



AMERICAN JOURNAL OF YOUTH AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT (AJYWE)

ISSN: 2835-3250 (ONLINE)

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1 (2023)

PUBLISHED BY

E-PALLI PUBLISHERS, DELAWARE, USA



Status of VAWC Crime Victims: A Basis for a Comprehensive Victimology Program

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Article Information

Received: May 04, 2023

Accepted: July 20, 2023

Published: August 05, 2023

Keywords

*Victims, Victimology, Violence
Against Women*

ABSTRACT

This study determined the status of crime victims, particularly victims of violence against women in order to arrive in practical solutions to the stated problems of the study. Specifically, it sought to determine the factors contributory to victimization among crime victims, the effects of victimization, the support extended for the treatment of crime victims, in order to arrive in recommendations to assist crime victims and minimize the impact of victimization. It made use of the descriptive-qualitative method of research. The researcher found out that the primary factors that lead to the victimization of women victims of violence are socioeconomic factors. Most of the abuses committed to victims were in the form of verbal abuse so there is no much visible physical effect. There is lack of support given to the victims. In terms of suggestions made by the victims to help other victims, most of them suggested livelihood programs because they believe that some cases of violence against women stem from financial reasons.

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women in many different forms has been existing since many years ago. To strengthen their call to action against this phenomenon, the government has built campaigns and programs. Despite this, the Philippines still remains one of the countries with the most number of cases of violence against women. Violence against women is quickly increasing and is affecting women, her household and the productivity of the region or the society (Racidon et. al 2018).

As published in the website of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, based on a 2013 global review by the World health organization, there are 35% of women in the world experience violence from intimate sexual or non-sexual partner. In some countries, the highest ratio of abused women is estimated as one into three, while one into five in other countries (UNODC, 23 May 2018). In the United States, according to the Vermont Commission on Women, a woman is beaten every 15 seconds. Numerous studies believe that as many as 1 in 4 women in the United States will be abused by a partner in their lifetime. Domestic violence is a leading cause of injury to US women between ages 15 and 44 according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (vermont.gov)

In South Africa, in reference to the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development report, in the year 2015 to 2016, about 51, 895 sexual offenses were recorded, which records an average of 142.2 per day. Though the sexual offenses rate decreased from 99 out of 100 000 in 2014 to 2015 to 94.3 in 2015 to 2016, the said decrease can be attributed to the underreporting of sexual violence cases (unodc.org/southernafrica/en/vaw/index.html, 23 May 2018).

In a report by Mashiegi (2017), the police warned about the increase in number of violence against women in South Africa, though they were not able to reveal how

much have the incidents increased. In the latest police statistics in the whole country, there were 37, 630 sexual offenses to include that violence against women from April to December 2016. There were also unaccounted number of femicides, or women killed by their intimate partners. The South Africa Medical Research Council also found out that three women in South Africa are killed by their intimate partners every day, whereas 40% of men assaulted their partners daily. In another study conducted by the World Health Organization in 2012, it was found out that 65% of women in South Africa had experienced spousal abuse in the year 2011.

In Nigeria, violence is mostly institutionalized through gender stereotyping, highlighting male superiority over female which results to bullying of women and domination of women by men at all costs. In a survey by Afri-Dev, a non-governmental organization, three in ten men of ages 15 to 49 believe that a man is justified in hitting his wife if she burns food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children or refuses sexual relation, while four in ten women respondents of the same age bracket responded the same (theable.ng/4-cases-of-violence-against-women-in-2016-that-will-shock-you, 23 May, 2018).

In UAE, there were 108 cases of violence against women handled by an organization in Dubai alone between July and September 2016. However, in a report by the Dubai foundation for women and children, there were 120 victims of violence against women in Dubai, which shows a slight increase as compared to the 115 cases handled from the same period in the past year. In the whole year round, it was recorded that most of the victims suffered verbal and emotional abuse, with 103 cases of deprivation and neglect, 86 of financial abuse, 80 of physical violence, 14 of sexual abuse and 11 of domestic violence (thenational.ae/uae/reported-

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abuse-cases-against-women-and-children-in-dubai-rise-slightly-1.157653).

In Karachi, Pakistan, according to Mansoor (2018), based on a report furnished by the Sindh's women development department, a total of 1,643 cases of various types of violent acts were filed by women from across the province since 2017. Out of these cases, 55 were reported to have occurred in Benazirabad, 45 in Jacobabad, 35 in Mirpurkhas, 32 in Hyderabad, 23 in Karachi, 12 in Larkana, 10 in Khairpur, 9 in Nausharo Ferose, and 1 each from Sanghar and Shikarpur (dawn.com/news/1399569, 23 May 2018).

In India, a report by the National Crime Record Bureau as cited by Sharma (2015) and published in the Indian Journal of Psychiatry, contained that every 78 hours there is one dowry death, every 59 minutes there is one sexual harassment, every 34 minutes there is rape, every 12 minutes there is one act of torture, and almost 1 in 3 married women experienced domestic violence. Further studies reported violence in 19% to 76% of women; 42% to 48% in Uttar Pradesh and 36 to 38% in Tamil Nadu; 19% in an urban slum community series; 12.9% in the hospital series were associated with domestic violence. Thirty percent of men in Uttar Pradesh reported beating wives. Twenty-two percent of woman of childbearing age from a potter community was physically assaulted. Thirty-four percent of those women assaulted required medical attention. In another study conducted, 40% of women who were surveyed in India reported experiencing violence during their marriage.

In the Philippines, as stated by the Philippine Commission on Women (2018), "violence against women appears as one of the country's pervasive social problems". One in five Filipino women aged 15-49 has experienced physical violence since age 15 according to the 2008 National Demographic and Health survey conducted by the National Statistics Office. It is indeed alarming that despite efforts to address the concern, violence against

women persists.

In Calapan City, the setting of this study, in reference to the crime statistics recorded by the Calapan City Police Station during the calendar years 2016 and 2017, the crimes most frequently committed involved violence against women.

The fact that violence against women is the most notorious crime recorded in the calendar years 2016 and 2017 in Calapan City and that the alarming number of VAW cases in the country increases despite efforts to repress it, prompted the need for the researcher to conduct this study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used mixed methods of research in which the researcher combined all the elements of qualitative and quantitative approaches for the purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration. Since this study determined the existing status or condition of crime victims, the data gathered was based on the perception of the respondents which was recorded, analyzed, and further interpreted.

Mixed methods research has been defined as a philosophically underpinned model of inquiry combining qualitative and quantitative models of research so that evidence may be mixed, and knowledge is increased in a more meaningful manner than either model could achieve alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, 2001). This method of inquiry was most suited for addressing the research aims of this proposal.

This study determined the factors contributory to victimization among crime; effects of victimization; and determined the support provided to be extended for the treatment of crime victims. It attempted to describe the present existing condition of the problem in order to arrive with recommendations and proposed solutions to the stated problems of the study.

Table 1: Factors Contributory to Victimization

Domain	Category	Themes	Statement	Percentage
Factors	Socio - Economic	Financial	"It doesn't seem to matter to me because I'm already used to."	10%
		Disagreement	"He does not do what was agreed"	10%
		Discontentment	"He tells me that my face is wrinkled"	20%
	Vices	Drunkenness	"When drunk"	20%
		Drug addiction	"He's too drunk"	10%
		Jealousy		10%
		Womanizing		20%

RESULTS

Table 1 indicates that the greater factors contributory to victimization of the victims of violence are the vices on the part of the offenders which include drunkenness, drug addiction, jealousy and womanizing.

One of the respondents stated that her husband becomes violent the moment he gets drunk. This statement was further substantiated by the data obtained from another

respondent, claiming that her husband hurts her when he is too much drunk. This is in accordance to the findings of the National Research Council of the US which acknowledges drinking alcohol as a cause of violence against women. This indicates the lack of resort or capability on the part of the victims in preventing their husbands from drinking, leading to their victimization. This also shows the existence of another problem that

caused their husbands to drink, attributory to the victims or the inability of the couple to resolve their problems leading to the reason why the husband drinks.

Meanwhile, one of the respondents claimed that her husband hurts her because of jealousy. This posits that the victim creates motivation or reasons on the part of her husband to get jealous like being in the company of another man.

The two other respondents claimed that they caught their husbands in the act of womanizing. This led to an argument

that escalated to the reason why their husbands hurt them. Other than the fact that womanizing could be the nature of some men, the data indicates that the respondents have done something that caused their husbands to womanize like neglecting their physical appearance and depriving their husbands of their sexual needs.

The other reasons for victimization are socio – economic factors which include financial problems, disagreement, and discontentment of the husband on his wife’s appearance.

Table 2 indicates that majority of the respondents did not

Table 2: Physical Effects of Victimization to Victims

Domain	Category	Themes	Statement	Percentage
Physical Effects	Non – serious injury	No visible effect	“He was being too aggressive towards me”	70%
			“None”	
			“None”	
			“He almost hurt me”	
			“Almost”	
			“He did not hurt me, he only threatened me”	
			“He chased me with a knife, he was going to stab me	
			“He chased me with a knife, he was going to stab me”	
			“He cut me in the arm”	
			“I got punched in the eye”	
	Serious Physical Injury	Wound	“I got punched in the eye”	10%
		Contusion	“He slapped me in the face”	20%

sustain any visible injury from their husbands.

One of the respondents shared that she was being bumped by her husband with his body. The second shared that she was being frightened by her husband. The third shared that she was chased with a knife by her husband. The fourth shared that she was about to be hurt by her husband. These acts by the respondents’ husbands indicate that the offenders merely want to frighten the victims for them to give in to what they want.

On the part of the two respondents who responded none or not, without stating any reason, it means that they only suffered verbal abuse from their husbands. One of the respondents further shared that her husband did not even hurt her physically from the very beginning, but he keeps on telling her hurting words. This indicates fault on the part of the victims in creating reasons for their husbands to tell them hurting words or frighten them. Indeed, the

data means that most of them suffered verbal abuse from their husbands.

Meanwhile, two of the respondents implied sustaining a more serious form of abuse because aside from hurting words, they also suffered physical abuse from their husbands. One of them shared that she was boxed by her husband on the eye resulting to contusion. The other shared that she was being hurt physically by the hand of her husband which means a slap or a punch.

The other sustained the most serious of all abuses, saying that she was hacked by her husband. This is a serious matter because it indicates willingness on the part of the husband to kill her. The United Nations identified some effects of violence against women to women victims such as long-lasting physical symptoms such as headache and back pain (<http://www.un.org/rights>, 23 May 2018). Table 3 presents the emotional effects of victimization to

Table 3: Emotional Effects of Victimization to Victims

Domain	Category	Themes	Statement	Percentage
Emotional Effects	Immune	None	“It doesn’t matter to me because I’m used to it”	10%
	Anxiety	Upset	“Opo” (When asked if she feels hurt when her husband tells her hurting words)	60%
			“I just cried for what he was doing”	
			“I feel hurt when hurtful words are spoken”	
			“It hurts me”	
			“It’s just really painful”	
			“I feel bad”	
			Its tiring because I’m already stressed”	

		Stress	"I got stressed"	20%
			"Nagging stress"	
		Fear	"I'm so scared"	10%

the victims. Majority of the respondents exhibited upset due to the abuses they sustained from their husbands. Some of them admitted that they hurt badly by what their husbands do to them.

One of them admitted that she cries every time her husband tells her hurting words. This indicates the possible taking advantage of the situation by the husbands knowing that their wives' only resort was to cry. This also indicates sadistic tendency on the part of the husbands. Meanwhile, these attributes' fault on the part of the victims by showing their weakness, causing their husbands to take advantage of it.

The rest of the respondents agreed that they feel stressed when their husbands tell them hurting words. This indicates the existence of another problem that these victims are facing, so every time they are abused

by their husbands; they are stressed knowing that they are already facing other problems. This indicates lack of coping mechanism on the part of the victims in relieving themselves from stressful situations. This also indicates the victim's lack of capability to deal with multiple problems. Meanwhile, one of the respondent victims admitted that what her husband does to her no longer affect her because she already got used to it. This indicates fault on the part of the victim in tolerating what her husband is doing. This creates additional avenues on the part of the husband to further abuse her. The World Health Organization (2017) stated that women victims of violence can suffer emotional consequences such as depression, post-traumatic stress and other anxiety disorders, sleep difficulties, suicide attempts and problem drinking.

Table 4 shows the support that the victims get from

Table 4: Support to Crime Victims (by PNP)

Domain	Category	Themes	Statement	Percentage
Support to Crime Victims by PNP	Duties and Responsibilities	Physical (Filing only)	"They just filed the case. That's it"	40%
			"Only in the filing of cases. Even my brother who is a policeman doesn't know about VAW"	
			"I gave my sworn statement and marriage certificate"	
			"They filed the case"	
		Physical and Moral	"The police told me that if there's a hearing, I should attend"	30%
			"I was told that I should not withdraw the case"	
			"They will give him a lesson"	
	Apathetic	Lack of Support	"At that moment, I withdrew the case"	30%
			"Nothing happened either"	
			"No one supported me"	

the PNP due to victimization. It reflects that majority of the respondents only get physical support which is just limited to aid given to them in filing the case. Two of the respondents directly admitted that the PNP just helped her file the case. One of them admitted that she was just interviewed, and her statement was taken along with her marriage contract as supporting evidence. One of the respondents admitted that her brother who is a police officer just helped her file the case, but he is not aware of what violence against women is all about. This indicates lack of awareness of the rest of PNP members on the provisions of the law on violence against women and its serious nature, leading to their very scant support to VAWC victims.

The rest of the respondents implied that aside from the physical support given to them in filing the case, they were also given moral support. One of the victims admitted that she was advised not to drop the case. This indicates that this PNP member is aware of the serious nature of

violence against women, causing him to extend such kind of support.

Meanwhile, the rest of the respondents admitted that the PNP did not help them at all. Instead of helping them file the case, the PNP members convinced them instead to drop the case as nothing will happen anyway even if the case will be filed. This indicates that these PNP members are not fully convinced that the victims will pursue the case until its end, causing them not to support the case. In general, it can be gleaned from the data presented that the PNP is lacking when it comes to support given to VAWC victims. According to the PNP Reform and Reorganization Act of 1998, it created women's desks in all police stations and the formulation of a gender sensitivity program that will administer and attend to cases involving crimes against chastity, sexual harassment, abuses committed against women and children and other similar offenses. However in the study of Espineli, *et al.* found out that support extended to victims of violence against women by the

Table 5: Support to Crime Victims (by DSWD)

Domain	Category	Themes	Statement	Percentage
Support to Crime Victims by DSWD	Non-awareness of Victims	Lack of Support	"I did not ask"	80%
			"I didn't ask"	
			"No"	
			"I did not attend"	
			"No one helped me"	
			"No"	
			"No"	
			"I did not attend"	
	Duties and Responsibilities	Filing	"When I went to DSWD, I only gave my paper"	10%
		Financial	"The social worker gave me transportation allowance"	10%

PNP is mostly limited to the filing of the case.

Table 5 shows the extent of support given by the DSWD to women victims of violence. Majority or almost all of the respondents admitted that they did not receive any support from the DSWD.

Most of these respondents who admitted that they did not receive any support said that they did not go to the DSWD to ask support. This indicates fault on the part of the victims as they should not expect the DSWD to come to them to give support. The rest of them simply said that the DSWD did not help them in any way. Though, one of the respondents implied that the DSWD helped her in filing the case. However, she admitted that she was the one who went to the DSWD to ask for support.

Meanwhile, one of the respondents admitted that she received support from the DSWD in the form of money.

To ensure the effective implementation of RA 9262 or the Violence Against Women and their Children, the Inter-Agency Council was created. It gave the DSWD the power to improve center and community-based services and develop programs responsive to the needs and concerns of victim-survivors of VAWC. The data vividly implies the deficiency of support given by the DSWD to VAWC victims. (<http://www.pcw.gov.ph/focus-areas/violence-against-women/initiatives/iacvawc>).

This indicates that the DSWD are not doing all means to find a way to support the victims, when they could find a way to support the VAWC victims if they want. It indicates that the DSWD do not bother to go to the PNP to monitor cases of violence against women but simply waits for the victims to come to them and ask for help.

In general, the data indicates the tremendous lack of

Table 6: Support to Crime Victims (by Barangay)

Domain	Category	Themes	Statement	Percentage
Support to Crime Victims by Barangay	Apathetic	Lack of Support	"None"	70%
			"None"	
			"None"	
			"None"	
			"None"	
			"None"	
			"No one helped"	
	Duties and Responsibilities	Protection	"Barangay Officials assisted us"	10%
		Counseling	"I went to Barangay Hall to seek for advice"	20%
			"They told me that this case should be directed to the police"	

support given by the DSWD to victims of violence.

Table 6 shows the extent of support given by the barangay to victims of violence against women. Majority or almost all of the respondents admitted that they did not receive any support from the barangay. The rest of them implied that though there was the presence of other personnel who could have helped them at the barangay, these personnel did not help them. While the rest of them implied that they did not ask for any help because they went immediately to the police to file the case, which could be the proper procedure, since that violation of the

VAWC law is a serious offense.

The rest of them implied the absence of authorized, able and trusted people to help them at the barangay. These victims refused to ask help from anybody from the barangay because they did not want that they will become subject of gossip and speculations. They thought that some of the barangay personnel are not professional enough to keep their case confidential. Two of the respondents admitted of receiving help from the barangay in the form of advice. One of them shared that she was advised by the barangay personnel to go directly to the

police to file the case. Meanwhile, one of the respondents admitted that she was given support by the barangay by sending tanods to guard her.

The data generally indicates the excessive lack of support that VAWC victims receive from the barangay which is attributed to the lack of awareness of barangay personnel on the serious nature of VAWC. This is also explained by the fact that the victims did not come from the same barangay and the extent of support given by barangay personnel varies depending upon how active or efficient the barangay officials are in that barangay.

Espineli, *et al.* found out that when it comes to support from the barangay given to victims of violence against women, it is impliedly lacking as the study revealed that the PNP WCPD do not often coordinate with the involved barangay.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

After careful presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made such as, the primary factors that lead to victimization of women victims of violence are the socio-economic factors and vices on the part of the husbands; in most cases no visible physical effects were inflicted to the victims because, most of the abuses committed were in the form of verbal abuse; in terms of support given to VAWC victims, there is lack of support given to them. When it comes to the PNP, support given to them was simply limited to filing the case. When it comes to the DSWD, they did not receive any support from them because the victims did not really go to the DSWD to ask for support. Similarly, to the barangay, they did not receive any help from them because they went directly to the police to file a case; and in terms of suggestions made by the victims to help other victims, most of them suggested livelihood program because they believe that some cases of violence against women stem from financial reasons.

After consideration of the conclusions of the study, the following are hereby recommended: there should be a way to teach women to handle or stop violence or the reasons why their husbands abuse them like the conduct of seminars or counseling in a coordinated effort by all concerned agencies like the barangay, police and DSWD. As for example, the victims must be taught on what to do to stop their husbands from getting jealous, or from womanizing or drinking. Separate sessions should be conducted with the husbands alone for them to voice out the reasons why they do it and their other concerns, and another session where both the husband and the wife are in present; when it comes to effects of victimization, since that majority of the abuses are committed verbally, most of them affect the victims emotionally. In this case, another seminar or informative campaign should be conducted to teach the victims on coping and handling properly the hurt and emotional effects of victimization, so that it will not lead to other graver consequences; strong support must be given to the victims, more seminars and trainings should be given to the PNP, intended to

widen their awareness about what case of violence against women is all about, how serious and sensitive its nature is and why is it important to handle it properly, the proper procedures in handling such cases, and the proper way of dealing with the victims. When it comes to the DSWD, there should be a way for its personnel to access VAWC victims to the barangay and the PNP even if the victims will not personally go to them. They should not wait for the victims to go to them before they will extend their help. Thus, DSWD personnel should be assigned permanently at the barangay to help barangay officials in handling VAWC cases and at the police station to assist the PNP, particularly the women and children desk section in handling VAWC cases. When it comes to the barangay, seminars and informative campaigns should be conducted to barangay officials intended to inform them about the nature of violence against women, the proper way of dealing with victims and the proper procedures in handling these cases. As mentioned, DSWD personnel should be assigned regularly at the barangay to assist barangay officials in handling VAWC cases; and lastly, the comprehensive victimology program may be adopted in order to mitigate one of the reasons for commission of acts of violence against women.

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