

# Prevalence of Domestic Violence Against Women and Children in the Philippines

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## Abstract

In a country where gender and development is promoted, professionals, educators, students, household and families must be exposed in the issues of Violence against Women and Children in the Philippines. Hence, this mixed method study determined the prevalence of domestic violence against women and children in the municipality of Malvar with an end goal of proposing extension service activities to minimize the problem of domestic violence in the municipality of Malvar. Specifically, it dealt with the following: the issues of violence against women and children in the municipality from 2014-2016, the police officers' perspective in addressing such case, and the factors that drive the complaints to report such case. The data were obtained through the issues of violence reported in the women's desk and interview of the two police officers and two random victims. By evaluating and analysing the information gathered, the researchers found out that the common factor that lead the complainant to report the case was the victim's fear that even their children may experience violence from the husband. The results of the study also revealed that reluctance of the victims to pursue the complaints and the victims' tolerance of abuse are the problems which boil down the culture. In connection to victims' reluctance to pursue the complaint, problems like costly, lengthy litigation and corruption in the judiciary and prosecution exist. These problems discourage the victims in filing formal complains. In addition, there is no established national free legal aid program for financially challenged women. In line of the above cited problems, the researchers recommend that victims be referred to DSWD even if she does not file formal complaint. In instances when the victims chooses to go back to her abuser, consistent monitoring and counselling must be done to inform them of other remedies like that of Barangay Protection Order which is cheaper and readily available in barangay.

**Keywords:** domestic violence, women and children, prevalence, gender

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, there are many reports of positive change in international, national and local laws focusing on development, equality and human rights that lead to positive outcome in deed and attitude on the part of governments, religious organizations and other institutions when looking at the key development issues through gendered lens-looking at how development decisions and practices affect both men and women. In addressing gender and development issues, it is usual to look at the relations between women and men (social, political, economic), focusing on global inequalities, always keeping in mind, however, that all play a part in supporting inequality wherever in the world. We look at issues of power, which can prevent development and which can hinder participation in, and opportunities for, involvement in one's own community.

Gender and development refers to the development perspective and process that are participatory and empowering, equitable, sustainable, free from violence, respectful of human rights, supportive of self-determination and actualization of human potential. It seeks to achieve gender equality as a fundamental value that should be reflected in development choices; seek to transform society's social, economic and political structures; and question the validity of the gender roles ascribed to women and men; contends that women are active agents of development and not just passive recipients of development assistance; and stresses the need of women to organize themselves and participate in political processes to strengthen their legal rights. (CHED Memorandum Order 1 s. 2015).

Violence against women is the most shameful human rights violation, and it is the most pervasive. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace.

In a fast changing world, everyone needs to be aware of the violence against women and children. Everyone must be involved in this issue and must know how to protect, guard and secure the rights of both men and women including at home. “It takes the viewpoint of the woman’s subordination and low status at home, in the community and in society, as the starting point of healing partnership; takes the issue of VAW as a violation of the human rights of a woman that is, the right to be free from violence, the right to equal opportunities in all spheres of life; takes women empowerment as the goals of healing partnership and service delivery....” (Responding to VAWC – A manual on gender responsive case management, DSWD, 2006)

Violence against women by state actors was highlighted at the time of martial rule when detained women suffered sexual abuse, torture and other ill-treatment. Violence against women as a human right issue was largely viewed as state violence, and minimal attention was given to VAW by non-state actors or private individuals, particularly in inter-relational contexts.

Republic Act No. 9262, known as the “Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2014; defines violence against women as any act or series of acts committed against wives, former wives, or women in any form of intimate relationship with the perpetrator, which result in or likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, or economic abuse. It considers these acts of violence a public offense, and provides for protective measures and other necessary relief for the survivor victims.

In March 2004, Republic Act 9262 or the so called Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Act was signed into law. This law was created to protect the welfare of housewives and all women and their children. Furthermore, the State values the dignity of women and children and its members particularly women and children, from violence and threats to their personal safety and security. (R.A. 9262, Sec. 2)

According to the 2008 Statistical Report on the Role of Filipino Women (NCFRW), violence against women (VAW) cases in the Philippines rose to 21 percent from 2007 report. With the implementation of the Republic Act 9262 or the Anti-Violence against Women and Children Act of 2004, it is very alarming that the number of violations against women’s rights did not decrease.

It is also important to know and study this topic to prevent and avoid series of acts committed by any person against a women who is his wife, former wife or against woman with whom the person has or had a sexual or dating relationship, or with or without the family abode, which result in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, or economic abuse including threats of such acts, battery, assault, coercion, harassment or arbitrary deprivation of liberty.

The above cited phenomenon serves as the rationale of the research endeavour. The researchers aimed to determine the prevalence of violence against women and children in the municipality of Malvar based on the law enforcers’ perspective and to provide recommendation to address the needs of not only the victims but of the law enforcers as well. The researchers believe that it would be best to conduct this research. This endeavour also aimed to promote gender and development (GAD) program as the institution adheres to the initiatives of the government on gender equality. The result of this study would also help the researchers to be aware on violence against women and children and radiate this concept among their future students as they teach in their field of specialization.

### *1.1 Objective of the Study*

This study aimed to determine the prevalence of domestic violence in the municipality of Malvar, with an end goal of providing recommendation to address the needs of not only the victims but of the law enforcers as well. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: What are the reported cases of violence against women and children in the municipality of Malvar?; What factors drove the complainants to report cases to the proper authorities? And lastly, what extension service activities may be proposed to minimize the problem of domestic violence in the municipality of Malvar?

## **2. Methodology**

In order to answer the questions posted in this study, the researchers utilized mixed method of research, specifically, quantitative and qualitative method of research. This is also called as “*multi-methodology*”, wherein its variation in data collection leads to greater validity. This kind of research method involves generating new knowledge and can involve either concurrent or sequential use of these two classes of methods to follow a line of inquiry.

Quantitative method utilizing descriptive design was used to describe the trend of violence from 2014-2016. The quantitative method can provide information and explanation that are adequate at the level of meaning while recognizing that survey research has not always been good at tapping the subjective dimension of behaviour. While qualitative method was used to elicit the responses of the officers regarding the prevalence of domestic violence and their action in dealing with these cases, and of the victims themselves. The qualitative method uses the nature

of data collected which is usually detailed descriptions recorded by the women's desk. It also provides textual description of how people experience a given situation; hence, the use of it provides better interpretation and understanding of the complex reality of violence against women and children.

Meanwhile, analyses of secondary data were also done by the researchers. These data were the issues of violence obtained from the records of the WCPD, particularly their blotter book. The researchers sought the assistance of one of the WCPD officers for counting the cases manually in the WPCD blotter book. Only cases which pertain to violence against women, particularly violation of RA 9262 were gathered for the purpose.

To substantiate the gathered data, interview was conducted by the researchers considering the schedule given by the WPCD section chief. They utilized interview guide questions to elicit response on the participants. During interviews, they took down notes and used voice recorder for comprehensive recording of the subjects' responses. The second wave of the interview followed after identifying the victims who are willing to be interview. Data gathered were classified, tallied and tabulated using frequency and percentage.

### 3. Results and Discussion

This chapter primarily deals with the research problems. To give an in-depth analysis and interpretation, the gathered data are arranged thematically and sequentially resembling the presentation of the specific problems posed at the beginning of the study.

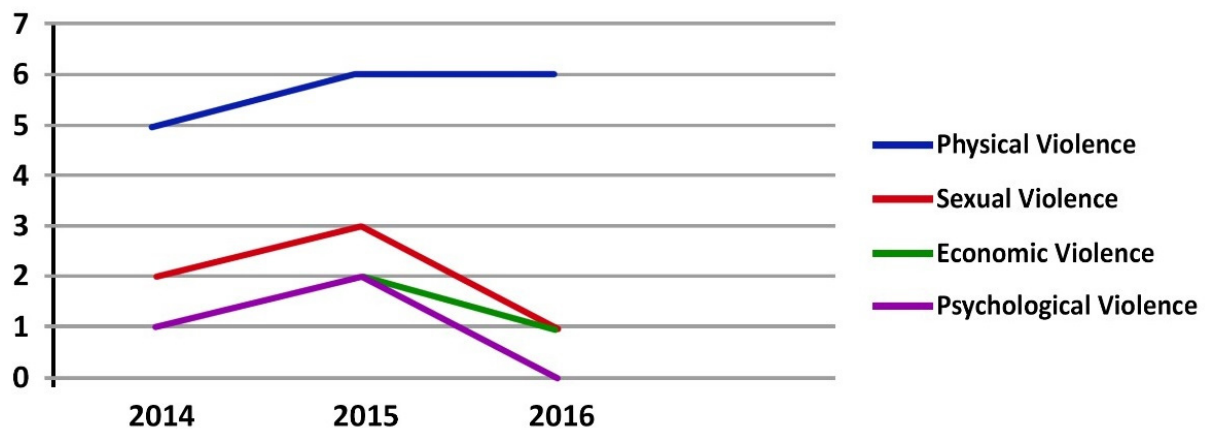


Figure 1. Reported Cases of Violence against Women and Children in Malvar Police Station

#### 3.1 What are the reported cases of Violence against Women and Children in the Municipality of Malvar?

The researchers sought the permission of the Officer-In-Charge in Malvar Police Station of the reported cases of Violence Against Women and Children from year 2014 up to 2016. These cases are physical violence, sexual violence, economic violence and psychological violence. To clearly present the numbers of the said cases, the researchers utilized a graph in Figure 1.

There were a total of 30 reported cases of Violence against Women and Children in the Municipality of Malvar from 2014-2016. Nine reported cases in 2014, five of which were physical violence, 2 were sexual violence, 1 was economic violence and 1 was psychological violence. In 2015, there was a sudden increase, 13 were reported cases of violence. Lastly in 2016, there was a declined of reported cases with a sum of eight.

In general, the number of cases of physical violence increased while the number of cases of sexual violence, economic violence and psychological violence decreased. It infers that there are more physically violent husband or persons that committed violence against women and children.

#### 3.2 What Factors Drove the Complainant to Report the Case to the Proper Authorities?

The researchers did their best to seek for the complainants' factors that drove them to report the cases to the proper authorities but due to the confidentiality and secrecy of the cases, the researchers did not achieve to seek those. They only got 2 victims who stated their reason to have reported the violence they had experience.

When asked what factors drove the complainant to report the case, the interviewed victims stated various reason. Each categories were discussed below.

### 3.2.1 Severe Physical Assault to the Victim and their Children

This portion shows the result of the interviews conducted by the researchers. Their answers were stated in verbatim, with corresponding translation for better understanding of the statements.

Victim 1 came to PCWD sometime in 2015, complaining that her husband hit her and she was afraid that her husband might inflict harm on their children. She stated: “Sinumtok ako... Sa katunayan ay lagi nya ako sinasaktan. Natatakot na nga ako na baka pati mga anak namin ay saktan nya sa tuwing nalalasing sya” (The woman said that her husband punch him, and hurts her all the time. She and her children are afraid especially when her husband is drunk.)

Victim 2, on the other hand, also experienced severe physical assault. She went to the police station because her husband boxed and strangled her. She said that it was not the first time that her partner inflicted harm on her. “Bale ilang beses na syang nananakit. Hindi lamang ako ang sinasaktan nya, maging ang aming anak na panganay. Wala syang pinipiling lugar, kahit sa kalsada at kahit sa harap ng maraming tao ay sinasaktan nya kami”. (The woman said that her husband hurts her in public, even their eldest child.)

Both victims opined the same case that they needed to seek the assistance of the WPCD Officers. In 1981, anthropologist David Levinson, as cited by Santiago and Aya (2014), reported that the most common form of family violence throughout the world was wife beating. Until 2000s, women in most societies were seen as being owned by their husband.

### 3.2.2 Abuse of Alcohol Drinking and/or Use of Drugs of their Partner

The two victims shared the same sentiments that alcohol and use of drugs aggravated the abuse.

Victim 2 stated that her husband is uncontrollable when drunk, saying that, “*pag lasing yan ay malimit na nag-aamok*”. Victim 1 shared similar statement, saying “*kapag yang si \*\*\*\*\* ay nakainom, diretso lahat sa ulo ang alak at dun na sya nagsisimulang manakit. Nung ngang isang araw minsan na umuwi rito, lasing na lasing, pagkarating ay naghahanap ng makakain ay gab-i na, wala nang ulam. Wala na akong pera dahil ang kinita ko ay pinambili na din ng ulam ng mga bata. Ayon, nagalit sa akin, ako’y minura at pinagsasampal*”. (The victim said that when her husband is drunk, he easily gets mad, and provokes a fight.)

Substance (alcohol/drug) abuse might have aggravated the assault of men to women. Substances often make people more likely to misperceive others’ behaviour and interpret their motives in a negative light. As noted by Caparas and Amparado (2011), while an abuser’s use of alcohol may have effect on the severity of the abuse or the ease with which abuser can justify his/her actions. They further asserted that alcohol affects one’s ability to perceive and process information. The distortion might cause the violence but it may increase the risk that user will misinterpret other’s behaviors and actions.

Javeña and Hernandez (2014) found that 74 percent of perpetrators had been drinking at the time of assault. North American studies have also found increased rates of violence after the perpetrators’ use of alcohol, particularly heavy drinking, is likely the result in more serious injury to their partner than if they had been sober. In here, the link between alcohol and drug use and perpetration of domestic violence is clear.

### 3.3 What Extension Service Activities may be Proposed to Minimize the Problem of Domestic Violence in the Municipality of Malvar?

The current study has an end view of drawing the suggested enrichment activities to strengthen the implementation of RA 9262. Proposed activities, objectives, proponent, strategies and beneficiaries was presented.

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

In the light of the important findings in this study, the following conclusions were drawn. First, most reported case of violence against women and children is the physical violence. Second, is that the severe physical assault drove the complainant to report the cases and lastly, the proposed extension service activities to be implemented will help combat Violence Against women and Children.

Considering the significant findings revealed and conclusions drawn in this study, the researchers humbly recommend the following. The Head of Extension Services and Head Secretariat of GAD Unit of the University may collaborate with the local government unit of the municipality in conducting seminar, training and workshop in the barangay level with regards to the implementation of RA 9262.

Table 1. Proposed Extension Activities to minimize the problem of domestic violence in the Municipality of Malvar

Proposed Activity	Objectives	Proponent	Strategies	Beneficiaries
Stress debriefing activity for the victims of violence	To enable victims to recover to the violence they have experienced	LGUs, VAW Desk of Malvar, Gender and Development Unit of the University, Psychologists and Guidance Counselor	Providing stress debriefing activity like conducting recreational activities to the victim as they recover to the violence they had experienced	Victims of violence-women and children
Seminar in Barangay's role in implementing RA 9262	To provide the barangay officials with knowledge on their role as provided by RA 9262	LGUs, Batangas State University Extension Service Office	Conducting of series of seminars	Residence of Barangay and officials of the Municipality of Malvar and the whole constituents.
Lecture on the proper issuance of Barangay Protection Order (BPO)	To enhance the effectiveness of barangay officials in issuing BPO			
Capacity building training for the strengthening of VAW Desk and Training workshop for VAW Desk officers	To help community in the strengthening of active Barangay VAW Desk To enhance the effectiveness of Barangay VAW Desk officers in the Municipality of Malvar	WCPD Malvar, VAW Desk of Malvar Municipal Government, Association of Barangay Chairpersons (ABC), WCPD Malvar, Batangas	Experts in the field will be invited as resource speaker Distribution of invitation for the conduct of the training workshops for the said proponents	Residence of Barangay and officials of the Municipality of Malvar and the whole constituents.

Second, GAD Focal Persons together with the students and with the assistance of the Student Organizations and Activities may distribute fliers and leaflets about RA 9262 and RA 9710 to stakeholders.

Third, VCPD Officers and VAW Desk officers may ensure safety and strengthen their fight against violence.

Fourth, the intervention program proposed by the researchers may be implemented, monitored, evaluated and reviewed to ensure strengthening the aforementioned laws. Lastly, a similar research may be conducted in other perspective to verify, confirm or negate the findings of this study.

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