

A Study of Domestic Violence Towards Women

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Abstract--Cases of domestic violence towards women are alarmingly increasing from year to year and attention should be seriously undertaken by all parties. This current situation of domestic violence is a reality that is occurring in our community that may influence the family institution. In general, domestic violence can be categorized as a form of abuse or threatening behaviour that may have a negative impact to the victims mainly the women like serious physical injury to the extent of permanent disability and emotional disturbance in the form of trauma and mental depression that may cause the women to commit attempted suicide. Thus, this article will discuss factors that contribute to domestic violence, the effects that will be experienced by women and the various forms of support that will be required. At the end of the discussion, various proposal will be put forward mainly the formal support networking resources to enhance the existing services.

Key words--domestic violence, suicide, mental depression

I. INTRODUCTION

The family institution is a basic form of community that establishes the various family life interaction between family members who are the adults and their children (Lily Mastura and Ramlan, 2007). According to Salleh (2003), a family is formed when the husband, wife, children and other family members live together as a family under the same roof. In reality, not all couples are lucky enough to continue remain married (Benokraitis, 1996). Some couples may face crisis in their marriage. There will be misunderstanding and discussions which will end with arguments (Rosnah, 2002). Argument within a family is quite normal but it will end as a problem when a husband's actions are not adequately controlled leading to domestic violence (Jal Zabdi, 2004). Violence towards women can be interpreted as any violent actions attributed to gender that may cause or perceived to have caused physical, sexual or psychological injury to women. This action will also include threat to cause physical, sexual and psychological injury through force or actions to curb freedom immaterial of whether that has happened to individual or public lives (Cronwell & Burgess, 1996). Domestic violence can threaten the formation of community in the future (Mohd Hasnawi, 2013).

Based on the most recent statistics that were recorded by PDRM till 2014, a total of 2874 cases of domestic violence have been reported, whereas in 2013, a total of 4123 cases of domestic violence were recorded from January till December 2013. It shows an increase of 633 cases compared to a total of 3488 for the same period in 2012. Based on PDRM statistics per schedule 1.1, Selangor recorded the highest rate of domestic violence in Malaysia every year followed by Negeri Sembilan and Johor. This is attributed to the highest stress level in the city environment. However, Melaka recorded the lowest number of cases every year.

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Table 1: Domestic Violence Statistics 2007-2012

State	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Perlis	46	10	54	47	64	100
Kedah	378	387	288	135	173	165
P.Pinang	338	279	286	282	300	230
Perak	261	241	290	345	353	315
Selangor	811	1102	1015	626	572	436
K.Lumpur	189	92	71	123	224	271
N.Sembilan	289	252	274	239	250	352
Melaka	106	89	62	64	74	80
Johor	315	273	231	300	256	350
Pahang	197	186	149	164	190	208
Terengganu	82	90	68	45	65	138
Kelantan	184	252	173	242	229	349
Sabah	144	218	342	301	280	214
Serawak	416	298	240	260	247	280
Total	3756	3769	3643	3173	3277	3488

Source: Polis Diraja Malaysia (PDRM)

The statistics from the Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat also indicated that Selangor recorded the highest level of cases followed by Wilayah Persekutuan and Johor per schedule 1.2 below. Pulau Pinang also showed a marked increase in 2014 of 105 violence cases compared to the years before that.

Table 2: Domestic Violence Statistics 2011-2014

State	2011	2012	2013	2014
Johor	66	60	68	67
Kedah	43	33	21	60
Kelantan	30	27	19	53
Melaka	31	14	27	23
Negeri Sembilan	26	21	2	0
Pahang	21	33	36	22
Perak	46	22	12	40
Perlis	1	0	6	12
Pulau Pinang	65	53	62	105
Sabah	22	42	0	25
Serawak	45	27	66	56
Selangor	184	113	95	174
Terengganu	19	24	8	3

W.P Kuala Lumpur	73	96	64	86
W.P Labuan	2	0	0	5
TOTAL	674	565	488	731

Source: Polis Diraja Malaysia (PDRM)

Why Women are Always the Victim?

The phenomena of domestic violence is increasingly critical. This incident can be seen from studies that have been done to indicate that violence towards women cannot be regarded as petty or small in nature that only occurs in certain parts of the community but can be regarded as a global issue that requires immediate action to be handled. Implications from domestic violence cases can destroy human development and indirectly also causing destruction of mankind.

The gender factor will play a part where the male species is characterized as a person of strength, unperturbed by emotions, overreact to challenges, loves violence and always wish to be in a position of superiority. According to Shariffah Nuridah Aishah and Noor'Ashikin (2010), the female groups that are frequently becoming victim of violence are women from the minority groupings, *orang asli* women, female migrants, female hostages, women from a poor background that are away from development, women prisoners, young girls, handicapped and aged women. Violent actions or threat that may cause fear in life will become obstacles in achieving gender equality and fair treatment.

Various Categories of Domestic Violence

According to Maizatul, Hazalina, Latifenossadat and Faizah (2008) there are various categories of violence towards women in the form of physical violence that included actions like hitting, punching, slapping, biting, kicking, cutting, breaking bones, throwing items and the use of weapons towards victims (Zulkiffly, 2006). Women are seldom unaware of psychological and emotional violence. This form of violence includes actions like threats, degrading others with harsh and cynical words (Norida & Rusni, 2006). Additionally, sexual violence is enforced towards women through forcing the victims to perform or observe sexual acts against their will or to injure the women during inter-course (Norida & Rusni, 2006). Sexual violence is an unwelcome behaviour, which is discomfoting and occur being invited or retaliated by the victims which has an impact as an act of harassment. Subsequently, social violence which is another form of violence when women become over dependent to their life partners and are deprived of outside support. Women are deprived and barred from pursuing a career and having access to the outside world. It does not end there but women persist to endure financial violence by being disallowed from seeking a job or opening an account and barred from having own savings.

Based on statistics from WAO domestic violence cases occurred can be categorized into physical and psychological or emotional. Schedule 1.3 shows five types domestic violence towards women categories namely physical, psychological or emotional, sexual, financial and social with the physical violence category recording the highest level of violence of 105 cases in 2014, followed by psychological and emotional of 110 cases for the same year.

Table 3: Women’s Aid Organization Statistics for 2011-2014 based on Violence Categories

Violence category	2011	2012	2013	2014
Physical	71	75	87	105
Psychological/Emotional	71	81	90	110
Sexual	31	33	32	40
Financial	47	62	47	61
Social	38	54	44	62

According WAO sources in 2013, various types of physical violence that had been incurred to victims can be referred to schedule 1.4 below. Victims that were injured using hands and legs recorded the highest of 94.4 percent with 93 victims. This is followed by injuring of the victims using various forms of objects of 44.9 percent. Additionally, physical violence that had occurred towards victims like throwing of objects recorded 43.8 percent, being beaten repetitively and threaten with knife or sharp object recorded a level of 32.6 percent and 27 percent and also being burnt with cigarette butts recorded 13.5 percent.

Table 4: Physical Violence Inflicted on Victims

Types of Physical Violence that has been Inflicted towards Victims	Amount	Percentage (From the 93 Victims)
Injure victims using hands and legs	84	94.4 %
Injure victims using objects	40	44.9 %
Throw objects	39	43.8%
Repetitive beaten on the floor	29	32.6%
Threaten with knife and sharpobject	24	27 %
Burnt using cigarette butts	12	13.5%

Source: Women’s Aid Organization

In Malaysia, statistics from JKM related to domestic violence in accordance to types of violence per schedule 1.5 showed that in 2012, there were 293 cases that caused physical injury to women and had increased to 343 in 2014. Violence that caused psychological and emotional stress had risen 29 cases in 2013 and 65 cases in year 2014.

Table 5: Domestic Violence based on Types of Violence 2012-2014

Types of violence	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014
Purposely place victim in a situation of fear of physical injury	205	138	290
Caused physical injury/harm	318	293	343
Force/Threats	32	20	24
To place victims under custody	6	5	12
Vandalize other’s properties/assets	18	13	11

Torture psychologically and emotionally	-	29	65
Cause victim to become delusion through items may make one to be drunk	-	-	1
Total	579	498	746

Source : Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat, Malaysia

The Police DiRaja Malaysia (PDRM) exposed that on an average 10 women are “tortured” every day in various forms including mental or physical with 98% of domestic harassment cases happened in public domain and in most cases family members and neighbours were aware about the torture but did not bother to take action. The police also clarified that victim did not lodge police reports as they were ashamed and some still loved their partners although being tortured.

Factors And Impact Of Domestic Violence

Violence towards women is a global problem that is happening in the whole world. There are various factors that is said to be the cause of domestic violence and women are victims of these domestic violence.

In the context of domestic violence, economic obstacle is one of the factors that causes violence at home. Apparently, the general factors that contribute towards domestic violence are the lacking of religious knowledge, the husband and wife couples are ignorant of the various rulings and requirements related to the relationship between them and their responsibilities towards their children. The current situation is the subset of young couples in this era with lack of knowledge and understanding in managing the family system and not prepared for a married life.

The low level of education is one of the factors that resulted in domestic violence. Knowledge should be the guiding light in life and will provide direction in their in their daily lives. Due to the lack of knowledge, decisions are normally made individually without obtaining views of others. According to the Polis Diraja Malaysia, the attitude of domestic violence victims who did not have the courage to lodge a police report due to a feeling of shame and worry that the report will hurt the harmony in the family relationship is a contributory factor that causes violence and abuses against them. Many felt that the husbands are significant element to protect them as well as being concerned that their children will also be victims.

The statistics that had been released by JKM indicated that financial problem was recorded as the third highest in the causes for domestic violence cases. This has resulted conflicts among the married couples which may further lead to domestic violence. The following statistics that was released by JKM for the whole years of 2102 and 2013 on the source of domestic violence in Malaysia is per Schedule 1.6 below:

Table 6: Domestic Violence Statistics Based on Causes of Violence in 2012-2013

Causes	2012	2013
Loss of employment	13	7
Mental pressure at work	8	2
Financial problem	54	43
Interference by In Laws	23	12
Relationship Outside Marriage	47	20
Drug Addiction	59	60
Gambler	19	10
Alcoholic Drinker	38	34
Misunderstanding	165	58
Right of children custody	12	12
Experiencing mental pressure	14	4
Unemployment	14	9
Conflict of assets distribution	0	0
Polygamy/Jealousy	0	0
Short tempered	0	113
Other matters	147	115
Total	613	499

Source: Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat Malaysia

Unemployed women or full time housewives made up the highest group that are experiencing domestic violence. In 2012, a tragic incident happened which publicized a sad story of a 17 year old housewife in Kedah found dead suspected to be killed by her own husband of 6-months old (Maznah,2013). This data indicated the problem among women in trying to understand the level of knowledge and information on violence towards women and the statistics should be given due attention by the public in general.

The following statistics released by Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat in 2012-2014 was based the jobs per Schedule 1.7 below. Although housewives recorded the highest level with 174 cases in 2014, 180 in 2013 and 197 cases in 2014, working women are not exception to domestic violence. Statistics also showed working women in the private sector recorded a total of 245 cases in 2014, 147 cases in 2013 and 153 cases in 2012 whereas women working in the government sector recorded 73 cases in 2014, 49 cases in 2013 with 57 in 2012.

Table 7: Domestic Violence Based on Various Jobs 2012-2014

Types of jobs	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014
Housewives	197	180	174
Government Officers	57	49	73
Statutory Bodies	0	5	6
Private Sector Employees	153	147	245
Factory Workers	31	0	0
Temporary Employees	17	0	0
Businessman	22	0	0
Village Workers	5	0	0
Unemployed	18	0	18
Professional	6	0	0
Work on Own/Sundry Retailer	0	67	111
Retiree	0	2	8
Student	0	23	41
Others/Unknown	65	9	38
TOTAL	571	484	734

Source: Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat, Malaysia

Incidents of violence towards women may leave a dark memory to the victims. Victims need to bear excessive pains due to physical pains and health issues in addition to undergoing trauma as a result of mental and emotional disturbances like fear, pressure to their feelings and inferiority. Trauma due to feeling despised by the community and loss of self-esteem will leave a negative impact throughout her life. The violence that has occurred will have implications on the individuals close to the victims. As an example, in cases of domestic violence, the children will be impacted negatively mainly from a psychological perspective. Children who witness abuses will easily feel depressed and lethargic.

Support System that are Available for Victims of Violence in Malaysia.

i. Non-Governmental Organizations of Women's Bodies

Currently, there are several Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) that have dedicated themselves to handle abused women cases in Malaysia. Some examples include Women Centre for Change (WCC), Persatuan Pergerakan Wanita (AWAM), Pertubuhan Pertolongan Wanita (WAO), Pertubuhan Kesedaran Wanita Kedah (PKWK), Wanita Sarawak untuk Wanita Society (SWWS) dan Tindakan Wanita Sabah Resource Group (SAWO). These Women NGOs provide advice and information on counseling services, support in acquiring shelter and work with other agencies like the police, hospital, welfare department and judiciary. However, amongst these NGOs, only a handful provide shelters to women due to the various difficulties.

ii. The Government Hospitals

A 'One Stop Crisis Centre (OSCC) has been established in general hospitals throughout the country in 1996 to provide immediate or urgent medical treatment and also to make available a safe environment for abused women before the process of referring to related agencies. Abused women will be accorded special status to be treated urgently/immediately by a doctor in a private room with the printing of prompt medical report as a proof of a crime happening. Visits to the hospital is significantly important if the victim is injured or has experienced injury previously but has not been treated prior to those incidents. With the consent of the victim, the OSCC team can refer the victim to the counseling unit or for psychiatric evaluation, if necessary, and for a safe shelter managed by an NGO as an accommodation on long term basis.

iii. Polis Diraja Malaysia (PDRM)

The police is one of the authorities with the normal power of arrest on domestic violence cases in Malaysia. The police statement is the most important document that will be used as evidence to prove that a criminal act has occurred. The roles of Police in the country in cases of violence are as follows (Kandiah, 2003):

- 1) The police will conduct investigations accordingly as provided per Criminal Procedure Code
- 2) The police department with sufficient and appropriate evidence can remand the abuser for up to 24 hours.
- 3) The police will be required to present the suspected abuser to the magistrate.
- 4) The police has the authority to remand the abuser from 24 hours up to 14 days

iv. The Social Welfare Department (JKM)

An officer from the Social Welfare Department can accompany the victim to the hospital and the police station if the victim has not made a medical report or police statement. The Department officer will assist the victim to apply to the court for an Interim Protection Order (IPO) and in many cases, the Protection Order (PO) that has been issued by the court will ensure that the abuser will be barred from using violence towards the victim. Additionally, the Protection Order will also include other family members including their children. Obtaining the Interim Protection Order and Protection Order will require some additional efforts.

v. Islamic Religious Department

For the Muslims, the dissolution of a marriage can only be allowed by the court under the Syariah Laws. In the cases of domestic violence, abused women can be accorded a divorce under the bad treatment towards the wife. Section 127 and 128 Act 303 provide significant protection to the wives of husbands who have committed marriage infractions like violence in relationship. Conditions for the dissolution of marriage (and the marriage itself) differ from states to states in Malaysia. Information relating to Syariah Laws and Syariah Court presented in full under Section 2 in this chapter (Marriage, Divorce and the Family).

vi. Legal Aid Bureau

This bureau provides free legal support and advice on all issues regarding domestic violence, attack and civil matters like rights in the marriage, rights on child care and maintenance claims. This service is offered to victims who are facing financial difficulties and do not have funds for legal fees. If necessary, the victims will be assisted to obtain Court Order, Protection Order and concurrently working with the police.

II. CONCLUSION

Violence towards women is a form of victimization towards the weaker sex by physical, sexual, social, financial, psychological and emotional means regardless of race, religion and income. Victimization happens because most women are unaware that all that is happening to them can be considered as violence. The implication from the acts of victimization and violence towards women will result in the women losing their self-confidence, having fear of challenges, lacking in mutual harmony in family and developing an imbalanced society.

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