



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN IN ACEH: AN ANALYSIS OF CAUSES AND IMPACTS

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Abstract

Domestic violence is a topic that is frequently debated and discussed, even widely reported on social media, where most husbands or men are portrayed as perpetrators of domestic violence and wives as the victims. However, it is known that within the household, anyone has a significant potential to become a perpetrator. Men as victims of domestic violence are often overlooked in social and legal discourses. This study aims to analyze the causes and impacts of domestic violence against men. The research methodology used is a qualitative approach with data collection techniques including observation, documentation, and interviews. This research was conducted in Aceh Besar District and Banda Aceh City. The study found that power dynamics in relationships, economic imbalance, and rigid gender roles contribute to the worsening condition of male victims. The impacts experienced by men who are subjected to domestic violence tend to include feelings of shame, stigma, and difficulty in accessing help due to social constructs that expect men to be strong and not show weakness. This study provides insight into the need for greater attention to men as victims of domestic violence and emphasizes the importance of changing societal perspectives and policies to create a more inclusive and responsive system for victims of all genders.

Keywords: Domestic Violence; Men; Victims.

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Received: April 29, 2025; Accepted: June 1, 2025; Published: June 30, 2025

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Abstrak

Kekerasan dalam rumah tangga menjadi topik yang sering diperdebatkan dan dibicarakan, bahkan diberitakan di sosial media sebagian besar para suami atau laki-laki yang menjadi pelaku kekerasan dalam rumah tangga dan istri yang menjadi korbannya, sedangkan diketahui bahwa dalam rumah tangga siapapun memiliki peluang yang besar untuk menjadi pelaku. Laki-laki sebagai korban kekerasan dalam rumah tangga seringkali terabaikan dalam diskursus sosial dan hukum. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penyebab dan dampak kekerasan dalam rumah tangga terhadap laki-laki. Metodologi penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif melalui teknik pengumpulan data yaitu observasi, dokumentasi dan wawancara. Penelitian ini dilakukan di wilayah Kabupaten Aceh Besar dan Kota Banda Aceh. Dalam penelitian ini ditemukan bahwa faktor kekuasaan dalam hubungan, ketidakseimbangan ekonomi, serta peran gender yang kaku juga berperan dalam memperburuk kondisi korban laki-laki. Adapun dampak laki-laki yang mengalami kekerasan dalam rumah tangga cenderung merasa malu, terstigma, dan kesulitan mengakses bantuan karena konstruksi sosial yang menganggap laki-laki harus kuat dan tidak boleh menunjukkan kelemahan. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan tentang perlunya perhatian lebih terhadap laki-laki sebagai korban kekerasan dalam rumah tangga dan pentingnya perubahan dalam pandangan masyarakat serta kebijakan untuk menciptakan sistem yang lebih inklusif dan responsif terhadap korban dari segala jenis kelamin.

Kata Kunci: Kekerasan dalam Rumah Tangga; Laki-laki: Korban.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic Violence (DV) is one of the most troubling social issues globally, and its occurrences are frequently found both within and outside the country.¹ The onset of DV cases arises in various forms, with economic factors being the most frequently encountered cause. DV also has serious consequences for the well-being of individuals and society as a whole.² This type of violence knows no geographical boundaries, background, or culture, and it affects people of all ages, genders, and social strata.³ In a global context, DV represents one of the most concerning human rights violations and undermines the fundamental principles of humanity.⁴

¹Maisun, Dara, Inayah Rohmaniyah, and Hablun Ilhami. "Persepsi Masyarakat Tentang Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan Dalam Rumah Tangga Di Sigli Aceh: Analisis Wacana Kritis Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan Dalam Rumah Tangga Di Sigli Aceh." *Mukaddimah: Jurnal Studi Islam* 6.1 (2022): 131-160.

²Abdullah, Arifin. "Sebab-Sebab Terjadinya Perceraian Dan Dampaknya Terhadap Perempuan Di Aceh (Analisis Perbandingan Putusan Mahkamah Syar'iyah Meulaboh Aceh Barat dan Mahkamah Syar'iyah Jantho Aceh Besar Tahun 2019-2021)." *Takammul: Jurnal Studi Gender dan Islam Serta Perlindungan Anak* 12.1 (2023): 10-34.

³Hanifah, Abu. "Permasalahan kekerasan dalam rumah tangga dan alternatif pemecahannya." *Sosio Konsepsia* (2007): 45-56.

⁴Zahra, S. 2023. "The Impact of Domestic Violence and Its Relevance to Human Rights: A Case Study of Mega Suryani Dewi in 2023 (Dampak Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Serta Relevansinya Terhadap Hak Asasi Manusia: Studi Kasus Mega Suryani Dewi Tahun 2023)."

Every married couple certainly hopes to have a family life filled with love and happiness. Every family initially yearns for a household that is safe, secure, and joyful. However, it cannot be denied that family life is not solely about affection and happiness. Couples, or even families, may experience complex conflicts due to misunderstandings or disagreements among family members. Unresolved conflicts may lead to DV.⁵

Based on data from the Women and Children Protection Information System (Simfoni PPA), during the period from January to June 2024, there were 7,842 cases of violence against children, with 5,552 female child victims and 1,930 male child victims, where intimate violence has ranked first in the number of victims from 2019 to 2024.⁶ Violence indeed does not consider gender, but it is clearly evident from the data above that violence against women is significantly higher. In addition, the Ministry of Women and Children Protection has also presented data showing that Domestic Violence (DV) is currently the most prevalent form of violence. Forms of DV are not limited to physical abuse but also include various other forms within the household.⁷

Violence often occurs in domestic or familial settings. When discussing DV issues, the focus is often directed at one group—viewing women as the primary victims. Although it cannot be denied that women are frequently targeted, we often overlook the voices that are rarely heard, namely men as victims. Even though society is becoming increasingly aware of the complexity of this issue, gender-related perceptions sometimes result in a lack of recognition of the reality that men can also be victims of DV.⁸ Society still holds onto the notion of "male heroism" as an element of masculinity. As a result, men who face conflict or danger must manage their fears alone to avoid being perceived as less masculine.

There are two fundamental factors that consistently contribute to the occurrence of domestic violence: an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim, and the existence of patriarchal culture.⁹ In cases of power imbalance, perpetrators generally feel more dominant due to certain advantages. For instance, in social or economic aspects, the victim is often seen as dependent either materially or otherwise.¹⁰

This is included in Article 5 of Law No. 23 of 2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence, concerning physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, or domestic neglect. The law aims to provide protection, special handling, assistance by social workers,

⁵Alimi, Rosma, and Nunung Nurwati. 2021. "Factors Causing Domestic Violence against Women (Faktor Penyebab Terjadinya Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga terhadap Perempuan)." *Jurnal Penelitian dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat (JPPM)* 2(1): 23–24.

⁶Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection (Kementerian PPA). 2024. Domestic Violence Data Report, June 2024.

⁷Analiansyah, Analiansyah, and Nurzakia Nurzakia. "Konstruksi Makna Nussyuz Dalam Masyarakat Aceh Dan Dampaknya Terhadap Perilaku Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga (Studi Kasus Di Kecamatan Ingin Jaya)." *Gender Equality: International Journal of Child and Gender Studies* 5.2 (2019): 141-160.

⁸Saputra, Hijrah. 2024. "Changes in the Behavior of Children Facing the Law after Guidance from the Class II Special Child Development Institute (LPKA) Banda Aceh." *Indonesian Journal of Community Services* 3(1): 89.

⁹Yussar, Milza Oka, Aulina Adamy, and Marthoenis Marthoenis. "Determinan Kejadian Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga (KDRT) Di Kota Banda Aceh." *Jukema (Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat Aceh)* 5.2 (2019): 432-437.

¹⁰Darwis, M., I. R. Saputra, and A. I. Kiramang. 2023. "Domestic Violence in the Perspective of Criminal Law (Kekerasan dalam Rumah Tangga dalam Perspektif Hukum Pidana)." *Jurnal Litigasi Amsir* 2(1): 117.

and spiritual counseling services to victims of DV.¹¹ The increasing rate of DV annually indicates that victims are beginning to realize that DV is not something that can be normalized, thus victims have the right to fight for a safer and better life.¹² However, the rising rate of DV also signals the urgent need for a reevaluation of victim protection.¹³

Research on domestic violence against men has not been widely conducted, especially in Aceh where patriarchal values and cultural customs are deeply rooted. However, numerous hidden cases of violence against men can be found, obscured by the masculine identity of Acehnese men. So far, many research findings have focused on legal protection for men as perpetrators and criminal offenses. Therefore, this study offers a new perspective on domestic violence against men using the concept of individual well-being, making it a highly worthy subject of investigation and publication.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative method, with data collection techniques including observation of men as victims of domestic violence, interviews with victims, and documentation of physical evidence resulting from the violence.¹⁴ The study was conducted in the regions of Banda Aceh and Aceh Besar.

The data analysis process in this research followed several procedural steps. First, the researcher determined the type of case study to be conducted, which focused on identifying the causal factors of domestic violence against men. Subsequently, the researcher utilized various sources of literature, including books, journals, theses, research reports, papers, seminar proceedings, official publications issued by the government or other institutions, online data, and other relevant sources.¹⁵

Next, the researcher used the data previously collected to conduct the analysis. The researcher then described the information by drawing conclusions to determine appropriate actions or interpretations. Finally, the qualitative data were presented in narrative text form. The data were interpreted using words or sentences to explain the actual facts found in the field, ultimately leading to conclusions and research findings.¹⁶

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Essentially, violence includes all forms of behavior perpetrated by the offender that cause discomfort and fear, whether physical or non-physical. Article 2 of Law No. 23 of 2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence (DV) includes: a) Husband, wife, and children; b) People who have family relations with those mentioned in point a and who reside in the same household; and c) Individuals who work to assist the household and live in that household. This shows that the household should be a safe space for family members

¹¹Kusumawaty, I., Y. Yunike, and M. V. I. Winta. 2024. "Dynamics of Domestic Violence: A Literature Review (Dinamika Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga: Tinjauan Literatur)." *Berajah Journal* 1(1): 62.

¹²Rahmah, Zulfa, Syafrilsyah Syafrilsyah, and Fatmawati Fatmawati. "Religiusitas dan kecenderungan melakukan kekerasan dalam rumah tangga." *Jurnal Studia Insania* 8.1 (2020): 10-22.

¹³Saputra, Fedry. "Kewenangan Pengadilan Dalam Penyelesaian Fasakh Akibat Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga." *Constitutio: Journal of State and Political Law Research* 1.1 (2022): 33-43.

¹⁴Somantri, Gumilar Rusliwa. "Memahami metode kualitatif." *Makara Human Behavior Studies in Asia* 9.2 (2005): 57-65.

¹⁵Anggito, Albi, and Johan Setiawan. *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif*. CV Jejak (Jejak Publisher), 2018.

¹⁶Satori, Djam, and Aan Komariah. "Metodologi penelitian kualitatif." (2009).

since a husband and wife establish a family through physical and emotional bonds. Furthermore, Article 33 of the Marriage Law states that: Husband and wife must love, respect, be loyal to, and provide physical and emotional support for one another.¹⁷

Three theories underlie the causes of DV. The first, the biological theory, posits that aggressive tendencies are not only found in animals but also inherently present in humans from birth.¹⁸ Sigmund Freud asserted that the human drive towards death motivates them to take pleasure in harming and killing others and themselves.¹⁹ However, Konrad Lorenz claimed that violence and aggression are two traits essential for survival. Second, the frustration-aggression theory posits that anyone who experiences frustration tends to act aggressively as a way to vent their emotions. The control theory explains that individuals who have unsatisfactory or incompatible relationships with others can easily be driven to violence when attempting to connect with others.²⁰

The issue of men as victims of DV has yet to receive significant attention from law enforcement and the public.²¹ Although DV is often seen as a problem that predominantly affects women, several observed cases indicate that men can also be victims of violence in domestic relationships.²² Below are some findings and research results regarding men as victims of DV:

1. Types of Violence Experienced by Men

Interviews and field observations show that men who are victims of DV frequently experience physical and psychological violence, such as:²³

- a. Physical violence: Hitting, slapping, kicking, or the use of objects to cause harm by the wife if the husband lies or is unreachable.
- b. Emotional/psychological abuse: Emotional blackmail, humiliation, or manipulation.
- c. Sexual violence: Some cases involve sexual abuse, though these are less common than among women, such as mutilation of genitalia.
- d. Economic abuse: Financial control or the use of economic means to dominate the partner.

¹⁷Amanda, Sylvia, and Dian Puji Simatupang. 2019. "Legal Protection for Women Victims of Domestic Violence in South Tangerang (Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Perempuan Korban KDRT di Tangerang Selatan)." Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia, 53.

¹⁸Hanapi, Agustin, and Evi Juismaidar. "Dampak Potensi Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Terhadap Meningkatnya Angka Perceraian (Studi Kasus di Mahkamah Syar'iyah Meulaboh)." *Jurnal Hukum Islam Dan Pranata Sosial Islam* 223 (2022): 38.

¹⁹Islami, Tamita Putri, and Khairulyadi Khairulyadi. "Kekerasan dalam rumah tangga oleh suami terhadap istri menurut perspektif relasi gender." *Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Fakultas Ilmu Sosial & Ilmu Politik* 2.2 (2017): 985-1010.

²⁰Alimi, Rosma, and Nunung Nurwati. 2021. "Factors Causing Domestic Violence against Women (Faktor Penyebab Terjadinya Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga terhadap Perempuan)." *Jurnal Penelitian dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat (JPPM)* 2(1): 23-24.

²¹Azzahra, Siti Fatimah. *Dampak Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga (KDRT) Terhadap Perilaku Keagamaan Anak (Studi kasus Pada Anak di Yayasan Kesejahteraan Masyarakat Aceh (YAKESMA))*. Diss. UIN Ar-Raniry, 2024.

²²Dewi, Sutya, and Rois Nafi'ul Umam. "Pendekatan Konseling Lintas Agama Dan Budaya Dalam Mencegah Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Pada Pasangan Kerje Mude [Cross Cultural and Religious Counseling Approach In Preventing Domestic Violence In Kerje Mude Partners]." *Journal of Contemporary Islamic Counselling* 2.1 (2022): 41-54

²³Interview with victim in Aceh Besar, June 17, 2024.

2. Social and Cultural Dynamics

Socially, men are often not perceived as victims of DV due to prevailing gender norms, which portray them as the dominant party in relationships. This results in low reporting rates of DV cases involving men because:²⁴

- a. Social stigma: Male victims often feel ashamed or humiliated as they are considered less "masculine" if they report the violence they experience.
- b. Lack of social support: Men may not receive adequate support from friends, family, or social institutions when they experience abuse.

Discussion

A. Analysis of Factors Causing Men to Become Victims of DV

Several factors contribute to men becoming victims of DV, including:

1. Gender Stereotypes: Societal views that perceive men as always strong and invulnerable to mistreatment often make male victims feel ashamed or reluctant to disclose their experiences. Men may fear being labeled as weak or unmanly if they admit to being abused.
2. Economic Dependence: In some cases, men may be trapped in relationships where they depend financially on their partners, making it difficult to leave despite the violence.
3. Dominant Partner Roles: Some female partners may exhibit dominant or aggressive behavior, leading men to become victims of verbal, emotional, or physical abuse. Emotional dependence or fear of more severe violence may compel men to remain in harmful relationships.
4. Mental Illness or Emotional Disorders: Men experiencing mental or emotional disorders may be more vulnerable to DV because they may struggle to maintain boundaries or recognize that they deserve respectful treatment.

B. Impacts Faced by Male Victims of DV

The impact on men who are victims of Domestic Violence can be diverse, including physical, psychological, social, and economic consequences. Although DV is frequently viewed as an issue affecting women more often, men can also be victims and face serious repercussions. The following are some impacts that male DV victims may experience:

1. Physical Impact
Men who suffer from physical DV may sustain various injuries, ranging from bruises, abrasions, fractures, to severe trauma. In extreme cases, this can result in permanent injury or even death.
2. Psychological Impact
DV affects not only the body but can also lead to severe psychological disorders, such as:
 - a. Stress and anxiety: DV victims may feel anxious, depressed, or fearful for their safety.
 - b. Depression: Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness often arise, potentially leading to depression.

²⁴Interview with victim in Banda Aceh, August 2, 2024.

- c. Shame and low self-esteem: Men may feel ashamed or lose self-worth due to social stigma suggesting that they should not be victims, making it harder for them to seek help.
 - d. Sleep disorders and PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder): Trauma experienced can lead to sleep disturbances or flashbacks of the abuse.
3. Social Impact
- Male victims often face greater social challenges due to stereotypes suggesting that men should not be victims of violence. Some of the social impacts include:
- a. Gender stigma: Men may feel isolated due to patriarchal culture that pressures them not to show weakness or seek help in such situations.
 - b. Social isolation: Male victims may feel alienated from friends and family out of fear of negative judgment or lack of understanding.
 - c. Lack of social support: Because of the stereotype that men should be “strong” and “resilient,” they may hesitate to seek help or feel that no one cares about their condition.
4. Economic Impact
- DV victims, including men, may suffer significant financial losses, such as:
- a. Medical and treatment costs: Physical injuries may require expensive medical care.
 - b. Disrupted employment: Abuse can impact job performance or even lead to job loss if the violence significantly affects their physical or mental health.
 - c. Financial dependency: In some cases, male victims may feel trapped in relationships due to financial dependence on their abusive partners.
5. Mental Health Impact
- DV victims can experience long-term mental health issues, such as:
- a. Feeling powerless: A sense of having no control over one’s life can result in deep hopelessness.
 - b. Social anxiety and reluctance to form new relationships: Victims may find it difficult to trust others, affecting their ability to form healthy relationships in the future.
6. Difficulties in Seeking Help
- Many male victims of DV struggle to seek help due to:
- a. Lack of dedicated services: Services for DV victims are generally focused on women, and men may find it difficult to locate resources or safe spaces.
 - b. Fear of rejection or disbelief: Men who report abuse often fear not being believed or being criticized by authorities, friends, or family.
7. Impact on Family Relationships
- Men who are victims of DV may experience changes in family dynamics. The tension caused by violence can damage relationships between spouses and affect interactions with children or other family members. In some cases, the violence may escalate and involve third parties, such as children, potentially causing trauma to them.
8. Handling and Solutions
- To assist male victims of DV, several steps should be taken:

- a. Raising Awareness and Education: Broader dissemination is needed to promote recognition of men as potential DV victims to reduce stigma and emphasize that DV is a humanitarian issue, not merely a gender issue.
- b. Providing Psychological Support: Male DV victims often need help to overcome psychological trauma and rebuild their self-esteem. Counseling and psychotherapy centers can offer a safe space for men to share their experiences without fear of judgment.
- c. Enhancing Access to Legal Services: Male DV victims should have equal access to legal protection and due process when needed. This includes developing laws that protect male victims just as they do female victims.
- d. Establishing Crisis Centers for Men: Specialized crisis services for male DV victims should be made available, including temporary shelters and counseling services tailored for men.

Domestic Violence refers to any act against a person that causes physical, sexual, psychological suffering or neglect within a household. This includes threats, coercion, and unlawful deprivation of liberty within the domestic sphere.²⁵

Violence experienced by men in the context of DV can vary, including physical violence. Although it is often viewed as perpetrated by men against women, physical abuse can also be committed by women against men. Such violence may involve beatings, kicking, or the use of sharp objects. Psychological violence includes emotional abuse such as humiliation, manipulation, control, or emotional blackmail, often involving verbal harassment and undermining the victim's self-esteem. Economic violence occurs when men trapped in unhealthy relationships become victims of economic control, where their partners dominate financial resources or prevent them from working and shopping.²⁶

Every individual's actions can impact themselves, others, or even larger groups. As previously described, DV encompasses various forms of violence—physical, sexual, psychological, and economic. These forms of abuse can have psychological effects on female DV victims, including anxiety, fear, depression, hypervigilance, frequent daydreaming, and insecurity when encountering similar cases. Victims may lose the courage to think or act, feel helpless, and lack self-confidence, often resulting in careless behavior, forgetfulness, and confusion. Victims may become withdrawn, unwilling to speak, and often isolate themselves in their rooms. They may also self-harm or attempt suicide. Extreme and erratic behaviors can make it difficult for victims to control themselves, becoming aggressive, temperamental, and emotionally harsh in their speech and actions.

Discussion of men as victims of Domestic Violence must be given proper attention, even though this issue has historically received less focus compared to women as victims. DV is generally viewed as a phenomenon more commonly experienced by women, but in reality, men can also be victims of DV—physically, psychologically, or sexually. Addressing this issue is essential to broaden understanding of DV and to promote equality and justice for all victims, regardless of gender.

²⁵Darmawan, Darmawan. "Pengaruh Angka Perceraian di Pulau Jawa Akibat Kasus Kekerasan dalam Rumah Tangga." *Ranah Research: Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development* 7.1 (2024): 407-412.

²⁶Manumpahi, Edwin, Shirley YVI Goni, and Hendrik W. Pongoh. "Kajian kekerasan dalam rumah tangga terhadap psikologi anak di Desa Soakonora Kecamatan Jailolo Kabupaten Halmahera Barat." *Acta Diurna Komunikasi* 5.1 (2016).

CONCLUSION

The conclusion regarding men as victims of Domestic Violence (DV) indicates that DV does not discriminate based on gender. Although women are more frequently reported as victims in many cases, men can also become victims of physical, emotional, or psychological abuse within domestic relationships. DV can affect anyone, regardless of gender. While statistically women are more often identified as victims, men are not exempt from experiencing violence in relationships. Many male victims feel stigmatized or ashamed to report the abuse they endure. Gender norms and societal expectations often portray men as strong and impervious to vulnerability, leading them to hide the violence they experience. Men who become victims of DV frequently suffer emotional or psychological abuse, though physical violence may also occur. This type of violence is sometimes harder to identify because perpetrators may use more subtle forms of manipulation, humiliation, or control.

The impacts of DV on men, similar to those on women, can be severe and far-reaching, including psychological trauma, depression, anxiety, and a decline in self-esteem. Physical consequences such as injuries or wounds resulting from abuse may also occur. Therefore, inclusive support for male DV victims is crucial, including access to counseling services, shelters, and other resources that are welcoming and accessible to men. To address this issue effectively, it is necessary to raise awareness that men are equally entitled to protection from DV. A gender equality-based approach is essential in supporting male victims and ensuring they are not neglected or silenced by societal perceptions.

Overall, it is important to acknowledge that DV is a serious issue that can affect anyone, regardless of gender. Increasing awareness and support for men as victims of DV is essential for building a more just and empathetic society.

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