate measures that the government can undertake to address sexual violence by examining the interrelation between patriarchal culture, feudalism, and public policy. The research employs a literature review method, analyzing scholarly works, official data, and reports from relevant organizations. The findings reveal that the dominance of patriarchal culture and the legacy of feudalism constitute major structural factors that hinder the effectiveness of legal protection for victims. The implementation of the UU TPKS still faces significant obstacles, including delays in drafting implementing regulations, the lack of a victim-centered perspective among law enforcement officers, and the inadequate quality of victim recovery services. Furthermore, inter-agency coordination within the government remains weak, and human rights-based sexual education has not been widely integrated. The study concludes that structural reforms are urgently needed, encompassing the acceleration of technical regulations, institutional cultural reform, strengthening victim support services, and mainstreaming gender equality education across all sectors to ensure the effective prevention and handling of sexual violence.

Keywords: Public policy, patriarchy, feudalism, women, sexual violence.

Introduction

Sexual violence against women in Indonesia remains prevalent, as evidenced by numerous media reports covering cases of harassment and assault. Perpetrators emerge from diverse backgrounds, and even individuals holding esteemed professions or reputations are not deterred from committing such heinous acts. This phenomenon underscores the persistent reality that women's lives are constrained by entrenched stigma and societal demands.

Historically, women in Indonesia have been bound to the oppressive structures of patriarchal culture, burdened with expectations that deny them the space to grow freely. During the Dutch colonial era, feudalism further suppressed the freedom of Indonesian women. As highlighted by (Perwitasari & Hendariningrum, 2009) in their discussion of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's novel *Gadis Pantai*, the patriarchy intensified alongside systemic discrimination, particularly against women in Java. Landowners, the *priyayi* elite, and the nobility wielded authority akin to that of the colonizers.

The rigid caste divisions of the colonial period further diminished women's opportunities for social standing or recognition. Women especially those from ordinary backgrounds were rendered vulnerable as objects within the institution of concubinage, illustrating how gender and class dominance intersected.

Japanese occupation brought a new layer of trauma. While shorter in duration than Dutch colonial rule, it mirrored the same chains of suffering. As depicted in Toer's *Perawan Remaja dalam Cengkraman Militer* (2015), the Japanese exploited promises of education for Indonesian women – an enticing prospect given the scarcity of educational opportunities only to coerce them into becoming *jugun ianfu* ("comfort women").

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Seventy-nine years after independence, little has changed in ensuring women's freedom in Indonesia. Although legal reforms have been enacted and updated, the lived reality for many women remains one of enduring fear and vulnerability. Figures such as Raden Adjeng Kartini, Dewi Sartika, and Martha Christina, alongside countless other icons of women's emancipation, fought against feudalism and patriarchy, yet these systems persist. As (Lubis, 2016) notes in *Manusia Indonesia*, feudal attitudes, passed down since colonial times, continue to shape societal behavior.

In addition to feudal legacies, Indonesia remains deeply influenced by patriarchal structures. (Rokhmansyah, 2016) in (Sakina & A, 2017) defines patriarchy as a system that centralizes power in the hands of men, granting them ultimate authority and control. This dominance fosters gender inequality across nearly every sphere of life, positioning men as primary decision-makers while women occupy inferior, less influential roles. The patriarchal system restricts women's participation, perpetuating discrimination and structural barriers that prevent equal access to opportunities.

This structural inequality fosters environments in which sexual violence thrives. Under patriarchy, masculinity is tied to power, ego, and dominance, while femininity is diminished to symbols of weakness. Such notions not only devalue women's contributions but legitimize the control and subjugation of women.

Sexual violence thus remains a recurring and deeply ingrained problem. From catcalling and unwanted touching to more severe forms of assault, women are routinely placed in positions of vulnerability. According to 2025 data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA), women remain the most vulnerable group, representing 80.8% of the 6,732 reported cases of violence approximately 5,800 cases. Alarmingly, 2,840 of these cases involved sexual violence (Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak, 2025).

The 2024 *Catatan Tahunan* (CATAHU) report by Komnas Perempuan recorded 445,502 cases of violence against women a 9.77% increase (43,527 cases) from the previous year's 401,975 cases. These figures reflect systemic weaknesses in both prevention and response mechanisms.

While Indonesia has enacted laws such as Law No. 12 of 2022 on the Crime of Sexual Violence (UU TPKS) and Law No. 23 of 2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence (UU PKDRT), their implementation remains inadequate. The UU TPKS is comprehensive, outlining nine forms of sexual violence and emphasizing victim protection through healthcare access, psychological support, and legal aid. However, as Komnas Perempuan Commissioner Siti Aminah (Harahap, 2024) notes, enforcement has been hampered by the absence of necessary implementing regulations. Without these, the law risks remaining symbolic rather than operational.

Komnas HAM's *Festival HAM*, featuring discussions led by Commissioner Anis Hidayah, stressed the urgency of evaluating the law's real-world impact. Despite increased reporting by survivors, the risk of criminalization, stigma, intimidation, and re-victimization persists. Moreover, public and institutional understanding of sexual violence especially the various forms outlined in the law remains limited.

Sexual violence frequently occurs in environments with deeply unequal power relations, such as universities, religious institutions, boarding schools (*pesantren*), and domestic spaces. In such contexts, perpetrators often hold positions of authority or influence, further silencing victims.

The endurance of patriarchal and feudal structures within Indonesian society not only perpetuates gender-based violence but also hinders public policy from genuinely addressing its root causes. Instead of centering victims, policies often reinforce stereotypes and conservative norms that restrict women's autonomy. This structural reality demands not just legislative action but also cultural and institutional reform to ensure that gender justice is embedded at every level of governance.

This paper, titled *Public Policy, Patriarchal Culture, and Feudalism: Challenges in Combating Sexual Violence against Women in Indonesia*, examines the barriers to addressing sexual violence through the interconnected lenses of public policy, patriarchy, and feudalism in Indonesian society.

Methods

This study employs the library research method as the primary approach for data collection and analysis. Library research is understood as a systematic process involving a series of activities, including searching, selecting, collecting, reading, recording, and processing various forms of information obtained from

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literature relevant to the research topic. This method enables the researcher to construct a comprehensive understanding based on data and ideas previously developed by authors and researchers.

Referring to (Zed, 2003) in (Supriyadi, 2016), library research aims to obtain information and data derived from written sources, including books, scholarly journals, previous research findings, academic articles, and other official documents. All materials are selected based on their relevance to the issue under study. In this case, sexual violence against women in the context of public policy, patriarchal culture, and feudalism in Indonesia.

Once the literature sources have been gathered, the next stage involves a critical and in-depth analysis of each document. This process not only examines the content or substance of the references but also takes into account the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which they were produced. In this way, the data obtained is not merely descriptive but also provides analytical contributions to the development of arguments and discussions in the study.

Thus, library research in this study serves not only as a tool for gathering secondary data but also as a conceptual foundation for shaping the theoretical framework and logical reasoning. This method offers reflective space for the researcher to revisit various theories and critical perspectives that can enrich the analysis and provide more profound and contextual answers to the research questions.

Result and Discussion

The Concept of Public Policy, Patriarchy, Feudalism, and Sexual Violence

The Concept of Public Policy

According to (Dye, 2011) in his book *Understanding Public Policy*, public policy is defined as “Public policy is whatever governments choose to do or not to do.” In other words, public policy encompasses everything the government chooses to implement or refrain from implementing. In line with this definition, Edward III and Sharkansky, as cited in Islamy (1984: 18), state that public policy is “what government say and do, or not to do. It is the goals or purpose of government programs.” This definition emphasizes that public policy refers to what the government declares and implements or fails to implement as well as the objectives and targets of government programs.

Similarly, (Nugroho, 2018) in his book *Public Policy 7: Dynamics of Public Policy, Public Policy Analysis, Ethics of Political Policy* explains that public policy is an institutionalized political decision made by the government as the administrator of the state. It represents the allocation of the nation’s essential values, formulated as strategies and management plans to achieve the constitutional mission that embodies the promise of Indonesia’s independence.

Based on these perspectives, public policy can be defined as any decision or action taken by the government to allocate the nation’s essential values, develop strategies, and manage resources to achieve the objectives and goals of government programs, in alignment with the constitutional mission and the ideals of Indonesian independence.

Quoting (Nugroho, 2018) in (Asmara, 2009), several paradigms of public policy and their characteristics can be identified:

1. **Anglo-Saxon (Western 1)**

Public policy is defined as *Public Policy*, characterized by minimal hierarchical layers, a self-implemented constitution, democracy, convergence between state and public interests, the *Magna Carta*, and inherent conflict. Examples include the United States, the United Kingdom, and Commonwealth countries.

2. **Continental (Western 2)**

Public policy is perceived as law, featuring multiple hierarchical layers, a constitution and statutory laws that are not self-implemented, monarchy, prioritization of state interests, Napoleonic law, and an emphasis on obedience. Examples include continental European countries, including Russia.

3. **Eastern**

Public policy is equated with the authority of the state, with hierarchical structures determined by the

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will of those in power, feudalism, prioritization of power interests, natural law, religious law, and the pursuit of harmony. Examples include monarchies in Asia and Africa.

These three paradigms have significantly influenced the formation of structures, processes, and values underlying public policy formulation in Indonesia. As a former colony with a complex political history, Indonesia simultaneously exhibits traits of all three paradigms, which at times may conflict with one another.

In practice, Indonesia tends to be more strongly influenced by the Continental (Western 2) paradigm, as evidenced by its highly bureaucratic and hierarchical legal and administrative structures, based on positive law. The Constitution and other statutory regulations are not self-implementing; they must be elaborated into various technical regulations through government regulations, ministerial regulations, and regional regulations. This reflects the legalistic and structured characteristics of continental European law, where public policy is often perceived primarily as a legal product rather than as a responsive instrument addressing public needs.

Nevertheless, the influence of the Eastern paradigm remains evident, particularly in the exercise and acceptance of authority. The persistence of paternalistic culture and feudalism in the relationship between the people and the ruling elite has led to an understanding of public policy as the will of those in power rather than as the result of a compromise between the state and its citizens. In many cases, the interests of those in power dominate policy formulation, even when they conflict with public interests. This is reflected in the low level of public participation in policy-making processes and the strong dominance of oligarchic and political elites in determining national policy directions.

Meanwhile, the Anglo-Saxon paradigm has gradually emerged alongside the democratization process following the Reform Era. Principles such as information transparency, public participation, and accountability have been introduced as new standards in public policy-making. However, the implementation of these democratic values remains largely symbolic and has not yet penetrated the deeper structures of power. As a result, despite the existence of formal mechanisms such as development planning forums (*musrenbang*) and public hearings, the substantive content of policies continues to be determined by technocratic or political elites with limited accountability.

Furthermore, public policy in Indonesia can be classified into two main types: sectoral policy and regional policy. Sectoral policies primarily refer to those addressing the interests and needs of society. Such as political policy, economic policy, infrastructure policy, and environmental policy, as illustrated in the following diagram:

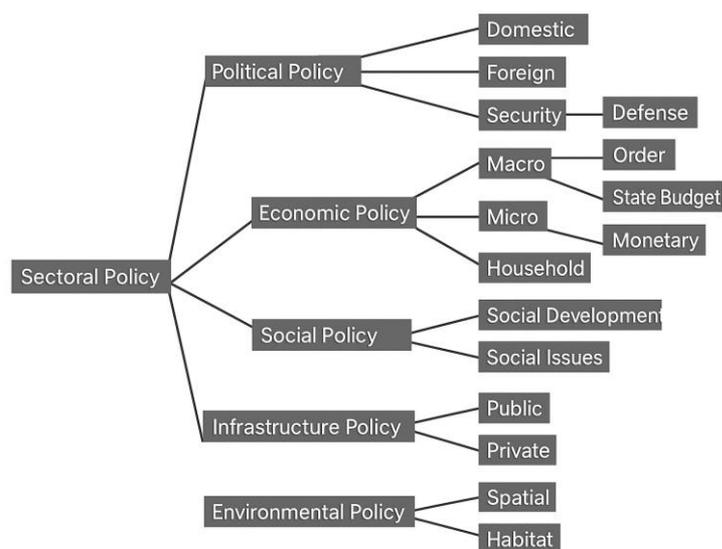


Figure 1. Diagram of Sectoral Policies

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Territorial policy is fundamentally closely related to various forms of government policy, including general policy, absolute policy, and concurrent policy. Each of these policies has distinct characteristics and regulatory scopes, yet all aim to ensure the effective governance of the entire territory of the state. General policy sets forth the fundamental principles of governmental administration, absolute policy addresses strategic matters that fall entirely under the authority of the central government, while concurrent policy reflects the division of responsibilities between the central and regional governments.

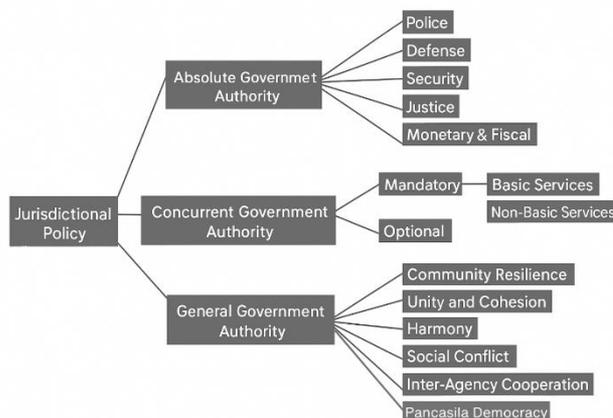


Figure 2. Diagram of Jurisdictional Policy

Sexual violence is a complex issue that not only involves violations against the body and individual dignity but also reflects systemic failures in social protection. In the context of public policy, sexual violence falls within the realm of social sector policy, which focuses on addressing social issues that directly impact community welfare. This indicates that the state holds a structural responsibility to identify, prevent, and address sexual violence as part of its commitment to social justice.

As a social problem, sexual violence does not occur in a vacuum. It unfolds within unequal power relations, both between individuals and within broader social structures. When sexual violence occurs, the harm extends beyond the physical and psychological suffering of the victim to the social order that is supposed to guarantee the safety of every citizen. Therefore, approaches to addressing sexual violence cannot be limited to individual or legalistic measures; they must be intersectional and integrated.

The Concept of Patriarchy

According to (Rokhmansyah, 2016) in his book *Pengantar Gender dan Feminisme (Introduction to Gender and Feminism)*, patriarchy originates from the term *patriarkat*, which refers to a social system that places men at the center of power, exercising control, domination, and serving as the standard in almost all aspects of life. Within this structure, men are not only the primary administrators of society but also the principal decision-makers in economic, political, social, and even psychological spheres. Conversely, women are positioned marginally, with very limited influence in decision-making across various domains of life, including in formal institutions as well as domestic settings such as marriage. This patriarchal practice does not merely produce gender inequality; it is deeply rooted in cultural norms, reinforcing women's subordination and cementing their systemic inferior position. Such injustice not only restricts women's mobility but also negates their fundamental rights as human beings.

Quoting Pinem (2009:42) in (Putri, et al., 2022), patriarchy is defined as a social status system that positions men as the primary authority at the center of social organization, granting them higher status than women in all aspects of social, cultural, and other spheres of life. Meanwhile, in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* by Friedrich Engels, as cited in (BEM Fisipol UNESA, 2023), patriarchy is described as a form of political organization that distributes unequal power between men and women.

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The concept of patriarchy is primarily rooted in a paternalistic worldview, which assumes that social order depends on the presence of a male figure particularly the father as the central authority and primary regulator. In this framework, men are regarded as essential to maintaining a functional family structure. They are perceived not only as heads of households but also as the foundational pillars sustaining social stability as a whole.

Paternalism, in this context, is interpreted as a symbolic concept that legitimizes men as the rightful representation of leadership. Male leadership is perceived as inherently embedded in the mother-child relationship, shaping social interaction patterns that prioritize male control and dominance. Domestic relationships, which should ideally be based on equality, instead reproduce hierarchical structures that privilege men.

The dynamics of social life are thus constructed upon this foundation, where male dominance is legitimized through cultural constructs and social norms. As a result, this unequal social reality not only strengthens men's control over both domestic and public spheres but also normalizes gender inequality as something natural and inevitable.

In Indonesia, patriarchal culture has deep historical roots, extending back to prehistoric times. In agrarian societies, labor was divided along gender lines considered "natural": men undertook productive activities outside the home such as hunting, farming, and protecting the community, while women were associated with domestic work such as childcare and household management. This division was not merely an adaptation to environmental and physical demands, but also the foundation for long-standing gender-based role structures (Rosalie, 2022).

The feudal social structure further reinforced male dominance, positioning men as leaders and decision-makers at both the family and societal levels. When Dutch colonialism introduced a system of governance and education aligned with patriarchal values, male dominance became further institutionalized. Colonial policies restricted women's public participation and reinforced gendered stereotypes of traditional roles.

Local cultural values and interpretations of religious teachings also contributed to consolidating male hegemony. In many Indonesian customary societies, women's roles are reduced to those of male companions or custodians of family honor, with little autonomy in decision-making. Gender-biased religious interpretations further perpetuate the narrative that leadership is a male prerogative, while women are relegated to subordinate roles. As a result, historically and culturally entrenched gender inequality continues to be reproduced in contemporary social life (Aryanti, 2024).

Despite advancements in the modern era, where women increasingly gain access to education and the workforce, patriarchal norms remain deeply ingrained. Social norms still position men as the ultimate authority within the family, holding full decision-making power, while women are burdened with cultural expectations to prioritize domestic roles as obedient wives and devoted mothers. Women's progress in public spheres is often conditioned on their continued adherence to these traditional roles.

In professional and political arenas, gender inequality persists through structural and cultural barriers. Women frequently face stereotypes questioning their leadership abilities, professional competence, or decision-making capacity. Many encounter discrimination, limited access to strategic positions, and the double burden of fulfilling domestic responsibilities. This demonstrates that increased access does not necessarily translate into equal opportunities.

Moreover, patriarchal culture forms the foundation that perpetuates gender-based violence. Socially legitimized male dominance creates unequal power relations, which in turn foster various forms of violence against women. Domestic violence, sexual harassment, and child marriage remain widespread across many regions of Indonesia. This reveals that patriarchy is not merely a system of values but a lived reality embedded in social structures, legal systems, and collective mentalities that must be confronted and dismantled (BEM Fisipol UNESA, 2023).

The persistence of patriarchal culture in Indonesia has far-reaching and complex impacts, particularly on women across multiple aspects of life. Patriarchy positions men in dominant roles while women experience marginalization and subordination. Marginalization results in women being excluded from equal access to economic resources, education, and employment, exacerbating poverty and social inequality. For instance,

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during the New Order era, agricultural programs disproportionately provided training and land access to male farmers, while women were denied equal rights.

Subordination of women is also evident in the low priority given to their needs in families and communities for example, limiting girls' education when resources are scarce, despite their equal or even superior academic performance. In the workplace, women face various forms of discrimination, including gender stereotypes, wage gaps, restricted access to leadership positions, and the risk of sexual harassment. Such conditions not only harm women individually but also hinder national economic and social development by underutilizing the potential of half the population.

Furthermore, patriarchal culture serves as the root cause of many forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, and early marriage. Male dominance reinforced by social and religious norms deepens gender injustice and increases women's vulnerability. In decision-making processes, women are often excluded whether at the family, community, or governmental level resulting in severely limited participation and representation.

Concept of Feudalism

Citing in (Mulya, 2014), in his book *Feodalisme dan Imperialisme di Era Global (Feudalism and Imperialism in the Global Era)*, in general terms, feudalism is an ideology that places power in the hands of a small segment of society, which may take the form of a family bond or other social ties. In the concept of feudalism, power whether in the form of a throne, office, position, or specific role is regarded as an achievement or distinction. Such power may be acquired through two main pathways: first, as a hereditary privilege passed down from families considered "distinguished," namely noble families honored for the status and accomplishments of their ancestors; and second, through personal achievement, whereby an individual attains such a position through effort and merit. However, within this worldview, power is more often perceived as a symbol of personal honor and pride rather than as a mandate or serious responsibility to be exercised with diligence. As a result, public office or positions of authority are often viewed less as professional duties requiring dedication, competence, and accountability, and more as entitlements to respect and privilege.

The origins of feudalism in Indonesia can be traced back to the era of Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms such as Majapahit, Mataram Kuno, and Kediri. During this period, the king was regarded as the earthly manifestation of a deity, holding absolute authority over the land and all natural resources. Kings possessed the exclusive right to grant land to nobles or court officials as a reward for loyalty or service, thereby creating a rigid social hierarchy. This structure also fostered patronclient relationships, in which commoners depended on the protection and assistance of rulers. Land ownership at that time served as a principal indicator of social status and power, laying the foundation for the growth of feudal culture in the archipelago.

When the Dutch colonial period began, the existing feudal system was not abolished but instead exploited to strengthen colonial control. The Dutch collaborated with local elites, appointing them as intermediaries to manage the population and administer resources. This gave rise to a system of neo-feudalism, further embedding feudal culture within governmental and societal structures. Social relations became increasingly vertical, marked by absolute obedience to superiors and the glorification of hierarchy. This culture persisted even after Indonesia's independence and remains evident in contemporary politics and bureaucracy, where power is often exercised without transparency and criticism is perceived as a threat.

During the New Order era, feudal practices expanded to the village level. Village heads and local elites wielded significant control over resource distribution and the implementation of government programs, fostering an exclusive and closed system of local governance. This was reinforced by the 1979 Village Government Law, which granted extensive authority to village heads, further entrenching the dominance and influence of feudal culture within the socio-economic structure of rural Indonesia (BBC News Indonesia, 2025).

The emergence and perpetuation of feudalism in Indonesia have also had profoundly detrimental impacts on women, particularly through structured discrimination and subordination. In feudal societies, especially in Java, women were regarded as second-class citizens after men, with mobility largely restricted to the domestic sphere, while men dominated the public sphere. Feudal rulers, such as nobles and *priyayi* (aristocrats), held absolute power, allowing them to treat women including wives and concubines as property without autonomy over their own lives. Women were frequently regarded as symbols of prestige and authority. This dynamic is vividly depicted in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's literary work *Gadis Pantai*, which

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portrays women from lower social classes as victims of oppression, exploitation, and sexual violence at the hands of the ruling elite.

Feudalism also reinforced the limitation of women's roles, subjecting them to marginalization, subordination, negative stereotyping, and a double burden managing household responsibilities while enduring social injustice. The patriarchal culture deeply rooted in the feudal system exacerbated gender inequality, leaving women vulnerable to violence without adequate social protection. Women were also often used as political instruments and symbols of power, as in the practice of *putri boyongan*, where women were presented as gifts to assert a ruler's dominance over newly acquired territories.

Consequently, women faced significant barriers to exercising rights over their own bodies, accessing education, economic opportunities, and participating in socio-political life. The legacy of feudalism has produced a strongly patriarchal society in which female victims of violence are frequently blamed, and legal protections for women remain weak. Overall, feudalism has deepened the roots of a patriarchal culture that positions women in a vulnerable state of oppression, with its effects still palpable in Indonesia's contemporary socio-cultural order (Perwitasari & Hendariningrum, 2009).

Concept of Sexual Violence

According to (Umiyati, et al., 2022) in (Ain, et al., 2022), sexual violence is a form of abuse committed without the victim's consent. This act can take various forms, including attempted sexual intercourse, solicitation for sexual activity, or sexually oriented threats. Any behavior that violates personal boundaries without the victim's permission can have serious consequences, both physically and mentally, and can significantly diminish the victim's quality of life. In recent years, cases of sexual violence, particularly against children, have increased significantly in various settings, such as schools, families, and communities. Perpetrators may come from any background, including immediate family members, neighbors, school peers, and even educators such as teachers.

Article 1 of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation (Permendikbudristek) No. 30 of 2021 defines sexual violence as any act that demeans, humiliates, harasses, and/or attacks a person's body and/or reproductive functions due to power and/or gender imbalances, resulting in or potentially resulting in psychological and/or physical suffering, including impairments to reproductive health, and depriving individuals of the opportunity to pursue higher education in a safe and optimal manner.

Furthermore, Article 1 of the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation (Permendikbud) No. 46 of 2023 defines violence as any act, deed, and/or decision against a person that causes pain, injury, or death; sexual/reproductive suffering; partial or total loss of function of physical, intellectual, or mental faculties; deprivation of opportunities to access education or employment in a safe and optimal environment; deprivation of opportunities to fulfill human rights; fear; loss of self-confidence; loss of the ability to act; feelings of helplessness; economic loss; and/or other similar forms of harm.

According to Article 4(1) of the Law on the Crime of Sexual Violence (UU TPKS), the types of sexual violence include:

1. Non-physical sexual harassment – statements, gestures, or activities of an inappropriate sexual nature intended to demean or humiliate;
2. Physical sexual harassment;
3. Forced contraception;
4. Forced sterilization;
5. Forced marriage;
6. Sexual torture;
7. Sexual exploitation;
8. Sexual slavery; and
9. Technology-facilitated sexual violence.

Article 4(2) of the same law further specifies that sexual violence offenses also encompass:

1. Rape;

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2. Acts of obscenity;
3. Sexual intercourse with children, indecent acts toward children, and/or sexual exploitation of children;
4. Acts violating decency against the victim's will;
5. Child pornography or pornography containing explicit violence and sexual exploitation;
6. Forced prostitution;
7. Human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation;
8. Sexual violence within the household;
9. Money laundering crimes where the predicate offense is sexual violence; and
10. Other offenses explicitly defined as sexual violence under prevailing laws and regulations.

Sexual violence against women has far-reaching and profound consequences, encompassing psychological, physical, and social dimensions. Psychologically, victims often suffer from severe emotional disturbances, such as deep trauma, excessive anxiety, acute depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which may persist over long periods. Many victims experience shame, guilt, and a loss of self-confidence, prompting social withdrawal and reduced interaction with others.

Physically, sexual abuse can lead to various health problems, including chronic headaches, sleep disturbances (insomnia or nightmares), abnormal fatigue, and an increased risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections due to the violence endured. In certain cases, victims may suffer physical injuries or reproductive health problems, such as unwanted pregnancies and other medical complications that exacerbate their physical condition.

Socially, the impacts are equally tangible. Victims often face stigma, social ostracism, and loss of educational or professional opportunities due to declining academic or work performance. Fear, distrust of others, and feelings of insecurity in public spaces become additional burdens that hinder survivors from actively participating in social and community life.

From a health perspective, one of the most significant consequences is unwanted pregnancy. Survivors of sexual violence frequently lack control over their own bodies, placing them at risk of becoming pregnant under physically or mentally unsafe conditions. Additionally, sexual violence may cause various reproductive health complications, such as reproductive tract infections, internal injuries, and damage to reproductive organs, which can affect future fertility. In extreme cases, sexual violence can be fatal. Some victims experience such severe trauma that they attempt suicide as an escape from unbearable psychological suffering. Moreover, survivors face a heightened risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, which not only threatens their health but also undermines their overall quality of life (Hendrawan, 2006) and (Putri, et al., 2024).

Critique of Patriarchal Culture and Feudalism

Patriarchy systematically entrenches male dominance, positioning women in subordinate roles and restricting their autonomy over body, mind, and life choices. It institutionalizes gender inequality through norms that marginalize women's voices, limit their participation in education, politics, and the economy, and confine them to domestic roles. Stereotypes depicting women as weak or irrational perpetuate exclusion, while deviations from prescribed gender norms are met with social sanctions and symbolic violence. This structure legitimizes gender-based violence through victim-blaming and impunity for perpetrators, making oppression an inherent feature of the system.

Toxic masculinity, as a byproduct of patriarchy, also constrains men, compelling emotional suppression and adherence to rigid roles as providers, which undermines mental well-being. Thus, patriarchy produces gender injustice that harms society as a whole.

Feudalism reinforces these inequities by upholding hereditary power and rigid social hierarchies, obstructing social mobility, and demanding unquestioning submission to elites. In Indonesia, its legacy persists in political and social culture, where deference to authority and informal dispute resolution including the "family settlement" of sexual violence cases shield perpetrators and perpetuate impunity. Together,

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patriarchy and feudalism operate as intersecting systems of oppression that sustain and normalize gender-based violence.

Challenges in Addressing Sexual Violence in Indonesia

Efforts to address sexual violence in Indonesia face a range of interconnected structural, cultural, and institutional barriers. (Nitha, et al., 2024) identify several key challenges, including the entrenched dominance of patriarchal culture, the normalization of sexual violence, low public legal awareness, limited enforcement of the Sexual Violence Crime Law (*Undang-Undang Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual*; UU TPKS), the legal system's insensitivity toward victims, weak inter-agency coordination in victim services, societal resistance to value changes, and the absence of detailed implementing regulations under the UU TPKS.

Similarly, discussions during the 2024 Human Rights Festival, organized by the National Human Rights Commission of Indonesia (Komnas HAM Republik Indonesia, 2024), highlight comparable obstacles. These include deeply rooted patriarchy leading to gender injustice, persistent stigma against survivors, power imbalances within various social settings (such as educational institutions, families, and religious organizations), law enforcement perspectives that fail to prioritize victims, the absence of derivative regulations under the UU TPKS, the lack of comprehensive human rights-based sexual education, and the insufficient establishment of Sexual Violence Prevention and Handling Task Forces (*Satgas*) in relevant institutions.

From these two perspectives, patriarchal culture emerges as the core structural barrier shaping nearly all dimensions of sexual violence prevention and response. Patriarchy positions men in dominant roles and women in subordinate ones, creating asymmetrical power relations that perpetuate conditions conducive to sexual violence. These values influence not only individual behaviors but also the functioning of legal systems, education, and social institutions, thereby weakening overall protection for victims.

Patriarchy also reinforces social stigma that silences survivors. Survivors often face negative labeling, such as accusations of tarnishing family honor or being blamed for the violence itself. This *victim blaming* culture discourages survivors from reporting incidents and contributes to the cyclical and unresolved nature of sexual violence.

Institutionally, the weak implementation of the UU TPKS further exacerbates the situation. Although the law marks a significant milestone in protecting victims of sexual violence, the absence of derivative regulations such as Government Regulations (*Peraturan Pemerintah*) and Presidential Regulations (*Peraturan Presiden*) creates ambiguity in procedures for handling, protecting, and rehabilitating victims. Moreover, law enforcement officers often lack training in victim-centered and gender-justice approaches, reducing the law's effectiveness in practice.

In sum, the challenges to combating sexual violence in Indonesia are deeply embedded in structural inequalities, encompassing patriarchal culture, skewed power relations, social stigma, and weaknesses in legal and institutional systems. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive, cross-sectoral approach grounded in gender justice and human rights principles.

Evaluation and Government Efforts in Combating Sexual Violence in Indonesia

The Indonesian government has made notable progress in addressing sexual violence with the enactment of the Sexual Violence Crime Law (*Undang-Undang Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual* – UU TPKS) in 2022. This legislation marked a significant milestone, representing the culmination of years of advocacy by civil society groups and survivors seeking more comprehensive legal protection. However, two years after its ratification, evaluations indicate that the implementation of this law remains far from optimal. Cases of sexual violence remain high, and survivors continue to face serious structural barriers in accessing justice and recovery services.

One of the fundamental issues lies in the slow drafting and issuance of derivative regulations under the UU TPKS, such as Government Regulations (*Peraturan Pemerintah* – PP) and Presidential Regulations (*Peraturan Presiden* – Perpres), which are essential to clarify technical procedures for enforcement. In the absence of such implementing regulations, law enforcement officers experience confusion in handling sexual violence cases, resulting in inconsistent services for survivors. This delay reflects the government's low sense of urgency regarding victim protection and reveals a lack of integrated vision among various ministries and related agencies.

Conclusion

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Moreover, Indonesia's legal culture deeply entrenched in patriarchy further exacerbates the problem. Law enforcement personnel often engage in victim-blaming, impose unnecessary burdens of proof, and treat survivors inhumanely during investigations. Such practices discourage survivors from reporting incidents due to fear of being judged, disbelieved, or even criminalized. The government has yet to undertake meaningful institutional reforms to ensure that law enforcement bodies adopt victim-centered and gender-sensitive approaches in addressing sexual violence.

Beyond legal and institutional shortcomings, the government's preventive efforts through education remain critically inadequate. To date, human rights-based sexual education has not been consistently integrated into the national curriculum. The reluctance to adopt comprehensive sexual education underscores a failure to recognize that sexual violence is a structural problem requiring early consciousness-raising, not merely reactive measures once cases occur.

Although the government has promoted the establishment of Sexual Violence Prevention and Handling Task Forces (*Satuan Tugas Pencegahan dan Penanganan Kekerasan Seksual - Satgas*) in educational institutions and workplaces, implementation has been uneven. Many Satgas bodies exist merely to fulfill administrative requirements, lacking adequate training on survivor handling or effective complaint mechanisms. Strict evaluation of these Task Forces is necessary to ensure they are not reduced to symbolic entities devoid of substantive impact on victim protection.

From the perspective of victim recovery services, conditions in the field remain far from satisfactory. Access to medical care, psychosocial support, legal aid, and safe houses is still highly limited, particularly in remote areas and regions outside Java. The government must expand service coverage by establishing victim-centered, one-stop crisis centers that are safe, inclusive, trauma-informed, and ensure all services are provided free of charge and without discrimination.

Another significant barrier lies in the fragmented, sectoral approach taken by different ministries and agencies. Current prevention and handling programs operate sporadically and lack coordination, leading to fragmented efforts and resource inefficiency. The government must establish a strong, integrated national coordination system with clear and accountable performance indicators.

In addition to strengthening legal, cultural, and service-related aspects, the government should enhance civil society participation in combating sexual violence. Civil society organizations, victim advocacy groups, and local communities possess valuable experience and expertise in survivor-oriented case handling. The government should create meaningful spaces for their participation in policy formulation, program monitoring, and evaluation – not merely as symbolic actors for legitimacy.

At the policy level, political commitment to the issue of sexual violence must be demonstrated through adequate state budget allocation. Currently, funding for victim protection programs remains disproportionately low compared to the scale of the problem. Without serious budgetary support, existing initiatives will remain stagnant at the rhetorical stage. The government must demonstrate its commitment by making the protection of sexual violence survivors a national planning and budgeting priority.

Conclusion

Efforts to combat sexual violence against women in Indonesia cannot rely solely on legal instruments such as the Sexual Violence Crime Law (UU TPKS). Although the law represents a significant milestone in the protection of women, critical analysis indicates that its implementation remains largely symbolic and has yet to address the structural roots of the problem. Power imbalances between men and women reinforced by patriarchal culture and feudal values serve as the foundation that legitimizes violence, silences survivors, and weakens the state's response to gender justice.

The study highlights that sexual violence is a manifestation of an unequal social structure, which deprives women of safe spaces not only in the physical sense but also in legal, psychological, and cultural terms. The state has not yet fully acted as a protector of victims' rights; this is reflected in the slow formulation of implementing regulations, the lack of sensitivity among law enforcement officials, and the limited access to adequate recovery services all of which reveal a weak commitment to safeguarding women survivors of violence.

Conclusion

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The findings of this study underscore the urgent need for comprehensive reforms, both structural and cultural. The government must promptly finalize the derivative regulations of the UU TPKS, implement victim-centered and gender justice-oriented training for law enforcement officers, expand human rights-based sexual education, and strengthen recovery services and victim support units through cross-sector collaboration. Furthermore, active civil society engagement in the formulation and evaluation of policies must be guaranteed, ensuring that sexual violence is no longer perceived merely as a moral issue but as a systemic failure requiring fundamental change.

Therefore, addressing sexual violence must be an integral component of public policy reform that advances gender justice, accompanied by cultural transformation capable of dismantling male dominance in both public and private spheres. Without a comprehensive paradigm shift, sexual violence.

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Conclusion

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