Social Policy in the Protection of Street Children in Indonesia

Nunung Nurwati[1*], Muhammad Fedryansyah[1], Willya Achmad[2]
[1]Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Padjadjaran
[2]Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Pasundan

*Correspondence Email: nunung.nurwati@unpad.ac.id

Abstract: *Indonesia is one of the countries that has the most street children among developing countries. This study aims to determine the methods in the social policy for child protection among street children in Indonesia. This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method, including 15 full-text journals. Publications are screened, analyzed, and reviewed for research. The data sources consist of government and private publications. The results showed 67,000 street children, or about 10.51 percent of children with social welfare problems. Most street children abuse drugs and alcohol. Poverty and peer pressure bring children to the streets. Drug and alcohol abuse causes respiratory, digestive, mouth, face, and heart problems. Drug abuse causes HIV/AIDS, STIs, violence, and crime. Indonesia adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child and established Integrated Street Children Programs in significant cities. Health, education, housing, nutrition, and the rights of street children are addressed. The Medical and Public Health Model is used for the prevention of drug abuse. From this research, it is also concluded that to avoid street children in Indonesia, we need an approach to empowerment, employment, equality, and culture.*
Keywords*: Social Policy, Child Protection, Street Children, Prevention*

Introduction

Social inequality is one of the most prominent features of contemporary society, and the presence of people living on the streets provides the most unmistakable evidence of this phenomenon. Every aspect of their lives is exposed to public views and judgments, and their appearance, living conditions, and behavior evoke feelings of pity, disgust, horror, and disapproval among the public (Syawie, 2011). Ultimately, people living on the streets symbolize social degradation, further emphasized when they are unaccompanied children and youth. According to prevailing social norms and cultural assumptions in western society, these young individuals are vulnerable and need adult protection and guidance (Yuningsih, 2017). Children and young people are expected to be at home or school and not to spend most of their time in public without adult supervision. Policymakers and scientists have paid increasing attention to this social phenomenon since the early 1980s, and many publications are devoted to descriptions of these individuals and their

street life and suggestions for possible interventions (Karlina, 2020).

Discourse about street children is well established among policymakers and scientists and is most often understood as a description of the reality of millions of children worldwide. However, the discourse can be understood in an alternative way. In line with the anti-essentialist ideas proposed by Lalor (1999), they represent social products created and maintained through social activities. While Gergen (1985) states that the term in which the world is understood is a social artifact, the development of historically situated exchanges between people. One of the crucial implications of this alternative perspective is the consideration of the discourses themselves as objects of study, especially in terms of their performative qualities. According to this perspective, the discourses found in literary works construct the subject of street children. Although they refer to the material world of individuals and the events surrounding their lives, they not only represent reality descriptions but also construct versions of social events. It is not argued here that these discourses are insignificant or flawed (Boyden, 1997).

Estimating the number of street children is fraught with difficulties. The exact number of street children is impossible to measure. Still, the figure is almost certainly in the tens of millions worldwide, indicating that the number is increasing (Gultom & Jatiningsih, 2019). The number of street children has grown in recent decades due to widespread recession, political turmoil, civil unrest, family disintegration, natural disasters, and urbanization (Astri, 2014). The problem of street children is more significant in developing countries than in developed countries, and it is estimated that more than 100 million children live and work on the streets in developing countries. In addition, Indonesia itself has one of the largest street children in the world (Mugianti et al., 2018).

Some estimates put the number of street children living in big cities in Indonesia at 72,000, more than half of which can be found in big cities on the island of Java. Poverty, urbanization, rapid economic growth, family breakdown, and domestic violence are the most direct causes of the increasing proportion of this phenomenon (Astri, 2014). Street children in Indonesia are addicted to illegal drugs at any time in their lives, and the minimum age to start using drugs in this study was five years. Street children abuse various illegal drugs, from ecstasy to marijuana. This situation presents street children with different health and social impacts. As a result, more than half of street girls aged 18 and older reported sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and 20% of them were treated for early pregnancy (Pardede, 2011).

To combat the causes and effects of drug abuse among street children through prevention programs, it is essential to understand how children end up on the streets in the first place. The purpose of the literature review is to identify the factors that place children on the streets, understand the context of drug abuse

among street children and the health problems they face, and develop a framework that can assist in preventing drug abuse by street children. The conceptual framework was designed after research to demonstrate the broader concept of cause, effect, and prevention strategies for the prevention of drug abuse among street children in Indonesia (Azmiyati, 2014).

The conceptual framework on strategies for preventing drug abuse among street children was developed following a study of drug abuse among street children in Indonesia. Street children began to abuse illegal drugs, such as alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. As a result, health and social effects are seen among them. To combat the causes and effects of drug abuse among street children, interventions from the government and non-government levels are presented in a conceptual framework.

Method

This study uses qualitative research with a literature review method. The literature review process is carried out through database searches and library citation indexes (Soelistyarini, 2013). After searching, publications are processed for screening, analysis, and review, with the exceptions required before the paper is used to generate findings and discuss the synthesis. Academic Search Premier, Google Scholar, and Medline/Pubmed are used to collect academic literature. This method involves searching a database from 1990 according to problem-based keywords. Each piece is

responsible for showing more than one finding of the academic articles used in this study.

Result And Discussion
Street children

Researchers, policymakers, and the media refer to street children as pre-existing entities that are revealed through variables and visualized and determined by the gaze of investigation. However, they cannot provide a clear definition of who the subject of their narrative is. There is a tendency to produce broad and ambiguous reports that cover a wide range of possibilities. For example, Aptekar (1994) proposes a phenomenological and circular definition in which the individual's relationship to the road environment is unclear. For him, street children are those who attend organizations that help street children (Aptekar, 1994).

On the other hand, other definitions where the street environment does have a role include children who live on the streets as well as those who live with their families and carry out activities on the roads (Scanlon et al., 1998). Most often, the definition of "street children" tends to fluctuate between depicting them as victims or deviants. On the one hand, street living conditions are less emphasized. Thus, Dallape defines these individuals as' those whose basic rights to food, shelter, education, and health are continuously violated' (Dallape, 1989). Although the different definitions of street children cover a wide range of youth and situations, this inaccuracy is often

JOURNAL OF GOVERNANCE

overlooked or considered irrelevant by the authors. Scientists, policymakers, and the media talk about street children as if they were referring to a clearly defined population.

The problem of broad and distinct definitions is generally ignored. The designation of individuals as "street children" is a valuable tool to help draw attention to the plight of children and youth worldwide (Haling et al., 2018). It seems that preserving this social construction, even in the face of its contradictions, is a powerful strategy to awaken the audience. The use of rhetorical devices is seen in the estimated number of street children in various parts of the world. There are significant differences between multiple sources, which scientists explain are due to different definitions of street children. However, there is an aspect of the question of population estimation of street children that suggests that this is a strategy that sensitizes readers at the expense of consistency and reliability. Estimates of street children often fail to cite their sources (Purwoko, 2013) and are branded with rhetoric and contradictions.

Although social problems in different countries and their cultural backgrounds and social policies differ substantially, international institutions and scientists tend to focus on the same problem to characterize and explain the origins of street children. One possible explanation for these similarities is that they report worldwide social phenomena regardless of geographic location and the historical, social, and cultural context of

the people. On the other hand, it can be argued that this agreement does not represent evidence of reality but is instead an indication of consensus. Social scientists, academics, and other professionals share the same language (e.g., categories, concepts) that they use to describe the world in order to raise public awareness of social issues.

According to UNICEF (1986), street children are classified into three categories: potential, street, and street children. According to this document, street children are young workers who live with low-income families, while street children are those who work and maintain some family relationships but receive inadequate and sporadic support. The third type, street children, refers to working individuals who have been abandoned or evicted by their families and consequently live without family support. This classification is still found in most of the literature on street children and is considered to reflect the process of becoming street children. In other words, apart from classifying a particular group of people, he proposed a theory of linear causality based on the degree of family relationship.

The family situation of street children stems from macroeconomic problems in the country where street children live. These places are reported to be characterized by migration to urban areas (Mugiyanti et al., 2018). Families of children are always presented as suffering from economic hardship. Moreover, this is a large family living in poor and

overcrowded conditions (in slum areas (Tundzirawati & Rusyidi, 2015).

The main reason for the initiation of children into street life lies within the family. Economic hardship and its dangerous nature cause young individuals to be introduced to street life. Children engage in income-generating activities to support their families, and their departure from home is often associated with family dysfunction and disintegration. Therefore, their parents are described as having degrading and morally despicable traits (Mugiyanti et al., 2018).

As a result of their exposure to degraded and abusive families and economic needs, young people are presented as succumbing to the 'temptations of the street.' The social construction of street children offers a strong image of young individuals and their street communities as aliens from "normal" mainstream society. Once on the streets, children become part of a different social sphere and display personal characteristics that go against the norms and values lauded by western civilization. Children who are away from mainstream society are said to be entirely governed by the lifestyle, values, and norms of their subculture, i.e., street society. According to Pamuchia & Pandjaitan (2010), this foreign society is an environment and culture with people on the move, gangs, families living on the streets, merchants, policemen, homeless people, criminals, and adults ready to exploit them (street children).

Children's incompatibility with moral values is highlighted by most of the literature on street children, which often refers to drug use and promiscuity. Drug use is often identified as an essential characteristic of street children, especially those classified as street children. Street children are also reported to experience violence and sexual abuse prematurely and often engage in high-risk activities such as prostitution (Rossa, 2021).

Even when street children are characterized by disgraceful behavior, they are partially acquitted of the blame for their misdeeds. On the one hand, they are depicted as wild; on the other hand, they are said to be driven to misbehave by basic human needs and the influence of different social deviants. Often, writers exploring the motivations underlying drug use explain it in terms of imitation and group pressure and in terms of seeking good feelings, having courage, easing pain, reducing loneliness and fear, escaping from sadness, calming down, and forgetting hunger. They also want to find relief from their intolerable reality (Ningsih, 2018).

Of course, the social construction of street children is a powerful discourse strategy that makes the public aware of the existence of children who live in difficult situations. However, this construction represents more than just a description of social phenomena. Creating a scheme to explain street children, the characterization of individuals and their families, which refers to moral values and the conception of isolated and isolated street society, has important implications. It stigmatizes low-income families and

children on the streets and helps perpetuate social exclusion.

Social Policy in the Protection of Street Children

The Government of Indonesia ratifies the Convention on the Rights of the Child to the Government by taking various initiatives to review state laws and regional regulations and align them with the provisions of the Convention. Furthermore, the government develops appropriate monitoring procedures to assess progress in the implementation of the Convention, involving all relevant ministries, international agencies, NGOs, and the legal profession in the implementation and reporting process. The Indonesian government has adopted a two-way strategy to address the problem of drug abuse and illicit drug use, which includes controlling supply and reducing demand. Similarly, Manihara stated that child protection laws relate pretty strongly to the care and rights of street children and drug abuse prevention strategies, but their implementation is still lacking.

The unique child social welfare program for street children is a national program that operates throughout Indonesia. The program targets homeless children who live alone or with their families on the streets. It provides education, health care, nutrition, and legal assistance and seeks to reunite runaway children with their families. These components can strengthen families and children to not leave their homes and prevent children from living on the streets.

In addition to national programs, many NGOs work to prevent children from being on the streets and provide for their needs. For example, street children and workers in Jakarta and Surabaya are offered direct care and support at 24-hour health care centers in these cities. The evaluation of the Integrated Street Children Program was carried out using a "rights-based approach," an "empowerment and capacity approach," and a "sustainable livelihoods approach" to develop various benchmarks for a participatory monitoring framework for street children from their perspective and also to compare program achievements and projects associated with them.

A national master plan for drug abuse was developed that focuses on establishing treatment and rehabilitation centers; training drug abusers for primary care physicians and other personnel; collaborating with non-governmental organizations; and implementing education and awareness-building programs. Currently, there are around 359 counseling centers in Indonesia to prevent drug abuse and spread awareness. The government finances more than 50 NGOs that are involved in the prevention of drug abuse. A tripartite agreement between the government, the ILO, and UNDCP has been signed to assist drug and substance abuse rehabilitation and recovery. The Integrated Child Protection Scheme was launched in Indonesia to create a safe and secure environment for children in need of care and protection, particularly children in conflict, vulnerable children and on the streets, and to prevent drug abuse among

children. For example, Indonesia has adopted the Medical and Public Health Model to avoid drug abuse among street children in various cities; for example, abusers are only treated medically; supervision of the use and distribution of drugs; and information about drugs as a cause of dependence. Prevention efforts are aimed at protecting a group of people from the danger of being "transmitted" by addicts, identification and assistance to high-risk groups, and information about drug awareness campaigns and cigarette advertisements.

Conclusion

There are few studies concerning drug abuse among Indonesian street children, although they comprise a significant proportion of the total population. Most research focuses on the causes, effects, and risk factors of drug abuse among street children in India, and there are very few academic papers on prevention. However, government and organizational publications discuss additional prevention programs and policies. It was found that there was variation in the research findings, and the study was primarily conducted in urban areas of the country. Such programs require a particular focus on reducing poverty in the country and peer pressure to prevent drug abuse among street children. Furthermore, for the sustainability of their program, they need sustainable resources and effective planning.

References

Aptekar, L. (1994). Street children in the developing world: A review of their condition. *Cross-Cultural Research*, *28*(3), 195-224.

Astri, H. (2014). Kehidupan anak jalanan di Indonesia: faktor penyebab, tatanan hidup dan kerentanan berperilaku menyimpang. *Aspirasi: Jurnal Masalah-Masalah Sosial*, *5*(2), 145-155.

Azmiyati, S. R. (2014). Gambaran penggunaan NAPZA pada anak jalanan di Kota Semarang. *KEMAS: Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat*, *9*(2), 137-143.

Boyden, J. (1997). Childhood and the policy makers: A comparative perspective on the globalist terlarangion of childhood. *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood*, *2*, 190-229.

Dallape, F. (1989, April). Street children in Africa. In a *symposium on Street Children in the Third World, Carita Neerlandica and the Working Group on Development Studies, University of Amsterdam* (pp. 20-21).

Gergen, K. J. (1985). The social constructionist movement in

modern psychology. *American Psychologist*, **40** (3), pp. 266–75.

Gultom, D., & Jatiningsih, O. (2019). Strategi Komunitas Save Street Child Sidoarjo Dalam Pendidikan Anak Jalanan. *Kajian Moral dan Kewarganegaraan*, *7*(1).

Haling, S., Halim, P., Badruddin, S., & Djanggih, H. (2018). Perlindungan Hak Asasi Anak Jalanan Dalam Bidang Pendidikan Menurut Hukum Nasional Dan Konvensi Internasional. *Jurnal Hukum & Pembangunan*, *48*(2), 361-378.

Karlina, L. (2020). Fenomena Terjadinya Kenakalan Remaja. *Jurnal Edukasi Nonformal*, *1*(1), 147-158.

Lalor, K. J. (1999). Street children: a comparative perspective. *Child abuse & neglect*, *23*(8), 759-770.

Mugianti, S., Winarni, S., & Pangestuti, W. D. (2018). Faktor Penyebab Remaja Menjadi Anak Jalanan. *Jurnal Pendidikan Kesehatan (e-Journal)*, *7*(1), 25-31.

Ningsih, S. H. E. S. B. (2018). Kekerasan Seksual Pada Anak Di Kabupaten Karawang. *Jurnal Bidan*, *4*(2), 267040.

Pamuchtia, Y., & Pandjaitan, N. K. (2010). Konsep Diri Anak Jalanan: Kasus Anak Jalanan di Kota Bogor Provinsi Jawa Barat. *Sodality: Jurnal Sosiologi Pedesaan*, *4*(2).

Pardede, Y. O. K. (2011). Konsep diri anak jalanan usia remaja. *Jurnal Psikologi*, *1*(2).

Purwoko, T. (2013). Analisis faktor-faktor penyebab keberadaan anak jalanan di Kota Balikpapan. *Jurnal Sosiologi*, *1*(4), 13-25.

Rossa, E. M. (2021). Literature Review: Masalah Kesehatan Anak Jalanan. *Jurnal Kesehatan*, *12*(3), 479-486.

Scanlon, T. J., Tomkins, A., Lynch, M. A., & Scanlon, F. (1998). Street children in Latin America. *B*MJ, *316*(7144), 1596-1600.

Soelistyarini, T. D. (2013). Pedoman Penyusunan Tinjauan Pustaka dalam Penelitian dan Penulisan Ilmiah. *Universitas Airlangga*.

Syawie, M. (2011). Kemiskinan dan kesenjangan sosial. *Sosio Informa*, *16*(3).

Tundzirawati, T., & Rusyidi, B. (2015). UPAYA PENINGKATKAN KESEJAHTERAAN SOSIAL ANAK JALANAN. *Prosiding Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat*, *2*(1).

UNICEF (1986) *Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances*, United Nations Children's Fund, E/ICEF/1986/L.3

Yuningsih, Y. (2017). *Perlindungan Sosial Pekerja Anak*. Pandiva Buku.