

# Policy Communication Design to Protect Women from Violence

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**Abstract.** This study examines the strategies used by the Indonesian government to address violence against women. The findings highlight various approaches: advocacy, behaviour and social communication change, social mobilization, mass media, and participatory communication. The government also supports survivors by funding shelters, enhancing hotlines, providing survivor-focused care, and disseminating information. Community engagement plays a key role in prevention efforts. Through community mobilization, the government encourages proactive measures to prevent violence and promote social norms that uphold gender equality. The study concludes that combating gender-based violence requires a comprehensive approach. This includes enforcing gender equality laws, funding women's organizations, and addressing daily forms of discrimination. Progress in prevention strategies has been significantly influenced by programs supported by UN Women over the past decade.

**Keywords:** Violence against women; Women's mental health; Government communication strategies

## 1. Introduction

The issue of domestic violence against women persists globally, representing a significant concern. Domestic abuse encompasses various manifestations, including physical, psychological, sexual, and economic forms [1]. A significant number of women who experience domestic abuse refrain from reporting such incidents due to fear or feelings [2] of embarrassment. Consequently, numerous instances of domestic abuse remain undetected and fail to receive the necessary intervention [2]. Numerous studies [3] have shown that physical violence is a frequent manifestation of domestic abuse. Physical violence encompasses several manifestations, such as the application of force through punches, kicks, bites, or the utilization of weaponry. The act of engaging in physical violence can result in various forms of harm, such as injuries, the manifestation of bruises, or, in extreme cases, mortality. Psychological violence encompasses several manifestations, such as verbal insults, explicit threats, and undue control [3]. Sexual violence is a prevalent manifestation

of domestic abuse that is typically underreported [4]. Sexual violence encompasses incidents of coerced sexual intercourse or non-consensual sexual activities [5]. Economic violence, however less recognized compared to other forms of domestic violence, poses significant harm to its victims [6]. Economic violence encompasses various manifestations, such as exerting control over the victim's financial resources or impeding their ability to engage in gainful employment.

Numerous women exhibit hesitancy in reporting instances of violence they experience, particularly when the perpetrators are individuals in close proximity to them [7]. This reluctance stems from various factors. According to existing literature, it is frequently observed that women commonly experience feelings of shame and tend to attribute the violence they endure to personal culpability or inadequacy [8]. The occurrence of this phenomenon can be attributed to the societal stigmatization associated with those who have experienced violence, whereby such individuals are frequently perceived as lacking strength or the capacity to address their own challenges independently [9]. Furthermore, it has been observed that women commonly suffer feelings of fear and apprehension regarding the potential repercussions that may ensue upon reporting instances of assault [10].

Women who experience violence often fear retaliation or worry that reporting the abuse may worsen their situation. Many also face a lack of support from family or society, leading to isolation and limited access to assistance. Additionally, women frequently encounter challenges in obtaining information about available services or resources. Concerns about economic or social repercussions, such as job loss, financial instability, or social isolation, often discourage women from disclosing their experiences.

The government plays a crucial role in protecting women from domestic violence, as it is a serious human rights violation with far-reaching impacts on women's safety, well-being, and socio-economic participation. Domestic violence can perpetuate a cycle of abuse, affecting children who witness or experience it. The state must uphold human rights, promote gender equality, and combat discrimination in the domestic sphere. This includes ensuring victims have access to health, psychological, and legal services, raising public awareness about the issue, and fostering a society that respects and protects women. A strong governmental framework is essential to create a safe environment where women can actively participate in society.

International studies highlight the critical role of state intervention in addressing domestic violence. Research from UNDP, ICRW, WHO, and Human Rights Watch emphasizes the importance of policies that strengthen legal protections, improve access to healthcare and psychological support, and promote gender equality. Public awareness campaigns and justice system reforms are also key components. This study focuses on the communication strategies employed by the Indonesian government to address domestic violence, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic. Using a case study methodology, the research examines Karawang Regency in West Java. Data was collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving three groups: policymakers (e.g., the Regent of Karawang), policy implementers (Women and Children Protection and Empowerment Service), and policy users (women affected by domestic violence). The study aims to explore how communication strategies contribute to protecting women and promoting a safer society.

## **2. Literature Review**

The government employs various communication strategies to protect women from violence, emphasizing advocacy, transformation of social norms, community engagement, media outreach, and participatory methods. Advocacy plays a crucial role by raising awareness about the importance of safeguarding women and inspiring proactive preventive actions. The government influences public opinion and policy through targeted messaging to prioritize the issue. Transforming behaviour and social communication is another key strategy, aiming to shift attitudes and beliefs to promote respect for women and discourage harmful behaviours that perpetuate violence.

Community involvement is fostered through social mobilization, engaging people to participate actively in efforts to prevent violence and embrace gender-equal social norms. Mass media is a powerful tool in this endeavour, leveraging television, radio, and newspapers to reach broad audiences, raise awareness, and shape positive attitudes. Additionally, participatory communication ensures that communities are directly involved in designing and implementing initiatives, making them stakeholders in promoting gender equality and preventing violence. Together, these approaches form a comprehensive framework to address and mitigate violence against women effectively. The government may also employ alternative approaches, including allocating financial resources to establish shelters and secure survivors' accommodation facilities. Furthermore, the government can enhance hotline services and facilitate the dissemination of information. Additionally, the government can prioritize survivor-centric care and services in order to address the needs of those affected. The aforementioned tactics are designed with the objective of offering support and aid to women who have encountered instances of violence, as well as proactively deterring the occurrence of violence.

## **3. Methods**

This study adopts a qualitative method that is either descriptive or illustrative. According to Creswell [14], using a qualitative approach is a step in the research process to comprehend a social issue in society. By closely examining the event that transpired, this research offers a detailed, complicated account of the currently available data. The data sources used to analyse issues with government communication strategies are primary data sources, data gathered in the field through observations and interviews, and secondary data sources, which are data based on literature, which are data from books, mass media, the internet, and journals. "first-hand information" refers to an actual thing or an authentic document containing raw behavioural data. Additionally, statistics are gathered from secondary sources.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

Women, as members of society and valuable contributors, possess equal entitlements, responsibilities, and prospects as men to actively participate in advancing various domains. The significance of women's roles as citizens, mothers, and wives is evident, as they balance the roles of

males. Consequently, it is imperative to uphold their rights. The role and status of women in society and the state are defined by their membership in society and their citizenship, which entails many rights and responsibilities. The constitutional provision delineating the status of women as citizens, encompassing their entitlements and responsibilities, can be found in Article 27, Paragraph 1, of the 1945 Constitution. This provision asserts that all citizens, irrespective of gender, possess equal standing in relation to the law and the government and are duty-bound to uphold the law and government without any exemptions. According to these stipulations, it can be inferred that the law does not distinguish between genders, ensuring equal rights and responsibilities for all individuals. Consequently, women hold an equivalent status to men.

Any action by a person that causes harm or distress on a physical, sexual, psychological, or neglect-related level is considered to be violent, and this includes the use of threats, coercion, or deprivation. Violence can be defined as a form of unlawful conduct or unjust treatment. The term "violence" encompasses behaviours that result in harm or fatality to individuals as well as inflict physical damage upon them. The phrase "violence" refers to the actions undertaken by an individual towards another individual that have the potential to result in physical or psychological harm. Instances of violence perpetrated against women and children, which frequently go unnoticed, are typically executed by adult individuals. Indeed, these individuals bear the paramount responsibility of safeguarding the well-being of children and women. According to a poll, it has been found that a higher percentage of women, specifically moms, engage in acts of violence more frequently compared to males, specifically fathers, instances of violence targeting women often involve individuals who are in close proximity to them, such as fathers and husbands, constituting a significant portion of the perpetrators. There are multiple factors contributing to the higher prevalence of maternal perpetration of violence against children, such as heightened levels of stress and the presence of traumatic memories from previous experiences. Violence perpetrated against women and children encompasses behaviours that lead to, or have the potential to lead to, physical, sexual, and psychological injury or distress. This includes instances of threatened harm, coercion, or personal freedom restriction, whether in public or private domains. To mitigate the prevalence of violence against women and children, it is imperative to implement efficacious governmental measures. Preventive measures targeting women and children are vital, and the significance of regional government initiatives in addressing violence should not be underestimated. One of the strategies employed by the government to mitigate the prevalence of violence is the implementation of campaigns aimed at curbing violent behaviour. Instances of sexual assault are among the deviant behaviours and criminal acts that elicit significant concern within society.

The government employs a variety of initiatives to address violence against women, focusing on prevention, support, and systemic change. Expanding helplines and improving information-sharing mechanisms are key in offering immediate aid to survivors while working to prevent future incidents. Additionally, governments allocate resources to establish shelters and secure accommodations, providing a safe refuge for women who have experienced abuse. Behavioural and social communication strategies are utilized to shift societal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours that perpetuate violence. Community engagement through social mobilization actively involves individuals and groups in efforts to promote gender equality and prevent violence. Mass media further amplifies these efforts, raising awareness and fostering positive perceptions of women.

Participatory communication ensures that communities are directly involved in developing and implementing initiatives. Preventive programs also engage community leaders, encourage men and boys to take active roles in prevention, and address structural issues contributing to violence, such as economic insecurity and marginalization. Strengthening legal and justice systems is another critical measure, ensuring perpetrators are held accountable, and laws promoting gender equality are effectively enforced. Governments also focus on empowering women economically to reduce their vulnerability to violence. Lastly, promoting education that teaches gender equality and respect for women is vital to fostering a mutual respect and equality culture. Together, these initiatives create a comprehensive approach to tackling violence against women.

The government has implemented the P2TP2A program to protect women from violence. This program provides legal aid, counselling, and support services for survivors, including psychological and medical assistance. It also raises awareness through public education and advocacy, encouraging community involvement and engaging men and boys in prevention efforts. P2TP2A focuses on social mobilization, working with communities to promote gender equality and prevent abuse. It supports initiatives like empowering women economically, involving community leaders, and addressing factors contributing to violence. By sustaining these efforts, the government aims to safeguard women and advance gender equality.

## **5. Conclusion**

The Indonesian government has developed a range of policies aimed at safeguarding women from violence, primarily through the establishment of P2TP2A, which stands for Integrated Service Centre for Women Empowerment and Children. The aforementioned measures encompass a range of interventions, such as legal safeguards, therapeutic guidance, proactive representation, community mobilization, preventive initiatives, secure environments, and appropriate referral mechanisms. P2TP2A offers a comprehensive array of services aimed at addressing the needs of women and children who have encountered instances of abuse. These services encompass legal aid, psychiatric therapy, medical care, and more forms of support. The program has notably influenced the well-being of women and children in Indonesia, affording them opportunities to obtain legal recourse, assistance, and nurturing. Nevertheless, the provision of P2TP2A services may exhibit regional disparities, resulting in certain P2TP2A establishments not operating round-the-clock as mandated. Women residing in rural regions or districts lacking a P2TP2A centre may have challenges accessing support services. It is imperative for the government to sustain its investment in P2TP2A in order to safeguard women and children from acts of violence and advance the cause of gender equality.

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Institute for Research and Community Service (LPPM) of the University of Singaperbangsa Karawang, who have funded the research through the 2023 Strategic and Applied Grant program, the Indonesian Institute of Cultural Arts Bandung and the University of Lambungmangkurat who have facilitated this research.

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