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Breaking the Silence: The Realities of Family Violence in the Philippines

Introduction

The efforts of the United Nations and the women's movements from all over the world to enhance women's participation in development, and to promote their human rights have generated a wealth of theoretical and empirical studies on women and gender issues. The United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985) particularly helped focus attention on one of the most serious and pervasive problems of women: the problem of gender violence. In 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was held to mobilize State Parties to take appropriate action to address the issue. This paved the way for the passage by the UN General Assembly of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in December 1993.

The Declaration, in its preamble, underscores that violence against women is "a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men." It recognizes that violence against women "in the family and society is pervasive", "that it is an obstacle to the achievement of equality, development and peace", and "it both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms."

Violence is generally defined as an act committed with the deliberate or perceived intention of hurting another person [GELLES

and STRAUSS in SCHULER, 1992]. Gender assault, on the other hand, is a specific form of violence committed against a person because of the person's being female or male. Since women are more often the victims, the term gender violence is used interchangeably in the literature with the phrase "violence against women." The use of the term gender violence underscores the cultural and structural manifestations and causes of the problem [SCHULER 1992].

Article 2 of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women defines violence against women "to encompass, but not be limited to"

- (a) *Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;*
- (b) *Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women, and forced prostitution; and*
- (c) *Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.*

The family is generally regarded as a basic social institution that must be cherished,

preserved and protected. The Family Code of the Philippines declares that no custom, practice or agreement destructive of the family shall be recognized or given effect. The premise, of course, is that the family is a haven where spouses and children expect to get protection and security, a safe place of nurturing and growth. It certainly should be the last place where one gets abused physically, sexually, economically and emotionally.

Family or intra-family abuse is a specific form of violence where the victim and perpetrator are related to each other by blood or affinity. They may or may not live in the same place or belong to the same household. It must be noted here that this definition follows the legal definition of the family as provided for in the Family Code:

- (a) Relations between husband and wife;
- (b) Relations between parents and their children;
- (c) Relations among other descendants and ascendants (e.g., grandparents and grandchildren); and,
- (d) Relations among brothers and sisters.

Filipino households usually include a nuclear or extended family and non-relatives, either working for the family as domestic helper or staying in the house as permanent guests. The Family Code, however, does not specify whether non-blood relations are also considered as family members. The family may also be defined as "the ideology of relatedness that explains who should live together, share income and perform certain tasks," while the household is the organization of family members "empirically found to be living together" [FERREE 1993]. Viewing the family as an ideology that sets the standards of social and sexual relations, feminist scholars underscore the social nature of the family and not the biological (natural) connectedness of family members. They claim that when the family is assumed to be a natural or universal unit, people tend to overestimate its importance over other social institutions and marginalize those who do

not have one or prefer to develop other forms of social and sexual relation [ANDERSEN 1993].

But the principle that the family is all important as upheld in the Family Code has been misused and distorted to justify an endemic Filipino culture or tradition of keeping the family intact at all costs, purportedly for the sake of the children. A restrictive culture maintains that whatever occurs in a marriage — even if it takes on a violent, criminal nature — is a private matter between husband and wife. It is a culture that tolerates violence against children and considers it within a parent's right to enforce discipline; a culture of silence that is justified by another misused value — honor. The shame of the family outweighs the abuse and violence being committed against a member, who, studies show, is most likely a woman or child, defenseless and innocent.

The feminist perspective has broadened the definition of family violence and used the term domestic violence to encompass not only family members but also the persons who live in the same household. It also sees domestic violence as inflicted on women by men in a culture that is patriarchal. In this context, the male is recognized as the supreme authority in the family: he has absolute control not only of his life (which he may conduct as he pleases) but that of his wife and children who are considered his property.

It is understandable that since domestic violence occurs in the confines of homes, it remains largely hidden and unrecognized as a problem. Only in 1985 did the United Nations make its first resolution on the problem, calling on member states to undertake research and formulate strategies to combat violence in the home. In December 1995, the UN General Assembly passed the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Worldwide, the estimates of violence vary. In the United States, injuries from domestic violence outnumber those in vehicular accidents, muggings and rapes. More than three million children witness acts of domes-

tic violence every year. The figures show a vicious cycle of social deterioration often unleashed by domestic violence. More than half of abused women who are mothers beat their children. The children of abused mothers are six times more likely to attempt suicide and 50 percent more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol. Canadian estimates range from a low ratio of one in eight women to a high of one in four women being assaulted at home. Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, and Papua New Guinea reveal a much higher incidence: namely, six out of ten women in these countries suffer physical battering and seven out of ten are emotionally abused. In the Philippines, recent estimates range from a low ratio of one in 10 women to a high of six in 10 women being assaulted at home.

Objectives of the Study

To formulate a plan of action and suggest policies that can address the problem of intra-family and household violence in a most comprehensive and integrated manner, the study was designed to achieve the following objectives:

- identify, describe and analyze intra-family and household violence in all its possible types and dimensions;
- determine the factors that contribute to this kind of violence, the situations that predispose persons to experience and commit it;
- describe and analyze the cycle or progression of events that lead to the commission of violence;
- assess the psychological, social and other effects on the victim, particularly on children and women; and,
- assess the strengths and weaknesses of existing laws, policies, mechanisms and programs that are directly and indirectly related to family violence.

Expected Outputs

The project consists of three phases:

- (1) The recently concluded first phase which has two components, yielded "A Review of Conceptual Frameworks and Studies on Intra-Family and Household Violence" for Component A. It provides information on the nature, forms, extent and prevalence of domestic violence in the Philippines; the characteristics of the victims as well as the perpetrators; the sociological and psychological factors that contribute to these violations. In addition, the theoretical perspectives and explanations of family violence are reviewed and examined.

Component B involves the collection and analysis of existing data sets from hospitals, women's crisis centers and shelters, government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academic research institutions. Further empirical evidence is provided on the medical, legal, social and policy dimensions of the problem. Its specific outputs include:

A Review of Philippine Laws Related to Family Violence

Analysis of 1,000 Reported and Documented Cases from Selected Government Agencies and Shelters

Focus on Child Abuse

Selected Case Studies of Family Violence

Intervention Strategies for Victims of Family Violence

- (2) Phase II takes a closer look at the socio-psychological and cultural dimensions and roots of family violence through in-depth analysis of selected cases of abusers; and,
- (3) Phase III is devoted to policy and program development.

Methodology

A multi-disciplinary approach to the study of intra-family violence was employed. The research team was composed of social scientists, a medical doctor, a lawyer and a clinical psychologist.

For its data collection, records, documents, client profiles, and case analyses from the following illustrative sources were collected and analyzed from hospitals, NGO shelters and government agencies, e.g., the Child Protection Unit of the Philippine General Hospital (PGH), the Morning Glory Shelter for sexually exploited and abused women and children, Philippine National Police (PNP) Central Police District-Criminal Investigation Command, Camp Karingal and five shelters for women and children of the DSWD in Metro Manila, Cebu City, Davao City and Cagayan de Oro City.

Study Findings

A total of 1,000 documented cases of family violence obtained from the files of both government and non-governmental organizations — including shelters and transition houses, a government hospital's pioneering child protection unit, and private clinics — covering the period from 1994 to the first

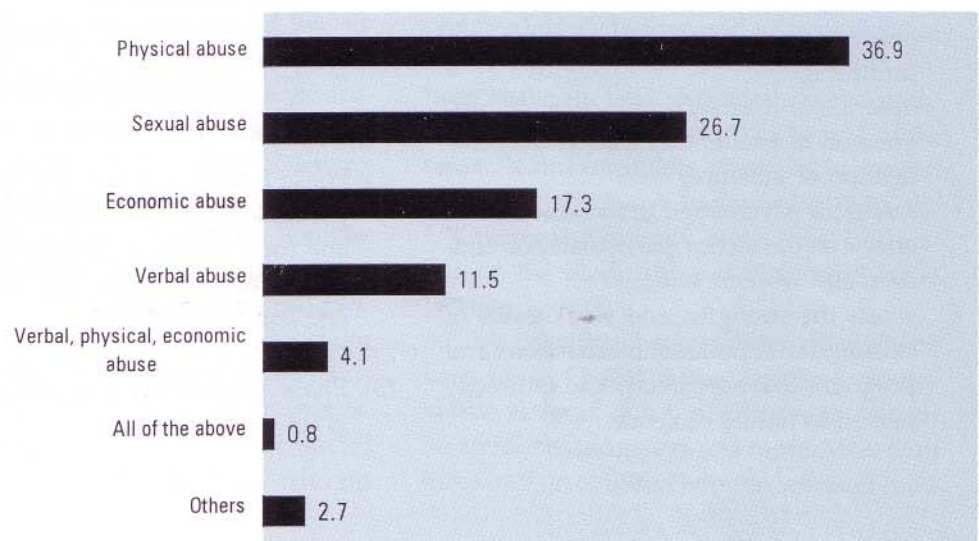
quarter of 1996 was analyzed. The study found many forms and dimensions of family violence. Some of the significant findings of the study indicate that:

- (1) Family violence consists of several forms of abuses — physical, verbal, economic, emotional and sexual. Physical assault accompanied by verbal and economic abuse of women or children — the common victims in the study — occurred most frequently (36.9 percent or one out of three cases), with sexual abuse an alarmingly close second (26.7 percent or one out of four), and economic abuse, third (17.3 percent). (Also touched upon, but which could still be further explored, are other variants of child abuse, such as parents forcing children to beg in the streets or selling them as prostitutes.)

These abuses occur in various combinations. Physical assault is often accompanied by verbal and economic abuse. A typical case would be an unemployed husband who batters his wife and children after a verbal altercation (a bitter quarrel). Another would be a husband who, in the course of a strained, violent marriage, abandons his pregnant wife and their children without providing support (See FIGURE 7.1).

- (2) Victims experience violence repeatedly at varying periods of time, in the hands

Figure 7.1
Forms of Abuse



of the same or different household members, from the male spouse or father (the most frequent abuser) to the mother, siblings, in-laws and employers (in the case of domestic helpers).

One form of violence leads to another. Typical progressions are : (a) verbal abuse leading to physical abuse (30 percent or one out of three) and (b) sexual molestation leading to rape (23 percent or one out of four). In some cases, rape was also preceded by verbal abuse, physical assault and sexual molestation. Rarely is

one abuse exclusive of another (See FIGURE 7.2).

- (3) Almost all victims (98 percent) are women. The average age of the victims is 23 years. Three out of ten are young adult females (18-24 years old); a slightly higher number (43 percent or four out of 10) are adults (25-49 years old). The youngest victim is an infant less than two years old (See FIGURE 7.3). Most victims are educated, with almost half reaching high school, one-third reaching elemen-

Figure 7.2 Progression of Abuse

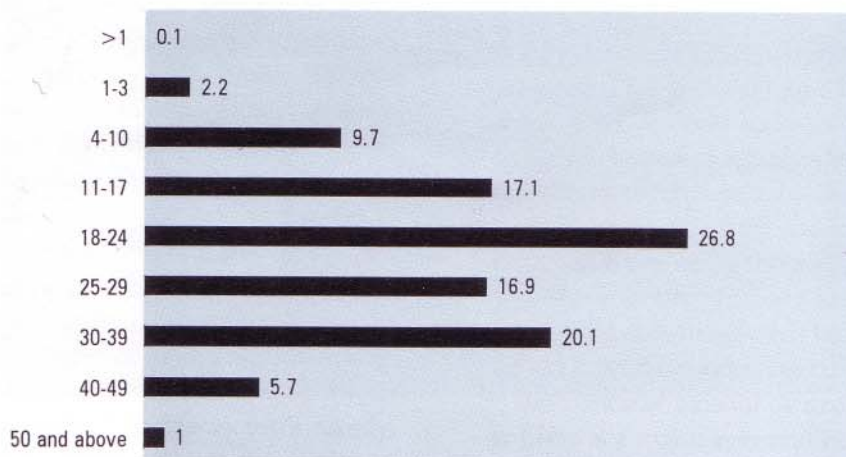
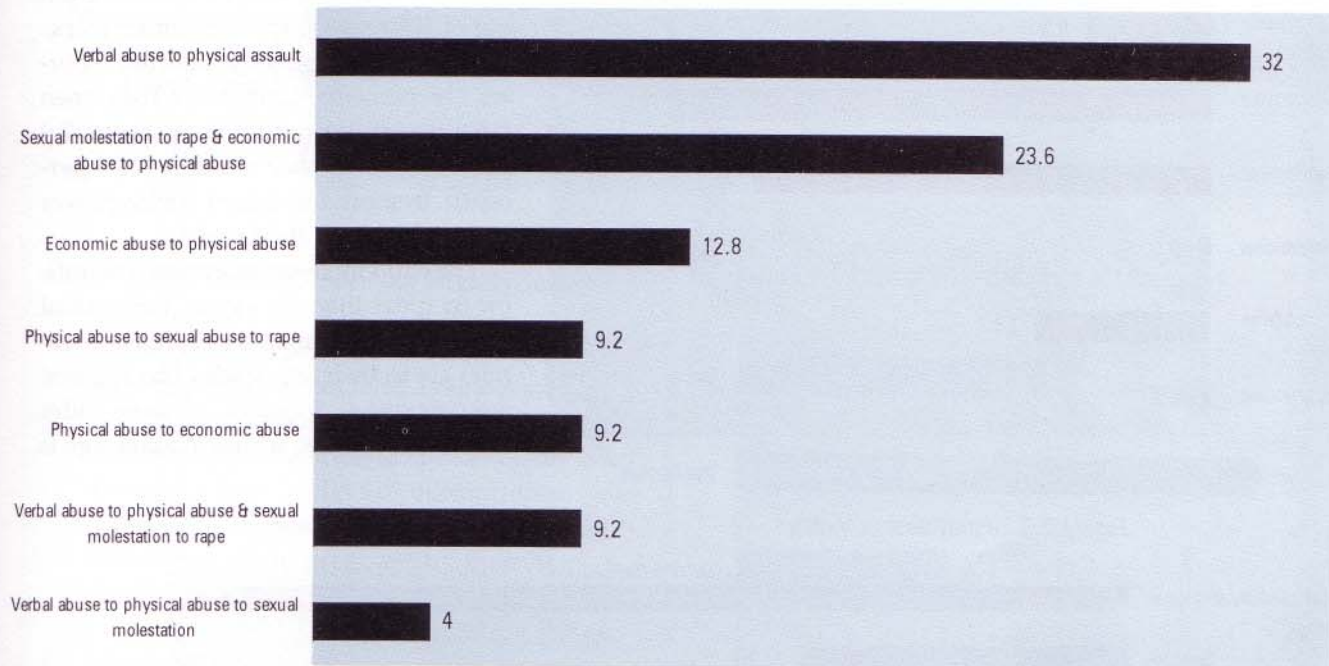


Figure 7.3 Age of Victim

tary school, and 13.1 percent, college (See FIGURE 7.4). Despite this, more than half are not gainfully employed; the rest are employed in low-paying jobs as domestic helpers (See FIGURE 7.5).

Minors (aged 0-17) comprise a third of the total victims of child abuse. More than half of the cases of domestic violence against children and minors involve some form of sexual abuse. Incest constitutes 33 percent of cases against children. Only 17 percent of the cases in-

volve physical abuse (See FIGURE 7.6). The average age of the victims is 11 years old. One out of four victims is not even old enough to be in school; these young children slightly outnumber high-school age victims (21 percent) (See FIGURE 7.7).

- (4) The most common perpetrator of assaults on women are their male spouses or partners, who account for more than half of the abuses (See TABLE 7.1). His average age of 35 years is 12 years older than that of his victim's (23 years). Generally, he is a bit more educated than his victim; only 5 percent have not gone to school (See FIGURE 7.8). Almost eight out of 10 are employed, although working in low-paying jobs: manual laborers (16 percent), farmers or fishermen (15.9 percent), production workers (2.9 percent) and service workers (26.9 percent)). In short, the abuser wields power and authority in the family.

The child molester or abuser is significantly older than his victim. Four out of 10 men who victimized children and minors are in their 30s or 40s. The abusers' average age is 36 years, 25 years older than their victims, whose average age is

Figure 7.4 Educational Attainment of Victim

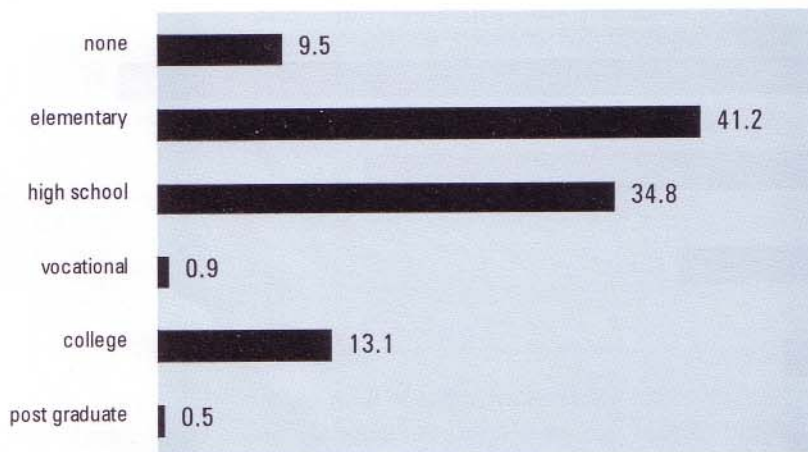


Figure 7.5 Employment of Victim

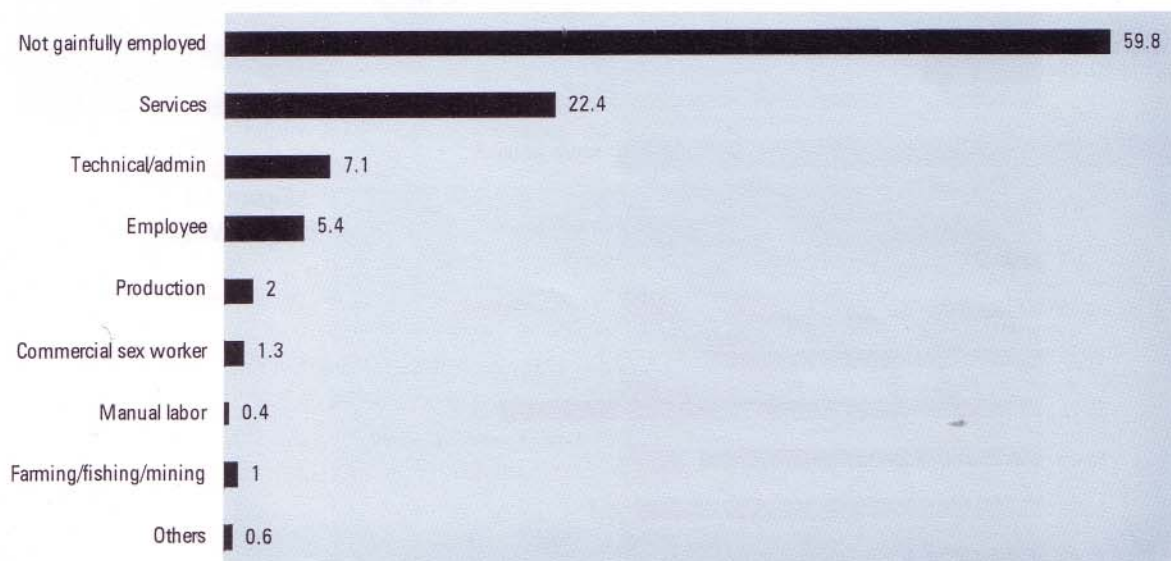
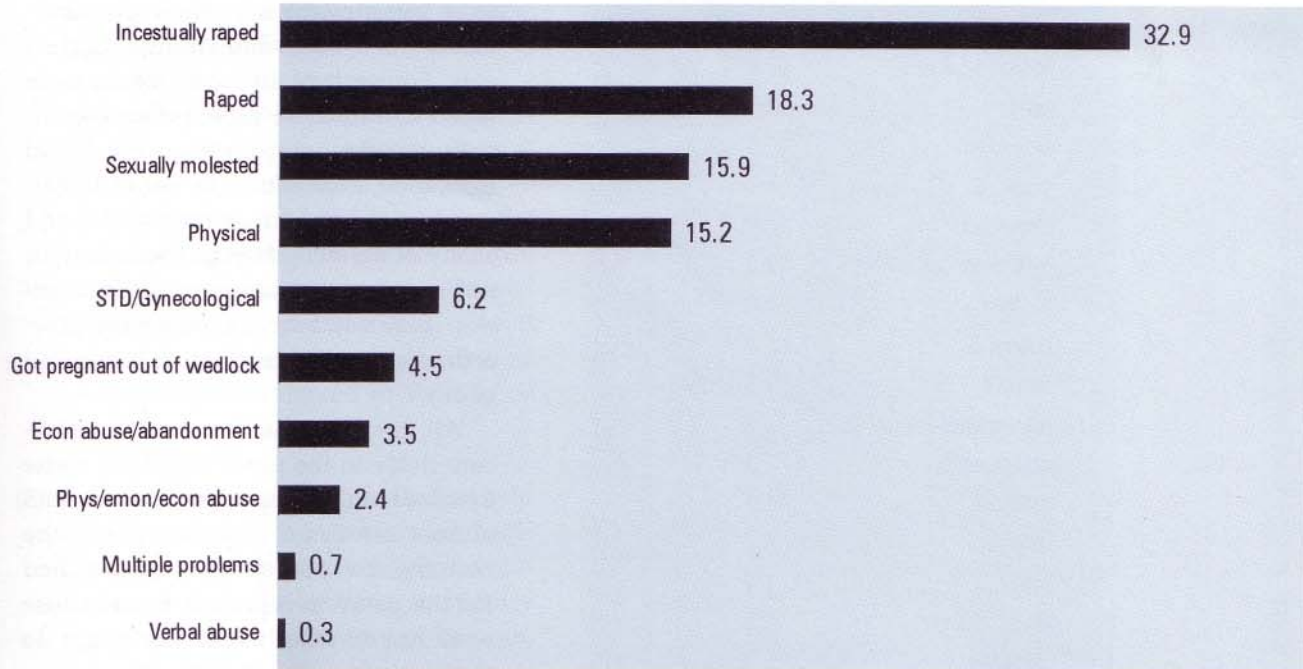


Figure 7.6 Forms of Violence Against Minors



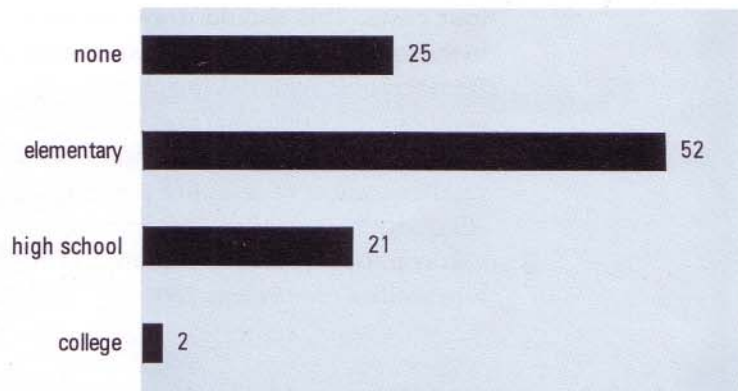
11 years. Child abusers are slightly less educated and more likely to be unemployed than perpetrators of violence; almost one-third do not have a regular job.

The most frequent abusers of female children are their fathers (29 percent), followed by their uncles (16 percent) (See TABLE 7.2). A number of incest victims have been made pregnant by their fathers.

(5) Most child abuses take place at home while the victim is alone. One out of three cases involve absentee parents. This underscores the need for supervised child care (as most of the perpetrators are male relatives) when parents go out to work (See FIGURE 7.9). Physical assault of wives are also often witnessed by children. More than half of the sexual abuses occurred at night, one-third during the day. Separate sleeping quarters or the presence of other family members appeared to be no guarantee against sexual abuse.

Economic conditions and relationships prevailing in the victim's family, such as strained relationships among

Figure 7.7 Educational Attainment of Minors



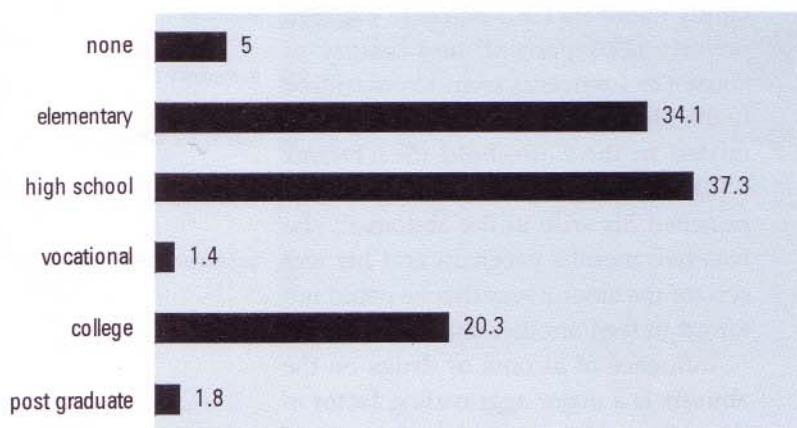
family members (26.3 percent), extreme poverty (22.1 percent) and history of abuse (28.4 percent) seem to contribute to the likelihood of violence being committed in the household (See FIGURE 7.10). In one case, a husband kicked and punched his wife in the abdomen; she was two months pregnant and his reason for the assault was that he could not afford to feed another child.

Influence of alcohol or drugs on the abusers is a major aggravating factor in domestic violence, cited in one out of

husband/partner	52.0
father	12.1
employer	8.1
uncle	5.4
stepfather	3.7
male neighbor	2.5
brother	2.0
cousin	2.0
in-laws	1.8
housemate	1.2
grandparent	1.1
mother	1.1
wife	0.7
sister	0.6
foster parent	0.5
stepsister	0.3
adoptive family	0.2
others	4.7

four cases. This should draw attention to the forces that drive men to such vices. Pornographic material (magazines, videotapes, etc.), a potential aggravating factor in child molestation, accounts for a smaller number of cases (0.8 percent). Its effect, due to its availability to young and old, could however, be explored in future studies (See FIGURE 7.9).

Figure 7.8 Educational Attainment of Abuser



- (6) Majority of the victims put up a fight but were overpowered by their predominantly male, older and stronger aggressors. Four out of 10 rape victims were raped five times or more before they finally sought help, for fear of reprisal from their assailants. Five out of 10 battered wives cited fear for the life and safety of their children as the reason for not reporting the abuse to the authorities. Fear was found to be a more powerful disincentive in children (seven out of 10).

All the cases that involved a significant delay in the reporting of the abuse involved multiple episodes of abuse with almost always a relative within the household as perpetrator. Reasons cited for the delay in reporting of the abuse were fear of what the abuser might do to the victim or his/her family or ignorance on how to go about reporting the case to the proper authorities/agencies. Twenty percent of cases of sexual abuse involved only single episodes of abuse that were almost immediately reported with the time lag not exceeding one week.

Fear for their lives is not the only factor in the delay. A sizable number of victims (13 percent) indicated they were afraid of losing economic support from their husbands once they report the abuse. Many battered wives suffer from a lack of self-esteem and marketable skills. Their dependence on their husbands for economic and emotional security keep them locked in an abusive situation – until it reaches crisis-level (e.g., there is an imminent threat to the victims' lives) (See FIGURE 7.11).

Lack of sexual awareness is another reason cited by nearly two out of 10 of the young victims of sexual abuse — they had no idea that they were being violated. This tragedy is compounded by the fact that the abuse is being inflicted by figures they look up to and depend upon for protection. Once these children

or adolescents report sexual abuses, they are often believed and assisted in seeking intervention from legal, medical and other pertinent professionals.

Other abuses were uncovered in schools by teachers who notice signs of distress — in some cases, pregnancy — in child victims, and in hospitals in the course of diagnosing complaints, injuries or ailments disguised as “accidental.” Other prepubescent children displayed sexual knowledge way beyond their years when interviewed in shelters or hospitals.

- (7) Eventually, victims were able to find help from agencies, often in the form of medical care, police protection, legal assistance as well as provisions for temporary shelter and food. In four out of 10 cases, family members, especially relatives of battered wives and mothers of child abuse victims, offered moral support and helped the victims seek help.

Table 7.2
Abuser of Minors (%)

father	28.9
uncle	16.1
stepfather	12.8
male neighbor	9.5
employer	6.6
cousin	3.7
grandparent	3.3
housemate	3.3
brother	2.9
mother	2.6
husband/male partner	1.8
in-laws	1.5
sister	0.7
foster parent	0.4
adoptive family	0.4
female partner	0.4
others	5.1

Figure 7.9 Aggravating Circumstances

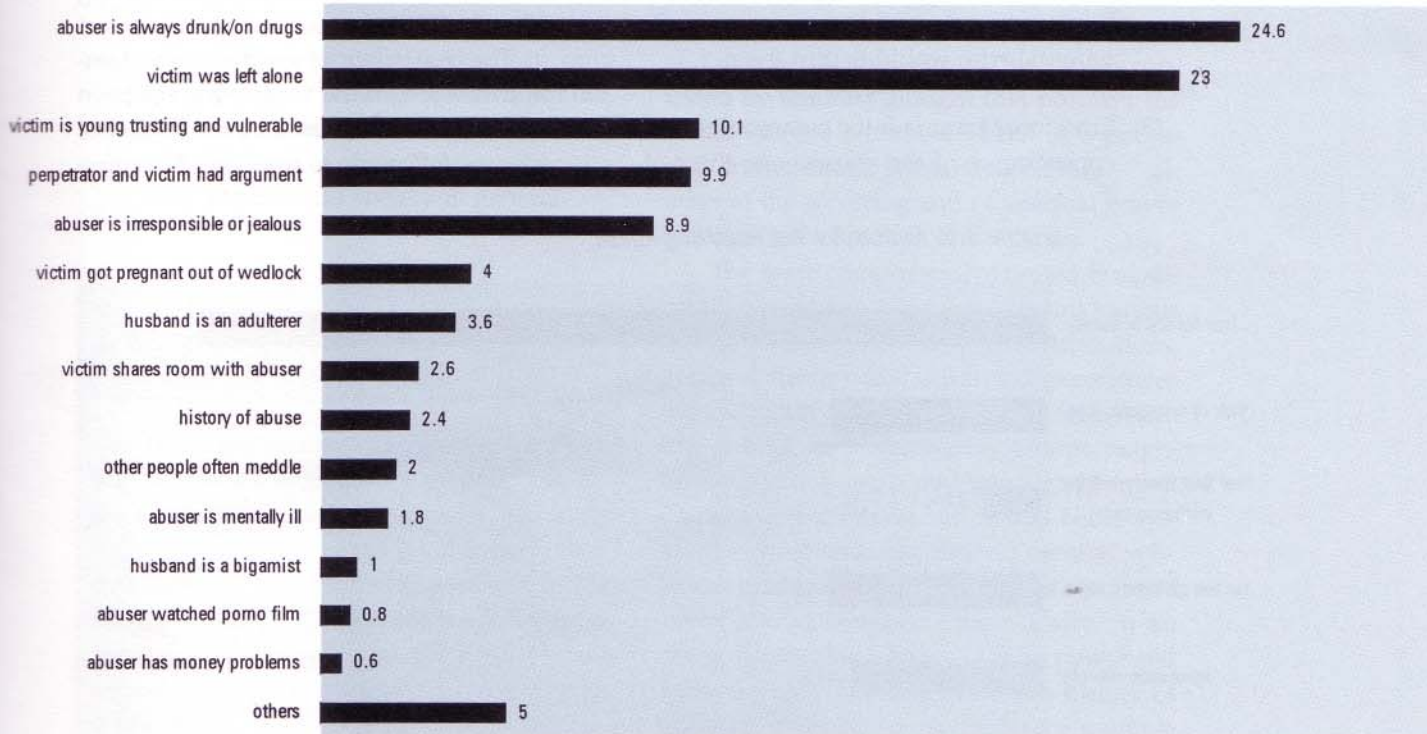
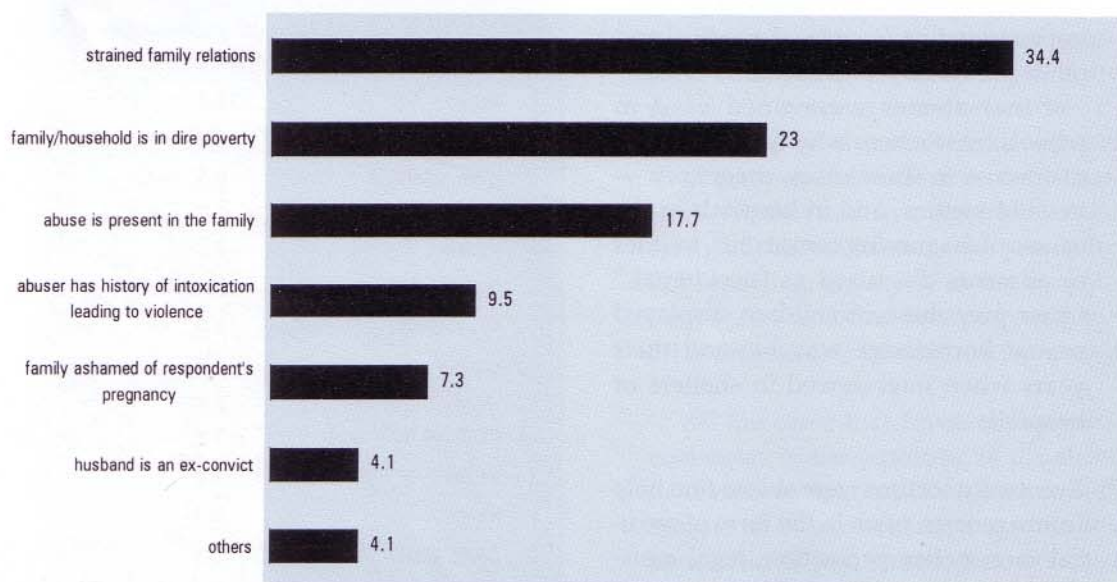


Figure 7.10 Family Background



Other victims were given counseling, value formation, skills training and other services that could prepare them for whatever options they may decide to pursue in the future. Presently, as many cases showed, prospects are limited to living with ascendants (parents, grandparents) who would accept them.

- (8) Emotional trauma is the commonly cited consequence of the abuses: one-third of

the victimized wives were institutionalized, the other third separated from their spouses. Nearly four out of 10 victims of child abuse had to be institutionalized as a result of the incident. The effect on both victim and family is devastating (FIGURE 7.12).

The true extent of psychological damage inflicted on the victims has not been established and should be the subject of a future follow-up to the study. But coun-

Figure 7.11 Reason for Not Reporting Abuse

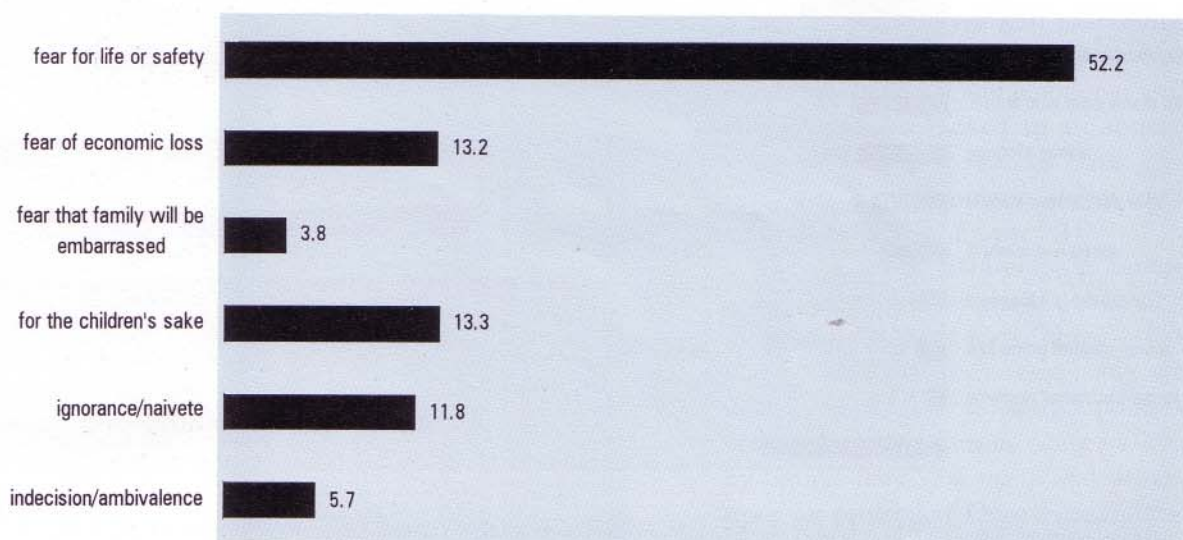
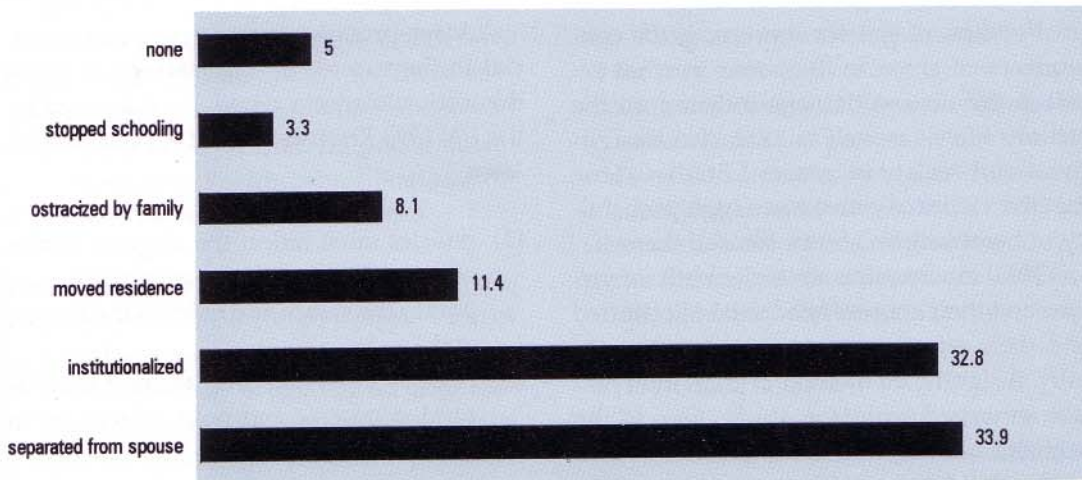


Figure 7.12 Effects of Abuse



selors and therapists described some of these effects as stunted emotional growth, childishness, low self-esteem, inability to make simple decisions, depression, and helplessness in the face of everyday problems.

Still unmanifested are deeper traumatic effects — especially in rape victims, four out of 10 of whom were raped five or more times before reporting their case to the authorities. One can only imagine their feelings of fear, shame, guilt, self-blame or rage against self that could extend to their family, especially their parents and society in general.

A Research and Policy Framework

There are compelling reasons for treating domestic violence as a problem requiring a legal solution. Recent reports, including this study, suggest alarming increases in various forms of gender-based violence in the family. While there is now some acknowledgment of the problem and the need to take action, existing laws are unable to deal with it effectively.

Breaking the cycle of violence requires policies and intervention strategies that are

informed and enlightened by research and analyses, not only of incidence or prevalence but also of the causes and consequences of abuse.

At present, there are several models or schools of thought on the causes of domestic violence. The traditional analysis maintains that both abuser and victim suffer from a poor self image. It suggests that the victim is a masochist who feels she deserves the abuse and unconsciously seeks it. This view is contested by feminist thought that portrays the woman as the perennial victim of a pervasive and endemic patriarchal culture — always at the receiving end of unequal power relations between man and woman.

The more comprehensive nested Ecological System Model takes into account various factors — ontogenetic level (predispositions, personal history and childhood experiences that contribute to family violence), microsystem (the family), exosystem (work groups, neighborhood, friendship and support groups), macrosystem (cultural values and belief systems) — that come into play in a domestic violence situation. From the therapist's point of view, low self-esteem, specifically, in an abuser's using the advantage of his power and authority over his children, and a history of domestic violence, coupled with the multiple stresses of poverty, work, child-rearing and strained family relations, are influential deter-

minants, both to the victim and perpetrator of abuse.

Perhaps, of greater concern, is the consequence of abuse in the home: to what extent is the unseen damage inflicted on the victim's life — as well as to his/her descendants and society in general? Studies show that the victim of abuse has a high probability of becoming an abuser himself/herself.

New intervention strategies both for victims and their abusers need to be pilot-tested and their effectiveness assessed systematically. A significant method in crisis intervention emerged from the study. One is the protocol used by the Child Protection Unit of the PGH, whose files were part of the study. The Child Protection Unit's informal setup yet effective documentation and diagnosis of domestic violence cases — a number of which were disguised in complaints and referrals as "accidental" cases — is a model of a hospital-based support system.

One factor however emerged from the findings, which is the need to ensure the safety, security and privacy of the victim. Hospital units or police stations handling domestic violence cases, should be adequately equipped and insulated from the rest of the public to preserve privacy and make the victim feel safe.

The valuable role of the pediatrician in the detection of signs of abuse has also emerged in the study. Pediatrics as a sub-discipline is more holistic and pediatricians function not only as clinicians but as *de facto* child psychologists and family counselors. More than any medical practitioner, a pediatrician is respected by the whole family and she or he guards the confidentiality of information regarding the cases she/he handles. Her/his training, insights, and positive reputation and influence will prove beneficial in combating domestic violence in any level — communities, hospitals, shelter, counseling centers, policy-making bodies.

Policy Approaches

A two-pronged approach to policy is crucial to the success of any strategy to make domestic violence a crime. As suggested by the *UN 1993 Resource Manual in Domestic Violence*,

- (1) policies must reflect the singular nature of domestic crime and must provide support to the victim and help for the abuser; and
- (2) policies must take into account the cultural, economic and political realities in our country.

Judicial and Other Reforms

The strategy will necessarily involve reforms in the judiciary and in the Philippine criminal and civil laws. It should have the following objectives:

- (1) To make the five pillars of the criminal justice system (police, prosecution service, courts, correction-rehabilitation service, community) responsive to the problems of domestic or intra-family violence.

The biggest stumbling block is cultural, especially in cases of sexual abuse. For the predominantly male police force, the prevailing attitude is: the victim, if she really wanted to save her chastity, should have fought off her attacker. But as the study has shown, all victims from puberty onwards have resisted their attackers to no avail.

Although the National Police has formed several Women's Desks to handle domestic violence cases, police responding to complaints outside the station remain largely insensitive or untrained to take statements from victims. The noisy and bustling atmosphere of police stations also discourages complainants from reporting cases or filing a com-

plaint, thus keeping them locked effectively in abusive situations. In other countries such as Australia, police have set up a separate facility for interviewing sexual assault and child abuse victims in a place far from the police station and equipped with computers and recorders to document interviews.

- (2) To systematize collection of data on domestic violence through the provision of a uniform intake system of reporting.

The problem of getting accurate statistics has caused a large variance in the general knowledge about the extent of domestic violence. For instance, one study said one out of 10 women were being assaulted in the home while another reported four out of 10. These other studies noted that a huge number of cases contained sketchy or undeveloped information that could otherwise have been useful in forming a clearer picture of the domestic violence situation.

Moreover, a uniform system for interviewing victims of domestic violence wherever they may run to for help — a government agency or NGO shelter, a hospital or police station — will eliminate repeated interviews which unnecessarily aggravate the victims' emotional state and further overburden the bureaucracy. In court cases, these data and information are invaluable — barring other factors like confidentiality.

- (3) To provide continuous training of representatives of the pillars of the criminal justice system in the handling of domestic violence.

So far, only the women's desk personnel in police stations have been trained in the handling of domestic violence situations. The sensitivity and responsiveness to the plight of victims of domestic abuse is alien in much of the prosecution and correction services. Even the courts jeopardize the privacy of victims

by bowing to pressures from the press and publicity-seeking officials.

Community leaders, like parish priests, the laity, barangay leaders and officers of home owners associations, should also be trained to aid and protect victims of family violence in their neighborhoods. A council against family violence could be formed, to report the incident to authorities and ensure immediate needs like first-aid, food and shelter, until proper help arrives or is located.

- (4) To provide for public education on the evils and harmful effects of domestic violence so as to change traditional attitudes and opinions on this social problem.

At present, the publicity surrounding sensational cases remains the sole source of information. Domestic violence incidents, fortunately, still elicit public outrage. Unfortunately, the deeper issues are not closely examined and seriously addressed in schools, the media, government agencies, and even Churches Women's groups have taken the effective route of making domestic violence a political issue through lobbying in Congress and protest actions that generate publicity. Such approach will fall short, however, unless followed through by a long-term program in which family, community and the government are active participants.

Omnibus Law

In order to implement the above objectives, an omnibus law or program is needed for the prevention of domestic violence, treatment of its victims and rehabilitation of its perpetrators. This law should recognize domestic violence as a singular criminal offense or set of offenses and consolidate provisions in various bills pending in Congress.

At present, there are three bills pending in Congress, which partly address domestic violence:

- House Bill 949, "An Act to Provide a Comprehensive Program Against Wife Cruelty Increasing Penalties for Offenders Thereof;"
- Unnumbered Senate Bill sponsored by Sen Miriam Defensor-Santiago: "An Act Defining Domestic Violence Providing Penalties Thereof and Providing for Protection Orders;"
- Senate Bill 408, sponsored by Sen Ernesto Maceda: "An Act Punishing Wife Beating and Providing Penalties Thereof,"

However, these bills have to be examined, consolidated and amended in order to come up with a holistic, interdisciplinary approach to the problem of domestic violence, one that will involve the five pillars of the justice system. Such an approach is required because intra-family violence is a complex problem whose solution requires the combined and coordinated efforts of professionals from different sectors.

Local Governments

Local legislation is needed to improve the criminal justice system, especially in facilitating intervention in crisis situations. The police hold the key to an effective response to domestic violence. Research has shown that "specific police actions, such as the arrest and charging of perpetrators, have a strong impact on offenders in domestic violence cases, reducing the rate of recidivism" [UN 1993 *Resource Manual in Domestic Violence*].

Strategies, formulated by local legislators in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government and the National Police Commission (NPC), the overseers of the National Police, are needed to improve police handling of domestic vio-

lence. These include the need to have clear legal powers of entry, arrest and release to respond appropriately to domestic violence. A familiar occurrence is when police fail to arrest an abusive husband, who demands an arrest warrant and threatens to charge them with trespassing if they do not leave. Other police policy guidelines are needed in defining domestic violence, the conduct expected of police handling such cases, procedures in protecting victims, and police responsibility in linking them to appropriate support services [UN 1993 *Resource Manual in Domestic Violence*].

Starting at the municipal level, local government units can introduce policies or enact ordinances which incorporate the social realities in their villages (or *barangays*, which have no legislative powers). Such policies must be explained to the *barangay* leaders who will lead in the implementation at the community level.

The present *barangay* justice system has proved inadequate to handle domestic violence. Its mandate is to mediate and settle conflicts peacefully — not protect the victim and punish the offender. This attitude has reinforced the feminist view of gender bias, of "preserving family unity and harmony at all costs and for the sake of children." In one case, an abusive husband continued to beat his wife even after making repeated written pledges to the *barangay* chief who mediated between the two. The family violence council based in the neighborhood or parish is one such idea that should be considered by local government policymakers.

Moreover, experience in other countries shows that "it is essential to provide everyone in the criminal justice system with basic and uniform information on policies and procedures for handling domestic violence". This is especially needed in the community, which houses both victim and perpetrator but is the least informed on how to address the situation and why.

Support Services

Support services are urgently needed for victims of violence. While some service facilities now exist (e.g., crisis counseling, shelters for battered and sexually abused women, women's desks in police stations) to respond to the problem, there is a need to expand their geographical reach and make the facilities more victim-friendly.

As mentioned, the valuable role of the pediatrician, with her/his training, insights and influence in the family, should be considered. So should an innovative hospital service like the PGH-Child Protection Unit.

Social workers who participated in the study reported that most shelters are overcrowded. Battered wives bring their children to the shelters with them. Even money for the trip to the victims' home in the provinces become the shelter's concern.

The stress on the counselors was also glimpsed in the study. Some have experienced threats to their lives by the perpetrators of violence, who resent the counselors aiding their victims.

Along with the growing realization of the need to focus attention on the prevention, early detection and intervention in domestic violence, there is likewise a need to identify the forms of support for abusers (e.g., counseling, rehabilitation, medical care) and appropriate ways to carry them out.

Recommendations

In sum, the project would like to give priority to the following areas of concern and action:

(1) Research, Documentation and Detection of Cases

A standard intake form should be devised for various government agencies involved in the prevention and eradication of all forms of violence and exploitation, as well as in the promotion of women's welfare and

protection of children and minors. These include agencies such as the Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD), the Department of Justice (DOJ), and the Department of Health (DOH), especially government hospitals where victims are brought for medical treatment. These forms should include vital information on both victims and abusers.

Sensitive indicators should be developed to detect abuse and provide information needed for medico-legal purposes and research/documentation for policy and action. This will also prevent repeated interviewing of suspected cases of abuse, particularly in the case of children and minors.

A systematic and integrated documentation of violence is needed; key agencies identified can collaborate with the National Statistics Office (NSO) and educational centers to consolidate available data and information.

Apart from information on the demographic profile of the abusers, little is known about them — their personality characteristics, personal histories and the reasons for their assaultive behavior. There are many theories and explanations for wife/child assault from psychiatry, psychology, sociobiology, sociology and feminism that need to be studied/tested in the context of Philippine culture.

- The multi-factor, multi-level theory of family violence can be used as a guide to identify critical factors that need to be studied for policy and action purposes. The explanatory power of different factors such as family ideology, patriarchy, power and powerlessness, child discipline practices, other belief-systems and values that promote and perpetuate family violence need to be studied more fully, using selected quasi-experimental designs and case studies with comparative samples.
- A study on perpetrators of family violence and an in-depth study of the con-

sequences of child abuse are sorely needed. In addition, the family must be taken as a unit of analysis to study in more depth the interaction of different forces that perpetuate violence. There is also a need to expand the data sets to include victims from the middle and upper socioeconomic groups.

- Research must also be built into existing programs: e.g., shelter/transition houses, hospital and child protection units, police women's desks, counseling, support and advocacy programs for victims of violence as well as treatment and rehabilitation programs for abusers. Research will help in assessing the effectiveness of interventions and determining alternative courses of actions.

These are problem areas that need more focused, innovative and gender sensitive research methodologies.

(2) Support Service

One of the critical areas in addressing the problem of intra-family and domestic violence is the identification and creation of appropriate forms and mechanisms of providing sustained support service for victims and their immediate family members. While certain service facilities now exist (e.g. crisis counseling, shelters for battered and sexually abused women, women's desks in police stations) to respond to the problem, there is a need to expand their reach and make the facilities more victim-friendly. With the growing realization of the need to focus attention on prevention, early detection and intervention, there is likewise a need to identify the forms of support for abusers (e.g., counseling, rehabilitation, medical care) and appropriate ways to carry them out.

Some of the possible intervention strategies include:

- establishment of community-based counseling service to victims and perpetrators of violence, integration of coun-

seling service into existing facilities of government agencies and private organizations (e.g., counseling for family planning clients, for prisoners, for applicants of marriage license) for students, etc.;

- skills enhancement courses or activities for actual and potential victims to be integrated in existing programs of schools and government as well as private agencies. These may include training to develop assertiveness and self-confidence, family conflict management, and others;
- skills enhancement of health and medical workers to diagnose and intervene in cases of violence;
- treatment and rehabilitation of abusers; and,
- long-term counseling/therapy for abused children and children who come from violent homes.

(3) Advocacy and Education

The long-term solution to the problem of violence lies in enhancing public awareness and consciousness of the negative effects of force and assaultive conduct, not only on individuals, but on the family and society as a whole. This can be done by integrating into existing school curricula values and learning processes that promote respect for individual rights and use of non-abusive and non-violent conduct specially to resolve conflicts. Other institutions that actively serve as socialization agents (e.g., media, Churches, family planning agencies), may also be called upon to integrate such values and practices in their existing programs.

Medical, legal and other caregivers must undergo training to adequately respond to the victim's needs and rights.

Raising public awareness of issues related to family, specifically, women and child health and welfare, also requires continuous engagement in campaigns, lobbying for legislative reforms, exchange of information materials among groups and networking. Women's alliances and human rights groups

may take the lead in organizing public fora and campaigns against violence.

(4) Criminal Justice System

The criminal justice system must respond to family violence as a serious problem. This requires a consolidated approach to the problem by the five pillars of the justice system — the police, the prosecutors, courts, corrections and the community.

Legislation is urgently needed as well as community response and action to ensure

that laws are enforced. A family violence council at the community level is recommended to effect this.

An omnibus family violence law or legislative program must consider a number of factors such as the creation of a unified family court with criminal jurisdiction over adults for crimes committed against family and household members, setting up emergency protection services on a 24-hour basis and training personnel to handle family violence cases.

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