

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

All countries of the world experience the barbarous custom of violence perpetrated by men of all calibres, whether in the home, workplace, street, primitive jungle or even areas steeped in war. Domestic violence cuts across all racial, social, cultural, economic, political and religious spectrums often perpetrated by those they love and respect. The most common type of abuse is "spousal abuse" involving humiliation, economic coercion, and physical brutality. It is estimated that half of the world's women have been abused (Economic and Social Council, United Nation, 1992).

Past study from World Health Organization (WHO,1997) indicate that between 16% to 52% of women world-wide are physically assaulted by an intimate partner at least once in their lives. In France, 95% of the victims of violence are women, 51% of them are at the hands of their husbands (The Tribune Newsletter, 1991). In Switzerland, a study of 1,500 women between the age of 20-60 years, reported that 20% had been physically assaulted (Gillioz ,1997). A study in Sri Lanka shows that 60% of 200 women interviewed said they were beaten by their partners and 51 of these women said their partner used a weapon during the physical assault (Sonali,1992). In Beijing, there is concern about the frequency of domestic violence in Chinese families amounting to two thirds of Chinese households (Jackman, 1998).

Like these countries, Malaysia also faces this social problem. According to a study on sample by Women's Aid Organization (WAO,1991), 39% of Malaysian women estimated to have been abused by their partners. In addition 68% of these battered women were physically abused while they were pregnant (Rashidah ,1994). Domestic violence is a significant, but often hidden social problem. The 'invisibility' of the problem is largely attributed to the sensitivity of the issues surrounding the problem, especially the traditional belief in the sanctity and privacy of the family and the intimacy of marital relationships.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to a national research study of Malaysia conducted by WAO (1991) b, it was estimated that in 1989, their husbands or boyfriends beat 1.8 million or 39% of the total women population over the age 15. Only 909 women actually reported violence to the police. Many battered women feel they were not listened to, were advised to be more patients, told not to provoke their husbands and to persist with the marriage. Behind these responses are the common attitudes that domestic violence is not a serious offence, that the woman is to be blamed for instigating violence in some way and that the role of a wife is to accommodate her husband's demands and behaviour. Many people in Malaysian society still believe that violent domestic disputes should be worked out privately between husband and wife and that if the situation is really as bad as women say, then battered women would leave their husbands rather than stay.

Why do women get battered? Why do they accept with docility and complaisance? What are the consequences they have to face? Therefore, there is a desire need to find out from this study to these questions and enumerate the extent of brutality against women in different societies.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to identify the issues and problems faced by the battered women not only all over the world but also in Malaysia. More specifically, the research objectives are as follows:

- a. To identify the characteristics of the battered women.
- b. To examine the socio-demographic of the batterer.
- c. To examine the contributing factors affecting the frequency of battering.
- d. To gain further insights into the problems faced by the battered women.
- e. To assess the implications of battered woman and discuss the findings.

.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is timely that this study will contribute to the current development of Malaysian women by means of contributing additional new data and findings. Malaysia has been and is still experiencing tremendous social and economic transformation and it has affected the lives of the Malaysian people in particular the Malaysian women in many

different ways. Educational level has improved considerably over the years. The gender gaps in educational and employment opportunities have narrowed. The number of female students is found to have outnumbered male students in a number of disciplines in institutions of higher learning (The Star, 2003). Consequently, more and more women are now entering the modern labour market.

The role of a woman does not stop at home only, but has grown tremendously in this past years. Malaysian government has allocated RM 99.1 million for the Women and Family Development, reflecting the Government's recognition of the role of women in national economic and social development (The Star, 2003). Basic human rights for everyone is still very much an on-going struggle, and it's a tooth-and-nail fight for every inch gained for women's rights. When Article 8(2) of the Federal Constitution was amended in 2001 to legally include gender as a form of discrimination, it took a lot of people by surprise. It is a challenging task to increase the awareness about gender disparities and basic human rights for all.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

A survey was conducted by a group of medical officers in the Accident and Emergency Department General Hospital Kuala Lumpur on patients seeking medical services in the department and were identified as battered victim. Questionnaires were used to obtain information from these battered women. Data obtained will be analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Analysis that will be conducted include frequency and percentage tabulations, crosstabs between two variables, descriptive analysis using mean and median, Analysis of variance, and the odds-ratio analysis using Mantel-Haenszel Methods for dichotomous dependent variables. Chi-square tests using Mantel-Haenszel will be used as indication of the overall fit of the data to the model.

1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The research paper will be organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 begins with the background of the study, followed by the objectives and significance of the study and finally the methodology that will be used in this study. Chapter 2 will focus on other studies related to this study. Chapter 3 will focus on the methods used in collecting and analyzing the data used in this study and Chapter 4 will present the data analysis and findings of the study. Finally, Chapter 5 will provide a summary, policy implications and recommendations for further studies.