

# STRENGTHENING AND EMPOWERING SMART PARENTING IN COMMUNITIES TO REALIZE GENDER SENSITIVITY AND EQUITY IN FAMILIES

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## ABSTRACT

In order to support the SDGs program which is also relevant to Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 concerning Gender Mainstreaming (PUG), various efforts are needed by the government together with the community to practice social habitus to uphold gender equality and justice. Parents (Parenting) provide affection, protection, socialization and so on. This parenting role provides an overview of parents ideally carrying out parenting roles with knowledge of educating children, social insight, PUG insight and gender equality as well as legal insight. Moving from this condition, the community service team sees the importance of strengthening and empowering the parenting community to be given insight and knowledge of gender sensitivity and various laws and regulations related to the role of parents and children's rights in the family. This is assumed to be an effort to take preventive action against events and legal consequences so that they can be prevented as early as possible. Partnering with Rangi Literacy House which carries out various parenting strengthening in communities that are marginalized communities. the implementation of community service is carried out by providing insight into gender sensitivity, socialization and gender justice education sociologically in the practice of habitus and combining this legal insight where this is a basic right for children to receive legal protection.

**Keyword:** SDGS, Smart Parenting, Gender and Law

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## ABSTRAK

Dalam rangka mendukung program SDGs yang juga relevan dengan Inpres No. 9 tahun 2000 tentang Pengarusutamaan Gender (PUG) maka diperlukan berbagai upaya yang dilakukan pemerintah bersama masyarakat melakukan praktek habitus sosial menegakkan kesetaraan dan keadilan gender. Orang tua (Parenting) memberikan fungsi afeksi, proteksi, sosialisasi dan sebagainya. Peran parenting ini memberikan gambaran orang tua idealnya melaksanakan peran-peran parenting dengan ilmu pengetahuan mendidik anak, wawasan sosial, wawasan PUG dan kesetaraan gender juga wawasan hukum. Bergerak dari kondisi ini tim pengabdian masyarakat melihat pentingnya penguatan dan pemberdayaan pada komunitas parenting untuk diberikan wawasan dan pengetahuan sensitivitas gender dan berbagai peraturan perundangan-undangan yang berkaitan dengan peran orang tua dan hak anak dalam keluarga. Hal ini diasumsikan sebagai upaya tindakan preventif terhadap peristiwa dan akibat hukum sehingga bisa dicegah sedini mungkin. Bermitra dengan Rumah Literasi Rangi yang melakukan berbagai penguatan parenting di komunitas yang merupakan masyarakat marginal. pelaksanaan pengabdian kepada masyarakat dilakukan dengan memberikan wawasan sensitivitas gender, sosialisasi dan edukasi keadilan gender secara sosiologis dalam praktek habitus serta memadukan memberikan wawasan hukum ini dimana hal ini merupakan hak dasar anak mendapatkan pengawalan secara hukum.

**Kata Kunci:** SDGS, Smart Parenting, Gender dan Hukum



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## 1. Introduction

Education is fundamental to human development, serving as a bridge to acquiring knowledge, moral values, and competitive skills in a rapidly evolving global society. The first and most influential source of education for a child comes from their parents, who act as primary role models and bear a significant responsibility in shaping their child's cognitive, emotional, and social development. As children spend the majority of their early years under parental care, the role of parents extends beyond basic needs to include providing proper guidance, emotional support, and fostering lifelong learning habits (Sa'id, 2004, in Yanti & Afuw, 2022).

Parental involvement in education is not limited to financial support but also encompasses active participation in their child's learning process, such as assisting with homework and reinforcing values at home. However, many parents still view education as the sole responsibility of schools, leading to a lack of consistent support in children's academic and personal development (Sri Reskia, 2014, in Rozana, Wahid & Muali, 2017). This gap in parental engagement can create challenges, particularly when children struggle with learning, emotional regulation, or independence, sometimes resulting in conflicts between parents and children. Parents often assume that a child's behavior is entirely a reflection of their upbringing and expect that "correct" parenting will automatically lead to an ideal, obedient child. However, as children grow into adolescence, they begin to assert their autonomy, which may be misinterpreted as defiance or failure in parenting (Missiliani R, 2014, in Rozana, Wahid & Muali, 2017).

Moreover, parenting practices are deeply influenced by traditional gender roles, where mothers are primarily expected to provide emotional and educational support, while fathers assume the role of financial providers. Research indicates that children experience better cognitive and emotional development when both parents actively participate in caregiving and education (Cabrera et al., 2014). Gender-sensitive parenting fosters an environment where boys and girls receive equal encouragement and responsibilities, free from limiting societal stereotypes. However, many parents still unconsciously reinforce gender norms in their parenting approaches, which can influence children's future roles and aspirations.

Recognizing the challenges posed by traditional gender expectations and the need for more inclusive parental involvement, this paper discusses a community service initiative designed to identify and promote smart parenting strategies. The initiative explores approaches that encourage gender-equitable parenting, ensuring that both fathers and mothers take an active role in their children's development. Following this, the findings were disseminated to the parents of Rumah Literasi Rangi as targeted community to equip them with knowledge and strategies to foster a more balanced and supportive parenting environment.

## 2. Method

This study employs a qualitative research method, drawing on phenomenology to explore the lived experiences of parents in applying gender-sensitive parenting strategies. Phenomenology seeks to understand individuals' perceptions and interpretations of their experiences, allowing for an in-depth exploration of how parents navigate their roles in child-rearing. Data collection was conducted through literature review and focus group discussion (FGD) with parents, enabling researchers to capture subjective experiences and shared meanings regarding parenting challenges and strategies. The FGD provided a platform for participants to express their thoughts, emotions, and reflections on gender roles in parenting, aligning with phenomenological inquiry, which focuses on understanding human experiences from the participants' perspectives. The socialization phase of the study involved lectures and mentoring sessions, where key findings were disseminated to the targeted community. These activities were designed not only to share insights from the research but also to engage parents in a reflective process, encouraging them to critically examine and adjust their parenting practices based on the discussions.

## 3. Result and Discussion

### *a. Key Parenting Practices and Challenges*

Parenting is a continuous process of interaction that not only influences children but also shapes parents themselves (Berns, 1997). Families serve as the primary socialization agents, playing a crucial role in

a child's development. In line with this, Brooks (2001) defines parenting as a dynamic process that involves a series of actions and interactions between parents and children. It is not a one-way relationship but rather a mutual exchange where children also influence parents.

In family sociology, the fundamental roles of parents include providing affection, protection, and education. Studies highlight a strong link between parenting styles and children's independence and success. As the first educators in a child's life, parents play a critical role in shaping their character, instilling moral values, and fostering independence (Rahmat, in Baharun & Finori, 2019). This responsibility includes ensuring children's emotional, cognitive, and social well-being through appropriate guidance and support.

Effective parenting involves understanding children's needs and responding empathetically, which allows parents to provide the right stimulation for their development (Levins & Munsch, 2011, in Hayati & Febriani, 2019). However, many parents face challenges in fulfilling this role, particularly due to time constraints. In many households, both fathers and mothers work outside the home, limiting their availability to assist children with learning. As a result, learning support is often left to mothers, with limited involvement from fathers.

Moreover, parents often struggle with providing individualized attention, especially in families with multiple children. Common obstacles include children lacking enthusiasm for learning, struggling with concentration, or requiring constant motivation. These challenges reduce the effectiveness of parental support, making it essential for parents to adopt structured and well-planned parenting strategies (Zakaria, 2021).

One of the key goals of parenting is to nurture independence in children, as it significantly contributes to their success and ability to achieve life goals. Independence is a structured developmental process that requires guidance, support, and motivation from parents. Parents must create opportunities for children to develop problem-solving skills and decision-making abilities while reinforcing positive behaviors (Zakaria, 2021).

The family serves as the foundation for developing independent character, where children learn through habit formation, role models, and value reinforcement. Parents play a crucial role in helping children transition into self-reliant individuals by providing a balance between support and autonomy. However, to foster independence, both fathers and mothers must actively engage in their child's learning and development, rather than relying solely on one parent.

#### *b. Factors Influencing Parenting Styles*

Several factors shape parenting approaches, including socioeconomic background, educational level, and parental perceptions of child development (Hayati, 2014, in Rozana, Wahid & Muali, 2017). Common barriers to effective parenting include busy work schedules, lack of time, and insufficient experience. Addressing these challenges requires greater parental awareness, education, and collaboration in raising children.

According to Rozana, Wahid & Muali (2017), to guide effective parenting, there are several key parenting concepts that can be applied:

1. Responding – Parents should provide appropriate and timely responses to their children's needs and behaviors. Corrective actions must be thoughtful and supportive, helping children learn from mistakes without discouragement.
2. Monitoring – Parents must supervise children's interactions with their social environment, ensuring they develop healthy relationships while guiding them toward responsible behavior.
3. Mentoring – Parents should actively help children cultivate positive habits and reinforce behaviors that align with their personal growth. Parental encouragement plays a significant role in boosting children's confidence and creativity.
4. Modeling – Parents serve as role models, setting positive examples for their children to imitate and internalize as part of their character development.

By implementing these parenting strategies, parents can enhance their children's social and cognitive development, ensuring that they grow into independent, responsible, and emotionally stable individuals.

*c. Parenting Styles and Emotional Development*

Parenting is dynamic and needs to adapt to children's growth stages and emotional needs (Nada, 2008:26). It includes various parenting styles:

1. Authoritarian Parenting – Imposing strict rules and limiting children's autonomy (Hasan, 2009:39).
2. Permissive Parenting – Granting excessive freedom without clear guidance.
3. Democratic Parenting – Encouraging open communication and fostering independence (Khaira, 2016:297, in Rozana, Wahid & Muali, 2017).

Empirical studies indicate that positive and supportive parental interactions such as warm, responsive caregiving can lead to better emotional regulation, social competence, and self-awareness (Denham & Kochanoff, 2002; Eisenberg et al., 2003). Conversely, negative and unsupportive parenting styles contribute to social maladjustment, emotional dysregulation, and behavioral issues (Jones et al., 2002; Davis & Buss, 2012).

*d. Gender Sensitivity in Parenting*

While parenting is ideally a shared responsibility, traditional gender norms often place a disproportionate burden on mothers for childcare and household duties, even when they work outside the home. Research highlights that children benefit significantly when both parents are equally involved in their education and daily routines (Lamb, 2010). However, workplace constraints and social expectations frequently prevent fathers from taking an active role in caregiving, reinforcing patriarchal family structures.

Patriarchal culture, as a dominant social system, positions men as primary decision-makers while relegating women to unpaid domestic labor, a phenomenon observed across various societies (Walby, 1990, in Qomariah, 2019). Women are often expected to preserve the household for male workers (their husbands) and raise the next generation of laborers, perpetuating gender inequalities (Jones et al., 2016, in Qomariah, 2019). Even when women enter the workforce, they continue to face economic discrimination through lower wages, lower status, and limited career opportunities, as they are still perceived as dependent on their husbands. This systemic gender bias results in a persistent gender gap, reducing women's participation in economic and social development.

Gender-sensitive parenting, where fathers and mothers share caregiving responsibilities, plays a crucial role in challenging these entrenched inequalities. It not only enhances children's cognitive and emotional development but also alleviates stress on mothers and fosters balanced family dynamics (Cabrera et al., 2014). Moreover, research suggests that parenting shapes children's perceptions of gender roles from an early age, meaning that reinforcing traditional stereotypes can lead to long-term gender biases (Bandura, 1977).

While gender equality is gaining greater emphasis in some Western societies, where more fathers actively engage in caregiving, many Asian and Middle Eastern cultures continue to uphold traditional gender roles. However, shifting societal attitudes and evolving family dynamics are gradually challenging these norms (Kagiticbasi, 2013). In Indonesia, efforts to promote gender equality began formally with Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 on Gender Mainstreaming, marking the start of institutionalized gender equality programs. Despite the development, traditional perceptions of gender roles persist. Gender inequality in parenting is often evident in gender-based violence, unequal labor market participation, and economic disparities (Jones et al., 2016, in Qomariah, 2019). The implementation of gender equality in families remains far from expectations due to deeply ingrained cultural perceptions. Addressing gender injustice in the family, however, requires a multi-faceted approach, including legal reforms, workplace policies that encourage parental involvement, and education programs that promote gender-equitable parenting.

*e. Challenges in Parenting*

Economic pressures, coupled with rising expectations for academic and extracurricular success, can create significant stress for both parents and children. Additionally, parents must also grapple with issues such

as bullying, social media influence, and mental health concerns, which require a proactive and informed approach. One of the most significant challenges in parenting is adapting to the unique needs of each child. Every child is different, with their own personality, learning style, and emotional requirements. Furthermore, societal expectations and conflicting advice can add to the challenges of parenting. Parents are often bombarded with information from various sources, including books, websites, and well-meaning friends and family. It can be difficult to discern which advice is best suited for their family, leading to feelings of confusion and self-doubt. The pressure to be a "perfect parent" can be overwhelming, causing many to feel inadequate or guilty. Ultimately, effective parenting requires a focus on building a strong and loving relationship with one's children, while also seeking support and guidance when needed.

#### f. Parenting and the Law

Understanding the law in relation to parenting is highly relevant because it ensures that parents fulfil their legal responsibilities, protect their children's rights, and raise them to become responsible members of society. Parental understanding of the law in parenting is crucial, particularly in the context of Indonesian legal regulations, for several reasons:

##### 1. Understanding Legal Rights and Responsibilities

Under Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection (as amended by Law No. 35 of 2014 and Law No. 17 of 2016), parents are legally responsible for fulfilling their children's basic rights, including food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, education, financial support, supervision, and protection. Article 26(1) of Law No. 35 of 2014 explicitly states that parents must nurture, care for, educate, and protect their children, ensuring their growth and development. Failure to meet these obligations may be considered neglect, which can have legal consequences. Even in cases of divorce, both parents remain legally responsible for their children's well-being, as stipulated in Article 45 of the Marriage Law (Law No. 1 of 1974, amended by Law No. 16 of 2019).

##### 2. Preventing Child Abuse and Violence

Indonesian law strictly prohibits any form of violence against children. Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection (Article 76C and 76D) criminalizes physical, verbal, psychological, and other forms of abuse. Law No. 23 of 2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence (PKDRT Law) further reinforces this by recognizing child abuse within the family as a criminal act. Perpetrators of violence against children—including parents—can face imprisonment and/or fines, emphasizing the legal consequences of abusive parenting.

##### 3. Parental Liability for Children's Actions

Under Article 1367 of the Indonesian Civil Code (KUH Perdata), parents are legally responsible for damages caused by their underage children. Furthermore, Law No. 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (SPPA Law) states that while children aged 12 to 18 years old can be held accountable for criminal acts, parents may still bear responsibility, including through compensation or legal guardianship obligations. This law also encourages diversion (restorative justice) for children in conflict with the law, ensuring that parental guidance plays a significant role in their rehabilitation.

##### 4. Instilling Legal Awareness in Children

Parenting also plays a role in legal education for children. According to Article 1(2) of Law No. 12 of 2011 on the Establishment of Laws and Regulations, laws function as guidelines for social behavior. Parents, as the first educators, must instill discipline and legal awareness in their children from an early age. The family environment serves as the foundation for understanding rules, norms, and legal obligations, helping children become responsible and law-abiding citizens.

#### g. Smart Parenting: A Balanced Approach

Smart parenting refers to the comprehensive and intelligent actions taken by parents to nurture, educate, discipline, and guide their children in an ever-evolving social landscape. As the first school for children, parents play a crucial role in shaping their character and personality (Rozana, 2018:1). This concept aligns with the increasing need for parents to adapt to changing social norms, technological advancements, and legal frameworks, particularly in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0, where the internet and digital media have significantly influenced children's exposure to information and values.

Parenting involves the continuous interaction between parents and children, encompassing activities such as nourishment, guidance, and protection (Asoloihin, 2013). As primary caregivers, both mothers and fathers share the responsibility of raising children. However, traditional gender norms often place a disproportionate burden on mothers, reinforcing patriarchal structures that limit women's opportunities while restricting fathers from actively participating in caregiving (Walby, 1990, in Qomariah, 2019).

Research shows that children benefit significantly when both parents equally contribute to their education and daily routines (Lamb, 2010). However, workplace constraints and societal expectations frequently prevent fathers from taking on an active role in parenting. Gender-sensitive parenting can enhance children's cognitive and emotional development while alleviating stress on mothers (Cabrera et al., 2014). Moreover, parenting shapes children's perceptions of gender roles from an early age, making it crucial to challenge stereotypes and promote inclusive and equal opportunities (Bandura, 1977).

Smart parenting is also closely linked to legal awareness, particularly concerning child protection laws. Parents must be informed about child rights, legal protections against violence, and parental responsibilities. Strengthening legal literacy among parents can prevent child neglect and abuse, ensuring a safer environment for children to thrive.

A well-structured smart parenting strategy must integrate:

1. Socialization Patterns – Reinforcing inclusive and gender-equal values.
2. Sociological Family Functions – Strengthening roles in protection, education, affection, and guidance.
3. Gender-Just Parenting – Balancing caregiving responsibilities between mothers and fathers.
4. Legal Literacy – Educating parents on laws related to child protection and parental responsibilities.

Referring to Asoloihin's opinion (2013), the concept of Smart Parenting is several intelligent educational efforts carried out by parents by utilizing available resources in the family and environment in the form of independent learning activities. Children are expected to become independent and responsible individuals. Smart Parenting is a process of continuous interaction between parents and their children which includes the following activities: feeding (nourishing), giving instructions (guiding), and protecting (protecting) children as they grow and develop. The use of the word "parenting" for parent and child activities here is because until now there has been no exact equivalent word in Indonesian. Smart Parenting helps to create such an environment, not partial handling to regulate children or becoming parents with broad principles without instructions on how to apply them. The strategy for building Smart Parenting must use the five basic principles which will be discussed together later. The basic principles aim to develop a healthy and constructive family atmosphere so that the goals of parents and children can be realized perfectly. (Syanii, 2013:25).

Smart parenting has the main objective of a dynamic parenting pattern according to the child's abilities and level of growth and development (Nada, 2008:26). Where the parenting pattern in question has several types, namely authoritarian parenting, authoritative parenting, and permissive parenting (Hasan, 2009:39). Authoritarian parenting is a parenting pattern that imposes the will, raises children with strict rules, forces children to behave like their parents and limits children to act on their own behalf. Permissive parenting is the opposite of authoritarian parenting, permissive parenting is a parenting pattern that is centered on the child, where children have very broad freedom to determine everything they want to the point that there are no limits to the rules or prohibitions from parents. Democratic parenting is characterized by the recognition of parents or educators of the child's abilities. Children are given the opportunity not to always depend on their parents. Parents always encourage children to talk openly about what they want (Khaira, 2016:297, in Rozana, Wahid & Muali, 2017).

Empirical studies have shown that positive and supportive parental interactions (i.e., warm and sensitive responses) to children's emotions are associated with: (1) emotional competence (Denham & Kochanoff, 2002, in Novianti, Maria & Hukmi, 2022); (2) positive self-emotions, awareness (Warren & Stifter, 2008, in Novianti, Maria & Hukmi, 2022); and children's emotion regulation (Eisenberg et al., 2003; Leerkes et al., 2009; Novianti, Maria & Hukmi, 2022). In contrast, negative and unsupportive parental reactions (i.e., punitive or belittling responses) are associated with (1) emotion dysregulation (Eisenberg et al., 2003;

Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994; Novianti, Maria & Hukmi, 2022); (2) socially incompetent behavior (Davis & Buss, 2012); and (3) social maladjustment (Jones, et al., 2002; Novianti, Maria & Hukmi, 2022). Therefore, parents and parenting and parent-child interactions are very important in the development of children's emotions and potential.

Moving from the concept and explanation of the importance of smart parenting above, it is necessary to strengthen and empower the community to provide good smart parenting insight by providing reinforcement in socialization patterns, providing functional understanding of the sociological aspects of the family in family functions in the functions of protection, socialization, education, affection that are gender-just so that gender bias aspects can be minimized. In general, the practice of gender injustice is a practical picture in society where there is still a lot of socialization of values in families that provide stereotypes of child-rearing patterns as the responsibility of mothers alone, even though the concept of smart parenting is also the role and responsibility of fathers. The division of roles and responsibilities that are balanced between fathers and mothers is important because parenting is a shared responsibility between husband and wife.

#### h. Socialization Activity

In the socialization session from a gender perspective, Dr. Harmona Daulay conveys the concept of sex and gender differences. The concept of justice and gender inequality in society. Provides insight and tips in practicing equal relationships between parenting styles for boys and girls in the family. The resource person also showed a film about gender issues in the household. Where in this film the domestic burden is the responsibility of the mother and daughter. The dynamics of the discussion were very interactive and at the end of the gender lecture, we closed by giving quiz questions from the lecture material and from the pocket book that had been distributed to the participants.

In the socialization session from a legal perspective, Dr. Detania Sukarja provides legal insight regarding children's rights and parental responsibilities. In smart parenting, parenting patterns are related to fulfilling children's rights, which are constitutional rights protected by law. The legal responsibilities of parents and the legal rights of children are regulated in various laws and regulations. Children's rights are also human rights protected by human rights conventions. Indonesia has also ratified international conventions related to working minors. This certainly needs to be a concern for parents in the case of children who work to help the family economy. Apart from that, the law also regulates the rights of children with disabilities. In his presentation, Dr. Detania also conveyed his understanding in terms of children having problems with the law, namely in cases where children become perpetrators of crimes or violate the law, become witnesses to a crime or become victims of crime.

## 4. Conclusion

In this community service to provide insight into smart parenting in sociological and legal perspectives, community service activities are carried out in several forms of activities. The activities are carried out by case studies, lectures, and also a quiz competition on how participants master the concept of smart parenting from the pocket books that have been given. Selection of smart parenting ambassadors for the Rangi Literacy House community. In the third stage, monitoring and evaluation of the service is carried out by conducting FGDs with mothers to determine the extent of the effectiveness of this activity and the practice of smart parenting in gender sensitivity and justice parenting patterns that have been implemented. Legal aspects are also discussed in the practice of educating children.

Through PKM activities in the form of awareness, strengthening and empowerment, it is hoped that it can provide insight into gender equality and internalize it in the social practice of gender relations in the concept of smart parenting. Participants are also given insight into the law of children's rights and legal protection for children in existing laws in Indonesia. Moreover, the PKM team invited psychologists to discuss the psychological aspects so that awareness, strengthening and empowerment of mothers and fathers in this community are complete from sociological, legal and psychological aspects.

Providing insight, case studies and discussions, as well as implementing smart and careful parenting ambassador selection and monitoring and evaluation are expected to open up insights into sensitivity and social

practices in gender relations that are just so that various forms of gender injustice such as gender stereotypes, subordination, women's triple role, marginalization and violence can be minimized so that they will not happen again. In addition, providing legal insight and children's rights is expected to make parents understand children's rights and can avoid legal problems in providing legal protection for children in the family.

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