

Women's Involvements in Immoral Activities and the Development of Blissful Life

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Purpose of the Study---This study aims to discuss issues regarding women's involvement in vices or immoral activities and to recommend means to bring them back into the fold of local societies. The women recruited in this study, were homeless, beggars, drug addicts, and sex workers in Kuala Lumpur. Their involvements in such activities need to be addressed to ensure their safety and to protect the reputation of the city of Kuala Lumpur among tourists. **Methodology:**

This study was based on a qualitative approach involving face-to-face interviews and observations of the life patterns of the research subjects in several locations in Kuala Lumpur, namely Chow Kit Road, Kampong Bahru, Kuala Lumpur Central, and Pudu Raya. Seven women were selected to be the interviewees after several rounds of negotiations to encourage them to share their experiences. To protect their privacy, their actual identities were not disclosed and they were referred to using identity codes (from R1 to R7). **Main Findings:** The findings showed several factors that contributed to their involvement in immoral activities, such as family breakdowns, infighting among family members, a lack of knowledge, poor education, and bad influences. Also, poverty, family conflicts, and poor understanding of Islamic teaching. As such, it is the responsibility of the society to provide them counsel and moral support and to take care of their financial and religious needs so that they can have a better place to live and to learn to live as true practicing Muslims. **Applications:** The findings can provide greater insight into the understanding of the plights of unfortunate women involved in immoral activities and identify factors that contribute to such involvements. Such findings can guide the stakeholders, such as religious officers and rehabilitation officers, to help such women to make amend and return to the fold of societies with care and compassion. **Novelty:** The finding can help the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (abbreviated in Malay as KPWK) to formulate effective strategy in helping women who were forced to live an immoral life as a result of social decadence, who have largely been left out from the mainstream society.

Key words---Immoral activity, mainstream, societal responsibility, social decadence.

I. Introduction

Over recent years, the number of women involved in immoral activities, such as prostitution and drug abuse, has been steadily increasing in many nations across the world, including Malaysia. What such women have in common

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is that they tend to be drug addicts, homeless people, beggars, and sex workers. According to MaizatulAkam Abu Bakar (2008), such social decadence has become so chronic in many cities in Malaysia, notably in Kuala Lumpur (KL), which poses threats to the safety of children (who can be exposed to diseases) and the tourism industry. Relevant enforcement agencies, such as Kuala Lumpur city council, police, and Charity Departments, have been working very hard to deal with such social problems with little success.

A study by Muhammad Wafi Ramli (2017), showed that the number of women involved in immoral activities in KL had reached 318 in 2013. The number continued to rise to 524 in 2015, and it is expected to increase further. In that year, the population of KL stood at 1.808 million, with Muslims and Bumiputras numbering at 46.4% and 45.9%, respectively. The number of women stood at 838,000 thousand. In 2015, the population of Kuala Lumpur is projected to reach more than 9 million, making this city the most populous city in Malaysia. Given such a projection, the problem of immoral activities is expected to worsen if no concrete effort is put in place to mitigate such a problem. Hence, a study is entailed to examine the current state of moral decadence in Kuala Lumpur so that proper corrective measures can be identified to help such unfortunate women to return to society to lead a normal life.

II. Literature Review

As a metropolitan city, Kuala Lumpur has become a popular destination of tourists, the majority of whom came from China, Europe, and the Middle East. This city has many places of interest to woo visitors and tourists to come to Malaysia. Another contributing factor is the exchange rate of the Ringgit with major currencies that favors the latter. In 2018, the Malaysian government through the Tourism Ministry launched a major campaign to make Kuala Lumpur a top tourist destination, which predictably attracted millions of tourists. In tandem, other industries have benefited from the boom in the tourism industry, creating many opportunities for Malaysians at large. For example, many young men and women from Sabah and Sarawak came to Kuala Lumpur to work in many industries or to pursue higher education in the city (Jabatan Perdana Menteri, 2013). Inevitably, all these developments have led to many socio-cultural problems, such as traffic congestions, job competitions, urban poverty, social problems, and increasing crime rates, among others (Azlina Abdullah, 2010). The last two are particularly worrying as they have led to a myriad of problems, such as family breakdowns, divorces, drug abuse, incest, illegal abortions, homelessness, and unmarried couples. Invariably, most of the problems stem from the unfair distribution of economic wealth.

According to KartiniAbooTalib@Khalid, (2016), the living standard in the city is simply too great to bear for a majority of the population, prompting the economically disadvantaged people to seek the easy way out, which mainly involves immoral activities, such as prostitution. The situation had become so bad that it attracted many agencies to take appropriate actions. For example, as reported in a major newspaper on the fourth of July, 2014, the then Minister of Federal Territory, Tengku Adnan bin TengkuMansor, announced that his ministry would focus their efforts to help ease the burden of the people and eradicate urban poverty. Most of the people living KL are non-

native in that they came to Kuala Lumpur to seek a better life. Being relatively poor and economically marginalized, they face many problems to make ends meet. Their plights are largely ignored by those entrusted to help the poor, such as state representatives or the local politicians (Wan NorAzriyati Wan Abd Aziz, 2011). Ultimately, they will be sucked into a vicious cycle of poverty, leaving complete hapless.

As stated by Khalid, Hassan N. (2012), like other major cities, KL has its share of the problem of marginalized people, who typically live in ghettos or squatters that give rise to many problems to other city dwellers. The latter will be hard-pressed in maintaining the cleanliness of the city, ensuring the safety of their children, and preventing contagious diseases. The problems are further compounded by the waves of immigrants coming to KL to take jobs that most Malaysians workers refuse to take. As reported in BeritaHarian dated 5 May 2015, it is not surprising that the number of cases of contagious diseases, such as influenza and tuberculosis affecting the locals has risen, which are easily transmitted in public places (FatanHamamahHj.Yahaya, 2005). Therefore, the locals have been advised to avoid several “hot spots” that are usually frequented by migrant workers on weekends, such as MydinKotaraya, Masjid Negara, Central Market, Menara Maybank, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, Jalan Masjid India, Jalan Tiong Nam (Chow Kit), Bulatan Sultan Mohamad, and Dataran Merdeka (Sharifah Mariam Alhabshi, 2012). Such places will be populated by the homeless at night time, a majority of whom are old, poor, mentally ill, drug-dependent, jobless, and entrenched in immoral activities. No exact statistics are available, but it is estimated that the number of homeless is more than 2,500, with 80% being Malay-Muslims (Rafiza Mohamed, 2013). Given the seriousness of the problems, KPWKM has taken several appropriate measures to help the homeless. For example, in 2013, 2,039 operations were carried out throughout Malaysia that saw 1,048 beggars, including 194 foreigners, being given assistance. Later, in Mac 2014, 404 operations were conducted across the nation, which helped provide relief to 296 people (Dewan Rakyat, No. 92, dated 19 June 2014).

According to Mashrom Muda, (2015), women with HIV/AIDS will tend to suffer more than their male counterparts as the former lack the power or influence to make decisions, particularly in choosing a life partner and getting proper medical care. Likewise, they do not have sufficient opportunities to get a good education that leads to poverty. Unfortunately, under parental pressure, some women have to marry men of low moral characters, some of whom are drug-dependent, promiscuous, bisexual, and homosexual, the eventuality of which makes the former’s lives miserable and marginalized. Several programs have been carried out by relevant agencies, such as *Yayasan Kebajikan Negara* (YKN) and *Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat* (JKM), to help alleviate the plights of these women, such as the provision of temporary shelter, Islamic counseling, and food. Despite such noble efforts, immoral activities in Kuala Lumpur continue unabated. It is, therefore, becomes the imperative of scholars, social champions, and researchers to examine the root cause of such activities and practical solutions to overcome them and to develop a protocol to guide women engaged in such activities to return to normal life.

As argued by Siti Hajar (2009), humans have to undergo a development process to develop a healthy, peaceful family and society, which relies on four ecological domains, namely the state of family economy, harmonious

family structure, the criminological state of the family, and parenting. In general, humans who live peacefully in society need to socialize and work with one another, which is in line with the living ecology of a socialized society, a notion proposed by Parsons (1951) through the Adaptation-Goal attainment-Integration Latency paradigm. He argues that the existence of any peaceful society depends on stable families that practice strong religious teaching, stable politic, and vibrant economy, with each member having to play his or her role responsibly. In this regard, people need to observe good manners and ethics in their activities to help attain and sustain a good social balance in a society (Noralina Omar, 2016). Such a concept concurs with Bubolz and Sontags' (1993) view that humans as a unit of individuals need to harmoniously interact with one another through various mechanisms. For example, schools are built as a place for students to gain formal education which entails all concerned to play their respective roles with full responsibility.

As such, students, their parents, teachers, and school administrators need to understand their roles in forging a strong bond to help realize a harmonious social environment in schools (Bubolz& Sontag, 1993; Collins, 2007). In this regard, parents have to show a strong personality that their children can emulate. Parents should never commit any criminal acts as there will be serious repercussions in the development of sound personality among children. The former are also entailed to create a stable, healthy environment to ensure the safety and well-being of their children (Collins et al., 2007). Economical factor also has a huge impact in that it can destabilize a family when parents are forced to pay less attention to their children. Hence, every member of society needs to work closely with one another to achieve a strong, vibrant, and peaceful society.

III. Methodology

This study was based on a qualitative approach involving face-to-face interviews and observations, as such an approach is appropriate in eliciting specific information from respondents (Marshall, 1999; Rossman & Othman Lebar, 2017). Seven women were selected to be interviewed after several rounds of negotiations to encourage them to share their experiences. The main selection criterion was that they had been involved in immoral activities for more than five years. To encourage them to participate in this study, they were assured that their identity would be not disclosed; as such, the researchers only used pseudo names to refer to these women. The interview sessions, on average, lasted for not more than 30 minutes. The observations of the life patterns of such women were carried out in several locations in Kuala Lumpur, namely Chow Kit Road, Kampong Bahru, Kuala Lumpur Central, and Pudu Raya.

IV. Research Findings

The first woman interviewed was Tijah, aged 38, who came to Kuala Lumpur from the east coast with her husband. Their marriage did not last long the latter died in an accident. With no recourse, she was forced to live on the street begging for money ever since. The following are her recollections of her life in Kuala Lumpur.

Ever since my husband died, I refused to go back home as it would burden my poor parents and siblings. I worked as a shop assistant in Bukit Bintang and rented a house with some friends in Kampung Bahru. After failing

to settle the house rent for three months straight, I was forced to leave. To make matters worse, my employer fired me, complaining that I was always late coming to work. Without anyone to help me, I have no other choice but to beg on the street at Klang Central Bus Station and other places in the vicinity. My income is erratic, and sometimes I have no money for days to buy food.

The second woman interviewed was MbakAinen, aged 33, who hailed from a suburb of Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. As a poor widow with a five-year-old child, she was the sole breadwinner. With mounting economic pressure, she reluctantly became a sex worker to earn some money to feed her child. Having no home, she and her child were forced to sleep on shop corridors at night and take shelter under flyovers and bridges in the morning, which researchers witnessed first-hand. When asked why she became a sex worker, this was her answer:

Before coming to Kuala Lumpur, I worked as an office assistant in a leading transport company in Kota Kinabalu. The pay was good, enough for me to pay the rent, to buy food, and to take care of my child. One of my friends in Kuala Lumpur offered me a job in a tourist agency as a clerk. After two weeks in Kuala Lumpur, I realized that the job offer was only a cover to force me to work as a sex worker. Having no other alternatives, I have work in the sex industry to survive.

The third woman interviewed was Sheron, single and aged 33, who came from Selangor. She has been in the sex industry for more than 10 years. When asked the reason that makes her a sex worker, this is what she had to say:

I was a happy girl who had a loving parent, but I was interested in studying. When I was in Form Four, my friends and I always skipped class, went back home late at night, and started to smoke. Eventually, my dad came to know of my truancy and asked me to leave home. I took a bus from TelukIntan to K Kuala Lumpur L, hoping to find a better life here. In KL, I made friends with several drug addicts. Ever since I become a drug addict and homeless, and I simply don't know how I could change my life.

The fourth woman interviewed was Dayang, single and aged 41, who hailed from Labuan, Sabah. She came with her father who worked as a security officer in a private company. She has been a sex worker since 2001. She was genial, always referring to herself as “akak” (literally means sister). She was quite open to giving her thoughts on immoral activities, as highlighted below:

I know that society looks at sex workers with contempt. They do not know or understand my situation, in which I need money to support life here. All they know is to stigmatize or pass judgment. I admit that I found the easy way out by involving in prostitution to solve my problems. I usually work at night. The money I earn helps me live an opulent life, and I like to enjoy myself with my friends. My parents have no idea of my profession, and they have never bothered to show their concerns for me.

Later, the researchers interviewed MakSom, aged 44, from a northern state. She was married but was abandoned by her husband. Together with her children, aged 3, 5, and 6, they usually had to sleep on shop corridors along Jalan Raja Abdullah dan Raja Mahmud. In response to the question of how she ended living in such a pathetic condition, this is what she had to say:

I came to Kuala Lumpur to seek medical care for my three-year-old child who has a heart problem. After a week or so, I ran out of money after spending all I had for food, my child's medical treatment, and lodging. Having no money to go back to Perlis, I have to live and beg for food on the street.

The interview that followed involved a single thirty-three-year-old woman from ParitBuntar, Perak named Haliza. She has become a drug addict for about five years. In the interview, she revealed the main reason for her addition as follows:

At first, I worked as a clerk in one of the government's departments. Under pressure in working there, I sought relief by going to several night clubs along Bukit Bintang. Eventually, I took heroin, morphine, and marijuana with my fellow club-goers and becomes an addict ever since. A year later, I was fired for my addiction. To sustain this kind of life, I have to work as a middle-class prostitute in Kuala Lumpur.

The final interview concerned a fifty-year-old homeless woman from Kuala Langat, Selangor. She used to live in a squatter area in Kampung Pandan for 25 years. Now, the area has been cleared to make way for new housing development. She worked as a part-time house assistant in areas around Lembah Keramat, Kuala Lumpur. When asked what forced her to live as a homeless, her answer was quite blunt as follows:

Previously, I had a house in Kampung Pandan, but the area was repossessed by a development company to build a new road for LRT. That piece of land belonged to the government, and yet we had not been financially compensated. Admittedly, the government tried to help by offering low-cost flats for use to buy, but, they were still expensive. To continue living here, I have to sleep under bridges, in abandoned homes, or in derelict buildings

V. Discussion

As revealed in the interviews, the immoral activities engaged by the women interviewed can be divided into three categories, namely begging and homelessness, drug addiction, and prostitution. The following subsections provide a detailed account of each category.

Begging and Homelessness

The first woman interviewed had been caught, interrogated, sentenced, and sent to a rehabilitation center called *Pusat Desa Bina Diri*, the sentence of which was based on the *Akta Orang Papa 1977 (Act 183)*. Nonetheless, she did not make any significant progress in the rehabilitation program. Her reason to remain as a beggar and homeless was that she did not have a fixed income to live in Kuala Lumpur that had a high living standard, which is typically

in many major cities in Malaysia (Muhammad Wafi Ramli, 2017). She said that getting such a job was difficult because of her age and poor educational background. Also, she did not have enough money to start a small business.

Evidently, without a permanent job and moral support from her family have compelled her to lead such a life. The former is particularly crucial in that the provision of long-term jobs that help alleviate the plights faced by such people (Wafi Ramli, 2017). Also, Steen et al. (2012) argue that those without jobs will be vulnerable to homelessness as they will have no money to buy food and to live in a decent home. Under extreme economic and socio-cultural pressure, more and more people will migrate to KL from other parts of Malaysia to seek work, and this will only intensify the problem of homelessness even further (SinarHarian, 18 November 2015).

According to Wong (2014) and Muhammad Wafi Ramli and Sharifah Rohayah (2017), begging is closely related to homelessness, which synonymous with the lives of the unfortunate in big cities. Being in this dire situation, the homeless usually are quite reluctant to disclose their background. In 2017 alone, their number reached 2,278, with 1610 being local and the remaining 668 foreigners, indicating a steady increase in people getting involved in immoral activities (Rafiza, 2017). According to Homeless Assistance Act 1987, the homeless are a group of people who have no homes that forces them to seek shelters elsewhere, such temporary shelters run by NGOs. In her study, Rafiza (2015) found that the main reason for homelessness was due to a lack of jobs as indicated by 46.6% (n = 646) of the homeless she interviewed.

Her findings concur with the data collected by the Department of Welfare (2010). Without any permanent jobs, such individuals will have no money to buy food and rent a decent home, and their situation will get worse if they have children to take off. Without recourse, their lives become unbearably manageable, the impact of which can adversely affect their families, notably their children (Azzayati, 2013). Such a notion is echoed by Rafiza Mohamed (2015) who asserts that the homeless living in Kuala Lumpur come from broken families. Meanwhile, Rahman (2012) argues that individuals without jobs will eventually become poor such that the prospect of owning a home is remotely impossible.

Based on the guidelines of KualitiHidup Malaysia (2011), (cited in Norazlina Abd Wahab and Abd Rahim Abdul Rahman, 2012), poverty is a situation in which a person does not have sufficient earnings to buy essential goods or foods, such as rice, sugar, flour, cooking oil, and decent clothes, among others. They also do not enough money to rent affordable homes. To overcome such economic pressure, they must have strong resilience and endurance to continue living in such a bad condition (Muhammad Ibrahim, 2010). Admittedly, the government through the Department of Welfare provides some financial assistance to the homeless but the red tape is simply too laborious for them to bear, as lamented by the first woman interviewed.

Drug Addiction (R2, R3, R6)

The answers given by the second, third, and sixth women interviewed point out that their drug addictions were partly attributed a lack of family support, which again is consistent with Fauziah Ibrahim's (2014) assertion that drug addiction among addicts will become more entrenched without support from their parents and siblings. As pointed out by Fauziah Ibrahim, Mustaffa Omar, Lukman Mohamad, Khadijah Alavi, NorulhudaSarnon, Salina Nen, and NasrudinSubhi (2011), the lack of support can impede the rehabilitation process as more time is needed to heal drug addicts from their chronic addiction. Such marginalized women must be given assurance, care, and support such that they will not lose hope in overcoming their dire situation (Limebury&Shela, 2015).

Based on the explanations made by the second woman interviewed, her drug addiction was stemmed from the lack of support from parents and siblings, which is consistent with the assertion made by Fauziah Ibrahim (2014). The latter argues that rehabilitating drug addicts will take more than a year, thus requiring a long-term from all concerned (Fauziah et al., 2011). In this respect, their parents should emphasize and take all the necessary measures to help their daughters battle the latter's drug addictions. The number of women involved in drug abuse seems to be on the rise. Over recent years, women aged 15 and 22 constituted the majority of women involved in drug abuse, standing at 39.5%. They were caught and sent to rehabilitation centers for counseling and treatment that lasted for almost three years. Their drug addiction has many ramifications affecting not only them but also their families and the society at large (Wilson &Kelling, 1982).

According to Abdul Munir (2014), every parent must give proper education to their children throughout the latter's entire lives, especially when they are still young, the age of which the development of children's personality can be influenced by many factors. Likewise, every parent must always love and care for their children all the time no matter what the situation might be. In this regard, parents of marginalized women should force their daughters to leave because of the latter's truancy or smoking habits. On the contrary, such parents should react positively by showing their love and concerns for their children's plights (Ismail Zain, 2001). In addition to the above measures, such parents should teach their children the importance of good manners, discipline, and obedience based on Islamic teaching, the impact of which can make the latter to be responsible, wise, and disciplined when they become adults.

Prostitution

The explanations given by third and fourth women interviewed indicated that the primary reason that incentivized them to indulge in prostitution stemmed from their hedonistic lifestyle by partying all night and seeking pleasure, completely disregarding the purpose of living as Muslims. Their involvement in these immoral activities transgresses the Islamic teaching that reminds its adherents to live as faithful servants of Allah SWT as called upon by the following Koranic verse: *And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me* (Adz-Dzaariyaat 51:56). Clearly, the above verse underscores the responsibility of men and women to fully submit to Allah's commands, and nothing else. In this respect, all human beings must ponder the negative effects that can befall them when they aimlessly lead a hedonistic life. A lifestyle that only focuses on social aspects can cast a person on a path of self-destruction. Such a lifestyle is exactly the kind of life that the third woman interviewed lead. Arguably, her

involvement in prostitution is partly due to a lack of concern shown by her parents. Surely, such indifference can propel economically vulnerable women to enter the world of vices, such as prostitution (Haryati Hasan, 2015).

To help her return to the Islamic way of life, it is important that all concerned, in particular, her parents, siblings, relatives, and close friends, to get close to her. Only then, she can be advised or convinced to quit her immoral activities by assuring her that she will not be left alone to deal with her plight (Ahmad Muhammad, 2008). According to (Haryati Hasan, 2015), a majority of women engaged in such immoral activities are typically unmarried, divorcees, widows, poor, illiterate, and uneducated. In the case of the third woman interviewed, her basic understanding and knowledge of religious matters were too low, which ultimately contributed to her descent in immoral activities. Such a revelation suggests that religious education is important to help children learn to become morally and religiously upright in their later lives. In the Malaysian context, Islamic teaching has to be made as an integral part of children's education to develop a future generation that is physically, spiritually, and morally balanced.

The Development of a Blissful Life

As stipulated in the *Pelan Tindakan Pembangunan Wanita 2009*, Malaysian women, irrespective of race and religion, should be given ample opportunities to get employed in the working sector. To ensure they can work productively, the working environments have to be made safe, conducive, and workers-friendly. The former is particularly important given that women, being physically vulnerable than men, will be more prone to mishaps and accidents. For working women, their employers should provide the support that can help them to take care of their children when they are at work, such as the provision of child-care centers. Working women should also be given the same opportunities as accorded to men to improve their professionalism, skills, and knowledge through training or education. Women should also be encouraged and supported to be self-employed by running small enterprises or setting up small businesses. Certainly, their active participation in the working sector can help them become self-reliant and, to a certain extent, contribute the economic growth of nations. As such, marginalized, poor women (as in the case of the first woman interviewed) who have been forced to live on the street to beg for food and money be given a second chance to improve their lives by giving them training (Phelan et al., 1997).

In this context, the researchers propose a temporary transit center to be built by the Malaysian government through relevant agencies. Such a shelter should be designed and equipped with enough resources in terms of manpower, logistics, food supply, and, amenities (for prayers, ablution, and cleaning), and sufficient space that can accommodate about 40 people at one time. From the Islamic teaching perspective, such women are considered one of the *asnafs*, a term that refers to a certain group of needy people who are entitled to receive alms from *zakat* or tithe (Muhammad Ammar, 2017), which is sanctioned by the following Koranic verse as follows:

Zakah expenditures are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed to collect [zakah] and for bringing hearts together [for Islam] and for freeing captives [or slaves] and for those in debt and for the cause of Allah and for the [stranded] traveler - an obligation [imposed] by Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise (al-Tawbah, verse 60).

This Koranic stipulates that the homeless are considered impoverished individuals who deserve and must be given financial assistance from *zakat*. It is, therefore, the responsibility of relevant authorities to identify and approach such people so that the latter's financial plights can be mitigated without too many delays, rather than the homeless having to go through painfully time-consuming bureaucratic procedures, a sad reality of the current practice that discourages such people to seek financial assistance from such agencies.

For long-term planning, relevant government agencies, in collaboration with government-appointed housing developers, can use zakat collections to build affordable houses for the homeless (Mazanah, 1999). Also, payments or distributions of zakat collection to deserving individuals can be made monthly. In this respect, the homeless who are single parents and have children should be given top priority for such assistance. The researchers also propose that other types of contributions can be channeled to such marginalized women to support their other needs, such as medical treatments and their children's school expenses.

As highlighted (in the case of the second woman interviewed), drug addictions among marginalized women have reached an unprecedented level that should raise concerns among members of society. Immediate remedial measures or interventions, such as religious classes, should be urgently and promptly instituted by relevant agencies to help such women to make amend for their past mistakes. Also, in such classes, they should be made to realize that such immoral activities will finally take their toll on them if they continue to indulge in such activities. Such recommendations are in line with those made in previous studies (BuerahTunggak, 2013; Nur Afzan Mohamad, 2012; KamaruddinHussin, 2008; &HussinJunoh, 2003). In those studies, the researchers found that women lacking spiritual enlightenment were vulnerable to materialistic temptations and worldly desires. Given this alarming finding, it is, therefore, important that such high-risk women be placed in counseling and religious classes to help them learn basic Islamic rules, laws, and principles, including the concepts of sins and rewards. With such knowledge, they can gradually make a smooth transition from a life filled with vices to one that is morally, religiously upright. Revealingly, the finding of Hushim Salleh, (2006) strongly suggests that Islamic counseling is the most effective method to help women engaged in prostitution to return to normal life as law-abiding human beings.

According to Rafiza (2017), methods that can deal with marginalized women with a strong sense of concern and compassion are aligned with the teaching of Islam that teaches its followers to help one another in whatever capacity. For example, those with financial means or political clout or both can certainly help marginalized people by relocating the homeless to more secure shelters. Likewise, those blessed with strong Islamic knowledge and of

strong intellect can provide free counseling classes or sessions to help women engaged in prostitution to repent and to learn to start afresh as good, respectable women in society. Such symbiotic relationships signify the concept of *habluminannas* or the relationship among people. Admittedly, most humans are inclined to transgress Allah's commands that can ultimately lead to their destruction, physically and spiritually, the reminder of which can be found in the following Koranic verse:

They have been put under humiliation [by Allah] wherever they are overtaken, except for a covenant from Allah and a rope from the Muslims. And they have drawn upon themselves anger from Allah and have been put under destitution. That is because they disbelieved in the verses of Allah and killed the prophets without right. That is because they disobeyed and [habitually] transgressed. (Ali'Imran-112)

As emphasized in the above Koranic verse, human beings need to interact, socialize, and work with one another with respect and love transcending their social and economic statuses. It is, therefore, of utmost importance for humans to establish a close relationship with Allah, the Supreme Creator, and also to forge strong bonding among themselves. Without such a divine connection with the former and social bonding with the latter, humans will not be able to live in peace and harmony, as distrust and hate will prevail over their lives. As such, women involved in vices or immoral activities must put their trust in and submit to Allah to improve their well-being. In turn, society must support these women's efforts to better their lives not only by giving them financial assistance but also by providing them loving care and moral support. More importantly, such women need to learn and abide by Islamic principles to help them overcome their plights and, finally, return to the fold of society to lead a noble, blissful life.

VI. Conclusion

As revealed in this study, women's involvement in immoral activities is attributed to a lack of care and love, poverty, broken families, divorces, poor education, and low discipline. Certainly, their involvement in such activities will have serious repercussions to achieve a harmonious society. From the perspective of human ecology, the development of such a society relies on stable, strong families. For this to take place successfully, every parent must bear the responsibility to take care of their children's needs for safety, shelter, and education such that the latter can develop into individuals with a strong personality, ethics, and morals. In view of the vulnerabilities faced by women in today's world, parents should devote more attention, care, and time in bring up their daughters to become women of principles with unflinching conscience and strong moral and religious values. In particular, parents must provide loving care to make their daughters feel wanted, special, and loved. Lacking such care can make young girls feel unwanted or unloved, which inadvertently can force them to seek help or love from outsiders.

Relevant agencies (such as the Department of Welfare), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and members of society can help these women by getting close to them, rather than ostracizing or stigmatizing them. For short-term solutions, such agencies, NGOs, and concerned individuals can help marginalized women by giving them some form of financial assistance to help them buy food and other necessities and to give them temporary shelters to live

in. For long-term solutions, more concerted efforts are needed to help them quit their immoral activities. Such efforts may involve education, training, and courses. By forging close relationships, these unfortunate women can become more open and receptive to listening to advice and accepting the reality that they need help to overcome their plights. Otherwise, they can become disheartened or demoralized to live like other normal persons.

Also, by being close, such women can be more willing to participate in rehabilitation programs, counseling sessions, and religious classes. Through perseverance, they can surely be able to make amend of their past misdeeds and to strive to become new persons with strong moral characters. Relevant agencies and NGOs can help these women earn their livelihoods by giving them appropriate training that enables them to work in various government agencies and private companies. Through such measures, such marginalized women can eventually overcome their plights to become respectable, responsible members of society that can make a significant contribution to the nation-building of Malaysia.

Acknowledgment

The authors wish to express their gratitude and appreciation to the Research Management and Innovation Center, UPSI, for the research grant (Fundamental 2017) Grant no. 2017-0176-106-01, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris that helped fund this research.

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