

Legal Education on the TPKS Act (Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence) and the Establishment of Village-Based Community Complaint Centers

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ABSTRACT

Sexual violence remains a persistent structural problem in Indonesian society, and rural communities in particular suffer from low legal literacy and limited access to formal complaint mechanisms. The enactment of Law Number 12 of 2022 on the Crime of Sexual Violence (UU TPKS) marked a paradigm shift by placing prevention, victim protection, and community participation at the center of the national legal framework. Yet the effectiveness of this law depends on how far its norms are translated into practice at the village level, where legal education is often sporadic and complaint channels remain distant from ordinary citizens. This article examines the urgency of continuous legal education on the TPKS Act and explores the establishment of village-based community complaint centers as an institutional bridge between normative protection and practical accessibility. Employing normative juridical research with statutory and conceptual approaches, the study analyzes the TPKS Act, the Village Law, and their implementing regulations alongside recent socio-legal literature. The findings show that community complaint centers, when embedded in sustained legal education and linked to formal referral pathways such as UPTD PPA, can strengthen early detection, reporting, and victim assistance. The article recommends a collaborative model integrating village government, community-based service providers, and law enforcement to operationalize the participatory mandate of the TPKS Act.

Keywords: : TPKS Act; legal education; village-based complaint center; sexual violence; community participation

INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence in Indonesia remains a significant legal and social problem despite the enactment of Law Number 12 of 2022 on the Crime of Sexual Violence (TPKS Act). Data from Komnas Perempuan and the 2024 National Women's Life Experience Survey indicate that approximately one in four Indonesian women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence during her lifetime, while many cases remain unreported because of stigma, social pressure, limited legal awareness, and inadequate access to complaint services. The enactment of the TPKS Act marked an important shift from a predominantly offense-based approach toward a victim-centered framework that integrates prevention, handling, protection, and recovery and recognizes the role of community-based service providers. However, the existence of a progressive legal framework has not necessarily ensured effective protection at the grassroots level.

The main challenge therefore lies not only in the substance of the TPKS Act but also in its implementation, particularly in rural and village communities. Recent studies indicate that institutional readiness, coordination among local agencies, and public understanding of reporting procedures remain uneven (Riyanto & Barung, 2025; Rusdi & Sulaiman, 2025). Informal approaches to resolving sexual violence cases may further

undermine victims' rights when they prioritize social reconciliation over statutory protection (Alifah, 2025). These conditions demonstrate an implementation gap in which legal protection formally exists but is not consistently accessible to communities that are geographically, socially, or institutionally distant from formal legal and protection services.

At the village level, limited legal awareness is closely connected to the absence of sustained mechanisms for obtaining information and assistance. Community-based studies have shown that villagers and other local community groups often possess only limited knowledge of the TPKS Act, victims' rights, prevention measures, and reporting procedures (Banjarani et al., 2026; Dudy et al., 2025; Hidayat et al., 2025). Although legal education and peer-based initiatives can improve awareness, these interventions are generally temporary and do not necessarily provide a continuing institutional mechanism for reporting and follow-up (Widyawati et al., 2025). Consequently, legal education remains disconnected from the practical needs of victims when violence occurs.

The accessibility of complaint mechanisms constitutes a further implementation problem. Studies of sexual violence reporting in regional and remote areas indicate that geographical distance, procedural complexity, limited resources, and inadequate institutional access can discourage victims from continuing with formal complaints (Mawarni et al., 2025; Islam et al., 2025). The effectiveness of victim protection therefore depends not only on the availability of formal institutions but also on the existence of trusted and accessible points of initial assistance within the community (Setyaningsih et al., 2026; Yusrianti et al., 2025). This need has become increasingly important as technology-facilitated and online gender-based violence creates additional forms of victimization that may also require community-level recognition, reporting, and referral.

These conditions reveal a research gap between legal education and complaint handling. Existing village-based studies predominantly examine legal socialization as a means of increasing knowledge, while studies of complaint mechanisms generally focus on police, UPTD PPA, and other formal institutions. Limited attention has been given to how these two functions can be integrated into a sustainable institution located within the village itself. The novelty of this study lies in proposing a village-based community complaint center (*posko pengaduan berbasis komunitas desa*) that combines continuous legal education with an accessible first point of contact for complaints, initial assistance, and referral. The proposed model is positioned within the legal framework of the TPKS Act, particularly its recognition of community-based service providers, and the governance framework of the Village Law, including the potential utilization of village institutional resources and Village Fund support in accordance with applicable regulations.

Rather than treating legal awareness and complaint accessibility as separate policy concerns, this study conceptualizes them as interconnected elements of effective implementation of the TPKS Act at the village level. A village-based complaint center is proposed as an institutional bridge between residents and formal protection and law-enforcement institutions, enabling communities to obtain legal information, report suspected sexual violence, receive initial assistance, and access appropriate referral mechanisms without having to immediately navigate distant and complex formal procedures. The model also seeks to strengthen the preventive and participatory dimensions of the TPKS Act while maintaining the legal safeguards and victim-centered principles required by national law.

Accordingly, this study examines three interrelated issues: the need for strengthened village-level legal education concerning the TPKS Act; the legal and

institutional design of a village-based community complaint center within the framework of the TPKS Act and the Village Law; and the institutional and policy measures required for its implementation. By integrating legal education, complaint accessibility, and institutional referral within a village-based framework, the study seeks to contribute to the development of a more accessible and sustainable grassroots mechanism for implementing sexual violence protection in Indonesia..

METHODS

This study employs normative juridical research (penelitian hukum yuridis normatif), treating law as a system of norms that can be analyzed through its internal coherence, hierarchy, and consistency rather than through direct field observation. Two complementary approaches are used. The statutory approach (pendekatan perundang-undangan) examines the text and structure of Law Number 12 of 2022 on the Crime of Sexual Violence, Law Number 6 of 2014 on Villages as amended by Law Number 3 of 2024, Law Number 35 of 2014 on Child Protection, and their implementing regulations, including Presidential Regulation Number 9 of 2024, Presidential Regulation Number 55 of 2024, Government Regulation Number 30 of 2025, and Government Regulation Number 29 of 2025. The conceptual approach (pendekatan konseptual) is used to analyze doctrines and concepts relevant to community-based legal education, victim protection, and restorative justice as developed in legal scholarship. Primary legal materials consist of the statutes and regulations noted above, while secondary legal materials consist of peer-reviewed journal articles, community-service reports, and institutional publications from the past five years. Data were collected through library and documentary research and analyzed descriptively-qualitatively, using statutory interpretation and comparison with prior empirical findings to construct the proposed model of a village-based community complaint center.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Normative Framework of the TPKS Act and the Space for Community-Based Mechanisms

The TPKS Act departs from earlier Indonesian criminal legislation on sexual offenses in three interrelated respects. First, it broadens the catalogue of recognized offenses beyond the categories historically found in the Criminal Code, covering forms of sexual violence such as sexual harassment, forced marriage, sexual torture, sexual exploitation, and electronic-based sexual violence, thereby responding to the digital and gender-based violence identified by Lisi et al. (2025), Reumi et al. (2025), and Syahriana et al. (2022). Second, it restructures criminal procedure around victims' rights to handling, protection, and recovery, requiring integrated services rather than fragmented, single-agency responses (Poetri & Indraswari, 2024). Third, and most relevant to this article, the TPKS Act formally recognizes non-state actors as part of the protection architecture. Article 1 of the Act defines a "community-based service provider" (Lembaga Penyedia Layanan Berbasis Masyarakat) as a legally incorporated community institution that delivers services to victims, their families, and witnesses, and it defines a "companion" (pendamping) as a person trusted and competent to assist victims in accessing their rights. These definitions create explicit legal space for institutions situated below the district or provincial level, including village-based bodies, to participate in prevention, complaint handling, and referral.

The Act's chapter on prevention further obliges both government and society to eliminate the conditions that give rise to sexual violence, while its provisions on integrated services (pelayanan terpadu) require that handling be multi-aspect, cross-

functional, and cross-sectoral. Read together, these norms indicate that the TPKS Act does not conceive of victim protection as the exclusive domain of the police, prosecutors, and courts. Adiputra et al. (2022) and Nurhayati et al. (2023) both characterize this as a progressive departure from a purely punitive model toward one that treats prevention and community participation as coequal objectives. However, as Rusdi and Sulaiman (2025) and Riyanto and Barung (2025) observe, translating this normative openness into functioning local institutions has proven slower than the legislative intent suggests, in part because the Act's implementing regulations concentrate institutional authority at the district level through the Unit Pelaksana Teknis Daerah Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak (UPTD PPA), established under Presidential Regulation Number 55 of 2024, without always specifying how villages beneath that level are to be connected to it. This creates a structural distance between the normative promise of community participation and its institutional realization, precisely the gap this article seeks to close.

The Urgency of Legal Education at the Village Level

Legal education is not merely a preparatory step before enforcement; it is a precondition for the TPKS Act's prevention mandate to function at all. A community that does not recognize a given act as a criminal offense, or that does not know a formal remedy exists, cannot be expected to report it, regardless of how comprehensive the underlying statute may be. The community-service literature reviewed for this study consistently documents this knowledge gap in rural settings. Banjarani et al. (2026) found that residents of Celikah Village had minimal prior exposure to the TPKS Act despite the law having been in force for several years, while Hidayat et al. (2025) observed comparable gaps among school-age participants in Sukorejo Village. Dudy et al. (2025) and Karina et al. (2025) reach similar conclusions in their respective study sites, noting that participants frequently could not distinguish between forms of sexual violence covered by the Act or identify where to report a case. Lewoleba et al. (2025) extend this concern to the specific context of human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation, arguing that legal illiteracy at the community level is itself a risk factor that traffickers exploit.

These findings resonate with Setyaningsih et al. (2026), who argue that protection for victims of gender-based violence is only as strong as the surrounding community's capacity to recognize and respond to warning signs, and with Khunaepi and Suhendra (2026), who show that cultural norms can actively discourage victims from pursuing legal recourse for sexual harassment when no trusted local source of legal information is available to counteract stigma. Widyawati et al. (2025) demonstrate that peer-led legal education among youth can measurably increase willingness to report, suggesting that education strategies grounded in local social relationships are more effective than top-down, one-off socialization sessions. Yet nearly all of the interventions reviewed share a common limitation: they are episodic. A single seminar, workshop, or school visit can raise awareness for a period, but without a permanent local institution to sustain that knowledge, answer follow-up questions, and receive complaints when they arise, the effect of legal education tends to dissipate. This is consistent with the broader finding of Alifah (2025) and Rusdi and Sulaiman (2025) that implementation failures under the TPKS Act are less a matter of inadequate initial exposure than of the absence of durable follow-through mechanisms at the point where victims actually need help.

Designing Village-Based Community Complaint Centers within the TPKS Act and Village Law Framework

Building on the normative space identified in Section 3.1 and the practical needs identified in Section 3.2, this article proposes a village-based community complaint

center as an institution combining two legal bases. The first is the TPKS Act's recognition of community-based service providers and companions, which supplies the substantive legal function such a center would perform: receiving initial complaints, providing basic information about victims' rights, and referring cases to the appropriate authorities, including UPTD PPA under Presidential Regulation Number 55 of 2024, and the recovery mechanisms established by Government Regulation Number 30 of 2025 and the victim assistance fund created by Government Regulation Number 29 of 2025. The second is Law Number 6 of 2014 on Villages, as amended by Law Number 3 of 2024, which supplies the institutional and financial basis for establishing and sustaining such a center, since village governments possess authority to organize community services and may allocate a portion of the Village Fund (Dana Desa) toward social protection activities, including the training of village cadres as companions under the standards set by Presidential Regulation Number 9 of 2024 on integrated education and training for community-based service personnel.

Operationally, the model draws on the case-study literature to identify design features that address the specific failure points documented above. Because Mawarni et al. (2025) found that survivors often withdraw reports due to the distance and cost of formal channels, the center is designed to be physically located within the village, staffed by residents rather than outside officials, thereby reducing both travel burden and the social discomfort of reporting to unfamiliar authorities. Because Islam et al. (2025) found that police investigators in remote areas struggle to reach victims quickly, the center functions as a first point of contact that can stabilize a case, provide initial psychosocial support, and coordinate transport or referral to UPTD PPA or health facilities, rather than requiring victims to navigate the formal system alone from the outset. Because Widyawati et al. (2025) found peer-based education more effective than top-down sessions, the center's cadres are recruited from within the community, including youth representatives, so that legal education continues informally between formal outreach events. Because Lisi et al. (2025), Reumi et al. (2025), and Suryanti and Muttaqin (2023) document a rising incidence of technology-facilitated sexual violence even in areas with limited digital access, the center's mandate explicitly includes basic digital-safety education and, where feasible, coordination with technology-assisted guidance tools of the kind piloted by Socratianurak et al. (2021), whose LAW-U chatbot demonstrates that automated legal guidance can complement, though not replace, face-to-face community support.

The proposed center also incorporates safeguards responsive to concerns raised in the restorative justice literature. Alifah (2025) and Riyanto and Barung (2025) both caution that informal, community-level dispute resolution can be misused to pressure survivors into premature settlement, undermining the very protections the TPKS Act was enacted to secure. To guard against this risk, the model confines the village center's authority strictly to initial complaint reception, information provision, and referral; it is not empowered to mediate, adjudicate, or otherwise resolve cases of sexual violence, a function that Bukido et al. (2026) similarly argue must remain anchored in accountable formal institutions even where community and customary structures play a supporting role. This distinction preserves the integrated-service philosophy of the TPKS Act, in which community-based providers extend the reach of protection without displacing the state's ultimate responsibility for handling, protection, and recovery, and it directly answers the child-protection concerns raised by Gagarin et al. (2024) and Yusrianti et al. (2025) regarding the special vulnerability of minors, whose cases require coordination with Law Number 35 of 2014 on Child Protection rather than informal village-level resolution.

The model also benefits from comparative insight beyond the Indonesian context. Eaton et al. (2024), studying survivor-proposed solutions to image-based sexual abuse in the United States, find that victims themselves tend to favor layered responses that combine legal, educational, and technological measures rather than relying on law enforcement alone, a finding that supports the multi-service design of the proposed village center. Abrari and Aisyah (2025) likewise argue that handling gender-based crime effectively requires a multidisciplinary approach integrating legal, psychosocial, and community dimensions rather than a purely prosecutorial one. Applied to the village context, this suggests that a complaint center should not be evaluated solely by the number of cases it forwards to police, but by the extent to which it reduces the practical and psychological barriers, documented by Mawarni et al. (2025) and Iqbal and Cyprien (2021), that keep survivors from seeking help in the first place.

Finally, sustaining such centers requires attention to institutional capacity and monitoring. Karina et al. (2025) and Salsabilla et al. (2023) both note that legal protection policies frequently falter not at the drafting stage but at the point of consistent, monitored implementation. Accordingly, the model envisions periodic reporting from village centers to district-level UPTD PPA, regular refresher training for cadres consistent with Presidential Regulation Number 9 of 2024, and integration into village development planning documents so that the center's continuity does not depend on the tenure of a single village head. Taken together, these design elements translate the TPKS Act's participatory mandate, and the Village Law's grant of local institutional authority, into a concrete, sustainable mechanism that keeps legal education and complaint accessibility functioning as a single continuous process rather than two disconnected interventions

CONCLUSIONS

This article has argued that the effectiveness of Law Number 12 of 2022 on the Crime of Sexual Violence at the village level depends on treating legal education and complaint accessibility as a single, institutionalized function rather than as separate, episodic interventions. The normative framework of the TPKS Act already recognizes community-based service providers and companions as legitimate participants in prevention, handling, and referral, while the Village Law grants village governments the institutional and financial authority to establish and sustain such bodies through the Village Fund and trained local cadres. The literature reviewed shows a consistent pattern: villages that receive one-off legal socialization gain short-term awareness but lack a durable channel through which that awareness can be acted upon, while survivors who do attempt to report through distant, unfamiliar formal channels frequently disengage before their cases are resolved. A village-based community complaint center, legally anchored in both statutes and confined strictly to initial reception, education, and referral rather than adjudication, addresses both problems simultaneously without displacing the state's ultimate responsibility for handling, protection, and recovery.

The novelty of this study lies in integrating two strands of existing research, community legal education and institutional complaint handling, into a single operational model, supported by concrete legal bases in the TPKS Act, the Village Law, and their implementing regulations. For this model to move from proposal to practice, several steps are recommended. Village governments, in coordination with district Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agencies and UPTD PPA, should formally designate and register village complaint centers as community-based service providers under the TPKS Act. Village Fund allocations should include a recurring line item for cadre training consistent with Presidential Regulation Number 9 of 2024, rather than one-time outreach budgets. Clear referral protocols should be established linking village centers to UPTD

PPA, health facilities, and, where minors are involved, child-protection mechanisms under Law Number 35 of 2014. Finally, periodic monitoring and evaluation should be built into village development planning to ensure that these centers persist beyond individual leadership terms. Future empirical research is needed to test the proposed model in specific village settings and to assess its measurable impact on reporting rates, case follow-through, and victim satisfaction, but the normative and institutional foundation for such centers, this article has shown, already exists within Indonesia's current legal architecture.

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