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Violence Against Children in School Learning Process in Aceh

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Observing a great deal of violence against children that occurs in educational institutions has made us realize that, in fact, the violence experienced by children has already been greatly widespread. Not only in the household and in the community, but the violence has also been found in a number of educational institutions in Aceh. Educational institutions are supposed to guide students to have good personal behavior, mindset, and character. Yet, in reality, the violence occurred within educational institutions has tarnished the spirit and purpose of the education itself. It has even distanced the students from the expected educational goals. Based on these problems, the study was focused to address several issues on: the factors causing violence against children in schools, the types of violence against children in schools, and the strategies and efforts of the Government of Aceh and the school to address the issue of violence in the school environment. This study was a field study using the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The sample consisted of 21 public/Islamic elementary schools (SD/MI), public/Islamic junior high schools (SMP/MTs), public/Islamic senior high schools (SMA/MA), and integrated boarding schools in Aceh. Data were obtained through focus group discussions (FGD), in-depth interviews, and questionnaires. The respondents included students, parents, teachers, police, community leaders, religious leaders, NGOs, and academics. Findings showed that a number of factors have caused the violence acts, among others: Schools had no standard operational and procedures (SOP) in handling problematic children, there was a mindset among teachers that the use of violence was still an effective method in educating the students, conflict issue has also influenced the way to educate children, both by the teachers and the parents, and also the violence legacy (culture of violence) in educational institutions. Generally, the forms of violence in educational institutions in Aceh which often happened and were experienced by the children (students) were more dominant on the aspect of physical abuse compared to the psychological abuse and sexual abuse. The emergence of various forms of violence to children (students) in schools has received serious attention from the Government of Aceh, the government of district/city and the school itself. A number of policies, regulations and programs have been formulated by the government to anticipate and prevent such violence. The schools have also established mechanisms and procedures for handling the children, improved the management and governance of the schools in order to create shared responsibility in taking care the children, publicized and socialized the school rules to the children and their parents as well as the society.

Keywords: Parental Involvement, Chinese Primary Schools

1. INTRODUCTION

Violence against children is not only a social reality in our society, but it also penetrates into educational institutions. The main purpose of the educational institutions is to guide students to change their behavior, mindset, and character into a better one. An educational environment which has been tainted with various forms of violence will further alienate the students from the expected educational goals.

Although there are a large number of laws that

provide advocacy and protection to the children, various forms of violence have, in fact, become a reality with the ever increasing cases over time. Child Protection Commission (KPA) reported that violence against children, in general, has increased from 2007 to 2008. During 2008, the child rights violation cases amounted to 26,901,627, consisting of physical, psychological, and sexual abuses, as well as minor employment. In 2008, the child rights violations observed have been increasingly worrisome and extremely complex (Kompas: Edition, Tuesday, September 11, 2012). In addition, in the education world, the data released by UNICEF in 2006

showed that approximately 80% of violence occurred in children was actually committed by the teachers (Children's Human Rights Foundation, 2006).

In Aceh, cases of violence against children in the school environment were found as many as 1,050 cases in SDs in four districts of Bireuen, South Aceh, Aceh Jaya, and Bener Meriah. Mathematically, it can be said that every child in Aceh experienced 3-4 types of violence. The types of violence included, for example, hitting with hands, hitting with a tool, slapping, pinching, kicking, rebuked, scolded, and so forth (Mujiburrahman, 2012, p. 109).

There are several factors that can trigger the violence against children: First, the child's condition, which refers to any child with either mental or physical disability, with unruly manner, who asks for a special request, or who is a stepchild and adopted. Second, family, which is related to the parents' educational backgrounds, family's poor financial ability, parents' alcohol habit, depressed or mentally ill parents, and parents who had grown up with violence who are highly likely to continue this form of education to their children, and also the parenting system commonly applied in the society (Sana Loue, 2001). Third, some teachers referred to the religious doctrine that supposedly legalized violence against children. They made a reference to the Hadith of the Prophet, "Instruct your children to pray when they are seven, and beat them at the age of ten, and separate their beds." (Source: Abu Daud and Ahmad). However, teachers should understand the meaning of hitting in the hadith works in the frame of learning, which means that hitting in the perspective of Islamic education is justified only in the context of educating, no more than that, and not for inflicting pain or injury to the students. Unfortunately, the implementation of educating by hitting in various educational institutions was a little out of the justifiable rules, thus, many cases of violence occurred in the educational institutions, including schools in Aceh.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Based on the above explanation, it should be that school is a place to teach students to be a person with good manner by using a proper way. However, there are some violant cases occur in the learning process. It becomes an issue that needs to be comprehensively studied according to some focuses ie., factors causing violances, forms of violances and government action toward the problem. In addition, this study will also compare between the punishment of children as allowed by sharia law and national laws relating to violence against children. Based on these problems, several research questions will be formulated as follows:

1. How did the factors causes violence against children in schools?

2. What are the forms of violence against children

occur in school?

3. What are the efforts of the Government of Aceh and the school to address the violence in the school?

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretically, violence against children (child abuse) can be defined as any physical, mental, or sexual treatment which commonly done by those who have the responsibility for a child's welfare by which it is all indicated with a loss and a threat to the health and welfare of the child (Bagong Suyanto and Sri Sanituti, 2002, pp. 113-114). In general, the forms of violence that occur in children can be categorized into four types, as described by Terry E. Lawson, namely, emotional abuse, verbal abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse.

Many theories have been developed by the experts to explain the background of violent behaviors in the society, including violence against children. Analyses on the violence have ranged from the macro level (war, government, repression) to the micro level, which occurs among individuals. Efforts to understand the violence have also been done based on the complex relationships among individuals such as gender and sexuality. Sana Loue (2001) explained some of the theories in this context, they are:

1. Culture of Violence Theory, which occurs in a pluralistic society. Some of the sub-cultures build the norms that allow the use of physical violence greater than the dominant culture. Such violence is increasingly common in the society with full of force than in the society with peace. Unequal relation, supporting the dominance of patriarchy in the family and to reinforce violence to strengthen the dominance of patriarchy, is one of the examples. This theory also generated another theory which states that pornography and violence on television can strengthen a 'culture of violence' against women.

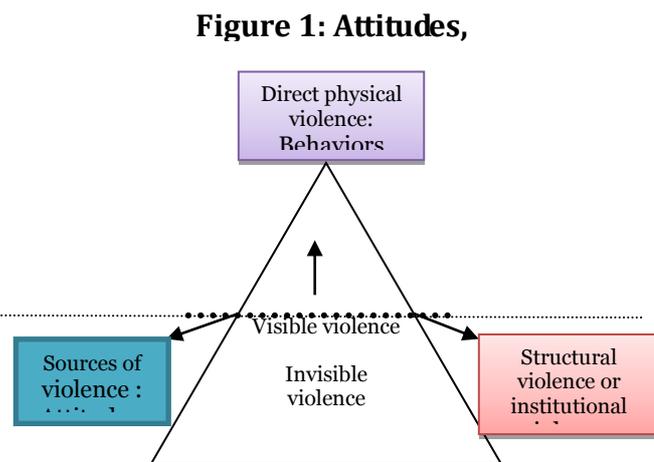
2. Ecological Theory, which seeks to link the family violence with the broader social environment. It includes culture, family social network [formal and informal], circumstances of kin, and family history. Such framework provides the basis for the theory of the risks of domestic violence based on certain criteria.

3. Evolutionary Theory, which states the fact that the society has changed from tending to be simple to being more complex. The family form is nucleus and smaller [father-mother-child], and the social relationships tend to be more structured and, thus, become ambiguous. These changes occur due to the differences in the models of parenting. For example, in a very strict family, non-independency is always passed on to the children, and there is even a belief that physical punishment is needed to ensure compliance. This theory states that compliance

is very important for someone in the highest hierarchical structure, especially when the activities of individuals [below] are done in a formal public meeting, outside home.

Based on its nature, there are two (2) types of violence, personal violence and structural violence. Personal violence is dynamic, and easily observed, showing great fluctuations that can lead to changes, while the structural violence is static, showing a certain stability and not visible. The structural violence takes forms such as exploitation, fragmentation of society, destruction of solidarity, penetration of outside forces that eliminate the autonomy of the community, and marginalization of the community, thus eliminating public participation in making decisions on their own fate. This structural violence also creates poverty, inequality in income and wealth, social injustice, and alienation or elimination of the individuals due to the uniformity of the citizens (Justin Sihombing, 2005, pp. 8-9). The below figure describes the relationship of the forms of violence.

Figure 1: Attitudes, Behaviors and Context



This study is a research field by using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The sample in this study consisted of several schools such as elementary schools, high schools as well as Integrated Boarding School in three regencies, namely: Kab. Aceh Besar, Aceh Jaya and Aceh Timur. Each regency will have 1 (one) each school level so that the school collected 21 schools and Islamic boarding school. Schools which were selected purposively from each district/city will be chosen randomly. Data will be collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGD), in-depth interviews, and questionnaires. Informants in this study consisted of students of elementary and high schools, parents, teachers, police, and community leaders, the ulema (religious leaders), NGOs and academia.

5. FINDINGS

Factors leading to violence against students at School

The findings from the fieldwork in three different districts: Aceh Timur, Aceh Jaya and Aceh Besar district show that factors leading to violence against students at school are varied from one district to the others. These factors intersect to and are connected with each other. However, family backgrounds and also larger communities, in which those students live in, play significant roles in contributing to the different level and form of violence, as in the following:

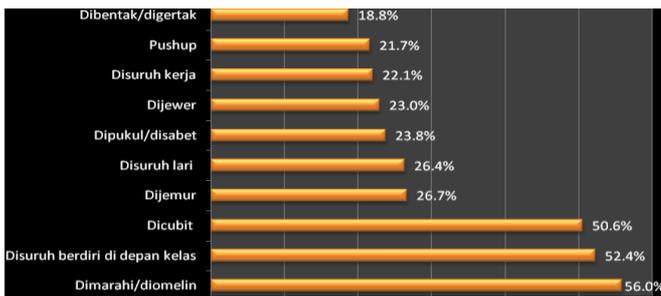
1. Most schools are not equipped with Standard Operation Procedures (SOP), in how to cope with violence against children.
2. Some teachers see that using stick instead of carrot is an effective way in educating students.
3. The fact that Aceh has been in conflict for at least 30 years, and the conflict has indirectly shaped child-raising styles, in which violence are seen as common ways of raising children. In fact, children living in conflict-torn areas are more prone to harassment and abuse. These students tend to be more stubborn in their behavior and attitudes.
4. There has been a culture of violence in certain types of educational institutions, such as in boarding school. The violence is inherited from generation to generation. For example, senior students inherit violence to their juniors. Thus violence continues from generation to generation.

This data can be revealed from the following quote, in which a participant explains his children's experience in a boarding school:

I take my child out of a boarding school, since he experiences a corporal punishment, and I see he got his body bruised, because he was hit by stick. The teachers seem not to understand my child's condition. He did not feel well, and when he did not comply with teachers' request, the teachers seem to see it as a sign of disobedience, and thus my kid got beaten. I almost reported this case to police, but then I cancel it for the sake of the school and my child's interest. (Interview, OT 1, Aceh Besar, 27 Juli 2012).

Types of child violence at school

Based on the findings from the questionnaires, we found that non-physical violence is more dominant than that of physical violence against children in schools. The following table shows this trend:



In teachers' perspective, the above corporal punishment is not a punishment at all; it is not seen as violence against students. Teachers believe that punishment as such, which do not harm students physically, is not violence and is considered as acceptable. For them violence is only when it hurts physically, while violence such as pinching, tweaking, and exposing students against sun light are not seen as violence at all as it is since as a small-scale violence. At the same token, in teachers' perception what is considered violence is only physical violence, while non-physical violence is not seen as violence at all.

This kind of understanding is very much connected to long-existed traditional system of education at schools. For teachers, violence such as corporal punishment will encourage students' learning success. Unfortunately, culture of violence as a method of teaching is not only seen as appropriate by teachers but is also seen as such by parents. In the focus group discussion, we found that some parents are not reluctant to have their children pinched for the sake of their children's success, as one of the parents said: "I do not mind if my children are pinched as long as it make him clever, and my child, after being tweaked he is now obedience and he becomes smart". (*Data FGD*, Aceh Timur, 24 November).

Violence against students in the past few years has been slightly decreased, and this is the result of paradigm shift on what the 'so called' education and educating. Teachers tend to be passive; they do not react on students' misbehave because they are worried that they will commit human rights violation, and they will be reported to police for committing such action One of the teachers utter as the following:

"If we, teachers pinch or tweak students, their parents will come to school and show their disagreement. For this case, we feel very difficult to educate students at school. Teachers are facing dilemma at the present times. This is because teachers are not allowed to use corporal punishment of any kinds. Actually we do not intend to do physical harm to students, we just need to discipline them, and how teach students otherwise is not trained to us" (*Data FGD*, Aceh Timur, 24 November).

The level of violence experienced by children at school will definitely hinder children psychological development. The direct negative impact of violence is turning students to be phobia. These students will lose their confident and self esteem during interacting within their environment. This fact discourages these students to improve their competent and skills and their learning motivation will drop significantly. As the result, these students are trapped into criminal acts, which in turns create public unrest.

Ibnu Khaldun strongly against violence against students at school for any reasons, as he states in the preface of his masterpiece:

"Punishment in learning process is harmful for physical and psychological development of students, and especially that of children. Any act of punishment will create bad habit. Violence and harassment utilized during learning process will shape rude attitudes of students, and that hinder their development. Violence will lead to all types of negative acts, such laziness, astray, fraud, and cunning. Those who are exposed to such kinds of violence will turn to be over reactive and defensive individuals, in which they resist improving themselves" (Ibn Khaldun, 2008, p. 763).

School strategies in reducing violence against students at school

There have been efforts taken by stakeholders in education to reduce and even eliminate the level of violence at school. Some of the efforts that have been agreed upon by all parties are to transform school norms, organizational structure and learning process. These transformations are conducted by the provincial government and by the government in the district level. In addition, schools also take responsibility to improve their own managerial elements and leadership in coping with the problems of delinquent students.

To cope with these problems, the government of Aceh has issued a legal product, the Qanun Number 11, 2008 on the protection of children from violence. This Qanun is a legal foundation for the Aceh government to solve violence against children. The Qabun also has allowed the government to issue regulations used at the benchmark and also as the guideline to solve problem of violence against children throughout Aceh. The Qanun is the source for the birth of the following Legal Act.

1. The regulation of Aceh Timur Regent number 05, 2012 on the violence prevention mechanism against children through school and health clinic.

RESEARCH ARTICLE

2. Empowering multi-sector institutions to prevent and solve violence against children. In Aceh Timur, for example, the district government has empowered Center for serving and empowering women and children, or known as *Pusat Pelayanan Terpadu Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Anak (P2TP2A)*, in the Indonesian term.

3. Establishing an executing body to encourage participation of all stakeholders to produce peaceful environment for children.

4. Department of education and also ministry of religious affairs in the district level play significant role in peace facilitators if violence takes place at school. The peace process is usually involved school practitioners, parents, and students themselves. This peace building reduces the violence rate significantly.

5. The dissemination of the legal act on child protection has been carried out by multiple stakeholders. However, this dissemination only covers some schools. As the result, common perception on good educational practices and violence at schools cannot be reached comprehensively.

In addition to the government's significant role in reducing violence against children at school, schools themselves have issued some policies in the attempt to cope with problems in regard with violence against students at school. In the following, I will show some good practices implemented by school to reduce violence.

6. CONCLUSION

Factors leading to violence against students can be categories into internal and external. The internal factors are those within schools themselves and also from students. The research also found that violence against children at school occurs because of varied reasons: There is the absence of standard operational procedure at school to solve students' delinquency at school; lack of teachers' understanding on regulations for children protection. Some teachers still believe that punishment and violence are effective ways in disciplining students. On the other hand, students' misbehavior is increasing and some of students are moral handicap. The external factors include family backgrounds and students' immediate communities. Familial factors include broken home, using violence in teaching and parents' negligent of their children's wellbeing. While social factors are conflicts experienced by the Acehnese, and the conflict in a way shapes the Acehnese attitudes in educating their children. Violence has been a common place in Aceh during and post conflict, and last but not least the violence is inherited from generation to generation in Aceh wider society.

Even though violence at school has decreased significantly, the presence of violence at school should be put into serious attention from all school practitioners and not limited to teachers only. It is frequent that corporal punishment used by teachers to discipline students who have committed constant and repeated breach of the school regulations, and this corporal punishment is still regarded as one of the effective ways to discipline students and mold their good attitudes. In spite of this fact, non-physical violence against students takes place more frequently.

The Aceh and the district government should put a major attention to reduce the emergence all these types of violence at school. Fortunately, the government has been working tirelessly to reduce any kinds of violence against children through many ways possible, such as issuing legal act and regulations on the protection of children.

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