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The Role of Social Welfare Institutions in Supporting Child Protection and Family Resilience in Urban Communities: A Social Policy Perspective

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Abstract

Child protection and family resilience have become increasingly important issues in urban communities due to the growing complexity of social, economic, and demographic challenges. Social welfare institutions play a strategic role in addressing these challenges by providing services and interventions that support vulnerable children and families. This study aims to analyze the role of social welfare institutions in supporting child protection and strengthening family resilience in urban communities from a social policy perspective. A qualitative case study approach was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of institutional practices, stakeholder experiences, and policy implementation. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis involving social welfare institution managers, social workers, government officials, community leaders, and beneficiary families. The data were analyzed using an interactive qualitative analysis model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that social welfare institutions contribute significantly to child protection through case management, psychosocial support, parenting education, advocacy, and community-based protection initiatives. These institutions also strengthen family resilience by improving parenting capacities, providing economic and social support, facilitating access to essential services, and fostering community support networks. The effectiveness of these interventions is supported by professional social workers, intersectoral collaboration, community participation, and favorable policy frameworks. However, challenges such as limited financial resources, shortages of qualified personnel, social stigma, bureaucratic barriers, and the complexity of urban social problems continue to hinder institutional performance. From a social policy perspective, social welfare institutions serve as key actors in translating policy objectives into practical interventions that promote child well-being, family stability, and social inclusion. The study highlights the need for stronger institutional capacity, integrated policy frameworks, and enhanced collaboration to ensure sustainable child protection and family resilience in urban settings.

Introduction

Child protection and strengthening family resilience are two fundamental aspects of sustainable social development (Hamalainen et al., 2020). In many countries, including Indonesia, children are viewed as strategic national assets whose survival, growth, participation, and protection must be ensured through an effective and inclusive social system. In the context of social welfare development, the family plays a primary role, responsible for meeting children's physical, psychological, social, and educational needs (Garbarino, 2017). However, social changes resulting from urbanization, modernization,

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and economic transformation have given rise to new challenges that impact the family's ability to carry out these functions (Inglehart, 2020).

The phenomenon of increasing urbanization in recent decades has significantly altered the social structure of urban communities. Large cities have become centers of economic growth, attracting migration flows from various regions (Area, 2019). While urbanization opens up economic opportunities and broader access to public services, this process also brings with it various social consequences, such as increasing social inequality, urban poverty, overcrowding, unemployment, and the weakening of traditional social support networks that previously served as protective mechanisms for families and children (Bhattarai & Daud, 2019). In many cases, families living in urban environments face complex economic and social pressures that potentially impact the quality of parenting and children's well-being (Depeau, 2016).

Numerous studies have shown that children living in urban areas are vulnerable to various social risks, including violence, exploitation, neglect, child labor, bullying, and limited access to quality social services (Banday et al., 2018). These risks are exacerbated in poor families with limited access to economic and social resources. According to developmental ecology theory, child development is influenced not only by individual and family factors but also by the broader social environment, including the community, social institutions, and public policies (Eccles & Roeser, 2015). Therefore, child protection cannot be solely the responsibility of the family, but rather requires the involvement of various social actors within an integrated protection system (Yuningsih, 2017).

On the other hand, family resilience is becoming an increasingly important concept in social welfare studies and public policy. Family resilience refers to a family's ability to survive, adapt, and thrive in the face of various social, economic, and environmental pressures and changes (Ungar, 2016). Families with high levels of resilience tend to be able to provide better care, create a safe environment for children, and manage conflict and challenges constructively (Lestari, 2016). Conversely, families experiencing prolonged economic pressure, internal conflict, or limited social support often face difficulties in meeting children's basic needs and maintaining the well-being of their family members (Li et al., 2015).

In this context, social welfare institutions play a strategic role in supporting child protection and strengthening family resilience. Social welfare institutions provide a variety of social services to assist individuals, families, and community groups facing social vulnerability (Az-Zahrah, 2018). The role of these institutions includes providing social assistance, family support, counseling, social rehabilitation, strengthening parenting capacity, advocating for children's rights, and coordinating with various stakeholders in the social protection system (Crea et al., 2018). The presence of social welfare institutions is becoming increasingly important in urban areas characterized by the complexity of social problems and the high need for responsive social services (Martinelli, 2017).

From a social policy perspective, the existence of social welfare institutions is inseparable from the state's efforts to achieve public welfare (Aravacik, 2018). Social policy is a set of strategies, programs, and interventions designed to improve the welfare of citizens, reduce social inequality, and protect vulnerable groups from various life risks (Rehm, 2016). Within the framework of a welfare state, the government has a responsibility to

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ensure that every child receives adequate protection and every family has access to the resources necessary to achieve well-being (Coles et al., 2016). Therefore, the effectiveness of social welfare institutions is greatly influenced by the support of policies, regulations, funding, and governance implemented by the government.

Indonesia has developed various policies aimed at strengthening child protection and family welfare. Some important regulations include Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, Law Number 11 of 2009 concerning Social Welfare, and various social protection programs aimed at vulnerable families (Nasution, 2018). Furthermore, the government is also encouraging the strengthening of the role of social welfare institutions, social workers, and community organizations in supporting the implementation of social welfare programs at the local level (Indonesia, 2017). However, the implementation of this policy still faces various challenges, such as limited resources, poor coordination between agencies, disparities in access to services, and the complexity of social problems in urban areas (Coaffee et al., 2018).

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between child protection, family resilience, and social welfare services. However, most studies tend to focus on one aspect in isolation, such as the effectiveness of child protection programs, family empowerment, or social policy implementation (Tjilen, 2019). Studies specifically analyzing the role of social welfare institutions as a bridge between child protection and family resilience in the context of urban communities are still relatively limited (Truter et al., 2017). Yet, understanding this relationship is crucial for developing more comprehensive and sustainable social policies and practices.

Furthermore, the development of the modern social welfare paradigm indicates a shift from a residual approach to a developmental social welfare approach, which emphasizes the empowerment of individuals, families, and communities as part of the social development process (Adi, 2019). From this perspective, social welfare institutions function not only as providers of assistance to vulnerable groups but also as agents of social change, contributing to strengthening the capacity of families and communities. Therefore, research is needed that can explain how social welfare institutions carry out this role in the context of dynamic and challenging urban communities.

Based on the above description, this study aims to analyze the role of social welfare institutions in supporting child protection and family resilience in urban communities from a social policy perspective. This research seeks to identify the types of services provided, the institutions' contributions to improving child and family welfare, factors that support and hinder program implementation, and the implications of social policy for the effectiveness of these services. Therefore, this research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of social welfare studies and social policy, while also providing an empirical basis for formulating more effective strategies to strengthen child protection systems and family resilience in urban areas.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a case study design to explore the role of social welfare institutions in supporting child protection and family resilience within urban communities. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of social processes, institutional

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practices, stakeholder experiences, and policy implementation related to child welfare and family support services. The case study design enabled the researcher to investigate the phenomenon within its real-life context and to capture the complexity of interactions among social welfare institutions, families, communities, and policymakers.

Research Setting

The research was conducted in selected urban communities where social welfare institutions actively provide child protection and family support services. These locations were purposively selected based on several criteria, including the presence of established social welfare programs, the existence of vulnerable families and children, and the implementation of government-supported social protection initiatives. Urban communities were chosen because they represent environments characterized by rapid social change, population density, socioeconomic disparities, and diverse child and family welfare challenges.

Participants and Sampling Technique

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that the information obtained was relevant to the objectives of the study. The participants included managers of social welfare institutions, social workers, local government officials, community leaders, parents receiving social services, and families involved in child protection programs. These participants were selected based on their direct involvement, professional experience, and knowledge of social welfare interventions. In addition, snowball sampling was employed to identify additional informants who could provide valuable insights regarding institutional practices, policy implementation, and community responses to social welfare services.

Data Collection Methods

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview guides that allowed participants to freely express their experiences, perceptions, and opinions regarding the role of social welfare institutions in child protection and family resilience. Participant observation was undertaken to observe service delivery processes, institutional activities, interactions between social workers and beneficiaries, and community engagement initiatives. Document analysis was conducted to examine relevant policy documents, program reports, institutional guidelines, government regulations, and other official records that provided contextual information regarding social welfare services and policy frameworks.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model of qualitative data analysis developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The analysis process involved three interconnected stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, and organizing relevant information obtained from interviews, observations, and documents. Data display involved presenting the findings in the form of thematic matrices, narrative descriptions, and conceptual categories to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying patterns, relationships, and emerging themes related to the contribution of social welfare institutions to child protection and family resilience within urban settings.

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Results

The Role of Social Welfare Institutions in Supporting Child Protection

The findings of this study reveal that social welfare institutions play a crucial role in supporting child protection within urban communities. These institutions serve as frontline organizations that provide preventive, protective, rehabilitative, and developmental services aimed at safeguarding children's rights and well-being. Through various interventions, social welfare institutions help address issues such as child neglect, domestic violence, child exploitation, school dropout, and other forms of vulnerability that may threaten children's physical, emotional, and social development. Their role extends beyond direct service provision to include advocacy, awareness campaigns, community mobilization, and coordination with government agencies and civil society organizations to establish a comprehensive child protection system.

One of the most significant contributions of social welfare institutions is the provision of case management and psychosocial support services for children experiencing abuse, neglect, or family-related problems. Social workers conduct assessments, provide counseling, facilitate referrals to specialized services, and monitor children's progress to ensure their safety and well-being. These interventions enable vulnerable children to access appropriate support and reduce the risk of long-term negative consequences. A social worker explained,

> *"Many children who come to our institution have experienced neglect or emotional abuse. We assess their situation, provide counseling, and work closely with their families to create a safer and more supportive environment."*

*The study also found that social welfare institutions actively promote child r*ights awareness among parents, caregivers, and community members. Educational programs, parenting workshops, and community outreach activities are regularly conducted to improve public understanding of children's rights and positive parenting practices. These initiatives contribute to the prevention of violence against children by encouraging non-violent disciplinary approaches and strengthening parental responsibilities. According to one parent participating in a family support program,

> *"Before joining the parenting sessions, I often used harsh discipline because I thought it was normal. After receiving guidance, I learned better ways to communicate with my children and support their development."*

Furthermore, social welfare institutions play a vital role in strengthening community-based child protection mechanisms. By collaborating with schools, health centers, local authorities, and community organizations, they create networks that facilitate early identification and intervention in child protection cases. Such collaborative efforts improve the responsiveness of local child protection systems and enhance the capacity of communities to protect vulnerable children. A community leader noted,

> *"The presence of social welfare institutions has made it easier for community members to report cases involving children. We now have a clearer system for responding to problems before they become more serious."*

Another important role identified in the study is the provision of support for children from economically disadvantaged families. Social welfare institutions often assist these families through educational support, access to social assistance programs, scholarship

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facilitation, and referrals to health and welfare services. By reducing economic pressures on households, these interventions help prevent situations that may place children at risk of neglect, child labor, or school dropout. A beneficiary parent stated,

> *"The educational assistance provided by the institution helped my children stay in school during a difficult financial period. Without that support, it would have been very difficult for us."*

The findings further indicate that social welfare institutions contribute to strengthening family functioning as a protective factor for children. Through family counseling, parenting education, and mediation services, these institutions help improve communication within families, resolve conflicts, and foster positive parent-child relationships. Strengthening family resilience is particularly important in urban environments where socioeconomic pressures often affect family stability.

The Contribution of Social Welfare Institutions to Family Resilience

The findings of this study indicate that social welfare institutions make a substantial contribution to strengthening family resilience in urban communities. Family resilience refers to the ability of families to adapt, recover, and maintain their functioning when confronted with economic, social, and psychological challenges. In urban environments, families often face multiple stressors, including financial instability, unemployment, housing insecurity, social isolation, and the increasing demands of child-rearing. Social welfare institutions play a critical role in helping families cope with these challenges by providing various forms of support designed to enhance their capacity to manage adversity and maintain family well-being.

One of the primary contributions of social welfare institutions is the provision of family counseling and psychosocial support services. These services help families address interpersonal conflicts, improve communication, and develop effective coping strategies for dealing with stress and crises. Social workers and counselors facilitate discussions that encourage family members to understand one another's perspectives and work collaboratively toward resolving problems. Such interventions strengthen family relationships and contribute to a more supportive home environment. A family counselor explained,

> "Many families come to us when they are experiencing serious conflicts or emotional stress. Through counseling sessions, we help them rebuild communication and develop healthier ways of managing challenges together."

The study also found that social welfare institutions contribute to family resilience through parenting education and capacity-building programs. These programs equip parents with knowledge and skills related to child development, positive parenting, conflict management, and emotional support. Improved parenting practices enhance family functioning and create a nurturing environment that promotes children's well-being. A parent who participated in a parenting program stated,

> "The training helped me understand how to communicate better with my children. I learned that listening and guiding them is more effective than using punishment."

In addition to psychosocial support, social welfare institutions provide economic assistance and livelihood support that strengthen families' ability to meet their basic needs. Many families participating in social welfare programs receive assistance in

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accessing social protection schemes, vocational training, small business development opportunities, and income-generating activities. These interventions reduce economic vulnerability and improve households' capacity to cope with financial difficulties. According to one beneficiary,

> *"The skills training and business assistance provided by the institution allowed me to start a small home business. This additional income has helped my family become more financially stable."*

Another significant contribution identified in the study is the enhancement of social support networks among families. Social welfare institutions frequently organize community groups, peer-support programs, and family development activities that encourage interaction and mutual assistance among community members. These networks provide emotional support, practical guidance, and access to information that can help families navigate difficult circumstances. A community participant noted,

> *"Through the family support group, I met other parents facing similar challenges. We share experiences and help each other find solutions to family problems."*

The findings further reveal that social welfare institutions contribute to strengthening families' access to essential social services, including education, healthcare, legal assistance, and child protection services. By connecting families with available resources and advocating on their behalf, these institutions help reduce barriers to service utilization and improve overall family well-being. A social worker explained,

> *"Many vulnerable families are not aware of the services available to them. Our role is to guide them through the system and ensure that they receive the support they need."*

Moreover, social welfare institutions play an important preventive role by identifying families at risk and providing early interventions before problems escalate into more serious crises. Early support mechanisms help families develop resilience and prevent situations that may lead to family breakdown, child neglect, or domestic violence.

Supporting Factors of the Role of Social Welfare Institutions

The findings of this study reveal that the effectiveness of social welfare institutions in supporting child protection and family resilience is influenced by several supporting factors operating at institutional, community, and policy levels. These factors strengthen the capacity of social welfare institutions to deliver services, coordinate interventions, and respond to the complex social challenges faced by urban families. The presence of these enabling conditions contributes significantly to the successful implementation of social welfare programs and enhances their impact on vulnerable children and families.

One of the most important supporting factors identified in the study is the competence and professionalism of social workers and institutional staff. Skilled social workers possess the knowledge, experience, and interpersonal abilities necessary to assess family needs, provide counselling, manage child protection cases, and facilitate access to social services. Their professional commitment and understanding of social welfare principles contribute to the quality and effectiveness of interventions. Participants consistently emphasized that well-trained personnel play a critical role in building trust with beneficiaries and ensuring the successful delivery of services. A social worker explained,

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"Our training and professional experience help us understand the unique challenges faced by each family. This allows us to design appropriate interventions and provide support that truly meets their needs."

Another significant supporting factor is the availability of collaborative partnerships among social welfare institutions, government agencies, educational institutions, healthcare providers, and community organizations. The study found that effective collaboration facilitates information sharing, resource mobilization, and coordinated responses to child protection and family welfare issues. Through interagency cooperation, institutions can provide more comprehensive services and ensure that beneficiaries receive support from multiple sectors. A local government official stated,

"No single institution can address all social problems alone. Collaboration between social welfare agencies, schools, health centers, and local authorities is essential for achieving better outcomes for children and families."

The findings also indicate that community participation serves as a crucial factor supporting the role of social welfare institutions. Community members contribute by identifying vulnerable families, reporting child protection concerns, participating in awareness programs, and supporting local welfare initiatives. Strong community engagement enhances the effectiveness of social welfare programs by fostering collective responsibility for child protection and family well-being. A community leader remarked,

"When community members actively participate in social programs, it becomes easier to identify problems early and provide assistance before situations become more serious."

Government support and favourable policy frameworks were also identified as important enabling factors. Social welfare institutions benefit from regulations, funding mechanisms, and policy initiatives that prioritize child protection and family welfare. Supportive policies provide legitimacy to institutional activities and facilitate the allocation of resources necessary for program implementation. Furthermore, government involvement helps establish coordination mechanisms that strengthen service delivery across different sectors. One institution manager noted,

"Government policies provide the foundation for our work. Without legal support and financial resources, it would be difficult to sustain many of our programs."

In addition, the availability of financial and material resources contributes significantly to institutional effectiveness. Adequate funding enables social welfare institutions to recruit qualified personnel, expand service coverage, organize community outreach activities, and provide direct assistance to vulnerable families. Institutions with stable funding sources are generally better equipped to respond to emerging social issues and maintain continuity in service delivery. A program coordinator explained,

"Sufficient funding allows us to implement long-term programs rather than only responding to emergencies. This helps create more sustainable outcomes for families and children."

The study further found that public awareness and positive perceptions of social welfare services support institutional performance. Families who understand the benefits of social welfare programs are more likely to seek assistance when needed and actively participate in intervention activities. Increased awareness reduces stigma associated

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with receiving social services and encourages greater utilization of available support mechanisms. According to a parent beneficiary,

> *"I initially hesitated to seek help because I was embarrassed. After learning more about the services, I realized that the institution was there to support families like mine, not to judge us."*

Technological advancements and improved communication systems were also identified as emerging supporting factors. Digital communication platforms, social media, and online service management systems facilitate information dissemination, case monitoring, and communication between institutions and beneficiaries. These technologies enhance efficiency and improve access to services, particularly in densely populated urban areas.

Inhibiting Factors of the Role of Social Welfare Institutions

The findings of this study indicate that despite their significant contributions to child protection and family resilience, social welfare institutions face numerous challenges that hinder the effectiveness of their services and interventions. These barriers operate at organizational, community, and policy levels, limiting the capacity of institutions to respond comprehensively to the complex social problems experienced by vulnerable children and families in urban communities. Understanding these inhibiting factors is essential for improving the effectiveness and sustainability of social welfare programs.

One of the most prominent barriers identified in the study is the limited availability of financial resources. Many social welfare institutions operate under constrained budgets, which restrict their ability to expand services, recruit qualified personnel, provide direct assistance, and implement long-term intervention programs. Insufficient funding often forces institutions to prioritize urgent cases while reducing preventive and developmental activities that are equally important for strengthening family resilience.

Another significant obstacle is the shortage of qualified social workers and professional staff. The increasing number of child protection cases and family-related issues often exceeds the capacity of available personnel. As a result, social workers frequently manage large caseloads, which can reduce the quality and intensity of support provided to beneficiaries. The shortage of specialized professionals, such as psychologists and family counselors, further limits the effectiveness of interventions.

The study also found that low levels of public awareness and understanding regarding social welfare services hinder institutional performance. Many families remain unaware of the support available through social welfare institutions or do not fully understand the benefits of seeking assistance. In some cases, misconceptions about social services discourage families from accessing available programs. A community member noted,

> "Many people believe that social welfare services are only for families facing extreme problems. As a result, they often wait until their situation becomes critical before asking for help."

Social stigma was identified as another important barrier. Some families are reluctant to engage with social welfare institutions because they fear being judged by their neighbors or labeled as incapable of caring for their children. This stigma can prevent vulnerable families from seeking assistance and reduce participation in support programs.

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"At first, I did not want to approach the institution because I worried about what other people would think. I felt embarrassed to admit that my family needed help."

The complexity of social problems in urban communities also presents a major challenge for social welfare institutions. Issues such as poverty, unemployment, family conflict, substance abuse, domestic violence, migration, and housing insecurity are often interconnected and require multidimensional interventions. Social welfare institutions may struggle to address these overlapping problems without sufficient resources and cross-sector collaboration. A social worker commented,

"Most families do not face just one problem. Economic difficulties, parenting issues, and emotional stress are often connected, making interventions much more complicated."

Furthermore, the findings reveal that inadequate coordination among institutions and service providers can impede effective service delivery. Although collaboration is recognized as essential for child protection and family welfare, communication gaps and fragmented responsibilities sometimes result in delays, duplication of services, or unmet needs. A local government representative stated,

"Different agencies often have overlapping responsibilities, but coordination mechanisms are not always clear. This can affect the efficiency of service provision."

Bureaucratic procedures and administrative requirements were also identified as barriers to accessing services. Some families experience difficulties completing documentation requirements or navigating complex administrative processes. These obstacles may discourage vulnerable households from seeking assistance or delay the provision of necessary support. One beneficiary explained,

"The process of applying for assistance can be confusing and time-consuming, especially for families who have limited education or access to information."

Additionally, rapid urbanization and population growth place increasing pressure on social welfare institutions. The growing number of vulnerable families and children requiring support often outpaces the expansion of available services. This imbalance creates challenges in maintaining service quality and ensuring equitable access to assistance.

Social Policy Perspectives on the Role of Social Welfare Institutions

The findings of this study demonstrate that social welfare institutions play a pivotal role in translating social policy objectives into practical interventions that directly benefit children and families in urban communities. From a social policy perspective, these institutions function as key implementing actors that bridge the gap between government policy and community needs. Their activities reflect broader policy commitments to child protection, social inclusion, poverty reduction, and family well-being. Through the provision of social services, advocacy, and community-based interventions, social welfare institutions contribute to the realization of social rights and the promotion of social justice among vulnerable populations.

The study reveals that social welfare institutions are essential mechanisms through which child protection and family welfare policies are operationalized at the local level. National and local policies provide the legal and institutional framework that guides service delivery, establishes standards of care, and allocates resources for social welfare

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programs. However, the effectiveness of these policies largely depends on the capacity of social welfare institutions to implement them within diverse urban contexts. A government official explained,

> *"Policies provide the direction, but social welfare institutions are responsible for bringing those policies into the lives of families and children who need support. Without effective implementation, policy goals cannot be achieved."*

A significant finding of the study is that social welfare institutions contribute to the promotion of social equity by ensuring that vulnerable groups have access to essential services and protection mechanisms. Social policy emphasizes the importance of reducing social inequalities and protecting individuals who face structural disadvantages. Through targeted interventions, social welfare institutions help address disparities in access to education, healthcare, social assistance, and child protection services. A social worker stated,

> *"Many of the families we serve would not have access to critical services without institutional support. Our role is to ensure that vulnerable children and families are not left behind."*

The findings further indicate that social welfare institutions embody the principles of preventive and developmental social policy. Rather than focusing solely on crisis intervention, these institutions increasingly implement programs designed to strengthen family capacities, enhance parenting skills, and build community resilience. Such approaches align with contemporary social policy frameworks that emphasize prevention, empowerment, and long-term social development. A program coordinator noted,

> *"We try not only to solve immediate problems but also to equip families with the skills and resources they need to become more resilient in the future."*

Another important theme emerging from the study concerns the role of social welfare institutions in fostering collaborative governance. Effective social policy implementation requires coordination among government agencies, non-governmental organizations, community groups, educational institutions, and healthcare providers. Social welfare institutions often act as intermediaries that facilitate communication and cooperation among these stakeholders. This collaborative approach improves service integration and enhances the overall effectiveness of social protection systems. A community leader explained,

> *"The institution serves as a connector between different organizations. It helps ensure that families receive comprehensive support rather than fragmented services."*

Despite their important contributions, the study also identifies several policy-related challenges that affect the performance of social welfare institutions. Participants highlighted issues such as insufficient funding, inconsistencies in policy implementation, bureaucratic constraints, and limited institutional capacity. These challenges create a gap between policy intentions and actual outcomes. In many cases, social welfare institutions are expected to address increasingly complex social problems without receiving adequate resources or institutional support. An institution manager remarked,

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"Government policies recognize the importance of child protection and family welfare, but implementation often faces practical limitations because resources do not always match the growing needs of communities."

The findings also suggest that social welfare institutions play a crucial advocacy role within the policy process. Beyond delivering services, these institutions provide feedback to policymakers regarding emerging social issues, service gaps, and the needs of vulnerable populations. Their direct engagement with communities enables them to generate valuable evidence that can inform policy development and reform. A senior social worker explained,

"Because we work closely with families every day, we understand the challenges they face. This experience allows us to advocate for policies that better reflect community realities."

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of adopting a rights-based approach within social policy frameworks. Participants emphasized that child protection and family support should be viewed not merely as charitable activities but as fundamental social rights. Social welfare institutions contribute to this perspective by promoting children's rights, advocating for equitable access to services, and supporting family empowerment initiatives.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that social welfare institutions play a central role in supporting child protection in urban communities through the provision of protection services, family assistance, parenting education, child rights advocacy, and cross-sector coordination. These findings emphasize that child protection cannot be understood solely as a separate responsibility of the family or the state, but rather as the result of the interaction of various actors within an interconnected social welfare system. In the context of urban communities characterized by complex social problems, increasing population mobility, and weakening traditional support networks, the existence of social welfare institutions becomes increasingly important as institutional mechanisms that bridge family needs with available social resources.

These findings align with the social ecology perspective, which states that children's well-being and development are influenced by the interactions of various surrounding social systems (Malin et al., 2016). In this study, social welfare institutions function as actors at the mesosystem level, connecting families, schools, communities, and the government in creating a safer environment for children. Thus, child protection depends not only on the internal capacity of families but also on the effectiveness of social institutions in providing external support that can strengthen parenting functions (Kresnawati & Imelda, 2020). This suggests that the success of child protection in urban areas is significantly influenced by the quality of the relationship between families and the social institutions operating within their communities.

This study found that the role of social welfare institutions in child protection extends beyond handling cases of violence or neglect, but also encompasses preventive and promotive functions. These findings demonstrate a paradigm shift from a residual approach to a developmental social welfare approach. In the residual approach, social interventions are generally implemented after problems arise. In contrast, the developmental approach positions families and children as subjects of development

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whose capacities need to be strengthened before they experience a crisis. The parenting programs, family counseling, foster care capacity building, and economic empowerment identified in this study demonstrate that social welfare institutions strive to build family resilience as a long-term strategy to prevent various child protection risks (Sulistyaningsih & Roro, 2016).

The results also demonstrate a close relationship between child protection and family resilience. These findings provide an important conceptual contribution, demonstrating that optimal child protection cannot be achieved without strengthening the capacity of the family, the child's closest social environment. Families with better economic capabilities, healthy communication, and access to social support tend to provide more effective protection for their children (Thompson, 2015). In other words, family resilience serves as a key protective factor mediating the relationship between social welfare institution interventions and child protection outcomes. This finding expands the literature, which has tended to separate the study of child protection and family resilience into two distinct domains.

From a social policy perspective, this study demonstrates that social welfare institutions play a key role in implementing child protection policies at the local level. Although various regulations and policies have provided a strong legal foundation for child protection and family welfare, the effectiveness of their implementation depends heavily on institutional capacity on the ground. This finding reinforces the argument in the policy implementation literature that the success of a policy is determined not only by the quality of its design but also by the ability of implementing actors to translate policy objectives into concrete practices (Subianto, 2020). In this context, social welfare institutions serve as a bridge between policy norms and the social realities faced by families and children in urban communities.

This study also found that the effectiveness of social welfare institutions remains constrained by various structural constraints. Limited human resources, budget constraints, high workloads of social workers, and the complexity of urban social problems are factors that reduce institutional capacity to provide optimal services (Baltruks et al., 2017). These findings indicate a gap between policy expectations and implementation capacity at the local level. From the perspective of institutional capacity theory, these conditions indicate that the success of a child protection system requires not only adequate regulations but also sustained investment in organizational resource development, social worker professionalism, and inter-agency coordination systems.

In addition to institutional factors, this study identified the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration in supporting child protection and family resilience. The complexity of problems faced by urban families often involves economic, educational, health, psychological, and legal aspects simultaneously. Therefore, a sectoral approach operating in isolation is less effective in addressing community needs. These findings support a collaborative governance approach that emphasizes the importance of cooperation between the government, social welfare institutions, civil society organizations, educational institutions, and the health sector in building a more responsive and sustainable social protection system. Thus, child protection needs to be understood as a collective responsibility that requires the integration of various resources and institutional capacities.

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Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of social policy studies by demonstrating that social welfare institutions function not only as service providers but also as agents for strengthening family capacity and facilitators of community-based social development. These findings broaden understanding of the role of social welfare institutions in the context of increasingly complex urban communities. Furthermore, this study proposes that the relationship between child protection and family resilience should be positioned as a unified, interconnected system, rather than as two separate policy agendas.

Practically, the results of this study imply the need to strengthen the capacity of social welfare institutions by increasing the number and competence of social workers, strengthening cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms, and providing adequate resources to support the implementation of family-based programs. The government also needs to develop more integrated policies between child protection, family welfare, and community development so that interventions are not fragmented. The family- and community-based approach found effective in this study can serve as a strategic model for strengthening child protection systems in urban areas facing various forms of social vulnerability.

Conclusion

This study concludes that social welfare institutions play a critical and multifaceted role in supporting child protection and strengthening family resilience in urban communities. Through the provision of child protection services, family counseling, parenting education, economic assistance, community outreach, and interagency collaboration, these institutions serve as essential intermediaries between social policy objectives and the practical needs of vulnerable children and families. The findings demonstrate that effective child protection is closely linked to family resilience, as families with stronger economic, social, and emotional capacities are better able to provide safe and supportive environments for children. The study also reveals that the effectiveness of social welfare institutions is facilitated by professional social workers, collaborative partnerships, community participation, and supportive policy frameworks, while being constrained by limited resources, institutional capacity challenges, social stigma, and the complexity of urban social problems. From a social policy perspective, social welfare institutions function not only as service providers but also as agents of social development, equity, and community empowerment. Therefore, strengthening institutional capacity, enhancing cross-sectoral coordination, and integrating child protection and family resilience policies are essential for creating a more effective and sustainable social welfare system capable of addressing the evolving needs of urban communities.

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