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Violence Against Women in Naga City**
by
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A Grim Reality in the Midst of Growth: Violence Against Women in Naga City

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ABSTRACT

Amidst the economic growth of Naga City is the grueling experience of women in the hands of men, be it their intimate partners, friends, acquaintance or someone unknown to them.

In an attempt to estimate the incidence of violence inflicted on them, determine women's perceived causes and effects of violence, and assess the victims awareness of and quality of the services provided by the city to VAW victims, a survey of 300 women aged 15 years and over was conducted in 2002. Focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and review of documents of police, some NGO/community leaders and health service providers were also used to substantiate the findings of the survey.

Results revealed a 26% incidence of VAW with substance abuse, excess intake of alcoholic drinks, women's negligence of role as wife and mother, poverty, jealousy and men's tendency to viewing pornographic materials as the most commonly mentioned perceive causes of violence. Identified effects of violence indicated a broad range of negative consequences on the victims, family and community. The low level of awareness on the availability of services indicated the less aggressive education campaign at the community level. Specific recommendations for improving their services were offered.

I. Introduction

Violence against women (VAW) is one of the most prevalent human right violations that strips one of security, dignity, self-worth and freedom. Studies estimated that, from country to country, between 10% and 50% of women have been physically assaulted by their intimate partner at some point in their lives.¹ In the Philippines, a national survey of 8,481 women 15-49 years of age in 1993 and of 1,660 women of the same age bracket in Cagayan de Oro City and the Province of Bukidnon in 1998 placed the figure at 10% and 26%, respectively.²

A global epidemic, VAW occurs in all countries and transcends social, economic, religious, and cultural groups. Taking a variety of forms, VAW finds its place in Naga City, "the heart of Bicol" located 377 kms south of Manila. Amidst its growing economy, the city is beset with problem of male violence against women. While watch groups such as *Bantay Familia* have been created in response to VAW, information on its nature and extent of male VAW of reproductive age, awareness and quality of service provided to victims needed to guide the design of prevention intervention were still lacking. Thus, a study which attempted to provide an estimate of the incidence of VAW, an understanding of the causes and consequences of VAW and an assessment of victims' awareness

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and quality of services provided by the city to victims was conducted in late 2002. The highlights of the results are presented in this paper.

II. Methodology and Approach

To attain the above objectives, the study conducted a survey with 300 women aged 15 years and over. The sample size was proportionately drawn from among the 27 barangays of the city using the Social Weather Station (SWS) systematic sampling design. A total of 60 spots were randomly distributed across the 27 barangays with each spot allocated a minimum of five (5) respondents. In each spot, qualified women respondents were selected by means of the systematic random method using an interval of two (2) households with the first household chosen at random starting from a fixed reference point within the spot. The woman respondent within a given household was selected at random from among those qualified in terms of age requirement with the use of the probability respondents key that was made a part of the questionnaire. The estimated margin of error for this sample size was plus or minus 5.7% with a reliability level of 95%. Focus group discussions (FGDs) with the community leaders, male community members, female community members, the youth, and female members of local organizations, key informant interviews with 11 VAW survivors, service providers, and sourcing secondary information were conducted to substantiate findings from the survey.

Taking into account the extreme sensitivity of the subject matter, experienced interviewers were hired and trained to draw out information without putting the women at risk. Women respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses.

What Characterize the women respondents

Majority of them (74%) were married, 15.7% single, 7.3% widowed and 3.0% separated. Their age ranged from 15 to 85 years averaging 36 years. Many were literate, with 34% completed elementary or some high school and 38.7% completed high school or reached college level. Close to a fourth (18.3%) obtained a college degree or even reached the post-graduate level. Their household size averaged 5.49, slightly higher than the region's of 5.24.³ Close to half (48%) belonged to class D, 30.3% class C, 15.0% class E and only 6.7% to the wealthy AB class.

Characteristics	No.	%	Characteristics	No.	%
Marital Status			Age		
Single	47	15.7	Mean 36		
Married	222	74.0	Range 15-85		
Widowed	22	7.3	Household size		
Separated	9	3.0	Mean 5.49		
Educational attainment			Range 1-14		
Some elementary	27	9.0	Socio-economic status		
Elementary graduate/ some high school	102	34.0	AB	20	6.7
High school graduate/ some college	116	38.7	C	91	30.3
College graduate/ post college	55	18.3	D	144	48.0
			E	45	15.0

Note: N = 300

The women's varied activities indicated multiple roles they played. Aside from household chores, 46% engaged in a wide range of productive activities, mainly operating a sari-sari store (17.9%), vending food and non-food (11.4%), practicing their professions as teacher, midwife, and social work (10%), dressmaking or providing beauty services (10%), administering/managing small business (9.3%), providing household help (8.6%) and many others (Table 2).

Type of Occupation	No.	%
Sari-sari store keeper	25	17.9
Vending	16	11.4
Practice of Profession	14	10.0
Dressmaking/beautician service	14	10.0
Administrator/contractor/manager/proprietor	13	9.3
Domestic work	12	8.6
Merchandiser/buy and sell/dealer of beauty products, saleswoman)	9	6.4
Farm laborer/livestock raising	9	6.4
Government/private employees (bank teller, clerk, secretary)	9	6.4
Agent (insurance/real estate)	8	5.7
Barangay official/community worker	7	5.0
Factory worker/repacker/box-maker/umbrella repair	3	2.1
Service crew/utility	1	0.7
TOTAL	300	100.0

Incidence and prevalent forms of male violence against women

About 46.7% of them perceived that VAW is a common occurrence in many households in the city. The 135 and 77 cases of VAW filed at Philippine National Police (PNP) in 2002 and 2003, respectively, and the number of cases served by *Bantay Familia* which indicated wife battering, rape/attempted rape, physical maltreatment/injury as dominant forms of violence affirmed the respondents' perception (Tables 3 and 4).

Type of Abuse	2002	2003 (as of September)
Rape	9	1
Attempted rape	2	1
Frustrated homicide	1	
Sexual harassment	1	
Acts of lasciviousness	5	3
Threats	10	7
Domestic violence/maltreatment	37	30
Physical injury	27	14
Oral defamation	12	5
Slander by Deed	3	3
Unjust vexation	28	12
Concubinage		1
Total	135	77

Source: PNP, Naga City

Type of abuse	2000	2001	2002
Abandoned	5	3	8
Neglected	0		1
Rape/attempted rape	14	15	12
Incest	3	4	3
Acts of Lasciviousness	3	2	2
Seduction	2	0	0
Sexually exploited	0	1	0
Physically Maltreated	21	14	10
Emotionally maltreated	1	1	10
Victims of child labor			1
Illegal recruitment			1
Child trafficking	1		2
Financial support	11	14	
Battered wife	29	38	32
Legal separation	5	10	20
Child's custody	10	9	20
Physical injury	5	2	16
Grave threats	3	3	5
Marital conflict	5	5	26
Drug-related cases		2	4
Case follow-up	18	18	37
Streetchildren related cases		1	2
Total	136	142	212

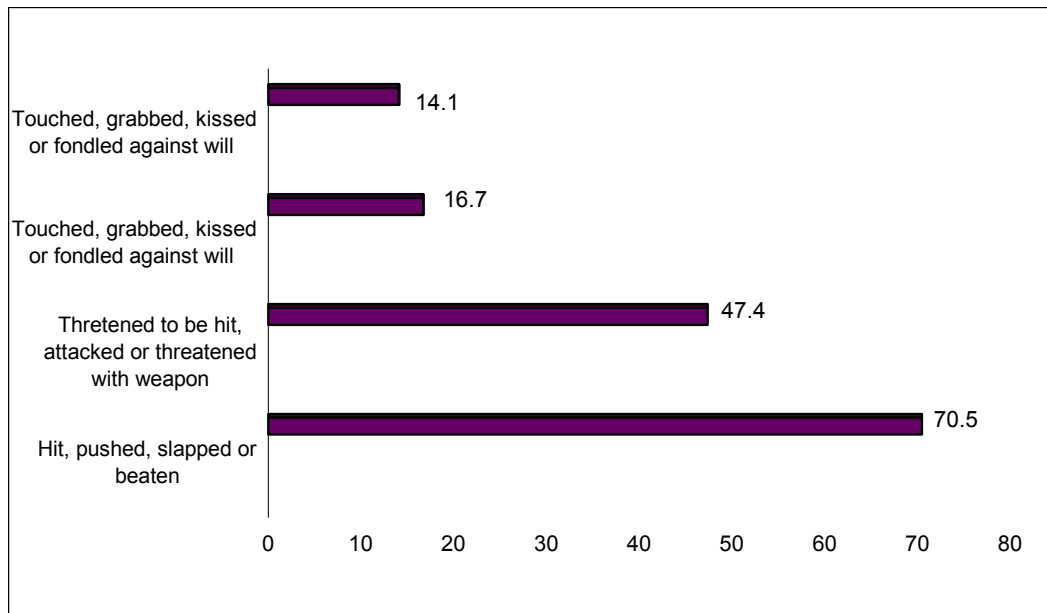
Source: *Bantay Familia*, Naga City.

Of the 300 respondents, 26% [78 or one out of four (4) women] have suffered some forms of physical or sexual abuse in the last 12 months prior to the study. This figure seems to be a conservative estimate when compared with the number of cases filed at PNP and those served by *Bantay Familia* indicating public's tendency to hold a dim view of women and to avoid public shame preferring to keep any shameful acts confined within the home.

The seriousness of the violence

Figure 1 shows the seriousness of the assault mostly by the husband or male partner. The most prevalent forms of abuse were women being pushed, slapped or beaten (70.5%), threatened to be hit, attacked, or threatened with weapon, (47.4%), touched, grabbed, kissed or fondled against will in any sexual way (16.7%), and forced or attempted to force into sexual activity by threat, holding down, or hurting in some way (14.1%). The 70.5% (or 18.3% at n = 300) women who sustained physical assault is relatively higher than the SWS national rate of 9% of women 18 years old and over.⁴

Figure 1. Proportion of women who have experienced violence, Naga City, 2003.



Among the 222 married women, 68.5% sustained emotional/verbal abuse, 21% sexual abuse and 16.7% physical abuse. The higher prevalence of emotional/verbal abuse among married women relative to other forms of abuse parallels the findings of a national survey among ever married or common-law Canadian women aged 18 to 65 years in 1993. Table 5 also shows that violence cuts across educational attainment and the presence or absence of income.

Table 5. Distribution of abused married women by educational attainment and presence or absence of income		
Type of Abuse	No.	%
Some elementary	13	8.28
Elementary graduate/some high school	60	38.22
High school graduate/some college	60	38.22
College graduate/post college	24	15.29
With income	71	45.2
Without income	86	54.8
TOTAL (n =157)	157	100.0

Explaining male violence against women

Male violence against women arises from a combination of complex and interrelated factors ranging from individual-related to family and society at large (Table 6). The five most frequently mentioned were substance abuse (56.9%), excessive intake of alcoholic drinks (36.9%) by male perpetrator, negligence as wife and mother are situations provocative of a husband's ire (30.7%), extreme poverty as a result of the husband's unemployment or low income (25.3%), and extreme jealousy as a result of marital infidelity (17.9%). The prominence of excessive intake of alcohol and substance abuse as factors that trigger violence has been well documented.^{5, 6, 7, 8, 9} The FGD participants further argued that the lack of privacy and the propitious sleeping arrangement are conducive to sexual abuse of unmarried female members.

Table 6. Distribution of respondents by factors perceived to be contributing to violence against women, Naga City, December 2002.		
Factors	No	%
Substance abuse (use of drugs, tripping)	170	56.9
Excessive intake of alcohol	108	36.9
Shortcomings of the woman as a wife or mother	92	30.7
Extreme poverty/unemployment of husband	76	25.3
Marital infidelity/jealousy	51	17.9
Flirtatious behavior/behaving like a vamp	38	12.7
Pornographic materials/films	32	10.7
Irresponsible husband/father/parents/broken family	23	7.7
Wife/husband engaged in vice	19	6.3
Nagging wife/unreasonable spouse	19	6.3
Husband's insecurity/immaturity	16	5.3
Lack of communication/miscommunication	16	5.3
Peer influence/environment	13	4.3
Situations conducive to perpetration of violence	9	3.0
Some women allow themselves to be abused	9	3.0
Lack of education	7	2.3
Refusal of wife to have sex with husband	3	1.0
Violence inherent in the family of male spouse	3	1.0
Lack of faith in God	1	0.3
No answer	4	1.3
TOTAL (n=300)*		

*Results do not add up to 100% due to multiple responses

Perceived Consequences of VAW

Perceived effects of VAW included a long list of physical, psychological, emotional and socio-economics effects on the victim, on the family and on the community.

On the victim. Table 7 shows that among others, abused women were most likely to suffer from trauma, excessive fear, illness inducing nightmares (32.7%), tendency to commit suicide (31.3%), tendency to become rebellious or develop violent behaviors enough to cause her commit crime (27.3%), mental breakdown (25.3%) and the lose of self-confidence and self-respect (20.0). The FGD participants also expressed anxiety over possible withdrawal of financial support by the husband and the loss of wife's affection and respect for the husband.

Table 7. Distribution of respondents by perceived effects of VAW on the victim, Naga City, December 2002.		
Effects on victim	No.	%
Shock and traumas/excessive fear/illness/nightmares	98	32.7
Develops suicidal tendency/loss of will to live	94	31.3
Victim becomes rebellious/violent/prone to committing crime	82	27.3
Victim develops mental disorder/nervous breakdown	76	25.3
Intense pain/anger toward abuser	61	20.3
Shame/inferiority/Loss of dignity/self confidence	75	25.0
Ruined future/loss of interest in schooling	34	11.3
Suffers from physical pain/health is affected	14	4.7
Victim learned a lesson/became strong	7	2.3
Victim loses faith in God	4	1.3
Unwanted pregnancy	2	0.7
No answer/don't know	11	3.66
TOTAL (n=300)*		

* Results do not add up to 100% due to multiple responses

On the family. When violence breaks out in the family, the children suffered the most. Sixty-five percent (65.7%) opined that violence traumatized children inducing them to be rebellious, harbor pain and anger and indulge in substance abuse, or positively, to study hard (Table 8). Two other most mentioned effects were the break-up of the family (44.9%) and the loss of good reputation in the community (16.9%).

Table 8. Distribution of respondents by perceived effects of VAW on the family of the Victim, Naga City, December 2002.

Effects on family	No.	%
Children suffer from anger, pain, fear, trauma/become rebellious/leave home/drawn to vices/study harder	197	65.6%
Husband and wife separate/broken family/	132	44.9
Loss of family reputation and good standing in the community	48	16.9
Sense of pity and loss with the ruin of a family member's life	21	7.0
Family abandoned by husband is drawn deeper into poverty	18	6.0
Retaliation through violence/criminal act	14	4.7
Parents seek justice for the victim	13	4.3
Early marriage	2	0.7
Members lose faith in God	2	0.3
Learns to become aware and careful	1	0.3
No answer	13	4.3
TOTAL (n=300)*		

* Percentage results do not add up to 100% due to multiple responses

Confirming the survey findings, FGD participants added that, in some cases, some children develop a strong resolve to study harder for brighter future, or the wife to work harder as positive responses to violence.

On the community. VAW has indirect effects on the community. Table 9 reveals that among others, VAW generates a climate of fear and tension among members of the community (38.9%), fuels loose talks/gossips (18.3%), and creates bad community's reputation (16.0%). These highlight the importance of maintaining peace and harmonious relationship in the community as well as its good reputation.

Table 9. Distribution of respondents by perceived effects of VAW on the community, Naga City, December 2002.

Effects on community	No	%
Creates fear/tension among members	114	38.9
Loose talks/gossips among community members	55	18.3
Gives a bad reputation to the community	48	16.0
Violence sets a bad example to children	28	9.3
The members join together to help victims	28	9.3
The community feels depressed	23	7.7
Indifference and apathy/nonchalance	17	5.7
Violence evokes anger/condemnation of abuser	17	5.7
Loss of confidence in the government	16	5.3
Community learns a lesson to become more careful	13	4.3
VAW is recognized as a problem	8	2.6
No answer	36	12.0
TOTAL (n=300)*		

* Results do not add up to 100% due to multiple responses

Women's awareness and quality of services to VAW Survivors

The study showed that only 39% indicated knowledge of services available to VAW survivors reflecting the less aggressive educational campaign on the community-based efforts as a response to VAW. Four (4) most services being offered to survivors were protection, care and rehabilitation of the survivor (23.9%), counseling services or advice by barangay leaders, volunteers of *Bantay Familia* and the pastoral council (23.9%), assistance in the forms of medication, food and hospitalization (16.2%) and in reporting the case to the concerned authority or referring it to the proper institution (11.9%) (Table 10). Very few showed a vague knowledge of the specific services provided by certain institutions as indicated by simple reference to *Bantay Familia* (14.5%), the DSWD (14.5%) and the DSWD *Bantay Bata* program (1.7%).

Table 10. Distribution of respondents by type of services known to be available to VAW Survivors, Naga City, December 2002.		
Services	No	%
Protection/rehabilitation/care of survivor	28	23.9
Counseling or advice by barangay leaders/BF/pastoral council, etc.	28	23.9
Assistance in medication/providing food/hospitalization	19	16.2
Assistance in reporting/bringing victim to authority/referral	14	11.9
Referral to nuns/Sta. Rafaela conducts dialogue with parents	8	6.8
Investigation/apprehending and detaining of offender	7	6.0
Legal assistance and legal counseling	6	5.1
Psychiatric service	4	3.4
Monetary and moral support	4	3.4
Seminars (bugkos familia)/advice on where to go for assistance	2	1.7
Bantay Familia	17	14.5
DSWD	17	14.5
Bantay Bata	2	1.7
TOTAL (n=117)*		

* Results do not add up to 100% due to multiple responses

In-depth interviews with 11 survivors of VAW corroborated the survey finding on low level of awareness. Of the 11 survivors, only four (4) were aware of legislation and policies governing VAW and five (5) of the services provided to VAW victims. And, only four (4) have sought assistance from persons of authority. The rest preferred to keep the incidents to themselves to avoid putting the family in shame. Two of the survivors who had hospital treatment found the quality of service fairly good while another one complained of a hospital personnel who seemed unfamiliar with the procedure for requesting medical certificates resulting in delays in securing medical certificates. In all of the cases that required medical attention, no referral to any other institutions was made.

Responding to Violence

Violence against women is a social problem that requires immediate coordinated response from multiple sectors to provide comprehensive support to women affected by VAW and their children. A short list of possible responses to VAW is presented below.

1. The relatively low level of incidence of VAW reflects the comparatively lower regard given to women and public awareness of VAW as a human right issue, a social and public health concerns - perpetuating male domination and female subordination. A more intensive and extensive education campaign and advocacy by the government, civil society and community must then be pursued.
2. The complex reasons for the occurrence of VAW and the low quality of services provided to the survivors emphasized the need for local service providers to undergo gender sensitivity trainings and psychosocial healing, establishment of a one-stop shop health services and a community-based groups to monitor the incidence of domestic violence and provide immediate and appropriate response to the victims.
3. The debilitating impacts of VAW on children victims calls for special psychosocial counseling assistance at the school and mainstreaming of gender and strengthening family values in school curriculum.
4. The study noted that finances, a stress factor, triggers the occurrence of VAW. Responding to it through provision of additional source of income may lessen the family stresses and consequently, the occurrence of VAW.

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