

The Role of The Special Development Institution For Children (LPKA) As A Rehabilitation Center For Juvenile Offenders

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Abstract. In Indonesia's correctional system, correctional institutions play a vital role, particularly in educating offenders, including juvenile offenders. Juvenile offenders are individuals under 17 years of age or those who do not yet possess an ID card, commonly referred to as children. Since children are in their developmental stage and are vulnerable to environmental influences that may worsen their psychosocial condition, rehabilitation often poses significant challenges for them. Therefore, correctional institutions are responsible for providing training that encompasses rehabilitation, social reintegration, and punishment. In this context, the rehabilitation process aims to fulfill the rights of children in correctional facilities, including access to formal and non-formal education, life skills training, and psychological counseling. The objective of this training is to equip children with the necessary skills to reintegrate into society after serving their sentence. Moreover, correctional institutions also play a role in fostering a sense of responsibility and self-esteem in juvenile offenders, enabling them to become active and positive members of society. The purpose of this study is to examine how correctional institutions contribute to the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders and the challenges faced in implementing rehabilitation programs that align with children's rights. The research findings reveal that, despite efforts by correctional institutions to implement various rehabilitation programs, such as education, skills training, and psychological counseling, there is still much to be improved.

Keywords: Correctional Institution, Rehabilitation, Offenders, Juveniles, Development Programs

1. INTRODUCTION

Correctional institutions (Lapas) are facilities where inmates and juvenile offenders undergo rehabilitation and training (Article 1, Point 3, Law No. 12 of 1995 on Corrections). Before the term "correctional institution" was adopted in Indonesia, such facilities were referred to as "prisons." Correctional institutions operate under the Directorate General of Corrections, Ministry of Law and Human Rights (formerly the Ministry of Justice) (Supandi, 2024).

In the current era, crimes committed by individuals, including minors, are becoming increasingly common and easy to perpetrate. The rise in juvenile delinquency should be treated as a pressing issue requiring immediate attention from the government. In legal proceedings, when a child is proven guilty of committing a crime, they are placed in a correctional institution, commonly referred to as Lapas. These institutions are tasked with providing rehabilitation, detention, and reintegration processes tailored to each offender's specific sentence.

Correctional institutions, particularly those for juveniles, play a crucial role in Indonesia's criminal justice system. They not only function as detention centers but also serve as rehabilitation facilities aimed at social reintegration. Recognizing the dynamic physical, mental, and emotional development of children involved in criminal activities, correctional processes must prioritize their unique needs.

Law No. 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System emphasizes that children in conflict with the law must receive human rights protection and treatment that prioritizes rehabilitation over retribution (Suryani et al., 2024). Thus, correctional facilities managing juvenile offenders must provide guidance that aims not only to punish but also to reform behavior and offer opportunities for change. This approach ensures children can reintegrate into society as better individuals after serving their sentences.

Providing proper rehabilitation for juvenile offenders in correctional facilities is challenging and faces numerous obstacles. Issues such as inadequate facilities, a lack of child-focused approaches, and overcrowding in prisons hinder the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs. Poorly designed programs may harm the mental and social well-being of children and even exacerbate future criminal behavior.

Children are a precious gift from God to every family, embodying the hopes and aspirations of a nation's future. They hold a strategic role with unique traits and characteristics that ensure the continuity of the nation's existence. To fulfill this role, children must be given the broadest opportunities to grow and develop optimally in physical, mental, and social aspects, as well as moral character (Sari, 2015).

Several factors contribute to juvenile delinquency, including poverty, poor parenting, difficult temperaments, and stressors in daily life. Additionally, delinquency may arise due to a child's physical and psychological development (Loppies et al., 2024). The increasing rate of crimes involving minors is a critical concern. Correctional institutions play a pivotal role in guiding these children, given their impulsive behavior and limited understanding of the consequences of their actions.

In these facilities, juvenile offenders receive different attention than adult inmates. Children should not simply be punished but rehabilitated mentally and emotionally for a better future (Wardiansyah et al., 2022). Juvenile rehabilitation requires a specialized approach that considers their development and future prospects. This aligns with the mandate of Law No. 11 of 2012, which underscores the importance of restorative justice and diversion in handling juveniles in conflict with the law (Meriana, 2019).

Juvenile correctional institutions are not merely detention centers but also platforms for holistic training to prepare children for reintegration into society. Programs cover education, skills training, and spiritual development, aiming to prevent recidivism and enhance children's potential. The success of rehabilitation programs significantly impacts the future of these children and the nation's development.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research aims to examine the role of correctional institutions in rehabilitating juvenile offenders, the programs provided, and the factors contributing to juvenile delinquency. The study seeks to explore the effectiveness and quality of rehabilitation efforts and identify ways to improve them. Through in-depth analysis, this journal discusses "The Role of Correctional Institutions as Rehabilitation Centers for Juvenile Offenders" and the strategies implemented to enhance their effectiveness.

The scope of this research focuses on the role of Special Correctional Institutions for Juveniles in providing guidance for underage inmates. This study also aims to explore efforts by the government or related parties to improve the quality of services provided by the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, particularly in the correctional sector.

The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining normative and empirical legal research. Normative-empirical legal research examines the implementation of positive legal provisions (laws and regulations) and written documents in factual contexts, observing legal phenomena occurring within society (Marzuki, 2011).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Correctional Institutions in Fulfilling the Rights of Underage Inmates

The Special Correctional Institution for Juveniles (LPKA) serves as a facility where juveniles serve their sentences. LPKA is responsible for providing education, skills training, guidance, mentorship, and ensuring other rights for sentenced juveniles. The goal is to foster positive behavior and equip juveniles with useful skills or expertise for their future (Subroto, 2024).

Changes in the behavior of juvenile inmates due to guidance programs reveal a correlation between the institution's functions and its role in implementing tasks and guidance efforts (Pangestika et al., 2020). LPKA ensures the fulfillment of juveniles' rights according to applicable laws. Through a holistic approach, LPKA acts as a vital institution to address individual needs, helping juveniles build a solid foundation for a better future.

Efforts to fulfill the rights of underage inmates include:

a. Fulfillment of the Right to Education

Correctional institutions collaborate with formal educational institutions to enhance the knowledge of underage inmates. They may provide intensive education within the institution for motivated juveniles, allowing them to obtain certificates through equivalency programs (packages A, B, or C) for a better future. Libraries and vocational training programs, such as sewing, hairstyling, and handicrafts, are also provided.

b. Fulfillment of the Right to Health

This includes:

- Routine and 24-hour health check-ups for sick juveniles.
- Provision of nutritious meals meeting standards for juveniles.
- Sports and structured activities.
- Counseling and mental health services.

c. Fulfillment of Social and Recreational Rights

This includes opportunities to interact with visiting family members, engage in social activities with peers, and participate in other programs.

d. Rehabilitation Programs

These programs include:

- Individual and group counseling.
- Psychological and mental therapy programs.
- Creative empowerment or skills training programs.

Juveniles are also protected under Law No. 23 of 2002, Article 1, Paragraph (15), which emphasizes special protection for children in emergencies, children in conflict with the law, and others vulnerable to exploitation or abuse (Pradana et al., 2021).

Challenges faced by LPKA in fulfilling juvenile rights include:

- **Limited Facilities and Resources:** Challenges with space, limited professional staff such as psychologists, and inadequate resources hinder effective guidance.
- **Overcrowding:** Overcapacity in facilities hampers effective rehabilitation.
- **Lack of Holistic Programs:** Many LPKAs lack comprehensive programs addressing psychological, social, and moral development.
- **Social Stigma and Discrimination:** Juveniles often face stigmatization that hinders their reintegration into society.
- **Insufficient Staff Training:** Untrained staff may struggle to meet the unique needs of juveniles.

- **Dominance of Punitive Approaches:** Some institutions prioritize punishment over rehabilitation.
- **Lack of Collaboration with External Parties:** Limited collaboration with external organizations affects support for juveniles.
- **Legal and Regulatory Constraints:** Misaligned or unclear regulations may limit optimal protection for juveniles.

Rehabilitating underage inmates requires adopting values of religion, morality, and social norms within the correctional process. The emphasis should be on protection rather than punishment, avoiding any form of violence or mistreatment.

Factors Contributing to Juvenile Delinquency

Juvenile crimes, particularly among teenagers, are often influenced by:

- a. **Family Factors:** Broken homes, lack of parental guidance, and family disharmony can negatively impact a child's character.
- b. **Age Factors:** Adolescents may engage in criminal acts to seek attention or satisfy personal fantasies.
- c. **Social and Economic Factors:** Poor economic conditions and unfavorable environments often drive juveniles toward crime.
- d. **Psychological and Personality Factors:** Immature psychological and personality development can lead to criminal behavior.

Efforts to reduce juvenile delinquency involve parental involvement, proper education, and ensuring children's overall well-being. As stated in Law No. 23 of 2002, Article 1, Paragraph (2), child protection encompasses efforts to ensure children's rights to live, grow, develop, and participate optimally while being shielded from violence and discrimination (Setyaningrum, 2019).

4. CONCLUSION

In handling criminal cases involving minors, the Special Child Correctional Institution (LPKA) plays a critical role as a facility for guidance and rehabilitation for juvenile offenders. LPKA functions not only as a place for serving sentences but also as an institution responsible for providing opportunities for children to improve themselves, build character, and prepare to reintegrate into society as better individuals. Consequently, the role of LPKA in fostering juvenile offenders is vital, especially in protecting children's rights and implementing juvenile criminal justice principles focused on rehabilitation and social reintegration.

However, in practice, there are various challenges and obstacles that require greater attention. Limited facilities, insufficient human resources, and a lack of comprehensive and integrated rehabilitation programs remain significant issues that must be addressed promptly. Therefore, better collaboration among LPKA, the government, society, and other related institutions is essential to create a conducive environment supporting the recovery of children involved in crimes. Additionally, quality education, relevant skills training, and adequate psychological support are crucial to prepare them for rejoining society without falling back into crime.

The role of families and society also significantly influences the success of rehabilitating juvenile offenders. LPKA needs to actively engage in educating families about the importance of their support in transforming children's behavior. Simultaneously, society must be given the opportunity to participate in the rehabilitation process. A more open and accepting community will accelerate the social reintegration process for children who have served their sentences, reduce social stigma, and provide them with opportunities to build a better future.

Overall, despite various challenges in rehabilitating juvenile offenders within LPKA, with strong commitment and collaboration among all stakeholders, as well as appropriate policy adjustments, the rehabilitation of children involved in criminal acts can be implemented more effectively. LPKA, as a rehabilitation institution, must adopt an approach oriented toward rehabilitation, education, and character building that supports children in returning to society as agents of positive change. Through optimal guidance, it is hoped that children who have previously been entangled in legal issues can grow into individuals who contribute to society and avoid criminal behavior in the future. Thus, the ultimate goal of the juvenile justice system—protecting children's rights and achieving optimal social recovery—can be realized.

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