SAPA 129 as a Government Strategy for Protecting Women from Violence in Aceh Province
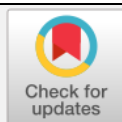
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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of SAPA 129 as a government-initiated service in safeguarding women who have experienced violence in Aceh Province. Employing a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The findings demonstrate that SAPA 129 facilitates access to legal, psychological, and social assistance while offering an accessible digital reporting system. It has also contributed to raising community awareness of gender-based violence. Nonetheless, its implementation remains challenged by limited digital literacy, inadequate infrastructure, and deeply rooted patriarchal norms. Drawing on structural-functional theory, the service performs both manifest and latent functions within the broader social protection framework. Manifest functions include formal assistance and structured support, while latent functions involve increasing social solidarity and empowering survivors to report abuse. However, the presence of dysfunctions, such as service gaps in remote areas and insufficient human resources, continues to hinder its effectiveness. The study recommends expanding outreach efforts, strengthening interagency coordination, and promoting value transformation through community-based education. These insights are intended to inform more inclusive and responsive gender protection policies while advancing sociological understanding of violence prevention in localized contexts.

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1. Introduction

Violence against women constitutes one of the most widespread and systemic human rights violations globally, with serious consequences for victims' dignity, safety, and overall well-being (Stöckl & Sorenson, 2024). Despite the development of legal frameworks, policies, and advocacy initiatives, the prevalence of violence against women continues to rise both globally and in Indonesia. In the Indonesian context, the most common forms of violence include physical, psychological, sexual, economic, and increasingly, digital violence (Komnas Perempuan, 2023).

Data from the Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children (SIMFONI PPPA, 2023) reported 24,290 cases of violence in 2023, with 20,942 of the victims identified as women. In Aceh Province, the Regional Technical Implementation Unit for Women and Children Protection (UPTD PPA) recorded an increase from 1,098 cases in 2023 to 1,227 in 2024. These numbers indicate that violence against women is not merely an individual issue but a structural problem that requires integrative and context-sensitive responses.

As part of the national strategy to address this issue, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection introduced SAPA 129 (Sahabat Perempuan dan Anak), a digital-based reporting and assistance system. This service operates through telephone and WhatsApp and is directly connected to UPTD PPA offices in each province. SAPA 129 was designed to provide fast, secure, and confidential access to legal, psychological, and social support. Digital platforms such as this play a crucial role in reaching victims in remote areas and in overcoming geographic and cultural barriers (Im et al., 2022).

However, several studies have shown that the implementation of women's protection services often encounters structural challenges, particularly in regions with limited infrastructure and human resources. These limitations hinder the availability and effectiveness of psychosocial support, legal assistance, and counseling services for women survivors (Freedman, 2016). When such services are not delivered in an integrated manner, the system fails to reach the most vulnerable groups.

Other scholars have noted that limited technical capacity and poor communication access remain significant barriers to service effectiveness (Colombini et al., 2020). In addition, persistent patriarchal norms within communities continue to discourage women from seeking protection. Weak law enforcement and inadequate access to public services further diminish the effectiveness of protection policies, particularly for women with lower levels of education (Bhuwania et al., 2025).

In Indonesia, these structural constraints continue to affect the delivery of protection services. Limited human resource capacity and weak inter-agency coordination are cited as primary obstacles in the implementation of SAPA 129 (Rahma et al., 2022). Other contributing factors include low legal awareness, deeply rooted patriarchal culture, economic vulnerability, and permissive social attitudes toward domestic violence (Sutiawati & Mappaselleng, 2020). Specifically in Aceh, cultural conservatism and low digital literacy have been shown to hinder the effectiveness of SAPA 129, as many women are hesitant to use digital services due to social stigma or unfamiliarity with technology (Utami et al., 2024).

Despite these findings, little research has explored the actual implementation of SAPA 129 within Aceh's distinct socio-cultural landscape. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining how the service is administered, what forms of assistance are provided, and what obstacles persist in efforts to protect women from violence. The results aim to contribute both to sociological understanding and to the development of policies and practices that are better aligned with the needs of women in Aceh.

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2. Literature Review

2.1. Violence Against Women

Violence against women is not a new concept. Although we live in a modern era, cases of violence, most of which target women, still occur frequently, almost daily, in various parts of the world, in both individual and institutionalized forms. It is recognized as a global public health issue that includes physical, sexual, and psychological abuse by intimate partners, as well as other forms of gender-based violence, and is closely linked to patriarchal gender norms, power imbalances, and historically embedded social structures that discriminate against women (Stöckl & Sorenson, 2024).

In Indonesia, violence against women remains a pressing issue that demands serious and collaborative efforts from all sectors. A notable example is domestic violence. Acts of violence committed against women are criminal offenses that have increasingly attracted attention from scholars in the field of social sciences (Ginting et al., 2022). This violence refers to actions by individuals or groups that harm women. When perpetrated by men within the household, it is categorized as domestic violence. These experiences can cause significant psychological and mental health impacts, and although many survivors receive routine care, their need for emotional and psychological support remains high and largely unmet (Sorrentino et al., 2021).

Violence against women has become a highly visible issue in recent years and has drawn public attention both locally and internationally. It is a widespread human rights violation occurring across countries and in all social sectors regardless of development levels (Vázquez et al., 2021). It may be physical, sexual, or psychological in nature, and occurs in various forms such as domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment, sexual exploitation, forced and early marriage, marital rape, and human trafficking (Zakaliyat & Susuman, 2018).

Globally, violence against women remains a serious issue, with prevalence rates continuing to rise. One in three women has experienced physical or sexual violence in her lifetime. Despite progress in awareness and protective efforts, many women remain trapped in prolonged cycles of violence shaped by social norms, patriarchal culture, and systemic gender inequality (World Health Organization, 2021).

At the national level, current social conditions in Indonesia show that violence against women still occurs in various settings, both within the household and in public spaces. The number of reported cases continues to rise annually, influenced by factors such as poverty, social injustice, and gender inequality (Komnas Perempuan, 2020). Violence often occurs not only in public spheres but also within the family, where women are subjected to control, coercion, and abuse, sexual, psychological, physical, and economic, by their partners or family members in intimate relationships.

This form of violence constitutes a serious violation of human rights, reflecting the denial of women's dignity, equality, safety, and right to live in freedom. Its consequences include severe physical and psychological suffering, mental health disorders, diminished quality of life, and even death (Nasution & Fitriana, 2020; World Health Organization, 2021).

There are two main structural causes of violence against women in Indonesia: patriarchal ideology and exploitative development mechanisms. Patriarchy refers to a sociopolitical system in which the father, by virtue of his role in the household, dominates the extended family network and controls economic production (Afandi, 2019).

The Annual Report of the National Commission on Violence Against Women confirms that most Indonesian women who experience violence come from lower social strata. They tend to lack both material and intellectual resources, which makes them more vulnerable (Komnas Perempuan, 2020). This aligns with research suggesting that patriarchy grants male dominance

in legal and economic spheres. Today, the term patriarchy is widely used to describe male dominance over women, reinforcing unequal gender relations across all layers of society (Kholiq & Wibowo, 2016).

2.2. Social Protection

Social protection is an inseparable element in the process of development and in reducing inequality within a country. Indonesia's national aspiration for a social protection system is embedded in the Constitution as a foundational legal mandate. Currently, the state provides legal forms of social protection for women who are victims of violence as stipulated by law, including: (1) temporary protection; (2) the issuance of protection orders by the court; (3) the provision of specialized service units within police stations; (4) access to safe houses or alternative shelters; and (5) legal consultation by attorneys for victims during investigation, prosecution, and court proceedings.

According to conceptual insights on social protection, it plays a critical role in reducing inequality in Indonesia. It holistically functions to prevent acts of violence that harm specific individuals or groups (Yaneri & Deswanti, 2021). Social protection is also understood as an integrated strategy to ensure access to basic social services and income security for the general population, especially vulnerable groups. It is grounded in principles of justice and universal human rights to social security and an adequate standard of living, including access to food, clothing, housing, medical care, and social services (Supriyanto et al., 2014).

Social protection for women survivors of violence is a vital issue that spans several domains, including human rights, social welfare, and health. It is an approach aimed at providing safety and support to women who experience various forms of violence. This concept includes multiple forms of intervention designed to reduce the risk of violence, provide legal protection, and enhance women's social and economic well-being (UN Women, 2021).

Research shows that many governments have positioned social protection as a key instrument for achieving sustainable development and have prioritized it in national policy agendas. Social protection is no longer viewed merely as a reactive measure to community vulnerability, but as a strategic element for addressing inequality, empowering marginalized groups, and ensuring equitable access to basic services (Shriwise et al., 2020).

Women who experience violence, whether physical, psychological, or sexual, often face complex challenges in accessing protection and support services. One form of social protection for women survivors is the provision of rehabilitation services, including psychological support and counseling. These programs are designed to help survivors cope with trauma and rebuild their self-confidence (World Health Organization, 2013). Social protection policies for women victims often include access to healthcare, psychological services, and legal aid. Such programs ensure that survivors can obtain adequate support services. For instance, crisis centers and emergency response units may provide immediate shelter, legal assistance, and counseling. In addition, public awareness campaigns are a vital component of social protection. These efforts aim to change the social norms and stigma that often prevent women from reporting violence or seeking help (SAPDAJOGJA, 2024).

3.   Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study method to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of the SAPA 129 service as a government strategy in protecting women survivors of violence in Aceh Province. This approach was chosen because it allows for

the exploration of social, cultural, and institutional contexts that shape the effectiveness of the service.

Research participants consisted of two main groups: (1) women survivors of violence who had used the SAPA 129 service and (2) staff or service administrators from SAPA 129 and officers from the Regional Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children (UPTD PPA) in Aceh Province who were directly involved in the service's implementation. A total of six informants were selected: three women survivors and three service staff members. The informants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement and lived experience, ensuring that the data obtained were relevant and sufficiently rich for analysis.

Data collection was conducted through three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted face-to-face using a semi-structured guide, focusing on survivors' experiences in accessing the service, types of support received, and challenges encountered. Observations took place at service locations to examine the working mechanisms of staff, the service delivery flow, and interactions between survivors and officers. Document analysis included reviews of annual reports from UPTD PPA, internal documents from the Provincial Office for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DPPA), legal regulations related to women's protection, and relevant academic literature. The fieldwork was carried out over six months, from October 2024 to March 2025.

This research was conducted with strict adherence to the ethical principles of social research, particularly given the sensitive nature of the topic and the involvement of a vulnerable population. For women survivors of violence, the researcher provided a clear explanation regarding the study's objectives, procedures, and participants' rights. Verbal and voluntary informed consent was obtained, and efforts were made to ensure participants' comfort throughout the process. Interviews were conducted in safe, mutually agreed-upon locations, and participants were given full freedom to decline questions or terminate the interview at any point without judgment.

For institutional informants (SAPA 129 staff and UPTD PPA officers), prior permission was formally secured from the relevant institutions. Informants were informed that the interviews would be used solely for academic purposes. Explicit consent was granted for including their institutional affiliation in the study findings. All information cited from these sources was factual and reflected the participants' official roles and responsibilities. Quotations used in the findings were carefully selected to ensure that no informant's identity, position, or safety would be compromised.

Data were analyzed systematically through three main stages: (1) Data reduction. The researcher filtered and simplified raw data by selecting content relevant to the study's focus, such as service implementation, types of assistance provided, and operational challenges. Irrelevant data were discarded to maintain analytical clarity and consistency. (2) Data display. In this phase, the reduced data were organized into descriptive narratives and classified according to emerging core themes such as service effectiveness and encountered barriers. This process involved step-by-step coding, starting with the identification of initial categories and moving toward the grouping of interrelated themes. Finally, (3) Conclusion drawing and verification. In this phase, the data were interpreted using Robert K. Merton's Structural-Functional theory as an analytical framework. Verification was conducted by comparing findings across multiple data sources to ensure the accuracy and consistency of interpretations.

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4.   Results

4.1. Implementation of SAPA 129 Services in Aceh Province as a Protection Strategy

SAPA 129 is a technology-based complaint system initiated by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection to provide protection for women and children from violence. Since its launch in 2021, this service has become one of the most accessible digital reporting channels for the public. According to documentation from the Aceh Province UPTD PPA, from 2023 to early 2024, a total of 16 cases of violence against women were reported through SAPA 129. There were 6 reports in 2023, which increased to 9 reports by early 2024, indicating a growing public awareness and utilization of the service in a relatively short time. Further analysis shows that the majority of reported cases involved domestic violence and psychological abuse, aligning with the general patterns of gender-based violence in society.

Although the number of reports submitted through SAPA 129 in Aceh remains relatively low, the 50% increase in case submissions illustrates a rising awareness of the reporting mechanism. This growth can be interpreted as an early indicator of the service's success in expanding access and encouraging survivors to report violence. Most users submitted reports via WhatsApp, which is considered fast and user-friendly. The service provides an automated initial response that collects basic information and incident chronology, eliminating complex administrative steps. This makes the service efficient and survivor-centered. The following image shows a screenshot of SAPA 129's initial WhatsApp interface, which features the system's automated response.
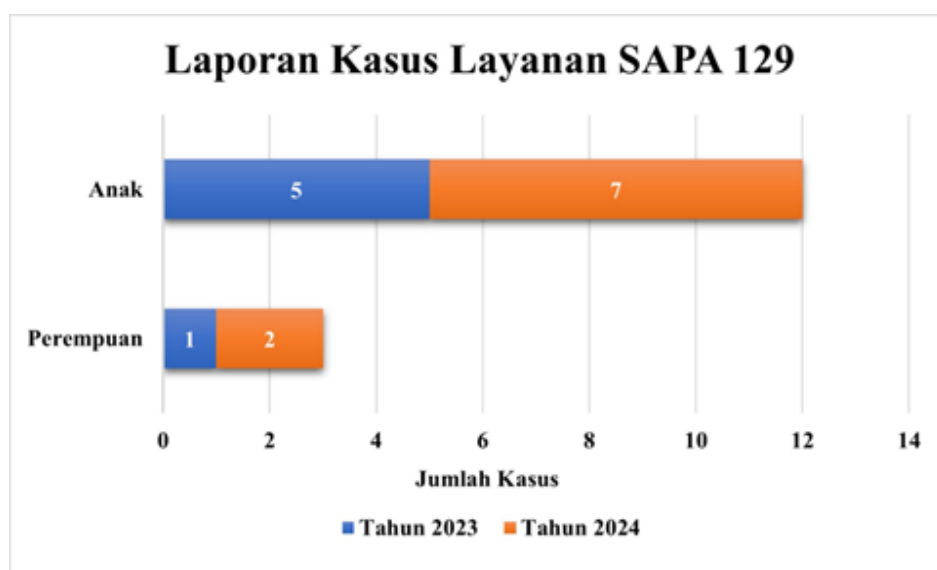

Figure 1. Summary of Violence Cases Reported via SAPA 129

This bar chart illustrates the number of violence cases reported through SAPA 129 in Aceh Province, disaggregated by gender and year. The term "*Perempuan*" refers to women, while "*Anak*" refers to children. The data compares cases reported in 2023 (blue) and 2024 (orange). For women, there were 1 case in 2023 and 2 in 2024. For children, 5 cases were reported in 2023 and 7 in 2024. The SAPA 129 service is a digital complaint and referral system operated by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection in Indonesia.
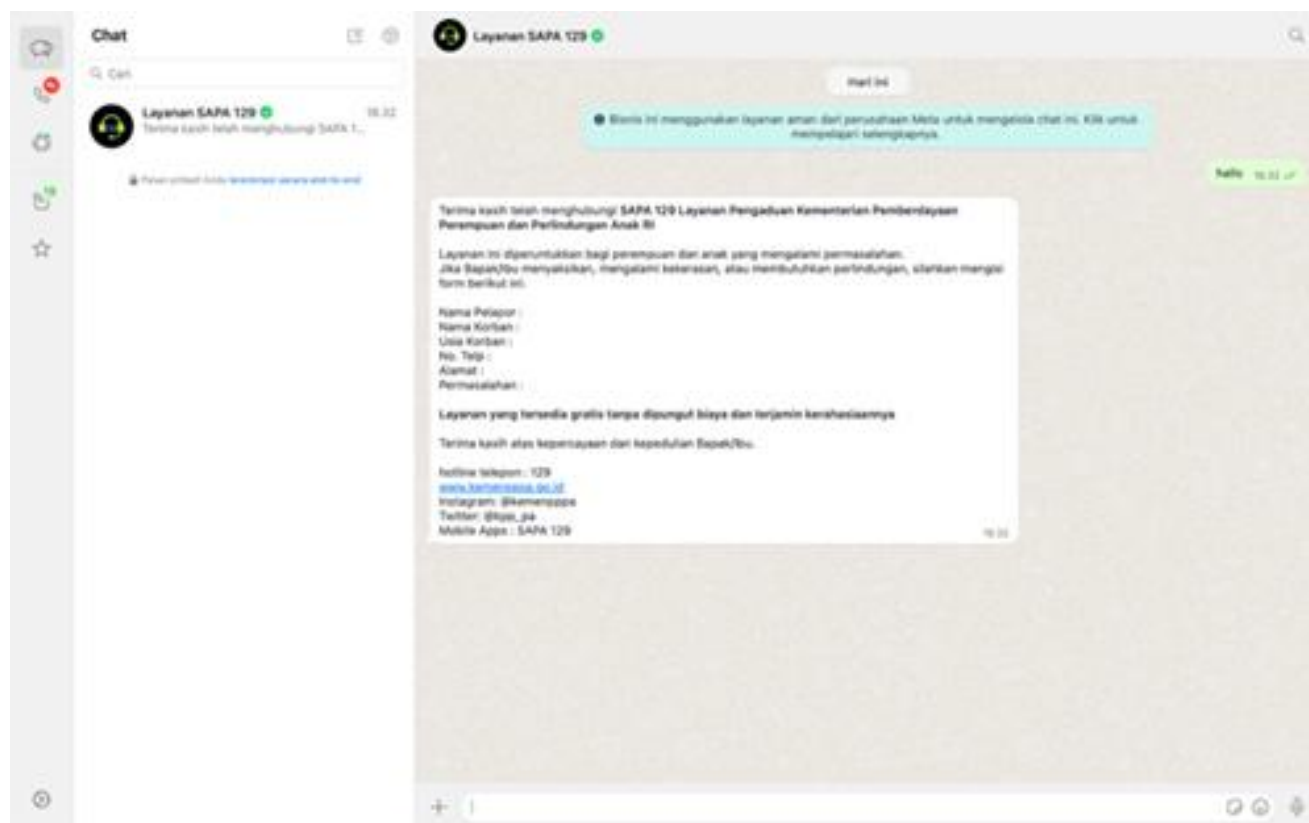
Figure 2. Initial display of SAPA 129 WhatsApp interface featuring automated response

The WhatsApp-based interface demonstrates that the service is designed with ease of use in mind. It emphasizes three main aspects: accessibility through a widely used platform, simplified reporting procedures requiring only basic personal data and a brief chronology, and assurance of free and confidential service. These features have become key drivers in encouraging survivors to report without bureaucratic obstacles. According to a service operator, the user-friendly interface not only facilitates reporting but also helps empower more women to access the service.

> *"Easy access doesn't just make it easier to report, it also makes other women more confident about reaching out. More people now know what SAPA 129 is for, thanks to awareness campaigns from both the government and anti-violence advocacy"* (Interview, February 11, 2025).

Survivors also confirmed this experience. One informant stated that she chose to use SAPA 129 because the incident occurred at night, outside regular office hours:

> *"I reported the violence I experienced around 10 p.m., so I couldn't go to the office"* (Interview, February 12, 2025).

Another informant mentioned that the convenience of remote access was a decisive factor:

> *"I used this service because I saw that I could report it just using WhatsApp or my phone. That's why I chose SAPA, it was simple"* (Interview, February 13, 2025).

One survivor emphasized the value of having a private and safe reporting space:

> *"I wasn't brave enough to report in person. But with SAPA, I could use WhatsApp or just call, so I didn't have to go out and face anyone directly"* (Interview, February 13, 2025).

The accessibility and flexibility of SAPA 129 not only impact technical aspects of reporting but also create broader social effects, especially in shifting community attitudes and behaviors. A significant outcome is the growing willingness of survivors to share their stories and inform others about the service, especially through informal networks. This reflects the formation of survivor-based solidarity and the strengthening of informal social support networks among women. One participant revealed that she first learned about SAPA 129 not through official channels but through social media following a high-profile celebrity case:

> *"I first heard about SAPA 129 from a case involving a public figure. At that time, many of my friends posted about the service and shared the contact info"* (Interview, February 13, 2025).

This indicates that the dissemination of SAPA 129 information occurs informally via digital social networks. From a sociological perspective, SAPA 129 reflects a shift in the state's approach to gender-based violence, from bureaucratic procedures to a survivor-centered model that is rapid, practical, and minimally burdensome. Using WhatsApp as the main reporting channel provides a private space for survivors to report without fear of stigma. The simplified procedure, requiring only basic information such as name, age, address, and a brief incident description, is an attractive feature. The emphasis on free service and confidentiality further reinforces the service's approachability.

However, despite these strengths, the effectiveness of SAPA 129 in Aceh still faces several challenges, such as limited staff capacity, inadequate training, and the uneven distribution of service information in rural and remote areas. Effective protection services rely on cross-sectoral integration, sufficient funding, and ongoing professional development (Bennett et al., 2017). To strengthen the service in the future, efforts should focus on increasing staff capacity through continuous training, enhancing digital infrastructure, and expanding outreach, especially in marginalized communities. In addition, regular monitoring and evaluation are essential to ensure the service remains adaptive to community needs and can function as a responsive and inclusive protection strategy.

4.2. Forms of Assistance Provided

SAPA 129 plays a critical role in providing assistance to women survivors of violence in Aceh Province. One of its core functions is to connect survivors with extended support systems such as healthcare services, legal assistance, and shelters. In practice, the service operates not only as a reporting platform but also as a state protection mechanism that ensures survivors' access to their basic rights in the aftermath of violence.

Field findings show that the assistance offered through SAPA 129 is delivered in an integrated and holistic manner. The following table outlines the specific forms of assistance provided by the service:

Table 1. Forms of Assistance Provided by SAPA 129 in Aceh Province

Type of Assistance	Implementing Agency	Scope of Service	Objective
Psychological	UPTD PPA counselors/psychologists	Counseling, emotional support, trauma recovery	To support mental and emotional recovery post-violence
Legal	UPTD PPA legal officers, partner attorneys	Legal information, assistance with police reporting, court support	To ensure legal protection and fulfillment of survivors' rights
Social	SAPA 129 staff, UPTD PPA, NGO partners	Shelter referrals, social aid, skills training	To provide social support and empower survivors
Digital Access	SAPA operators	Complaints via WhatsApp and hotline	To simplify reporting without physical visits and minimize stigma

Source: Field Interviews & UPTD PPA Aceh Documentation, 2025.

As shown in the table, SAPA 129 in Aceh offers four key forms of assistance: psychological support from counselors for trauma recovery; legal assistance from officers and legal partners to protect survivors' rights; social assistance provided by staff and NGOs, including social aid and empowerment programs; and digital access via WhatsApp and hotline services that enable confidential and rapid reporting.

Several informants shared their direct experiences in receiving these services. A survivor of domestic violence recounted:

"I reported a domestic violence case, so I received legal and psychological support, though I didn't undergo a medical examination because I felt it wasn't necessary." (Interview, February 12, 2025)

Another informant highlighted the continuity of support:

"They supported me all the way through. SAPA 129 even offered placement in a safe house when I didn't feel safe at home." (Interview, February 13, 2025)

Accessibility was also a key reason for choosing SAPA 129:

"I reported through SAPA 129 mainly because I didn't need to go to the office. It was already 10 p.m. and the office was closed." (Interview, February 13, 2025)

Overall, SAPA 129 in Aceh does not merely respond reactively to reports of violence but acts proactively and responsively to survivors' needs, particularly in terms of rapid response, sustained support, and flexible access. The UPTD PPA also collaborates with various NGOs to

deliver psychosocial, legal, and economic empowerment assistance. This synergy enables a more comprehensive response, even in hard-to-reach areas.

These findings are consistent with the study by van Gelder et al., which underscores the importance of service provider readiness in addressing gender-based violence with sensitivity and effectiveness, including through digital adaptations in crisis contexts (van Gelder et al., 2020).

4.3. Challenges in Implementing SAPA 129 Services in Aceh Province

Significant challenges persist in the implementation of SAPA 129, as reported by service providers. Although SAPA 129 was established as a reporting and protection mechanism for women survivors of violence, its execution in Aceh Province continues to face structural, cultural, and technical constraints. One indicator of this is the relatively low number of cases reported through SAPA 129 compared to those submitted through direct, in-person channels. Many community members, especially women survivors, remain unfamiliar with the service and do not understand how to navigate the reporting process.

The first major challenge is strong sociocultural resistance to reporting acts of violence. Many women hesitate to report due to pressure from conservative norms and the entrenched patriarchal culture that continues to shape Aceh's social structures. Interviews with UPTD PPA staff revealed that such cultural resistance is a central barrier to delivering optimal protection for women. Social pressure, feelings of shame, and fear of stigma often result in reporting being seen as a last resort, even in highly dangerous situations.

The second challenge lies in low levels of digital literacy, particularly among women in rural areas. While SAPA 129 is accessible through relatively simple digital platforms such as WhatsApp, many survivors still lack familiarity or confidence in using digital technology. This gap highlights a significant disparity between digital policy design and on-the-ground user capacity. As noted by Méndez-Domínguez et al., the digital divide encompasses not only access to devices or internet connectivity but also users' ability to effectively operate digital tools (Méndez-Domínguez et al., 2023). Factors such as educational attainment, income level, and geographic location all influence women's ability to access government digital services, including SAPA 129.

The third challenge is the lack of adequate outreach and awareness regarding SAPA 129 and its functions. A large proportion of women in Aceh remain unaware of their right to report and receive psychological, legal, or social assistance. This lack of knowledge means that the service, though available, is not being utilized to its full potential. The absence of clear information about reporting procedures and service benefits leads to hesitation or even inaction on the part of survivors. This finding is in line with research by Sutiawati and Mappaselleng, who identified legal enforcement, low legal awareness, persistent patriarchy, economic hardship, social environments, and alcohol consumption as structural contributors to domestic violence (Sutiawati & Mappaselleng, 2020).

In addition to community-related challenges, limitations in institutional support infrastructure present significant obstacles. One of the most critical issues is the shortage of professional personnel, particularly psychologists, to assist in victim recovery. The Head of UPTD PPA Aceh Province explained:

> *"The limitation in human resources doesn't affect our ability to reach survivors of violence; we respond to every report as long as it is within our jurisdiction in Aceh. However, we do face a shortage in psychological services, which hinders some*

processes. We have had to collaborate with other institutions to meet the need for psychological support." (Interview, February 7, 2025)

This statement underscores that while service providers demonstrate a strong commitment to assisting survivors, structural barriers such as limited human resources and inadequate facilities continue to impede the delivery of comprehensive and sustainable services. These challenges reveal a disconnect between the SAPA 129 policy framework and field-level realities. The effectiveness of the service is contingent upon both community readiness and local infrastructure capacity.

As a result, there is a pressing need for inclusive digital literacy strategies, ongoing community-based outreach, and capacity building within local institutions. These priorities align with findings from Rockowitz et al., who reported similar challenges in gender-based violence service delivery in East Africa (Rockowitz et al., 2023). Their study emphasized that limited funding, insufficient service provider training, and prevailing social stigma are among the principal barriers to effective implementation.

5. Discussion

In analyzing the role of SAPA 129 as a protection strategy for women survivors of violence in Aceh Province, this study adopts the structural-functional approach developed by Robert K. Merton. This theoretical framework views society as a system composed of interrelated elements, each functioning to maintain social equilibrium (Ritzer, 2012). Within this framework, SAPA 129 operates as a social institution that fulfills a critical role in stabilizing society by responding to violence against women.

The findings of this study show that the manifest function of SAPA 129 is reflected in survivors' motivations for using the service. The primary factor encouraging its use is the ease and convenience of access. SAPA 129 functions as both a complaint channel and an assistance service for women, offering legal, psychological, and medical referrals. This function is explicit, deliberate, and aligns with the service's foundational objectives. As explained by the Head of the Complaints Reception and Clarification Division at UPTD PPA Aceh:

"The main factor encouraging women to report is their growing awareness about the importance of reporting. They choose SAPA because it's easy, just a message on WhatsApp." (Interview, February 7, 2025)

This statement supports the finding that survivor awareness, supported by a practical reporting medium, is the core appeal of the service. The use of WhatsApp allows survivors to file complaints without physically going to an office, reducing social pressure, fear, and stigma. The increase in reported cases indicates that SAPA 129 is effectively fulfilling its manifest function. These findings are consistent with those of Rahma et al., who note that SAPA 129 was designed as an integrated one-stop service with rapid response mechanisms through various digital channels, including WhatsApp, hotlines, and online applications (Rahma et al., 2022). In this regard, SAPA 129 not only reinforces formal protection mechanisms but also serves as a bridge between the state and marginalized communities.

Beyond its manifest functions, this study also identifies the latent functions of SAPA 129. One such function is the growing awareness and confidence among survivors to share their experiences and disseminate information informally. Horizontal solidarity has emerged among women survivors, fostering mutual support and encouraging reporting. One informant stated:

> *"I first found out about it from a friend… she told me to just report through SAPA 129 because it was easier."* (Interview, February 13, 2025)

This testimony illustrates how information about the service spreads through social networks and digital media, creating new spaces for solidarity and empathy. SAPA 129 indirectly fosters a shift in values, from silence to courage in speaking out. Beyond functioning as a complaint center, the service contributes to public education and outreach efforts that involve families, community leaders, schools, and law enforcement. Its broader aim is to establish a participatory and comprehensive protection ecosystem. These findings align with Utami et al., who argue that SAPA 129 reduces stigma and promotes openness in reporting violence (Utami et al., 2024). Its latent function also lies in reinforcing community bonds through survivor networks, advocacy groups, and service institutions. In the long run, SAPA 129 contributes to the formation of safe spaces for women and drives social change in perceptions of gender-based violence. This supports the view of Sopacua, who suggests that active social services can serve as strategic tools for the systemic prevention of violence (Sopacua, 2022).

However, Merton's functionalist theory also underscores the importance of recognizing dysfunctions, or consequences that undermine the stability of social systems. This study finds that the dysfunctions of SAPA 129 stem from low digital literacy, persistent stigma, and deeply rooted cultural silence. These factors deter some survivors from reporting or from using digital platforms, which in turn hinders the effectiveness of protection systems and delays the anticipated social transformation.

Additionally, SAPA 129 faces nonfunctions, referring to the structural failures in achieving its intended goals due to technical and institutional limitations. Identified obstacles include limited infrastructure, an insufficient number of service operators, and a shortage of professional personnel, especially psychologists. The Head of UPTD PPA Aceh noted:

> *"…we face psychological service shortages, which delay some processes. We need to collaborate with other agencies to fill these gaps."* (Interview, February 7, 2025)

This indicates that while the service exists and is well-intentioned, cultural resistance, fear, and lack of digital skills remain significant barriers to women's access. As a result, the service has yet to effectively reach remote areas and the most vulnerable groups. These findings resonate with Rahma et al., who report that having only two operators significantly limits service delivery, especially in emergency situations (Rahma et al., 2022). McCleary-Sills et al. also highlight that structural barriers such as distance, stigma, and weak referral systems are major impediments to service access (McCleary-Sills et al., 2016).

From Merton's structural-functional perspective, SAPA 129 may be understood as a social structure that demonstrates strong manifest functions and transformative latent functions, while simultaneously exhibiting dysfunctions and nonfunctions arising from socio-cultural and technical constraints. To enhance the service's effectiveness, institutional strengthening, capacity building for professional staff, and the development of community-based, context-sensitive services are necessary. With these strategies, SAPA 129 holds the potential to become a transformative social instrument that reinforces sustainable protection for women in Aceh.

Based on these findings, several practical implications arise for policy and service development. First, outreach for SAPA 129 must be expanded to rural areas using community-based strategies that incorporate local wisdom. Second, improving human resource capacity is

essential, especially in gender-sensitive training and empathetic case handling. Third, the government should develop alternative reporting channels for survivors with low digital literacy and enhance inter-agency integration among health services, police, and legal aid organizations. Fourth, strengthening infrastructure and increasing the number of professionals, such as psychologists and counselors, will be crucial for improving service delivery, particularly in emergency and long-term recovery contexts.

Despite its conceptual and empirical contributions, this study has several limitations. It focuses solely on Aceh Province, and therefore, its findings cannot be generalized to other regions with different social and cultural characteristics. Moreover, the study does not incorporate quantitative methods, which could provide broader statistical insights into the reach and effectiveness of the service. Future research is recommended to extend this analysis to other provinces with diverse socio-cultural settings and to include more respondents from among service users, including survivors and their families.

6. Conclusion

SAPA 129 plays a strategic role in protecting women survivors of violence in Aceh Province by providing accessible reporting channels, legal and psychological assistance, and digital referrals. From a structural-functional perspective, SAPA 129 serves not only its manifest function as a formal service provider but also its latent function in raising public awareness and fostering social solidarity on issues of gender-based violence.

However, the effectiveness of this service remains hindered by several challenges, including low levels of digital literacy, cultural resistance, and limited infrastructure in remote areas. To address these gaps, continuous training for service operators is necessary, along with targeted digital literacy campaigns for women in rural communities and the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation systems. Furthermore, cultural transformation through community education and the active involvement of local leaders is essential to fostering an environment that is responsive to gender-based violence.

This study is limited by its small number of informants and its focus on a single province, which constrains the generalizability of its findings. Future research is recommended to broaden the geographic scope and adopt participatory approaches in order to deepen understanding of the effectiveness of digital protection systems across diverse social contexts.

7. Acknowledgment

8. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author has declared no potential conflicts of interest regarding this article's research, authorship, and/or publication.

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