

# Violence Against Women in the Philippines

Racidon P. Bernarte<sup>1</sup>, Quennie Marie M. Acedegbega<sup>2</sup>, Mariah Louise A. Fadera<sup>3</sup>, Hanna Jemima G. Yopyop<sup>4</sup>

Department of Communication Research, College of Communication  
Polytechnic University of the Philippines  
Sta. Mesa, Manila, Philippines

<sup>1</sup>rpbernarte@pup.edu.ph, <sup>2</sup>acedegbegaquennie@gmail.com,  
<sup>3</sup>faderamariahloise@gmail.com, <sup>4</sup>hannajemima@gmail.com

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**Abstract** - *The issue of violence against women is evident among the crimes committed in the Philippines so this study was conducted in order to consolidate and draw a clear condition of violence against women in the Philippines. The focal point of this study is to determine the state of violence against women in the Philippines by recognizing the contributing factors, its perpetrators, number of cases and forms of abuses. There were two research procedures used in establishing the study: series of face-to-face interviews with authorities in the field of violence against women and supported by the analysis of the data gathered from the Philippine National Police (PNP). Through an extensive review, the researchers opt for women's group representatives, consultant on women's affairs, Philippine National Police (PNP) officials, Women and Child Protection Center (WCPC) officials and barangay women's desk officers as the key informants. An interview guide constructed by the researchers was used in the interviews while a coding sheet was accustomed in the analysis of the secondary data. The results showed that family, economic and social factors already exist in the Filipino community that causes occurrence of violence on women in different setting. Upon the in-depth analysis, socio-cultural and socio-political factors were also found contributing to the existence of the phenomenon.*

**Keywords:** *violence against women, contributing factors on violence, Philippines*

## INTRODUCTION

Violence against women has been existing many years ago in many different forms [1]. In the Philippines, there are implemented laws to protect women's rights and prevention of violence against women. The government has built campaigns and programs to strengthen their call of action for this phenomenon. But despite of this, Philippines is one of the countries that has the most number of cases of violence against women as stated by Michelle J. Hiden in 2002. Violence against women is increasing quickly that takes a big effect not only to women themselves, her family and her household but also to the economy and productivity of the region and society.

There are contributing factors on the occurrence of violence against women anywhere that can be observed in everyday life. In the Filipino family context, men are superior over women. According to the data from the Philippine National Police, the perpetrators of violence against women are commonly intimate male partners. Cross-cultural studies have cited that male control of wealth and decision-making within the family and marital conflicts are strong predictors of abuse [2]. Inequalities between men and women go across public

and private phases of life including social, economic, cultural and political rights and are manifested in restrictions and limitations on women's freedom, choices and opportunities [3]. Many factors affect violence against women such as family, economic and social. The researchers are able to identify how these factors can affect and associate violence against women in order to draw a clear condition of violence against women in the Philippines.

There are many efforts executed to lessen violence against women in the Philippines. The local government has implemented various laws to protect women; one of these is the Republic Act 9262 or the Anti-Violence against Women and their Children Act of 2004. It is a Philippine law for protection of women and their children in the family. Any act or series of acts committed by any person against a woman who is his wife, former wife, or against a woman with whom the person has or had a sexual or dating relationship, or with whom he has a common child, or against her child whether legitimate or illegitimate, within 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 is condemned by this law.

By understanding, the various dimensions of this global problem through data collection and analysis of the factors that attributes to violence against women supported by the data gathered of the Philippine National Police, government would be able to develop and evaluate measures design to prevent and eliminate this problem.

#### Scope of the Problem

From the recorded data of violence against women of the Philippine National Police, in the span of four years (2013- mid-year 2016), the researchers found out that the huge number of violence cases occurred in 2014 (49,883). The most common form of violence under Gender-Related Crimes is the physical injury meanwhile threats and theft in the Non-Gender Related Crimes. Ironically, the data revealed that even though men are known perpetrators, there are still numbers of women executing violence. With this, a case study on the state of violence against women was established.

#### Factors affecting Violence against Women

Violence against women is an outspread societal issue present in different regions of the world [4]. Despite the different countries' implementation of laws and campaigns, cases of women abuse are constantly on the rise [5]. Consequently, it is wise to find out and have a handle on the contributing factors why this crime occurs to provide the favorable solution in lessening or eliminating cases of violence against women.

There are different factors worldwide causative to violence against women [6] according to some studies. Age, relationship separation, income and foregoing oppression are few of the influencers of violence against women in Nigeria [7]. On the other hand, the common factors in Bangladesh are age, education, wealth index, religion and marrying age [8]. Additionally, educations of women, violence witnessing, husband's high level of control, vices, religion are the prevalent modifiers of women violence in Ghana [9]. However, they have something in common namely: these are the age, socioeconomic status, repeat victimization, culture, pregnancy and termination of relationship [10]. In the Philippines, there are many factors involved in the presence of cases of violence against women but is not yet clearly identified.

#### Theoretical Background

This study is anchored to Standpoint theory developed by Sandra Harding and Nancy Hartsock that focuses on perceptions about gender that concentrate on feminist viewpoint. This theory explains that there are factors that affect people's perceptions such as personal experience, tradition and culture, socio-economic status in the society, and the basic differences of gender.

Women are considered as marginalized group of people where they adapt and accept perceptions of powerful groups that bring change in their viewpoint. However, perspectives of a person differ individually but can be similar when they share same interests and environments with others [11]. Thus, the researchers chose professionals' insights about the phenomenon. Their viewpoint is substantial to show the state of violence against women in the Philippines through its factors.

The theory is important to this study to support the claim that there are attributing factors why violence against women occurs and it is a continuous societal issue in the Philippines.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are to determine violence against women in the Philippines in terms of number of cases, forms of violence or abuse done to women, and to identify the factors affecting violence against women in terms of family, social and economic attributes.

#### Violence against Women

Violence against women (VAW) is any act that troubles and violates women making them endure pain physically, emotionally, psychologically and mentally as declared by the UN Women along with their announcement of elimination of VAW. Substantially, women are subject to abuse without considering their age, income or education [12]. In the analysis of World Health Organization (WHO), London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Medical Research Council in 2013, 30% of women has experienced abuse physically and sexually over 80 countries worldwide. Among these countries, 24.6% belongs to West Pacific region, 37.7% in Southeast Asia and 37% within Eastern Mediterranean area [6].

In the Philippine, violence against women is a well-known crime that continuously exists even with the laws implemented by the government such as R.A.

9262 or the Anti-Violence against Women and their Children Act of 2004 as reported by the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW). According to the National Statistics Office (NSO), the number of women abuse in the country decreased from year 2005 to 2006. However, it increased for about 500% in the year 2013 as stated in the report of the Philippine National Police (PNP). There are some cases where the victims and witnesses of the violence do not involve police and related authorities. As a result, there are no clear and strong established studies providing the current state of violence against women in the Philippines.

### **Forms of Violence against Women**

To fully assess violence against women and its concepts, it is best to identify and understand its elements. There are different forms of abuse that falls to violence against women in the world including domestic violence, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, psychological violence, sexual exploitation, sexual trafficking, female genital mutilation, femicide, dowry-related abuse, and acid-throwing [13]. These can be experienced by a woman of any age at school, in her workplace, on the street or even at her own home [14]. Other common forms of abuse done on women are rape, early marriage, stalking, dating violence, forced marriage, contradicting a woman access to and control over basic resources, isolating woman, and embarrassing her [15],[14].

### **Perpetrators of Violence against Women**

Perpetrator is an individual or group of individuals that contributes and allows abuses to other people according to the United Nation High Commission for Refugees. It is also the term that describes a person who committed a crime according to Merriam Webster Dictionary. They have the power and authority in controlling their victims thus most of the perpetrators are related to them such as husbands, friends, intimate partners but it can also be a stranger [16],[17]. There are cases that women are also doers of abuse to both men and women just like in India; mother-in-laws are the main perpetrators of dowry-related crimes [18]. In Australia, 43% percent of the perpetrators of violence on women are male partners while 11% are female partners [19]. The age of the perpetrator is assumed to be related to the commitment of violence resulting to the younger ones are more engaged in women violence as stated by an international research study [20].

In the same research, roughly one-third of perpetrators are under the age of 25 and nearly one-fifth of them are already committed violence on women since the age of 18-21 years old. In Philippines, data from January to June 2016 as gathered by the Philippine National Police (PNP), there were 22, 257 male perpetrators and majority of them are in the ages of 18-40 years old. On the contrary, 244 cases have female perpetrators and most of them are in the ages of 41 years old and above.

## **MATERIALS AND METHOD**

### **Key Informants**

Since the study aims to find the factors affecting violence in the country, all the key informants were selected according to the researchers' sets of criteria. For the women's desk officer of Philippine National Police the criteria are: must have the appropriate positions in the agencies to address the set of formulated questions by the researchers and must handle the cases on the department under study. For women's help desk officer in barangay: informants handled a case of violence against women and are desired to be knowledgeable on violence against women, basic concepts of effective communication concepts on counselling. The researchers also included consultant on women's affairs as informant and the criteria is: must be knowledgeable on human rights cases, law fundamental processes and basic concepts of violence against women. Lastly, the researchers included women's group representative as informants the criteria are; informants must be an officer on women's organizations/institution for more than a year and have conducted lecture related on the issue of violence against women. Among the non-probability sampling techniques, the researchers employed purposive sampling.

There are eight (8) key informants in this study, composed of two Philippine National Police Women's desk officers, three local barangay help desk officials, one consultant on women's affair and two representatives from women's institutions (Gabriela and Philippine Commission on Women).

### **Procedure**

A series of face-to-face interviews were conducted among the informants to avoid outside interventions and interruptions that may possibly occur in a focused group discussion. The interview was used to probe details of personal opinions, beliefs and information

regarding pertinent issues. In the interview, researchers started by establishing rapport and asking general questions and then proceeded to the more purposive ones. For the second data analysis, the researchers consolidated the gathered data from Philippine National Police (PNP).

Invitation letters were given weeks before the actual interviews took place. The informants agreed to have a recorded interview with the researchers reminding that all the information they have provided is used for academic purposes only. They are competent to give consent and voluntarily participated in the study and uncoerced.

### Instrument

This study used an interview guide for primary data and coding sheet for secondary data. The interview guide involved outlining of issues that were explored and discussed in the interview to ensure that all vital and relevant topics were covered. The questionnaire has undergone pre-test to several individuals who are knowledgeable on the issue of violence against women and appropriate adjustments were made. There are two parts of the questionnaire. The first part is the socio-demographics of the informants and case background of violence against women which answer the question what is the state of violence against women in the Philippine. The second part refers to the factors affecting violence against women, which is composed of 18 questions. The researchers used coding sheet for quantitative data from Philippine National Police for reliable statistics.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Data of Violence against Women from Philippine National Police

These are the quantitative evidence of the prevalence of violence against women in the Philippines.

### Recorded Data of Violence against Women in the Philippines from Philippine National Police

Table 1- Number of Reported Cases

Period Covered	Number of Reported Cases
January to December 2013	25,430
January to December 2014	49,883
January to December 2015	48,210
January to June 2016	21,468
<b>Total</b>	<b>144,991</b>

Source: Philippine National Police

According to the gathered data of researchers to Philippine National Police, the highest reported cases are on the January to December 2014. The data shows that the number of cases on violence against women decreases.

There are two kinds of violence against women in the Philippines, the gender related and non-gender related. Gender-Related violence refers to violence commits to women where there is a violation of women's dignity and being. It is also defined by the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women or CEDAW as violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately, it is an issue affecting them because of their gender [21]. Non-gender related violence are those crimes that can be done to other sexes without violating the right of being a woman but violating the other human rights.

As shown in the Table 2, the number of cases are inconsistently increasing and decreasing. From the total number of rape cases there is 20.15% in 2013, 32.17% in 2014, 32.93% in 2015 and 14.75% in 2016. Incestuous Rape increases in number consistently throughout 2013 to 2016.

Table 2 –Recorded Cases of Gender-Related Crimes

CASES	2013	2014	2015	2016	TOTAL
Rape	1,259 (20.15%)	2,010 (32.17%)	2,058 (32.93%)	922 (14.75%)	<b>6,249 (100%)</b>
Incestuous Rape	26 (14.05%)	36 (19.46%)	47 (25.41%)	76 (41.08%)	<b>185 (100%)</b>
Attempted Rape	317 (16.61%)	635 (33.26%)	700 (36.67%)	257 (13.46%)	<b>1,909 (100%)</b>
Rape with Homicide	0	0	11 (61.11%)	7 (38.89%)	<b>18 (100%)</b>
Acts Of Lasciviousness	1,035 (17.18%)	1,871 (31.06%)	2,126 (35.29%)	992 (16.53%)	<b>6,024 (100%)</b>
Sexual Harassment	196 (44.24%)	103 (23.25%)	91 (20.54%)	53 (11.96%)	<b>443 (100%)</b>
Physical Injury	3,564 (28.78%)	7,727 (62.39%)	922 (7.44%)	172 (1.39%)	<b>12,385 (100%)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,397 (23.51%)</b>	<b>12,382 (45.5%)</b>	<b>5,955 (21.88%)</b>	<b>2,479 (9.11%)</b>	<b>27,213 (100%)</b>

Source: Philippine National Police

Attempted Rape increased in number in 2013 to 2015 then decreased in 2016. On the other hand, there is no recorded Rape with Homicide in year 2013 and 2014. It also has the least number of cases compared to other gender related crimes. Act of Lasciviousness have 17.18% in 2013 from the total number through 2016. Year 2015 has the most number of Act of Lasciviousness cases with 35.29% from the total of 6,024. Sexual harassment has the most number of cases in year 2013 with 44.24% from the total of 443. From all of the recorded gender related crimes, Physical Injury has the most number of cases from 2013 to 2016. It has a total of 12,385 and 2014 has the most part of it with 62.39%.

In 2014, the cases went 93.56% high from the total number on 2013. The cases decrease in 2015 by 51.91%. It increased a little by 58.37% in year 2016.

Table 3. Reported Cases of RA 9262 Anti-Violence against Women

CASES	2013	2014	2015	2016	TOTAL
<i>RA 9262 Anti-Violence Against Women</i>					<b>48,454</b> (44.59%)
<i>Physical Abuse</i>	0	0	29,274	12,610	<b>41,884</b> (38.54%)
<i>Sexual Abuse</i>	0	0	288	79	<b>367</b> (0.34%)
<i>Psychological Abuse</i>	0	0	9,182	4,612	<b>13,794</b> (12.69%)
<i>Economic Abuse</i>	0	0	2,824	1,352	<b>4,176</b> (3.84%)
<b>Grand total</b>	16,517	31,937	41,568	18,653	<b>108,675</b> (100%)

Source: Philippine National Police

As illustrated on the Table 3, the first two years of the recorded data only falls under the law RA9262 itself, on the other hand, in year 2015-2016 the data were classified into 4 categories based on the violation on the Violence against Women law.

The recorded data from the Philippine National Police shows that the most common forms of violence

that happens inside the family is physical abuse with 38.54% from the total of 108,675.

Table 4. Perpetrators of Violence: January to June 2016

Female		Male	
18-40 years old	41 y/o and above	18-40 years old	41 y/o and above
75	169	13,688	8,569
<b>Total: 22,501</b>			

Source: Philippine National Police

Violence against women are commonly done by men but that does not mean that it can't be done by women. Table 4 shows that there are still numbers of women who have done violence to other women. But it is incomparable to the numbers of men who abuse women. There is a drastic difference between the percentages of women being the perpetrators and men executing violence. The percentage of men being the perpetrator is 98.92%. This evidence supports that in the situation of abuse between men and women, women most of the time are the victims of violence.

Violence against women can occur even in the most intimate environment. It can happen inside the family. According to the recorded data of Philippine National Police, live-in partner or spouse is the most common perpetrator of violence against women with 37.64% from the total of 22,561. It strengthens the data for Republic Act 9262.

In Filipino context, males are always dominant. It is an inherited culture of Filipinos that men are superior over women. This belief can result to gender inequality. Perpetrators of violence against women are commonly intimate male partners. Cross-cultural studies have cited that male control over wealth and decision-making within the family and marital conflicts as strong predictors of abuse [22]. Gender inequality contributes to thinking that women are weaker and less capable than men are. Women were not given the same opportunity as men thus resulting to violence against women.

Table 5 - Relationship of the Perpetrators to the Victim: January to June 2016

Spouse/Live-In Partner	Parent/ Grandparent/ Stepparent	Boyfriend/ Girlfriend/Ex	Other Relatives	None
8,492 (37.64%)	2,882 (12.77%)	3,579 (15.86%)	2,959 (13.12%)	4,649 (20.61%)
<b>Total: 22,561 (100%)</b>				

Source: Philippine National Police

## **Factors of Violence against Women in the Philippines**

The contributing factors of violence against women in the Philippines as tackled in the in-depth interviews shed light on the complex nature of how violence occurs in households and suggest that the reason the violence occurs is often multi-faceted.

### ***Family Factors***

This factor refers to the violence that occurs within the family. There are many reasons why violence occurs at home namely: family at or below poverty line, marital instability and marital conflict.

According to a Consultant on Women's Affairs, there is a RA 9262: The Anti-Violence against Women and Children Act of 2004 because of the presence of domestic violence in the community. On the other hand, an agent of Philippine Commission on Women, a government agency that serves as the national machinery for gender equality and women's empowerment, claimed that family factors are present in the country considering the social status of women.

The representative of Gabriela, a nationwide alliance of more than 200 women's organizations plus chapters and support groups of Filipino women and non-Filipino in various continents of the world and one of the informant of this study, also added that it triggers violence against women because of the patriarchal system in the society that makes the man powerful and head of the family. Focusing on macho culture, this happens because of the head of the family thinks that he owns his family, thus, having the right to control them. The other informant said that this is why rape cases happen sometimes inside the house which involves relatives because of the authority of the male. As stated on R.A. 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women, the equal rights in all manner relating to marriage and family relations, a woman who is denied of equal rights in the family is disregarded. Thus, this is a form of violence against women.

The informants were also asked about the causes of violence against women in the Philippines, they said marital instability triggers the conflict between the husband and wife, which leads to violence. Another factor in the family is the influence of the parents of the husband or wife. The unpleasant attitude of a nagger wife towards her husband can be considered as a contributing factor.

Hence, the different family factors that affect violence against women are marital instability and marital conflict of partners that can lead to physical abuse, the economic status of the family resulting to the involvement to drugs and alcohol, and the

discrimination within family where female children were deprived of getting proper education.

### ***Economic Factors***

Economic Factor is the most common factor of violence against women based on the cases that the informants have encountered. It involves the financial aspect of women as well as her family and financial support by the head of the family. In the R.A. 9262, economic is defined as the acts that make or attempt to make a woman financially dependent.

A Consultant on Women's Affairs stated that economic factor is the root of all the violence done to women. According to the Chief of Women and Children Protection Services of the Manila Police District, one factor in the economic aspect is unemployment. A data from National Demographic Health Survey illustrates that woman who are in lower income bracket are victim of and vulnerable to violence. On the other hand, the agent of Philippine Commission on Women supported that not only women who live in a lower income bracket are vulnerable to violence. Some of the victims are from well-known family but ashamed of reporting due to the value of their family's name in society. Violence cuts across all sectors of the society, whether rich or not, every woman is vulnerable.

The informants explained why women who are in low income bracket are vulnerable to violence than women in higher income bracket. They said that it is because of lack of social services resulting to women engaging in dangerous jobs like prostitution that leads to sexual harassment which is a violation to the rights of women. In the economic view inside the family, a barangay chairwoman claimed that violence occurs when the husband controls the wealth and decision inside the home leaving the woman powerless.

### ***Social Factors***

According to the representative of Gabriela, violence against women is one form of gender discrimination. In our society, companies offer bigger opportunities to those who have higher educational attainment. Because there are a lot of women who are not a priority to be educated because of gender inequality, it hinders the opportunity of having a decent job.

Another factor is the portrayal of women in traditional and new media as stated by a barangay chairwoman in Manila. Some television program shows women who are in bikini and performing sensual dance and are seen an object which are for them is degrading and discriminatory to women. On the other

aspect, discrimination of women is present in the education setting as claimed by the consultant on women's affair. Children are taught about the limitations of women. They are being taught unequally. In classroom, women are taught of doing household chores or domestic jobs while men are taught of different things. There is no practice of equality even in grade school which leads to perception of women being good at domestic jobs only.

The statement above is a violation of women's rights guaranteed under the Magna Carta on Women. The law refers to the non-discriminatory and non-derogatory portrayal of women in media and film to raise the consciousness of the public in recognizing the dignity of women and the role and contribution of women in family, community and in the society through strategic use of mass media.

Electronic Violence against Women (EVAW) is also a solution presently giving attention by the government according to the agent of the Philippine Commission on Women since violence is also present in cyberworld like cyber bullying, threats etc.

After the series of interviews on the key informants, there are two other factors found in the Philippines that affect violence against women as follows:

### ***Socio-Cultural Factors***

The researchers labelled religion under the socio-cultural factors affecting violence against women. According to the Chief of Women and Children Protection Services of the Manila Police District, religion can contribute to violence. It promotes violence on women in the form of prohibition of using contraception. There are health considerations for women, as explained by the consultant on women's affair and prohibiting them in using protection and contraceptives that might lead to infections and other diseases.

The representative of Gabriela insisted that the feudal patriarchal culture in the Philippines dictates the role of women in the society. Further, Filipino culture has a concept that women should stay home and do household chores. There are other reasons why socio-cultural has an effect in violence against women such as discrimination. This happens when women are in a relationship with a person of other race and having different ideologies. It is believe that sometimes the misunderstanding of their beliefs creates clash between the two that leads to violence against women.

In relation to this, this can be applied on the violence done to Filipino women who are working in foreign country. Many Filipino women are seeking help because of the abusive behavior of their employer. In line with this, a domestic worker in other country means slaves. Hence, that leads to violence against Filipino women who are mostly domestic helpers.

### ***Socio-Political Factors***

Socio-political is also a factor for violence against women. This exists in government aspects. According to the consultant on women's affair, citizens of the country prioritize male leaders than female ones. They eye it as discrimination for women most especially if it is in national position.

On the other hand, patriarchal settings inside the family are also considered as socio-political factors as sited by Gabriela representative. Men as a powerful person inside the home are authoritative in household settings, which lead to unequal power distribution within the family.

As a conclusion, family, social, economic, cultural and political factors influence violence against women in the Philippines that opens the possibility of women's rights being violated in any setting. These factors are related to each other. We know that family is the basic unit of the society thus when violence against women is present to the basic unit of society, it is automatic that there will be a presence of abuse outside family. This affects the society or the whole country.

When women are discriminated inside her home, she will be less prioritized in every aspect, such as education. When women lack on education there will be less job opportunity for her. When she is unemployed, with no social support she will be forced to engage herself in dangerous activities. And the cycle will continue. And this is only a one face of the state of violence against women in the Philippines. There are a lot more to consider and study about this phenomenon.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

In this study, the researchers evaluated the opinions of professionals towards violence against women in the Philippines. There are various different perspectives on violence against women that needed to be focused on so the suggestion for future studies is to examine the causal relationship of these factors on the occurrence of this phenomenon. A need exists for additional researches that use knowledge from qualitative studies to inform quantitative inquiries. Furthermore,

continuous research is needed to have an in-depth exploration of the factors in corresponding to the elimination of violence against women.

Since the number of cases of violence against women in the Philippines are increasing and decreasing, future researchers, government or organization should find out why this occurs. The increase of number of cases can be positive for the organizations and the government if it is caused by the awareness of women's rights, the laws and programs that help women to have courage to file a case. On the contrary, the increase might be a negative result if it is because there are no enough punishments to perpetrators and the efforts to lessen violence against women are not substantial.

Violence against women occurs also in families, which is the building block of the community. Due to different factors, this also affects how the society sees women and how the society works. We recommend establishing studies involving how the family setting contributes in the rising cases of violence among women within the household and how it can be eliminated. Home should be a safe place for women and their families. It is significant to explore more about violence against women to formulate much stronger strategies to combat this issue.

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