

Legal Protection for Children Exploited as Beggars in Bandar Lampung City

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ABSTRACT

Child exploitation through forced begging in Bandar Lampung City constitutes a severe violation of fundamental rights, substantially undermining both physical and psychological development. Criminal networks systematically manipulate vulnerable minors for economic gain, representing a grave breach of child labor protection statutes. This research examines law enforcement mechanisms targeting exploitation perpetrators, identifies systemic barriers, and proposes enhanced legal protection frameworks. The investigation employs a sociological-juridical methodology, utilizing documentary analysis, ethnographic observations, and structured interviews with law enforcement personnel, social service practitioners, and child advocacy specialists. Analysis draws upon child protection theory and progressive jurisprudence principles. Findings reveal enforcement mechanisms remain fragmented, reactive, and institutionally unsupported. Primary impediments encompass inter-agency coordination deficits, inadequate street children documentation, and insufficient rehabilitation funding. The research advocates for policy restructuring and systematic strengthening of child protection mechanisms through interdisciplinary collaboration. The study's significance lies in advancing more integrated and effective legal safeguards for exploited children across municipal and national jurisdictions.

ABSTRAK

Eksplorasi anak melalui praktik mengemis paksa di Kota Bandar Lampung merupakan pelanggaran berat terhadap hak-hak fundamental yang secara substansial merusak perkembangan fisik dan psikologis. Jaringan kriminal secara sistematis memanipulasi anak-anak rentan untuk keuntungan ekonomi, yang merepresentasikan pelanggaran serius terhadap undang-undang perlindungan pekerja anak. Penelitian ini mengkaji mekanisme penegakan hukum yang menargetkan pelaku eksploitasi, mengidentifikasi hambatan sistemik, dan mengusulkan kerangka perlindungan hukum yang lebih baik. Investigasi ini menggunakan metodologi sosiologis-yuridis, memanfaatkan analisis dokumenter, observasi etnografis, dan wawancara terstruktur dengan personel penegak hukum, praktisi layanan sosial, dan spesialis advokasi anak. Analisis didasarkan pada teori perlindungan anak dan prinsip-prinsip yurisprudensi progresif. Temuan mengungkapkan bahwa mekanisme penegakan hukum masih terfragmentasi, reaktif, dan tidak didukung secara institusional. Hambatan utama meliputi defisit koordinasi antar-lembaga, dokumentasi anak jalanan yang tidak memadai, dan pendanaan rehabilitasi yang tidak mencukupi. Penelitian ini mengadvokasi restrukturisasi kebijakan dan penguatan sistematis mekanisme perlindungan anak melalui kolaborasi interdisipliner. Signifikansi penelitian ini terletak pada kemajuan perlindungan hukum yang lebih terintegrasi dan efektif bagi anak-anak yang dieksploitasi di tingkat municipal dan nasional.

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1. Introduction

Children are a mandate from God Almighty and the next generation of the nation whose rights must be protected in order to ensure optimal growth and development, both physically, mentally, and socially (Sukawantara *et al.*, 2020). The state has a constitutional obligation to guarantee protection for children from all forms of violence, discrimination, and exploitation as regulated in Article 28B paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (Sidauruk, 2023). However, in reality, there are still many children in Indonesia who are victims of exploitation, one of which is child exploitation in the form of begging in public spaces (Anwar & Wijaya, 2020). This condition is evident in Bandar Lampung City, where children are often found begging at crossroads, shopping centers, and tourist areas. Not a few of them become victims of exploitation by adults who use children as a means of seeking economic gain. In fact, in more complex cases, the exploitation of children often overlaps with other crimes, such as violence and sexual exploitation.

In Bandar Lampung City, child exploitation does not only occur in the form of begging but has also developed into a more complex and systematic form, namely sexual exploitation. Children are not only exploited to gain economic benefits through begging on the streets but are also forced to become commercial sex workers under the control of pimps (Salman Al Farizi *et al.*, 2025). The latest case uncovered by the General Criminal Investigation Directorate (Ditreskrim) of the Lampung Police in April 2024 shows how organized this criminal practice is. In a press statement, the Head of Public Relations of the Lampung Police, Senior Commissioner Pol. Umi Fadillah Astutik stated that six young children were successfully rescued from a boarding house on Jalan Soekarno-Hatta, Labuhan Ratu, which was used as a headquarters for child prostitution. The pimps used the method of ensnaring victims with debt by giving items such as motorbikes, cell phones, and iPhones^{**}, ^{**} the value of which was inflated^{**}; ^{**} then the victims were required to pay off the debt by serving adult men. The minimum debt value was eight million rupiah, with a fee of 50 thousand rupiah for each "date" priced at 250 thousand rupiah. The pimps, who are mostly young, are divided into roles: some are bosses, social media admins, and those who pick up and drop off victims. The police confiscated various pieces of evidence, including six motorbikes, 12 mobile phones, contraceptives, and clothing (Salman Al Farizi *et al.*, 2025). The suspects were charged with Article 2 paragraph (1) and Article 10 of Law No. 21 of 2007 concerning the Eradication of the Crime of Human Trafficking (TPPO), and Article 83 of Law No. 17 of 2016 concerning Child Protection, with a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison.

In addition, data from the Lampung Children Crisis Center (CCC) shows that throughout 2018-2019, there were at least 38 child victims of sexual exploitation who were successfully assisted by the institution. The Daily Chairperson of CCC Lampung, Syafrudin, revealed that the number is only a small part of the cases that occur because many children are reluctant to report due to fear of being punished or stigmatized. These two cases indicate a weak legal protection system and minimal early detection of child exploitation. Child exploitation, both economically and sexually, is a form of serious crime against humanity and a gross violation of children's rights (Tri Purna Jaya & Abba Gabrillin, 2020).

Data from the Lampung Children Crisis Center (CCC), a non-governmental organization that cares about children's issues, revealed that at least 38 children were victims of sexual exploitation in Bandar Lampung City in the period 2018-2019. The Daily Chairperson of the Lampung CCC, Syafrudin, stated that this number only reflects cases that have been successfully assisted. According to him, there are still many children who are victims but have not been reached by legal assistance or psychological assistance. He also added that many victims are reluctant to report because they are afraid that they will be subject to criminal sanctions. This situation

shows how important the role of the state is in building a child protection system that is not only normative but also functional and pro-victim (Tri Purna Jaya & Abba Gabrillin, 2020).

One of the main factors driving child exploitation is structural poverty. Many poor families are forced to mobilize all family resources, including children, to meet household economic needs. Research shows that children who work are not working to meet their personal needs, but to help meet family needs. This phenomenon blurs the line between permitted light work and illegal child exploitation. Although Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower allows children to work under certain conditions such as obtaining parental permission and a maximum working time of three hours per day, practice in the field often violates these provisions (Sitorus *et al.*, 2024).

In Bandar Lampung City, the phenomenon of child labor exploitation can be seen visibly through the presence of children who work as "Pak Ogah." The term "Pak Ogah" comes from a character in the television series *Si Unyil*, who is associated with the behavior of asking for money after providing small services, such as directing the flow of vehicles at intersections. This term was then applied by society to anyone, including children**, who does similar work (Salman Al Farizi *et al.*, 2025). A real example can be found along Jalan ZA Pagar Alam, Rajabasa, Bandar Lampung City. Within a radius of about 2.5 kilometers from the Selamat Datang Gate to the Boemi Kedaton Mall Flyover, there are at least six intersection points that are often used by children aged 10–17 years to work as Pak Ogah. At each point, there are around four to seven children who work in shifts. They usually operate between 13.00–17.30 WIB or 15.00–21.00 WIB. As expressed by one informant with the initials DK, these children consider this activity as routine work and a main source of income. The existence of these child workers has two main impacts. According to Tjahjanto (2008), on the one hand, there is a positive impact in the form of economic contribution to the family. However, on the other hand, the negative impact is much more dominant, especially in the form of vulnerability to violence, traffic accidents, dropping out of school, and further exploitation, both economic and sexual (Tri Purna Jaya & Abba Gabrillin, 2020).

This condition is exacerbated by the discovery of a case of child sexual exploitation by a pimp syndicate, as uncovered by the Lampung Police Criminal Investigation Directorate in April 2024. In this case, six girls were ensnared in debt by pimps by being given high-value goods, then forced to become commercial sex workers to pay off the inflated debt. They were systematically organized and placed in boarding houses that had been prepared as locations for prostitution practices. The perpetrators were charged with Articles 2 and 10 of Law No. 21 of 2007 concerning the Eradication of TPPO and Article 83 of Law No. 17 of 2016 concerning Child Protection (Fafirani & Lukitasari, 2022). These various incidents show the weakness of the child legal protection system, both in terms of prevention, prosecution, and rehabilitation. Therefore, it is important to examine how the state, through its legal instruments, enforces protection for children who are exploited in the form of begging or street workers like Pak Ogah. This study aims to analyze the form of law enforcement against perpetrators of child labor exploitation, identify inhibiting factors in the implementation of legal protection, and offer concrete strategies that can be implemented effectively at the regional level, especially in Bandar Lampung City.

Child exploitation, whether in the form of begging or prostitution, is a criminal act prohibited by Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection and various other legal regulations. However, law enforcement against perpetrators is often not optimal. Problems of coordination between institutions, minimal victim data collection, and low public awareness are the main inhibiting factors in the child protection process. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze how law enforcement is carried out against perpetrators of child labor exploitation in Bandar Lampung City and to identify inhibiting factors in its implementation. This study also aims to formulate a more

effective legal protection strategy that favors children as victims, to encourage the formation of a legal system that is just and child-oriented.

2. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method. This approach was chosen because the focus of the study is to analyze laws and regulations, legal theories, and scientific literature relevant to the issue of child exploitation and its legal protection. The data used are secondary data obtained through a review of legal documents, such as laws, government regulations, and legal literature, including textbooks, scientific journals, and research reports that support the analysis. In collecting data, the author reviewed in-depth written sources related to the exploitation of child labor, human trafficking crimes (TPPO), and child protection based on positive law in Indonesia. The approaches used in this study include the statute approach and the conceptual approach. The statute approach is carried out by reviewing various related regulations, such as Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection and Law Number 21 of 2007 concerning the Eradication of TPPO. Meanwhile, the conceptual approach is used to explore theoretical views and legal doctrines that have developed in legal studies, as a basis for understanding the essence of legal protection for children in the context of economic and sexual exploitation.

3. Results

3.1 Law Enforcement Against Perpetrators of Criminal Acts of Child Labor Exploitation

Children represent the future generation who will carry forward the nation's noble ideals as prospective leaders and sources of hope for previous generations. They require the broadest possible opportunities to develop spiritually, physically, and socially. Child protection involves efforts and activities across all levels of society in various positions and roles, with full awareness of children's significance for the nation and state's future (Hanapi & Fuadhi, 2023). Child protection encompasses a broad scope, extending beyond merely safeguarding rights and interests that guarantee proper growth and development—spiritually, physically, and socially—to include concerns for the younger generation (Tang, 2020). Implementing child protection and welfare requires institutional support and legal frameworks that can guarantee effective implementation. Everyone is prohibited from placing, allowing, executing, ordering, or participating in sexual exploitation of children, according to Article 76C (Chapter XI A. Prohibitions) of Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection (Wijaya, 2021). Consider, for instance, protecting children from crimes such as human trafficking. Article 1 of Human Trafficking Law No. 21 of 2007 concerning the Eradication of Criminal Acts of Human Trafficking defines trafficking as: recruitment, transportation, harboring, sending, transferring or receiving someone through threats of violence, abuse of power or vulnerable positions, detention, forgery, kidnapping, fraud, or debt bondage.

Employment Law strictly prohibits employers from employing children, though children aged 13-15 may be exempted to perform light work provided such work does not affect their growth, development, or mental, physical, and social health. Labor law permits children to engage in light work aligned with their preferences, talents, and interests. Legal protection regulating the alignment of children's interests and talents in work performance appears in Decree 115/Men/VII/2004 (Minister of Manpower and Transmigration of the Republic of Indonesia, 2004). Law No. 1 of 2000 concerning ratification of ILO Convention No. 182 of 1999 recommends prohibiting the worst forms of child labor as outlined in Section 74, Paragraph (2) of Law Number 13 of 2003,

following ILO Convention Number 182 of 1999, which defines the Worst Forms of Child Labor. The Agreement includes:

- 1) All forms of child exploitation and similar practices including child sale and trafficking, debt slavery, bondage and forced labor, including forced recruitment of children;
- 2) Using, obtaining, and offering children in prostitution activities or production of and participation in pornography or pornographic materials; and
- 3) Using, exploiting, recruiting, or offering children in illegal activities such as drug manufacture and sale as defined in relevant international agreements.

Child exploitation severely harms children. Children experience abuse and neglect that undermine protection of their rights. Children become objects serving others' interests (Yani & Marasaoly, 2022). As the most vital part of social life playing roles in families and society, children must receive adequate opportunities for growth and development. Child growth and development processes include human rights that parents must respect, ensuring optimal development physically, mentally, socially, and intellectually. However, not all children access these rights, particularly those in inadequate economic conditions where children must contribute to household budgets. Consequently, children sometimes work in harmful jobs due to their powerlessness (Mashuril Anwar *et al.*, 2024). Indonesia experiences significant child exploitation, often perpetrated by close relatives, family members, or parents themselves. Child Protection Law Number 35 of 2014, Article 76I, regulates child exploitation, stating that "Everyone is prohibited from placing, allowing, executing, ordering, or participating in economic and/or sexual exploitation of children." The law provides legal certainty for child protection through prohibitions and sanctions for perpetrators as seen in Employment Law (Rini Fathonah *et al.*, 2023):

- 1) Article 88 states: "Anyone violating provisions referred to in Article 76I shall be punished with imprisonment of maximum 10 years and/or maximum fine of IDR 200,000,000.00 (two hundred million rupiah)."
- 2) Article 185 Paragraph (1) explains: "Anyone violating provisions referred to in Article 42 Paragraph (1) and (2), Article 68, Article 69 Paragraph (2), Article 80, Article 82, Article 90 Paragraph (1), Article 139, Article 143, and Article 160 Paragraph (4) and (7), shall face criminal punishment of imprisonment for maximum 1 year to maximum 4 years and/or fine of minimum IDR 100,000,000.00 (one hundred million rupiah) and maximum IDR 400,000,000.00 (four hundred million rupiah)."

Victims also receive compensation as stated in Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, Article 88, which addresses criminal acts of violence against children. Applying criminal penalties serves as protection for child victims of exploitation because fine payments create deterrent effects on perpetrators. Despite existing regulations being quite detailed, law enforcement against child exploitation perpetrators still encounters various challenges (Razy, 2023). Child laborers can be understood as children performing routine work for parents, others, or themselves requiring significant time with or without compensation (Amalia *et al.*, 2021). Child labor existence represents a complex social problem inseparable from broader socioeconomic conditions. Beyond problems arising from child labor—low wages, long working hours, unclear work relationships—children also face potential loss of access and opportunities for optimal self-development. Furthermore, children employed in urban informal sectors may develop pride and self-worth through their ability to contribute to family survival, but such feelings can ultimately diminish school interest due to desires for earning more money.

Poverty drives children into labor markets because parents desperately need their

children's contributions to household income. Reality shows that not all poor families allow children to enter the workforce, indicating other influencing factors—social, cultural, demographic, and psychosocial—also affect child labor. Additionally, prohibitions on child work aim to maintain their health and education since children's physical bodies remain too weak for work, especially heavy labor. Even light work can harm children's intellectual development because work, particularly routine work, causes intellectual stagnation. Child work prohibitions also relate to mandatory education children must receive. Children must attend school until age 14, approximately through high school or vocational school, which extends 2-3 years after completing elementary school. Based on the above description, the author can provide a child labor concept formulated in Child Protection Law: child workers are working children aged 18 and under, while young child workers are working children aged 5-11 years. In principle, Child Protection Law prohibits involving children, especially minors, as workers, but Manpower Law provides opportunities for children to work under specific requirements. Violating these requirements constitutes criminal acts against children.

The worst forms of child labor scope includes business sectors: plantations, fisheries, industry, entertainment, and tourism, plus other business sectors potentially creating worst forms of child labor. Regional Government or District/City Government and Law Enforcement Officers must actively address child labor by removing children found working in worst forms of child labor locations while collaborating to prevent and address worst forms of child labor. Article 1 paragraph 2 of Republic of Indonesia Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Amendments to Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection explains that child protection encompasses all activities guaranteeing and protecting children and their rights so they can live, grow, develop, and participate optimally according to human dignity and worth while receiving protection from violence and discrimination (Mestika, 2022). State and government obligations and responsibilities in executing every task entrusted by Indonesian citizens remain vital for providing real evidence of what has been established and ratified by government and applicable laws.

Moreover, regarding protection of children working as artists who should receive attention because extensive national television news contains economic exploitation by parents against their artist children, many children's rights face violations when they perform artist work, having sacrificed childhood to support family economy. However, government often ignores child protection regulations because it focuses on economic issues rather than child protection. Government should further emphasize Child Protection Law Article 88 so television industry and entertainment actors and parents can face punishment under the Article, ensuring they understand they can be considered as exploiting children practicing such professions (McCafferty & Mercado Garcia, 2024).

Legal protection forms regarding child exploitation as reviewed from Child Protection Law, specifically Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Amendments to Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection, particularly Article 66. Children's life sustainability has become something requiring greater attention; children are no longer just assets but the only ones we can hope for regarding the nation's future direction. Children deserve opportunities they should receive and more protection so their rights and obligations are fulfilled for sustainable growth and development (Schmidt, 2025). Child exploitation constitutes serious human rights violations, particularly when children become instruments for economic gain through forced begging, street labor such as "Pak Ogah" (informal traffic guides), or trafficking victims for sexual purposes. Law enforcement against child labor exploitation perpetrators plays crucial roles in ensuring effective and just legal protection for child victims.

Normatively, Indonesia has established several legal instruments for prosecuting

child exploitation perpetrators. Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection, under Article 76l, explicitly prohibits any individual from placing, allowing, ordering, or participating in child exploitation (Juniawaty & Harefa, 2024). Article 88 elaborates sanctions, providing maximum 10-year prison sentences and/or fines up to 200 million rupiah. Furthermore, Law No. 21 of 2007 on Human Trafficking Eradication provides additional legal grounds for prosecuting offenders involved in trafficking and exploiting children, with maximum 15-year imprisonment penalties (Rio Saputra Manullang *et al.*, 2025).

In practice, however, law enforcement remains suboptimal. In many cases, although substantive law is clear, application at enforcement levels often proves weak. For instance, in cases investigated by Lampung Regional Police in April 2024, several child victims were forced into prostitution through debt bondage orchestrated by pimps. Although perpetrators were successfully charged under Articles 2 and 10 of Human Trafficking Law and Article 83 of Child Protection Law, not all similar cases receive proper attention. Challenges include underreporting, weak victim protection systems, and limitations in early detection and investigation by law enforcement agencies (Weatherburn & Mellon, 2019). In street-working children cases, such as those acting as "Pak Ogah," legal pursuit of perpetrators also faces difficulties. Often, exploiters are children's own family members or relatives involving them in street labor for financial survival, creating complexities in legal intervention due to familial ties and apparent voluntary participation. In reality, these children work under economic pressure without appropriate safeguards or protection mechanisms.

Law enforcement efforts should therefore extend beyond punitive measures. More holistic approaches are required, involving preventive and rehabilitative strategies. Law enforcement officials, social service agencies, and child protection institutions must collaborate to build integrated protection systems focused on victim recovery. One viable strategy involves using prosecutorial discretion based on children's best interests, ensuring not only offender prosecution but also victim rehabilitation.

Therefore, law enforcement against child labor exploitation perpetrators must be framed within holistic justice approaches: addressing criminal accountability, disrupting exploitation cycles, strengthening monitoring of child activities in public spaces, and ensuring victim recovery. Reactive enforcement alone proves insufficient; progressive legal paradigms are needed—ones centering on full protection of children's rights.

3.2 Inhibiting Factors in Law Enforcement Against Perpetrators of Criminal Acts of Child Labor Exploitation

Law enforcement against child labor exploitation perpetrators, despite having strong legal foundations, still encounters various obstacles—structural, cultural, and substantive (Andreas Nainggolan & Rahmayanti, 2025). These obstacles prevent efforts to protect child victims of exploitation from functioning optimally, especially in urban areas such as Bandar Lampung City. First, the Women and Children Protection Unit (PPA) of Criminal Investigation Division at Lampung Regional Police has faced numerous obstacles in enforcing law and handling criminal offenses against women and children in Bandar Lampung. One main challenge involves personnel numbers within PPA unit, currently consisting of only 11 members divided into two sub-units. As acknowledged by Hamid Andri Soemantri: "Until now, PPA unit has been understaffed, while every day approximately five cases related to women and children require our handling. With only 11 personnel, meeting public expectations for swift case resolution proves difficult."

Personnel shortage in PPA unit has become significant obstacles to effectively resolving cases in Bandar Lampung. Such shortage represents one reason why law enforcement efforts against child exploitation as beggars have encountered difficulties. PPA unit handles not only child exploitation cases but also other case types involving women and children, such as sexual harassment, violence, and related offenses. Second, supporting facilities and infrastructure factors include both software and hardware. Software examples include education and training. Hamid Andri Soemantri

stated that training received by PPA Unit members at Lampung Regional Police has been appropriate for practical field needs, including training on children's rights protection, Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning Amendment to Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection, and education on criminal acts of violence, exploitation, and harassment involving women and children.

Training scope provided corresponds to authority and responsibilities of each sub-unit within Criminal Investigation Division. Specifically, PPA Unit of Lampung Regional Police receives legal education focused on women and children, as these fall under its jurisdiction. Hardware refers to physical items serving as supporting tools, including basic office supplies and equipment such as paper, printer ink, printers, laptops, vehicles, and similar resources. Third, according to Hamid Andri Soemantri, one main obstacle to law enforcement against child exploitation as beggars involves public attitudes. Many people remain unaware of police duties, are unsupportive, reluctant to act as witnesses, and tend toward apathy regarding cases involving children exploited as beggars. Additionally, public participation in reporting such cases remains low; most individuals only report incidents when they themselves become victims or face direct involvement. Such lack of proactive community involvement constitutes significant barriers to effective law enforcement.

Hamid Andri Soemantri further stated that another hindering factor involves low levels of legal awareness among the public. In practice, although circular letters have been issued prohibiting people from giving money to street beggars, many Bandar Lampung residents continue giving money to child beggars, thereby indirectly supporting exploitation. In cases where children become victims of sexual exploitation, various factors may contribute to committing such crimes. Sexual violence causes are complex and multifaceted, and such offenses do not occur in isolation. They may be influenced by conducive conditions, presence of vulnerable victims who may unintentionally attract offenders, or other contributing factors. These can be categorized into internal factors (originating from perpetrators or victims) and external factors (influences from surrounding environments) (Konoras, 2023).

4. Discussion

Law enforcement against child labor exploitation perpetrators in Indonesia, including Bandar Lampung City, encounters several challenges categorized into two main groups: internal factors and external factors. These two categories are interrelated and collectively influence child protection system effectiveness. Internal factors refer to obstacles arising within law enforcement institutions themselves. One pressing issue involves law enforcement personnel capacity, both in numbers and in-depth understanding of child protection issues. Not all officers have received training or developed child rights-based approaches, often resulting in responses focusing solely on punishing offenders without adequate attention to victim recovery. Additionally, lack of supporting infrastructure and budget—shelters, child counselors, and child-friendly reporting systems—significantly hampers investigation and ongoing protection processes. Another critical internal issue involves lack of coordination among relevant institutions including police, prosecutors, courts, and social service agencies, often leading to fragmented and inefficient case handling (Ilyasa, 2022).

Conversely, external factors originate from outside law enforcement systems. One prominent factor involves society's permissive attitudes toward child labor, especially in low-income communities. Many people do not perceive child labor as exploitation, particularly when occurring within families or framed as "helping household economy." Consequently, public participation in reporting suspected child exploitation cases remains very low. Moreover, restricted public awareness and legal literacy contribute to

underreporting, as many exploitation cases are viewed as part of everyday life. Another significant external factor involves structural poverty, serving as root causes of child exploitation. When basic family needs cannot be met, children are often pushed into work environments endangering their rights and well-being. Therefore, effective law enforcement against child labor exploitation requires not only strong internal institutional capabilities and professional legal enforcement but also external support through public awareness, family economic empowerment, and adequate social protection mechanisms. Synergy between strong internal capacity and supportive external environments proves essential for building child protection systems that are just, humane, and sustainable.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that law enforcement against perpetrators of child labor exploitation in Bandar Lampung has a strong legal foundation, primarily through Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection and Law No. 21 of 2007 on the Eradication of Human Trafficking. Law enforcement authorities, such as the police and public prosecutors, have made efforts to prosecute individuals involved in the exploitation of children, including pimps who force minors into commercial sex work through debt bondage schemes. However, the implementation of these legal provisions remains suboptimal in practice due to various systemic challenges. The inhibiting factors in enforcing the law can be categorized into internal and external factors. Internal factors include the restricted capacity and expertise of law enforcement personnel, weak inter-agency coordination, insufficient infrastructure such as shelters and child counselors, and a lack of child-rights-oriented perspectives. External factors involve low public legal awareness, cultural tolerance of child labor, and structural poverty that compels children to work from an early age. These issues often result in cases of exploitation going unreported, undetected, or inadequately addressed by the justice system. Therefore, effective law enforcement against child labor exploitation requires a more holistic and integrated approach. Such an approach includes not only repressive legal action against perpetrators but also victim rehabilitation, community education, prevention mechanisms, and the strengthening of a thorough child protection system that upholds the best interests of the child at every stage.

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