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# Unraveling Barriers to Addressing Domestic Violence Cases at the Cilacap Police Department

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*Original Article*

## Abstract

Domestic violence (DV) constitutes a violation of human rights that remains widespread and is frequently regarded as a private matter, thereby hindering victims from obtaining adequate legal protection. This study aims to examine the role of investigators within the Women and Children's Service Unit (PPA) of the Cilacap Police Department in addressing domestic violence cases, as well as to identify the challenges encountered in the process. The research employs an empirical legal method with a socio-legal approach, utilizing interviews, observations, and document analysis, all of which are examined qualitatively. The findings reveal that PPA investigators are actively involved in receiving reports, providing victim protection, conducting investigations, collecting evidence, and coordinating with relevant agencies. However, several key challenges persist, including limited resources, difficulties in evidentiary proof, withdrawal of complaints, familial pressure, economic dependency, and prevailing socio-cultural norms. In conclusion, effective handling of domestic violence cases necessitates institutional strengthening, enhanced victim protection mechanisms, and transformation of the community's legal culture.

**Keywords:** *Domestic Violence; Investigators' Role; Legal Protection; Restorative Justice*

## Abstrak

Kekerasan dalam rumah tangga (KDRT) merupakan pelanggaran hak asasi manusia yang masih sering terjadi dan kerap dipandang sebagai persoalan privat, sehingga korban tidak memperoleh perlindungan hukum secara optimal. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis pelaksanaan peran penyidik Unit Pelayanan Perempuan dan Anak (PPA) Polresta Cilacap dalam penanganan perkara KDRT serta mengidentifikasi kendala yang dihadapi. Penelitian menggunakan metode hukum empiris dengan pendekatan sosio-legal, melalui wawancara, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi yang dianalisis secara kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penyidik PPA berperan dalam penerimaan laporan, perlindungan korban, penyelidikan, penyidikan, pengumpulan alat bukti, dan koordinasi lintas lembaga. Kendala utama meliputi keterbatasan sumber daya, pembuktian perkara, pencabutan laporan, tekanan keluarga, ketergantungan ekonomi, dan budaya masyarakat. Disimpulkan bahwa penanganan KDRT memerlukan penguatan kelembagaan, perlindungan korban, serta perubahan budaya hukum masyarakat.

**Kata kunci:** *Kekerasan, Peran Penyidik, Perlindungan Hukum, Keadilan Restoratif*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence (DV) is a form of gender-based violence that remains a significant concern in many countries, including Indonesia. It can no longer be regarded solely as a private or domestic matter; rather, it constitutes a violation of human rights with far-reaching implications for individual safety, family resilience, and social stability. Victims of domestic violence frequently endure multiple forms of harm, including physical injury, psychological trauma, economic hardship, loss of security, and sustained social disruption. In many instances, victims experience not only direct violence but also structural vulnerability arising from economic dependence, unequal power relations, and the social stigma associated with domestic issues.

As part of the state's commitment to ensuring legal protection, Indonesia enacted Law Number 23 of 2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence. This legislation affirms that domestic violence encompasses physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect within the household. Its enactment represents a critical shift in legal paradigm, establishing that domestic violence is not merely a private matter but a public concern in which the state is both entitled and obligated to intervene through legal mechanisms. Accordingly, the state bears a constitutional responsibility to prevent, prosecute, and redress the consequences of domestic violence through an effective system of law enforcement.

Despite this normative framework, the implementation of legal protection for victims in practice continues to face substantial challenges. Many cases remain unreported due to victims' fear, shame, economic dependence on perpetrators, or pressure from family members to preserve household unity. In societies where domestic matters are still widely perceived as private, victims are often encouraged to reconcile without adequate consideration of their safety or access to justice. This condition contributes to a high incidence of "hidden crime," in which offenses occur but are not captured within the formal legal system.

Beyond issues of reporting, the handling of domestic violence cases is frequently impeded at the evidentiary stage. Victims often report incidents long after they occur, resulting in the loss or deterioration of physical evidence. Additionally, victims may withdraw complaints due to social pressure, threats from perpetrators, economic considerations, or expectations of reconciliation. This places law enforcement officials in a complex position, requiring them to enforce the law while remaining attentive to the victim's psychological condition and broader family dynamics.

Within this context, the Women and Children's Service Unit (PPA) of the police plays a strategic role. Established under internal Indonesian National Police policy, the PPA Unit is tasked with addressing cases involving women and children as vulnerable groups, including domestic violence. The role of PPA investigators extends beyond conventional law enforcement functions to include providing victim-centered services,

ensuring a sense of safety, facilitating assistance throughout the legal process, and coordinating with hospitals, psychologists, legal aid institutions, and social service agencies. Consequently, the effectiveness of domestic violence case handling is closely linked to the professionalism, gender sensitivity, and institutional capacity of PPA investigators.

The prevalence of domestic violence cases within the Cilacap Police Department underscores the urgency of this study. The increasing number of reported cases over time indicates that domestic violence remains a persistent threat. Most victims are women—particularly wives—with physical and psychological abuse being the most common forms. These patterns reflect underlying factors such as unequal power relations within households, economic stress, limited legal awareness, and entrenched patriarchal norms. At the same time, rising reporting rates may also signal increased awareness and willingness among victims to seek legal protection, thereby placing greater demands on law enforcement agencies to respond promptly, fairly, and with a victim-oriented approach.

However, a higher volume of reports does not necessarily correspond to effective case resolution. In practice, investigators frequently encounter constraints such as limited human resources, high caseloads, inadequate supporting facilities, difficulties in obtaining evidence, and low levels of victim participation in legal proceedings. Victims often opt for reconciliation or withdraw their complaints due to familial pressure and economic considerations. As a result, the fundamental objectives of the legal system—namely protection, legal certainty, and justice—are not always fully realized.

The study of domestic violence (DV) has emerged as a key issue in criminal law, human rights protection, and law enforcement policies in Indonesia. The primary focus of previous research has generally been on the effectiveness of enforcing Law Number 23 of 2004 concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence, the role of the police as law enforcement officers, victim protection, and socio-cultural barriers that contribute to high rates of underreporting. Various studies have shown that despite the existence of a regulatory framework, the implementation of legal protection for victims still faces serious challenges.

Aryani Nur Chamidah examined the effectiveness of domestic violence case investigations at the Grobogan Police Department. The study confirmed that procedurally, the investigations were conducted in accordance with criminal procedure law, starting from receiving reports and conducting investigations, examining witnesses, preparing post-mortem reports, and ultimately prosecuting the perpetrators. However, the effectiveness of law enforcement is still influenced by legal factors, law enforcement officers, infrastructure, community resources, and culture. These findings demonstrate

that the success of handling domestic violence is determined not only by legal norms but also by the surrounding social structure.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, Ni Komang Marsena Yanis Cristiana et al., examined the role of the police in resolving domestic violence cases in Karangasem Regency. The results indicate that the police's role has been effective, but not optimal due to an increase in cases over the past three years. This study is interesting because it distinguishes two models of resolution: mediation with the police acting as mediators and litigation with the police acting as investigators. The main obstacles stem from victims, their families, and the perpetrators, as well as a community that is less supportive of the legal process.<sup>2</sup>

Andi Suhartini et al. also examined the role of police investigators in handling domestic violence in Sidenreng Rappang Regency. This study identified two approaches to case resolution: family mediation (penal mediation) and formal legal policy (penal policy). In addition to normative barriers related to the unclear legal basis for penal mediation, this study highlights more complex obstacles, such as obstacles from victims, perpetrators, families, and the state. These findings demonstrate that handling domestic violence is multidimensional and requires cross-sectoral synergy.<sup>3</sup>

From a victim protection perspective, Wizaldi et al. highlighted that Law Number 23 of 2004 does regulate protection for female victims of domestic violence, but it does not fully accommodate victims' rights to material damages or compensation. This study confirms that court decisions tend to be oriented toward punishing the perpetrator, while victim rehabilitation remains a primary concern. This study is important because it demonstrates that substantive justice in domestic violence cases has not been fully achieved.<sup>4</sup>

Ulfi Maftukhah examined the role of Purbalingga Police investigators in resolving domestic violence through mediation. The results showed that mediation is used as an alternative case resolution, with investigators acting as mediators. However, the lack of explicit regulations regarding the procedures for penal mediation in domestic violence cases creates legal uncertainty. Furthermore, family interference, social pressure, and a lack of evidence are key inhibiting factors. These findings demonstrate the dilemma

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<sup>1</sup> Aryani Nur Chamidah, "Penyidikan Terhadap Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Di Wilayah Hukum Polres Grobogan" (Universitas Islam Sultan Agung Semarang, 2021), <https://repository.unissula.ac.id/id/eprint/22467>.

<sup>2</sup> Ni Komang Marsena Yanis Cristiana et al., "Peran Kepolisian Sebagai Penyidik Dalam Penyelesaian Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Di Kabupaten Karangasem," *Jurnal Komunitas Yustisia* 2, no. 2 (2019): 78–87.

<sup>3</sup> Andi Suhartini et al., "Peran Penyidik Kepolisian Dalam Penanganan Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga," *Jurnal Litigasi Amsir* 10, no. 2 (2023): 158–66.

<sup>4</sup> Ivanda Wizaldi et al., "Tinjauan Yuridis Perempuan Sebagai Korban Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Menurut Undang-Undang Nomor 23 Tahun 2004 Tentang Penghapusan Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga," *Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Fakultas Hukum Universitas Malikussaleh* 6, no. 4 (2024): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.29103/jimfh.v6i4.13703>.

between the need for a quick resolution and the demand for legal certainty and victim protection.<sup>5</sup>

Lena examined the Merauke Police's efforts in handling domestic violence. This study divides police strategies into preventive and repressive measures. Preventive measures are implemented through outreach, while repressive measures involve legal proceedings. This study also emphasizes the importance of improving the human resource capacity of investigators, particularly in understanding victim psychology, so that officers can provide services that are more sensitive to victims' circumstances.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, Melda Juliana et al. highlight the role of the police in providing protection to victims of domestic violence. This study concludes that protection is realized through guarantees of victim safety and security in accordance with statutory provisions. However, obstacles such as a lack of evidence and low case reporting prevent many cases from being processed optimally.<sup>7</sup>

However, most prior studies have been conducted in the regions of Grobogan, Karangasem, Purbalingga, Merauke, and Sidenreng Rappang. Limited research has examined the implementation of the role of investigators from the Women and Children's Service Unit (PPA) at the Cilacap Police Department, an area experiencing an increasing trend in domestic violence cases. Moreover, existing studies have not integrated key factors—such as the withdrawal of victim reports, familial social pressure, and institutional constraints faced by investigators—within a single empirical analytical framework. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the Cilacap Police Department, its analysis of the practical implementation of PPA investigators' duties, and its identification of structural and cultural barriers affecting the effectiveness of domestic violence case handling.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of the role of investigators from the Women and Children's Service Unit (PPA) in handling domestic violence cases at the Cilacap Police Department, encompassing the receipt of reports, provision of victim protection, investigative and inquiry processes, evidence collection, and coordination with relevant institutions. In addition, the study seeks to identify and examine the factors that hinder the implementation of this role, including internal constraints such as limited human resources, inadequate facilities, and procedural limitations, as well as external factors such as the withdrawal of complaints

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<sup>5</sup> Ulfi Maftukhah, "Peran Penyidik Dalam Penyelesaian Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Melalui Proses Mediasi: Studi Kasus Di Polres Purbalingga, Jawa Tengah" (Universitas Islam Negeri Saifudin Zuhri Purwokerto, 2024), <https://repository.uinsaizu.ac.id/24609/>.

<sup>6</sup> Fredik Lena, "Upaya Kepolisian Dalam Penanganan Kasus Tindak Pidana KDRT di Wilayah Polres Merauke," *Arimba Law Journal* 1, no. 2 (2024): 86–99, <https://doi.org/10.65675/alj.v1i2.100>.

<sup>7</sup> Melda Juliana et al., "Peranan Kepolisian Dalam Memberikan Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Korban KDRT Di Wilayah Kabupaten Sukabumi," *Asabiyah: Jurnal Pengabdian Hukum* 2, no. 1 (2024): 8–20, <https://doi.org/10.32502/asabiyah.v2i1.83>.

by victims, family pressure, economic dependence, and prevailing community norms that continue to frame domestic violence as a private matter.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employs an empirical legal method with a socio-legal approach, examining law both as a normative framework and as a practice embedded within society. This approach is adopted on the grounds that domestic violence (DV) cannot be adequately analyzed solely through statutory provisions; it also requires an examination of law enforcement practices, officers' responses, victims' conditions, and the broader social factors influencing case handling. The research is descriptive-analytical in nature, systematically outlining the implementation of the roles performed by investigators of the Women and Children's Service Unit (PPA) at the Cilacap Police Department, while also assessing their effectiveness, constraints, and remedial efforts.

The research was conducted at the Cilacap Police Department, specifically within the PPA Unit, as this setting reflects the dynamics of domestic violence case handling relevant to the study. The data utilized consist of both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with PPA investigators, relevant police personnel, and victim advocates. Secondary data were derived from a review of legislation, scholarly journal articles, books, and other official documents.

Data collection techniques included interviews, observation, and documentation. Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on their involvement in and knowledge of domestic violence case handling. Data were analyzed qualitatively through processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The validity of the data was ensured through triangulation of sources and methods. The study also adhered to research ethics by maintaining the confidentiality of informants and obtaining informed consent prior to conducting interviews.

## **3. RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1. Implementation of the Role of Investigators from the Women and Children's Service Unit (PPA) in Handling Domestic Violence (DV) Cases at the Cilacap Police Department**

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the role of investigators from the Women and Children's Service Unit (PPA) in handling domestic violence (DV) cases at the Cilacap Police Department, encompassing the receipt of reports, the provision of victim protection, the processes of inquiry and investigation, evidence collection, and coordination with relevant institutions. This focus is essential, as the effectiveness of domestic violence case handling depends not only on the prosecution of perpetrators

but also on the extent to which victims—who represent the most vulnerable group—are adequately protected.

The findings indicate that investigators within the PPA Unit of the Cilacap Police Department perform functions that extend beyond those of conventional criminal investigators. Their role encompasses not only the repressive aspects of investigation and prosecution but also the provision of services, victim protection, initial psychological support, limited mediation in accordance with applicable legal provisions, and inter-agency coordination. These findings highlight the distinctive nature of domestic violence case handling, which involves intimate relationships, the emotional well-being of victims, and the continuity of family life.

At the initial stage, the receipt of reports serves as the primary entry point for case handling. Field data indicate that PPA investigators are at the forefront of receiving complaints from victims, the majority of whom are women—particularly wives—in the Cilacap region. The reporting process is conducted using a victim-centered, confidential, and humane approach to ensure the victim's comfort and safety. This approach is critical, as many victims present themselves in conditions of trauma, fear, or uncertainty regarding legal proceedings. Accordingly, the quality of the initial interaction between investigator and victim plays a crucial role in encouraging victims to disclose their experiences.

These findings are consistent with the principles of victim protection under Law Number 23 of 2004, which positions victims as subjects entitled to protection.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to prior studies emphasizing the administrative aspects of police response<sup>9</sup>, this study demonstrates that responses at the Cilacap Police Department have evolved to incorporate psychosocial dimensions, including empathetic communication and the provision of a sense of security.

Following the receipt of a report, investigators identify the type of violence involved, whether physical, psychological, sexual, or neglect within the household. The results show that physical and psychological violence are the most prevalent forms, with economic factors serving as the primary trigger. Economic pressures within the household frequently escalate into prolonged conflicts that culminate in acts of physical assault, threats, verbal abuse, or intimidation. In addition, the involvement of third

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<sup>8</sup> Moch. Yusuf Bachtiar and Suwarno Abadi, "Prinsip Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Korban Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Berdasarkan Undang-Undang Nomor 23 Tahun 2004 Tentang Penghapusan Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga," *Law and Humanity* 2, no. 3 (2024): 314–40, <https://doi.org/10.37504/lh.v2i3.662>; Dendri Bawues, "Perlindungan Hukum Perempuan Sebagai Korban Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Ditinjau Dari Undang-Undang Nomor 23 Tahun 2004 Mengenai Penghapusan Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga," *Lex Crimen* 9, no. 3 (2020): 142–51; Holifia Holifia and Fathorrahman Fathorrahman, "Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Perempuan Sebagai Korban Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Berdasarkan UU No. 23 Tahun 2004," *Jurnal Hukum, Administrasi Publik Dan Negara* 2, no. 1 (2025): 182–92, <https://doi.org/10.62383/hukum.v2i1.217>.

<sup>9</sup> Melda Juliana et al., "Peranan Kepolisian Dalam Memberikan Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Korban KDRT Di Wilayah Kabupaten Sukabumi."

parties constitutes a significant contributing factor. Domestic violence in Cilacap should therefore not be understood solely as an individual legal violation, but also as a social phenomenon shaped by structural pressures within the family. This finding is consistent with previous research identifying internal family dynamics and economic conditions as dominant causal factors.<sup>10</sup>

With respect to victim protection, the study finds that the PPA Unit at the Cilacap Police Department implements temporary protection measures as mandated under Article 1(5) of the Domestic Violence Law. Such protection is provided immediately upon reporting, particularly in cases involving ongoing threats from the perpetrator. These measures include securing the victim, providing assistance during examinations, coordinating with health services, and facilitating placement in safe houses in collaboration with social service agencies. Safe houses are maintained with restricted access, continuous monitoring, and confidential locations to ensure the safety and security of victims.

These findings suggest a shift in the paradigm of legal protection in domestic violence cases, from a passive to an active model. The state, through law enforcement agencies, no longer relies solely on judicial outcomes but provides immediate protective measures when there is a risk to the victim. Compared to prior studies highlighting weaknesses in victim compensation<sup>11</sup>, this research demonstrates that, at the implementation level, physical and psychological protection mechanisms have begun to be strengthened.

During the inquiry and investigation stages, PPA investigators examine victims, witnesses, and suspects, while also collecting relevant evidence. In cases involving serious physical violence, the *visum et repertum* (forensic medical report) constitutes a primary evidentiary instrument. Investigators collaborate with medical institutions to document injuries sustained by victims. This forensic report functions both as documentary evidence and as expert testimony, thereby strengthening the evidentiary basis of criminal proceedings in court.

However, this study finds that proving cases of psychological violence is considerably more complex. Psychological abuse is inherently intangible, often leaves no visible physical evidence, and requires professional assessment of its impact on the victim's mental condition. Accordingly, investigators must exercise caution in determining appropriate legal measures, including the potential detention of the perpetrator. In this context, the involvement of psychologists, social workers, and counselors is essential. These findings extend prior research that has emphasized

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<sup>10</sup> Lena, "Upaya Kepolisian Dalam Penanganan Kasus Tindak Pidana KDRT di Wilayah Polres Merauke."

<sup>11</sup> Wizaldi et al., "Tinjauan Yuridis Perempuan Sebagai Korban Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Menurut Undang-Undang Nomor 23 Tahun 2004 Tentang Penghapusan Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga."

procedural aspects of evidentiary proof.<sup>12</sup> The present study demonstrates that, in contemporary domestic violence cases, proof is no longer limited to conventional forms of evidence but also entails the capacity to assess and interpret the victim's non-physical suffering.

The results further indicate that investigators at the Cilacap Police Department prioritize resolution through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and restorative justice, in accordance with Police Regulation Number 8 of 2021, provided that both formal and substantive requirements are satisfied. Restorative approaches are applied where reconciliation occurs voluntarily, without coercion, without recurrence of the offense, and without generating public unrest. In practice, investigators exercise discretion in determining whether a case should proceed to court or be resolved at the police level.

This approach reflects a shift in law enforcement orientation from a purely punitive model toward a more proportionate and restorative framework. Nevertheless, this study confirms that restorative justice cannot be uniformly applied to all domestic violence cases. In instances involving serious injury, significant threats, repeated acts of violence, or pronounced power imbalances, formal litigation remains the primary mechanism for ensuring victim protection<sup>13</sup>. Accordingly, the exercise of investigative discretion must be undertaken with due care and must prioritize the interests of the victim.

These findings are consistent with prior research identifying the use of penal mediation, while further underscoring the need for clear normative boundaries to prevent mediation from becoming a form of coercive reconciliation.<sup>14</sup> In terms of institutional coordination, investigators from the Women and Children's Service Unit (PPA) at the Cilacap Police Department have established collaboration with social service agencies, healthcare providers, hospitals, and other supporting institutions. Such coordination is essential, given the multidisciplinary nature of domestic violence case handling. Victims require not only legal remedies but also psychological recovery, safe shelter, social assistance, and sustained legal support.

However, this study also identifies fundamental challenges: many victims withdraw their complaints, are reluctant to pursue legal proceedings, or opt for reconciliation due to economic dependency and familial pressure. This condition reinforces the phenomenon of the "iceberg" of crime, whereby only a small proportion of cases are

<sup>12</sup> Aryani Nur Chamidah, "Penyidikan Terhadap Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Di Wilayah Hukum Polres Grobogan."

<sup>13</sup> Aziz Syamsuddin and Anis Fuadi, *Tindak Pidana Khusus*, 2nd ed. (Sinar Grafika, 2019); Fatahillah A. Syukur, *Mediasi Perkara KDRT: Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga) Teori Dan Praktek Di Pengadilan Indonesia*, 1st ed. (C.V. Mandar Maju, 2011), <https://mandarmaju.com/main/detail/382/Mediasi-Perkara-KDRT-Kekerasan-Dalam-Rumah-Tangga-Teori-dan-Praktek-Di-Pengadilan-Indonesia>; Ruslan Renggong, *Hukum Pidana Khusus*, 1st ed. (Kencana, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> Ulfi Maftukhah, "Peran Penyidik Dalam Penyelesaian Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Melalui Proses Mediasi: Studi Kasus Di Polres Purbalingga, Jawa Tengah."

formally reported, while many incidents remain concealed due to their characterization as private matters and prevailing social taboos.

From an analytical perspective, these findings suggest that the effectiveness of law enforcement is shaped not only by institutional capacity but also by the broader legal culture of society. As long as domestic violence is socially normalized, law enforcement efforts will continue to face structural limitations. Therefore, repressive legal strategies must be complemented by public education, the economic empowerment of women, and the strengthening of accessible and secure reporting mechanisms.

In conclusion, the role of investigators within the Women and Children's Service Unit (PPA) at the Cilacap Police Department has evolved into a comprehensive, integrative, and victim-oriented model of law enforcement. Investigators no longer function solely as processors of criminal cases but also as protectors, facilitators of recovery, limited mediators, and coordinators across institutions. Despite ongoing challenges related to social dynamics and evidentiary constraints, the PPA Unit remains a critical instrument in ensuring access to justice for victims of domestic violence. This study affirms that the effective handling of domestic violence requires synergy between criminal law enforcement, social protection mechanisms, and broader cultural transformation.

### **3.2. Factors Hindering the Implementation of the Investigative Role of the Women and Children's Service Unit (PPA) at the Cilacap Police Department**

This study aims to identify and examine the factors that hinder the implementation of the investigative role of the Women and Children's Service Unit (PPA) at the Cilacap Police Department in handling domestic violence (DV) cases. It focuses on internal constraints arising from law enforcement institutions—such as limited human resources, facilities, and procedural frameworks—as well as external constraints originating from victims, family dynamics, socio-economic conditions, and broader community culture. This inquiry is significant, as the effectiveness of legal protection for victims of domestic violence depends not only on the existence of legal norms but also on the capacity of law enforcement institutions to address practical challenges in the field.

The findings indicate that, although the PPA Unit at the Cilacap Police Department has endeavored to perform its functions in victim protection and law enforcement, the implementation of these responsibilities continues to face multidimensional challenges. These obstacles are not isolated; rather, they are interrelated and involve institutional limitations, victims' psychological conditions, family relationships, and societal constructions of domestic life. Accordingly, domestic

violence should be understood not merely as a matter of criminal law but as a complex social issue.

The first internal constraint concerns limited human resources. Field data reveal that the number of personnel assigned to cases involving women and children is not proportional to the caseload. PPA investigators are responsible not only for domestic violence cases but also for other offenses involving women and children, including sexual violence, child neglect, and related crimes. This situation can result in suboptimal support for domestic violence victims, particularly during post-report monitoring stages. The quality of victim protection is strongly influenced by the ratio between investigators and case volume; limited personnel increases the risk of investigative delays<sup>15</sup>, insufficient initial counseling, and less effective inter-agency coordination. These findings are consistent with prior studies emphasizing the need to strengthen police capacity, particularly in addressing the psychological dimensions of victims.<sup>16</sup>

The second internal constraint relates to the limited availability of resources and supporting facilities. Effective handling of domestic violence cases ideally requires dedicated and private interview rooms, access to psychological services, safe houses, technological support for case administration, and operational vehicles for victim outreach. In practice, several of these facilities remain dependent on collaboration with external institutions, such as social services and hospitals. While such coordination is valuable, reliance on external actors may delay response times, particularly in situations requiring immediate protection. From an institutional perspective, this condition indicates that the victim protection system has not yet been fully integrated within a single, comprehensive service framework. Given the urgent, confidential, and multidisciplinary nature of domestic violence cases, strengthening specialized facilities within the PPA Unit is essential to ensure seamless and effective service delivery.

The third internal constraint pertains to procedural and evidentiary challenges. In domestic violence cases—especially those involving psychological abuse—the process of establishing proof is often more complex than in cases of physical violence. Psychological abuse does not always produce visible evidence, requiring investigators to rely on expert testimony, psychological evaluations, and consistent victim accounts. At the same time, victims may experience trauma, fear, or difficulty in recounting events coherently, thereby necessitating a more careful and time-intensive evidentiary process. These findings extend previous research on procedural barriers by emphasizing the need

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<sup>15</sup> Andi Dadi Mashuri Makmur et al., “Problematika Penyidik Polres Wajo Dalam Penanganan Tindak Pidana Yang Dilakukan Oleh Anak,” *Legal Journal of Law* 2, no. 1 (2023): 16–33; Aoura Putri, “Peran Penyidik Dalam Penanganan Kasus Kekerasan Seksual Berbasis Elektronik Pasca Undang-Undang Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual Di Kepolisian Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta” (Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2024), <https://etd.repository.ugm.ac.id/penelitian/detail/237348>.

<sup>16</sup> Lena, “Upaya Kepolisian Dalam Penanganan Kasus Tindak Pidana KDRTdi Wilayah Polres Merauke.”

for a more progressive evidentiary approach that recognizes psychological harm and the vulnerability of victims.<sup>17</sup>

The most prominent external constraint identified is economic dependency. Interview data indicate that many victims are reluctant to report perpetrators who serve as the primary breadwinners of the household. Victims often fear that legal action against their partners will jeopardize their daily subsistence, children's educational needs, and overall household stability. Under such circumstances, victims may choose to remain in abusive relationships as a strategy for economic survival.

Sociologically, these findings indicate that economic dependence functions as a mechanism of control that reinforces the perpetrator's dominance over the victim. Legal protection becomes less effective when it is not accompanied by social protection schemes and measures for victims' economic empowerment.<sup>18</sup> In other words, access to justice in domestic violence cases cannot be achieved solely through criminal law mechanisms; it also requires the assurance of post-report welfare and support.

Another external barrier is the presence of shame and social stigma. Many victims are reluctant to report incidents for fear of being labeled as a "failed" spouse, associated with a "troubled" family, or exposing what is perceived as family disgrace. In societies where family harmony is closely tied to social status and honor, victims often endure abuse in order to preserve the family's public image. These findings are consistent with prior research identifying societal and familial constraints as dominant factors in the resolution of domestic violence cases.<sup>19</sup> However, this study more specifically demonstrates that social stigma operates through mechanisms of shame, silencing, and moral pressure imposed on victims.

In addition to stigma, family pressure constitutes a significant obstacle. Victims are frequently encouraged by parents, in-laws, or relatives to reconcile with the perpetrator, often justified by the desire to preserve the marriage for the sake of children's future. As a result, victims may be persuaded to withdraw their complaints and return to the abusive environment, despite the risk of repeated violence. In some instances, the legal process itself is perceived as bringing dishonor to the extended family.

These findings reveal a tension between the value placed on family integrity and the principle of victim protection. The preservation of the household is often prioritized over the safety and well-being of the victim, placing victims in a difficult position: reporting the abuse may be viewed as undermining the family, while remaining silent perpetuates continued harm. Another related obstacle is the withdrawal of complaints

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<sup>17</sup> Aryani Nur Chamidah, "Penyidikan Terhadap Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Di Wilayah Hukum Polres Grobogan."

<sup>18</sup> Sabrina Nurfauziah and Erny Herlin Setyorini, "Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Korban Tindak Pidana Perdagangan Orang," *Iuris Studia: Jurnal Kajian Hukum* 5, no. 3 (2025): 877–90, <https://doi.org/10.55357/is.v5i3.779>.

<sup>19</sup> Ni Komang Marsena Yanis Cristiana et al., "Peran Kepolisian Sebagai Penyidik Dalam Penyelesaian Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Di Kabupaten Karangasem."

by victims. Following the filing of a report, victims may reconsider their decision due to apologies from the perpetrator, informal family mediation, or promises of economic improvement. This dynamic disrupts the legal process, particularly in cases that rely heavily on victim testimony as primary evidence.

This phenomenon reinforces the concept of “iceberg crime” in domestic violence cases, where many incidents never enter the formal legal system or are discontinued during the process. Compared to other forms of crime, domestic violence is characterized by the emotional bond between victim and perpetrator, which significantly affects the consistency of legal proceedings. Accordingly, investigative approaches to domestic violence cannot be equated with those applied in conventional criminal cases.

Community norms that frame domestic violence as a private matter also constitute a structural barrier. In some communities, marital conflict is still regarded as an internal issue that should not involve external intervention. Consequently, witnesses may be unwilling to testify, communities may fail to provide protection, and violence may persist without early intervention. These findings suggest that the enactment of Law Number 23 of 2004 has not fully transformed societal legal culture. While, at the normative level, domestic violence has been recognized as a public offense requiring state intervention, at the cultural level it continues to be perceived by some as a private matter. This discrepancy between legal norms and social attitudes represents a fundamental challenge.

The findings confirm that obstacles to the implementation of the investigative role of the Women and Children’s Service Unit (PPA) at the Cilacap Police Department arise from a combination of internal and external factors. Internal constraints include limited human resources, insufficient facilities, and the complexity of evidentiary processes, while external challenges encompass victims’ economic dependence, social stigma, family pressure, withdrawal of complaints, and prevailing cultural norms that privatize domestic violence. Accordingly, effective handling of domestic violence requires not only institutional strengthening within law enforcement but also a broader transformation of societal legal culture. Without parallel progress in both domains, efforts to protect victims will continue to encounter persistent challenges.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the role of investigators within the Women and Children’s Service Unit (PPA) of the Cilacap Police Department in handling domestic violence (DV) cases, and to identify the factors that hinder the effectiveness of its implementation. The findings indicate that PPA investigators perform a strategic role not only as investigators but also as providers of victim protection, facilitators of assistance and health services, collectors of evidence, and

coordinators with social service agencies and other relevant institutions. The handling of cases has evolved toward a more humanistic and victim-centered approach.

However, the effectiveness of these functions continues to be constrained by both internal and external factors. Internal constraints include limited human resources, inadequate supporting facilities, and the complexity of evidentiary procedures. External challenges include the withdrawal of complaints, family pressure, victims' economic dependence, social stigma, and prevailing community norms that frame domestic violence as a private matter. These findings confirm that the successful handling of domestic violence cases depends not solely on formal legal frameworks but also on broader social, economic, and cultural support within society.

This study contributes to the evaluation of victim protection policies and the strengthening of institutional capacity within the PPA Unit. Its primary limitation lies in its focus on a single institutional setting, namely the Cilacap Police Department. Accordingly, it is recommended that efforts be made to enhance human resources, develop integrated service facilities, and promote public education. Future research should adopt a comparative, multi-regional perspective and employ quantitative and longitudinal approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of domestic violence case handling.

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