

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.63332/joph.v5i6.2029>

The Implementation of Domestic Violence Laws in Malaysia: An Analysis

Nuruaslizawati Ayob¹, Siti Hajar Abdul Rauf², Azlini Chik³, Normala Riza⁴, Siti Balqis Mohd Azam⁵, Siti Hajar Abu Bakar Ah⁶

Abstract

Malaysia introduced the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) 1994 (Act 521) through the provisions: interim protection order, protection order, and emergency protection order. For this law to be enforced effectively, all relevant factors including the experiences of DV victims and the roles of those who handle such cases took into account. The objective of this article is to examine how the DVA is applied in Malaysia by using a qualitative method via face-to-face interviews within 12 key informants. The interviews were conducted based on interview protocols and analyzed using NVivo software. The study found that there were two gaps in the implementation of the DVA; the well-being and protection of the Authorized Welfare Officers and the details for subsection 7(c) of the DVA concern the definition of a residence that has not been clearly stated. Therefore, it is recommended that improvements be made to the current DVA, particularly to address the existing gap to protect DV victims and Authorized Welfare Officers managing the cases.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Domestic Violence Act, Interim Protection Order, Protection Order, Emergency Protection Order.

Introduction

As a common issue, both domestically and internationally, domestic violence (DV) is considered a critical crime within the community. Siti Hajar et al. (2022) describe DV as the deliberate act of instilling fear in the victim, inflicting physical harm, coercing, or threatening sexual activity, unlawfully restraining the victim, and engaging in property destruction, all of which contribute to the victim's emotional distress that leads to the feelings of sorrow and anxiety. Meanwhile, the Malaysian Ministry of Health (2024) defines DV as violent acts against a partner or ex-partner. These acts include physical violence and sexual harassment, verbal abuse (insults and slander), threats, harassment, or emotional and financial neglect. DV generally recurs and sometimes remains even after divorce. This situation occurs because the abuser wants to maintain control and dominance over the victim. Most abusers are men, and the victims are generally women or children.

The Domestic Violence Act (DVA) 1994 (Act 521) describes DV as behavior or acts that: a) Deliberately or knowingly instill, or try to instill, fear of physical harm in the victim; b) Inflict physical harm on the victim through actions that are either known or should be known to cause

¹ Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin.

² Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Email: hajarrauf@unisza.edu.my, (Corresponding Author)

³ Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin.

⁴ Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin.

⁵ Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin.

⁶ Faculty of Arts and Social Science, University Malaya.



injury; c) Use force or threats to compel the victim into doing anything, sexual or otherwise, that they have the right to refuse; d) Restrict or imprison the victim without their agreement; e) Damage or destroy property with the aim or understanding that it may cause emotional pain or anxiety to the victim; ea) Wrongfully take the victim's property and cause financial loss as well as distress; eb) Threaten the victim to create fear for their safety, the safety of their property, others, or cause distress; ec) Engage with the victim or involve others about the victim in a manner meant to damage their reputation, using any means, including electronic; f) Inflict psychological harm or emotional injury on the victim; g) Cause the victim to hallucinate by using intoxicants or other substances without their consent, or through unlawful means; h) For child victims, cause hallucinations by using intoxicants, whether directly or indirectly, against: i) Spouse; ii) Former spouse; iii) Child; iv) Incapacitated adult; or v) Other relatives (Domestic Violence Act, 1994).

Given this understanding, DV is recognized as a critical issue that demands thorough attention. Its consequences extend beyond individuals and families, and it can profoundly affect society. Therefore, addressing the issue requires a comprehensive approach (Randawar et al., 2023). According to Nadiyah et al. (2021), one effect of DV is that it can jeopardize the safety and health of the victims. For example, if the act of physical violence is not prevented, it can result in physical injuries that might lead to death. Additionally, repeated injuries without appropriate treatments for a prolonged period due to DV can cause serious health issues. Other than resolving the physical threats, mental health also requires similar attention. For instance, it is anticipated that reducing DV cases can decrease psychological trauma and mental disorders such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Furthermore, tackling this aspect can help victims regain their self-confidence and emotional well-being (The Ministry of Health, 2021).

Furthermore, addressing DV is crucial for the positive and healthy development of children. Children must not witness or experience any form of violence, as exposure to these kinds of situations can lead to significant emotional trauma and developmental issues. When children are subjected to these harmful environments, their emotional and psychological well-being can suffer, and this may have long-term effects on their ability to grow normally. Additionally, some studies suggest that children who do not experience DV can help prevent this cycle of violence from repeating itself in future generations (Campbell, 2020). Besides being important for the children, efforts to address violence can also reduce the public health burden by decreasing cases of injury and illness requiring medical treatment. Indirectly, the social and economic costs borne by the government and society to treat and support DV victims can be reduced (Del Boca et al., 2020).

Thus, addressing DV is very important, especially for those who are affected and for the development of a stable and harmonious society. As such, continuous and comprehensive efforts are essential to ensure that everyone can live in a safe, healthy, and violence-free environment (Na'aim et al., 2022). The reason is that many DV cases often go unnoticed due to the shame, social stigma and fear attached to them, as highlighted by Aspalella et al. (2020) victims may not know how to report the abuse, or their partners might pressure them to remain silent. Women who suffer from domestic violence constantly battle to protect both themselves and their children from harm. However, some may believe they can manage the abuse on their own without seeking outside help. For this reason, it is crucial for both the informal sector and the state to ensure that sufficient resources and support are available to help victims leave abusive environments. (Randawar et al., 2023).

The Domestic Violence Law in Malaysia

Prior to the existence of the DVA in 1994, there were no specific laws governing DV issues in the country. Previously, victims could only refer to acts, such as the Married Women Act 1957, the Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) (LRA) Act 1976, and the Penal Code (Randawar & Najibah, 2022) when dealing with DV.

The Married Women Act 1957, originally known as the Married Women Ordinance 1957, was introduced by the British and enforced throughout Malaysia on 15 August 1957. This act addresses issues concerning married women. Under the provisions of this act, either the husband or wife can take legal action against each other in tort (a civil wrong that is different from a breach of contract, where the law provides compensation) for damages related to injuries to each other as two separate individuals. Under this provision, a battered wife will be protected and, at the same time, can claim compensation for injuries caused by a violent and cruel husband (Married Women Act 1957, amended 1990).

The LRA Act 1976 was created to regulate marriage and divorce. Other than that, this act also provides laws related to DV and, at the same time, offers solutions to DV victims, especially wives. This act was enforced in Malaysia on 1 March 1952. Among the provisions of this act are monogamous marriage, marriage, and registration of monogamous marriages, amending and consolidating laws related to divorce, and making provisions for matters related to it (Mohamad Hafifi et al., 2020; Rina Fakhizani et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, the Islamic Family Law (Federal Territories) Act 1984 (Act 303), Section 52(1)(h) of the Penal Code provides charges against abusers for assault, injury, grievous injury, intentionally causing injury, and intentionally causing grievous injury. For a criminal offense, the Penal Code does not prevent one spouse from prosecuting the other. All provisions in the Penal Code related to criminal offenses against a person can be applied to any violent husband. These provisions apply to anyone in general. Therefore, a wife has the right to initiate criminal proceedings for personal injuries inflicted on her by her husband. However, before the introduction of the DVA, the Penal Code did not specifically address the issue of assaults committed against women by their husbands. Instead, the Penal Code only provided provisions related to general assault. This would not make criminal law a precise solution for cases involving DV. Additionally, the Penal Code does not enforce orders that prevent a violent and abusive husband from entering the marital home. If the violent husband is imprisoned and he is the sole breadwinner, this means the family will lose their source of income. Therefore, there is very little that the Penal Code can do to protect the abused wife trapped within the confines of the marital home, as it is more focused on punishing the offender.

Domestic Violence Act and Remedies

The DVA 1994 (Act 521) was enacted on 24 June 1994 and officially published on 7 July 1994. A few years later, amendments to DVA 1994 were approved and made public on 9 February 2012. However, it was not until 20 February 2012 that the laws began to be applied. This law holds the distinction of being the first of its kind passed in Asia, and it is a reflection of the growing awareness of DV as a societal issue and the urgent need for a comprehensive system to aid DV victims. With the act in place, a wife suffering from DV can legally take action against her abusive spouse (Lembaga Penyelidikan Undang-undang, 2023).

Randawar & Najibah (2022) stated that the DVA 1994 was introduced to offer both civil and criminal protection for victims of DV without discrimination based on race, religion, culture, or background. This federal legislation applies universally across Malaysia. The act is divided into five main components: i) preliminary matters and definitions, ii) provisions related to emergency protection orders, iii) provisions regarding compensation and rehabilitation programs, iv) procedural provisions concerning protection orders, and v) miscellaneous provisions (Lembaga Penyelidikan Undang-undang, 2023).

In Malaysia, there are several remedies provided under the provisions of the DVA 1994 (Act 521) that have been officially gazetted to address DV. These remedies aim to protect victims of DV regardless of their background or situation. Some of the key measures implemented through this act include the Interim Protection Order (IPO), the Protection Order (PO), the Emergency Protection Order (EPO), as well as the authority to make arrests, all of which are available to DV victims through specific legal avenues (Domestic Violence Act, 1994).

Interim Protection Order (IPO)

The IPO, a directive from the Magistrate's Court, stays effective during the entire police investigation period until the matter is formally presented in court for trial. This means that once a victim files an application requesting an IPO, the court has the authority to grant it, offering immediate protection to the victim. In issuing the IPO under subsection (1), the court may also include specific conditions, such as prohibiting the perpetrator from encouraging or inciting anyone else to commit acts of DV. This protection can extend to a spouse, ex-spouse, child, incapacitated adult, or any family member, depending on the situation and the person the order is meant to protect. The main purpose of this order is to ensure the perpetrator is prevented from carrying out further acts of DV against the survivor. In the DVA, it has been stated that:

The court may, during the pendency of investigations relating to the commission of an offense involving domestic violence, issue an interim protection order prohibiting the person against whom the order is made from using domestic violence against his or her spouse or former spouse or a child or an incapacitated adult or any other member of the family, as the case may be, as specified in the order.

Within a week after the IPO ends, or once the police provide written notice that the case has been brought to court, the victim is eligible to request a PO (Domestic Violence Act, 1994).

Protection Order (PO)

A PO is a court order from the Magistrate's Court that takes effect as soon as the case is brought to court for prosecution. In addition, its effects continue throughout the trial process even after the police investigation has concluded. The primary goal of the PO is to ensure that the perpetrator is prevented from engaging in any further acts of DV against the survivor during this legal process. According to the DVA, the court is authorized to issue one or more specific of the following POs when dealing with a complaint of DV:

- a. A PO restraining the person against whom the order is made from using DV against the victim;
- b. A PO restraining the person against whom the order is made from using DV against the child;
- c. A PO restraining the person against whom the order is made from using DV against the

incapacitated adult.

The PO, as outlined under Section 5 of the DVA, includes specific orders provided under Section 6, which offer different types of protection to victims of DV. To ease the victim's anxiety and ensure their safety, the court can mandate the abuser to vacate the shared home, regardless of ownership or rental status. If the magistrate determines, based on the balance of probabilities, that this measure is essential for the complainant's protection, they may issue one or more orders as outlined in Section 6(1)(a-f) of the DVA. This section details the various protective measures that can be enforced:

(1) A PO issued under section 5, if the court is convinced on a balance of probabilities that it is essential for the protection and safety of the victim, child, or incapacitated adult, may include one or more of the following orders:

- (a) Granting the protected person exclusive occupation of the shared residence by excluding the person against whom the order is made, even if that person solely owns or leases the property, or it is jointly owned or leased by both parties, subject to subsection (4);
- (b) Prohibiting or restraining the individual against whom the order was made from:
 - (i) entering any protected person's place of residence, shelter, workplace, school, or any shared or alternative residence;
 - (ii) entering any protected person's place of employment or educational institution;
 - (iii) entering any other institutions where a protected individual is placed;
 - (iv) approaching any protected person within at least fifty meters or at a distance deemed reasonable by the court or
 - (v) making personal contact with any protected person unless in the presence of an enforcement officer or another designated individual as specified in the order;
- (c) requiring the person subject to the order to allow any protected person to access the shared residence, accompanied by an enforcement officer, for the purpose of retrieving personal belongings;
- (d) prohibiting the person subject to the order from making any form of communication with any protected person except in the limited circumstances specified by the court;
- (e) requiring the person subject to the order to permit any protected person to continue using a vehicle that was previously in regular use by the protected person; and
- (f) issuing any other necessary and incidental directions to ensure the effective enforcement of any order made under the provisions mentioned above.

This is because the PO remains valid for 12 months and can be extended if the court considers it appropriate to confirm the continued protection of the victim (Domestic Violence Act, 1994).

Emergency Protection Order (EPO)

Meanwhile, An EPO is a type of urgent protection granted by a social welfare officer who has been authorized in writing by the Director-General of Social Welfare, including the State Social Welfare Director for each state. Through the employment of an EPO, immediate protection for DV victims, as outlined in Section 3A(1) of the DVA 1994 (Act 521), can be given. According

to Section 3A(2) of the same act, victims can apply for an EPO at any time, whether or not they have applied for an IPO or PO. Additionally, an EPO can be issued even if an IPO or PO is still pending approval. Section 3A(4)(a)(b)(c)(d) of the DVA 1994 (Act 521) specifies that an EPO application can be made in any district where the victim lives, where the DV took place, or where the victim is temporarily residing. Under Section 3A(6), an authorized social welfare officer will hear the EPO application without requiring the victim to file a police report. Once the application is submitted, the officer must issue the EPO, if applicable, within two hours. However, as stated in Section 3A(8), an EPO is only valid for seven days, and Section 3A(9) clarifies that the issuance of an EPO does not affect any pending IPO or PO applications, meaning all orders can coexist without conflict (Domestic Violence Act, 1994).

Power of Arrest

According to the Lembaga Penyelidikan Undang-Undang 2023, when the court determines there is a credible risk that the abuser might cause actual physical harm to the wife, it has the authority to attach arrest powers to both the PO and IPO. Wiehe (1998) further clarifies that physical harm can include a range of violent behaviors, such as hitting, slapping, kicking, or pushing the wife onto the floor or ground. This also includes assaults with weapons like knives, broomsticks, guns, or other household items. Marvin (2001) expands on this by defining physical abuse to encompass even more aggressive acts like punching, choking, biting, pulling the wife's hair, stabbing, shooting, or making threats to carry out these violent actions. In essence, the arrest powers are activated if the court believes there is a significant risk that the abuser could cause serious physical injury to the wife. In this situation, the police officer is given the authority to make an arrest without needing a warrant if a report of domestic violence is filed by someone who is under the protection of either an IPO or PO. This allows the officer to take immediate action to prevent further harm and ensures that the protective orders are enforced swiftly to safeguard the victim. However, it is important to note that this applies if the person against whom the order is made violates any of the conditions laid out in the order, such as entering a prohibited area or obstructing efforts to prevent DV against the spouse, ex-spouse, child, incapacitated adult, or other family members.

Furthermore, PO can prohibit the individual from engaging in DV against the victim, child, or incapacitated adult. A PO issued under Section 5 can include particular restrictions if the court deems it necessary to protect the victim or any other individual under protection. This decision is made based on the balance of probabilities in order to ensure that the safety of those involved is prioritized through appropriate limitations placed on the abuser. These orders can include, but are not limited to, granting exclusive residency rights to the protected individual in the shared home by removing the person named in the order, even if they own or rent the residence either partially or entirely. Additional restrictions might be imposed, which could prevent the individual from (i) entering any safe house, shelter, or alternative home where the protected person is staying, (ii) going to the protected person's workplace or school, (iii) accessing any institution where the protected person resides, (iv) coming within at least fifty meters of the protected person or any distance the court sees fit, or (v) making any form of personal contact with the protected person unless accompanied by an enforcement officer or a person specifically appointed by the court. These measures are designed to ensure the safety and well-being of the protected person by limiting the abuser's ability to approach or contact them in any way that might cause harm (Domestic Violence Act, 1994).

Methodology

This study was conducted using a qualitative research design. This approach focuses on interpreting the meaning of data within its natural context without altering the variables being examined (Siti Hajar et al., 2022). The goal is to gain a deeper, more holistic understanding by utilizing a qualitative design, where data collection and analysis occur concurrently throughout the research process (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

The study was conducted in Malaysia by using a purposive sampling technique. A total of 12 key informants who are Authorized Welfare Officers were involved in the research. The data collection process was done through face-to-face interviews. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted based on developed interview protocols. All obtained data were analyzed and presented verbatim using NVivo version 14 software. The data were transcribed and coded, and thematic analysis was conducted using NVivo version 14 to ensure all obtained data were well managed and no information was overlooked.

In addition to the analysis of the raw data, the researcher also conducted a document analysis of several documents, including acts that are used together to manage DV cases in the country. Document analysis is done by examining and analyzing all the information contained in the DVA 1994 (amendment 2017), the Penal Code (act 574), the LRA (marriage and divorce) 1976 (Act 164), the Islamic Family Law Act (federal territories) 1984 (Act 303) and Married Women Act 1957 (Act 450), (amendment) 1990.

The Gap in Implementing the Domestic Violence Act in Malaysia

The DVA in Malaysia is designed to protect victims of DV. As a result, three types of orders are enforced to safeguard victims, including the IPO, PO, and EPO. However, even with the 2017 amendments, a detailed review of these three orders shows that certain issues remain unresolved, leaving some gaps that are not clearly addressed by the legislation.

A document analysis was conducted, and a study was carried out by referring to the existing act. It was found that several components need improvement for greater clarity and benefit to all parties involved. Firstly, it relates to the social welfare officers (PKMD). In Part 1A, subsection 3A(1) of the EPO, it is clearly stated who the authorized officers are, and subsection 3E(1)(2)(3) clearly describes the violation of the EPO by any person who intentionally breaches it and any person convicted for a second violation. However, the DVA does not address the safety of the authorized officers and any interference with the officers' duties during case management. Researchers view this matter as very important for each authorized officer based on the study conducted. The safety of the authorized officers must be prioritized and given attention. This is also relevant during the case-handling process since cases managed by authorized officers are handled with the client's consent by issuing an EPO, if necessary. Therefore, specific details regarding the safety of the officers handling the cases are crucial as they face high risks in managing each case. This is necessary for the safety of the officers and to facilitate case management. Additionally, there are also cases reported by neighbors, but they are at risk of being attacked by their spouses. This is evidenced when a key informant interviewed said:

"...the DVA does not provide immunity to officers, and we can be challenged and questioned. There should be immunity that cannot be challenged and questioned regarding our work processes, similar to the Child Act 2001. This is because we take actions through procedures, not arbitrarily. I believe, in time, people will say wow, the JKM officers issued an order. Later, a copy of the order needs to be given to the magistrate. The magistrate will be shocked when

they see the EPO. They might ask why the police didn't do anything. That's my experience in court. When proceeding with the IPO, the perpetrator is usually charged in court. So, when there is an emergency protection order, we are not seen in a bad light. We seek the good. There are many benefits, but among the cons are the risks to the officers. Therefore, we need to refine it further..."

(Source: Key Informant 11)

"...There are cases where we are threatened. Even the police are threatened. There is already an act. We want to save the child, not just leave them. The risk is to our lives as well. There should be a special allowance for JKM to handle high-risk cases. We need to make a police report before taking the victim from the house. After taking the victim, we must also make a police report. Otherwise, they might claim we kidnapped their wife..."

(Source: Key Informant 1)

"...This matter can be easily manipulated. With social issues, the environment, mass media, and widespread gadgets. We are not accusing, but that is what is happening now. That's why I suggest that if we still want to continue, it needs to be refined further based on the situation. At the same time, the safety of the officers is important, not just for the EPO but also for the IPO and PO..."

"...The EPO can be an easy way, a stepping stone, manipulated. We will avoid one party, not both sides. That's why, with more common sense, they apply for the IPO and PO. Violence is a criminal act, whether emotional or mental. It risks many things. Therefore, I suggest that ensuring the safety of the officers is unquestionable. Access, environment, and facilities should be considered. Going to the police station is not difficult. If they cannot go, they can call. That's my view. Even if confined, they can complain to JKM or the police. If they don't have a phone, neighbors can report, and we will come. Without cooperation, we must call the police to assist in the investigation. Especially when we know the place is dangerous and risky. What does JKM have? That's the term. We cannot risk ourselves in dangerous places..."

(Source: Key Informant 8)

If the DVA is analyzed in detail, nothing is touched on the immunity or safety of officers who are authorized to carry out their functions. Nevertheless, the question about the immunity or safety of officers authorized to handle cases of domestic violence was answered when the key informant interviewed stated:

"...indeed, there is no provision in DVA regarding the immunity or safety of the officer who manages the case. However, DVA needs to be read together with the Penal Code, where there is a section in the Penal Code (Act 574) that deals with the punishment for anyone who obstructs any officer from carrying out his duties. So, DVA needs to be read together with the Penal Code so that the immunity or safety of officers is maintained..."

(Source: Key informant 12)

As outlined in Section 186 of the Penal Code (Act 574), there is a specific focus on preventing harassment of public officials while they are performing their duties. This section makes it clear that any individual who obstructs or hinders a public servant in the execution of their official tasks can face imprisonment for up to two years, a fine that may reach RM 10k, or both penalties. This provision serves as a reference in situations where someone interferes with an authorized

officer's duties. As such, if a social welfare officer is blocked from performing their responsibilities, the person involved may be charged under the Penal Code (Act 574).

In addition to ensuring the safety of authorized officers, it is important to provide more clarity for subsection 7(c). This particular subsection, specifically 3(A)(7)(c), outlines that any individual who is subject to an order is prohibited from entering places such as safe locations, shelters, residences, shared residences, or alternative residences where a protected person might be staying. However, while the DVA clearly defines terms like alternative residences, shared residences, shelters, and safe places, it does not provide a definition for "residence." This raises a concern: does the term "residence" mean the same as a shelter or a shared residence? Because of this, there is a need for a detailed explanation to ensure all parties involved have a clear understanding and to prevent any possible confusion.

Conclusion

Drafting, implementing, modifying, or enhancing legislation is undeniably a complex and challenging process. Nevertheless, it is crucial that every law formulated, implemented, updated, or refined considers the concerns and needs of all parties involved. In Malaysia, DV is recognized as a serious issue. In response, Malaysia has made notable progress by passing the DVA 1994 (DVA), becoming the first nation in Asia to have such legislation formally approved. This Act provides a well-structured and comprehensive system aimed at supporting victims of DV effectively. Within the Act, Part I focuses on preliminary provisions, including aspects such as the short title and application, interpretation of terms, and the requirement for the DVA to be read alongside the Penal Code. Part IA is dedicated to EPO, covering various elements such as the issuance of EPO, service of these orders, proof of service, penalties for breaching such orders, and the maintenance of records related to applications and orders. Part II concerns the IPO and PO, and it offers an in-depth exploration of matters such as the issuance of IPOs, the content of POs, powers of arrest related to violations, breaches of orders, renewal of PO, compensation provisions, and the availability of rehabilitation programs. Part IV addresses procedural matters connected to both IPO and PO, discussing when IPOs can be requested, how ex-parte applications for IPOs are handled, revoking of IPOs, when POs may be requested, the process for applying for POs, filing procedures, applications made on behalf of children or incapacitated adults, and maintaining records of both applications and orders. It also touches on proof of service and the use of substitute service in certain cases. Lastly, Part V covers miscellaneous provisions, explaining the aspects of offenses related to DV, arrestable offenses, the duties of enforcement officers, and regulatory guidelines tied to the enforcement of the Act.

However, the Act does not clearly define the term 'residence' for subsection 7(c), nor does it address the safety of authorized social welfare officers (PKMD). Although PKMD is mentioned in the DVA, it does not address the safety aspects of PKMD, who handle DV cases and face very high risks. Due to there being no detail on the immunity or safety of officers who handle DV cases, the Penal Code (Act 574) needs to be read together. This is because Part X (Contempt of the Legitimate Authority of Public Servants), Section 186 (arresting public officials in the performance of their duties), provides for a prison sentence of up to two years or a fine of up to two years or both -any individual obstructing any officer handling a DV case. Therefore, improvements to DVA are suggested, especially against existing gaps that can be implemented in protecting victims of DV. The same is related to the immunity or safety of officers who manage cases of DV. Disclosures related to the immunity or security of officers need to be disclosed so that officers can perform their duties effectively and not worry about their personal

safety because they are protected under the provisions of the law in the country. In-depth knowledge of DVA and other acts that need to be read together is very necessary for officers because an understanding of this matter has a profound effect on the functionality of officers who manage DV cases in carrying out their duties.

Since domestic violence is one of the issues that has received attention not only in Malaysia but also at the international level, the United Nations (UN), through the framework of the Sustainability Development Goals (SDG), also emphasizes issues related to women and the family including Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). To ensure that efforts to deal with the issue of domestic violence are well managed, a holistic ecosystem-building model that includes various elements in managing the issue of domestic violence is very necessary. A conducive and integrated ecosystem enables the efficient formulation of acts, policies, and community-based programs. In other words, resolving the issue of DV requires a deeper understanding of how factors such as social structures, cultural norms, economic conditions, and legal frameworks contribute to the problem. This comprehensive approach necessitates knowledge of the DVA and other relevant laws that must be considered together to form a strong foundation for building a DV ecosystem. Through the approach, a more in-depth intervention process can be developed to manage and ultimately mitigate domestic violence effectively.

Acknowledgement

The author acknowledges the financial and technical support for this Fundamental Research Grant Scheme project provided by Ministry Higher Education Malaysia (MOHE) under the grant (FRGS/1/2023/SS10/UNISZA/02/3).

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

References

- Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976 (Act 164).
Akta Undang-undang Keluarga Islam (Wilayah Persekutuan) 1984 (Akta 303).
Islamic Family Law (Federal Territories) Act 1984 (Act 303).
Aspalella, A. R., Nazli, M., Che Thalbi, I. & Asmar, A. R. (2020). Recent Developments in Domestic Violence Laws in Malaysia. International Seminar on Regional Politics, Administration and Development 2020 (Insorpad2020).
Family Health Development Division, Ministry of Health Malaysia. (2021). Analysis of Domestic Violence in Malaysia in 2020.
Campbell, A. M. (2020). An increasing risk of family violence during the Covid-19 pandemic: Strengthening community collaborations to save lives. *Forensic Science International. Reports*, 2, 100089.
Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J. D. (2022). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
Del Boca, D., Oggero, N., Profeta, P. & Rossi, M. (2020). Women's and men's work, housework and childcare, before and during COVID-19. *Review of Economics of the Household*, 18(4), 1. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S11150-020-09502-1>
Domestic Violence Act 1994 (Act 521), (amendment) 2017. <https://www.moh.gov.my/>
Legal Research Board. (2023). Domestic Violence Act 1994 (Act 521) and Regulations. Petaling Jaya: International Law Book Services. Married Women Act 1957 (Act 450), (amendment) 1990.

- Marvin, D. R. (2001). Stronger efforts by Police can help reduce Family Violence. In JD Lloyd. (Ed.), Family Violence. United States of America: Greenhaven Press Inc.
- Mohamad Hafifi, H. Muhamad Abrol, A. B. & Nur Zulfah, Md. A. S. (2020). The Spectrum of Child Marriage in Malaysia: A Comparative Study Between State Islamic Family Law Enactments, the Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976 and International Conventions. *e-Jurnal Penyelidikan dan Inovasi*, 7(1), 20-44.
- Na'a'im, M. S. M., Rajamanickam, R. & Nordin, R. (2022). Intimate Partner Violence Within the Framework of Malaysian Laws. *UUM Journal of Legal Studies*, 13(1), 131-154.
- Nadiah, M. D., Mohd Norhusairi, M. H. & Mohd Hafiz, J. (2021). Domestic Violence in Malaysia: Analysis of Literature Review. *Journal of Shariah Law Research*, 6(2), 273-296.
- Randawar, D. K., Rahmat, N. E., Jayabalan, S. & Syed Sulaiman, S. N. (2023). Domestic violence in the wake of Covid-19: Intervention measures to ameliorate the impact. *UUM Journal of Legal Studies*, 14(2), 483-507. <https://doi.org/10.32890/uumjls2023.14.2.3>
- Randawar, D. K. & Najibah, M. Z. (2022). *Undang-undang Keganasan Rumah Tangga di Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press.
- Rina Fakhizan, M. S., Zuliza, M. K. & Mohd Zamro, M. (2020). The Implications of The Amendment of Act 164 to Marriage and Inheritance Property of Convert *Journal of Contemporary Islamic Law*, 5(1), 9-15.
- Siti Hajar, A. R., Azlini, C., Normala, R. & Sabri, S. (2022). Laporan akhir kajian tinjauan mengenai persepsi dan tahap pengetahuan masyarakat terhadap keganasan rumah tangga. Rawang: Institut Sosial Malaysia.
- Siti Hajar, A. R., Siti Hajar, A. B. A. & Haris, A. W. (2022). Variety of Sectors in Child Welfare Network at Sekolah Tunas Bakti (STB) Marang, Terengganu. *Akademika*, 92(1), 31-43.
- Wiehe, V. R. (1998). *Understanding family violence: Treating and preventing partner, child, sibling and elder abuse*. California: Sage Publication.