



Legislation for Women's Rights: A Study of Victims of Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E.2550

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Abstract

The three main purposes of this article were: 1) to study the violence against women, which has been one of the primary issues depriving women of their rights; 2) to understand the lawmaking process and how it has been implemented, leading to; 3) to analyze and point out the problems and obstacles in the implementation of the Victims of Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E. 2550 as a cross-sectional. The researcher uses the qualitative research and gather the information from the key informant interview and documentary research. The result from the interview and the study of the paper related to "The Victims of Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E. 2550" were divided into three parts: the law itself and the law making process, the law implementation and the suggestions from the NGOs. According to the results from the law itself and the law making process, the terminology has been unclear. Neither any written support was carried out after the law come into force, nor official assessment was conducted in attempt to amend the problem occurring during the law implementation. Consequently, government officials had difficulty working under the law due to the own conflict with the criminal code. Besides no valid procedures for multidisciplinary team were established for each agency to follow. Lastly, the job rotation of the bureaucracy system disrupted the continuity of working and prevented the officials from their advanced competency development. Regarding the Suggestions from NGOs, the people's mindset on violence against women should change and the knowledge on such issue should be shared among the people, government sectors and NGOs. Finally, the heart of the law effectiveness was the teamwork from every related department.

Keywords: Women's Rights, Victims of Domestic Violence, Violence Protection, Legislative Process, Violence Protection Act

Introduction

The Status of Women

His Majesty the King Vajiravudh mentioned, under his pen name 'Rammajitti', that "*the status of women was a symbol of the nation's civilization.*" (Rammajitti, 1992).

This statement means that the late King of Siam had upheld the status of women in Thai society as playing the traditional submissive role in the family. As stated in the written law from the Ayutthaya period in A.D. 1363 (B.E. 1906), it was legal for a husband to physically assault his wives (section 60); also, men were allowed to have more than one wife, as polygamy was considered normal at that time. Husbands treated their wives as their property and could lawfully trade their wives, which gave a woman little control over her social status; control over a woman's status initially belonged to her parents until it was transferred to her husband after marriage. These laws were revised during the King Buddha Yodfa Chulaloke period when the King examined existing marital laws and requested the revision of all written laws from the Ayudhaya period. These revised laws are known as the first Thai Enacted Law or *Kotmai Tra Sam Duang*, which means *the Law of Three Seals* (as the law was stamped with the symbols of the three ministries; the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the front page). Afterwards, the first Thai Enacted Law was dismissed due to changes in Thai culture due to technological advances and foreign-educated students, leading to the modern legal system. Since then, there have been slight changes to the rights of women in the law; for example, in the



period of King Rama IV, He announced the law on kidnapping in 1865, which gave rights to a woman to choose her own husband as a result of the case of Am Dang Muan. He also established the law on trading wives in 1867 as a result of the case of Am Dang Jan, who fought for her own freedom and did not want to be traded as a slave; this law states that husbands may not trade slave wives without consent. (Office of the Council of State, 2004). The rights of women changed tremendously during the reign of King Rama the V as He peacefully abolished the practice of slavery and gave equal rights to all Thai people. (Bunnag, 2011). In addition, King Rama the VI supported the law changing the recognized marital status in the kingdom to monogamy; however, its passing was argued among the Thai bureaucracy until finally, under King Rama the VII, after 20 years and long disputes on changing the recognized legal status of marriage from polygamy to monogamy, the law on monogamy was passed through the amendment of the Law of Husband and Wife B.E. 2473 (A.D. 1930) (Suklarpkit, 2013). From these two examples, it could be concluded that the two primary elements in lifting the status of women is for women to fight for their rights and attitudes on human rights and gender equality amongst policy makers.

Objective

To study violence against women, which is one of the primary issues depriving women of their rights. To understand the lawmaking process and how it is implemented in order to point out the problems and obstacles in the implementation of the Victims of Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E. 2550 as a cross-sectional study.

Research Method

The documentary research was employed as a method to understand the social problem regarding the women's right in the society. In order to analyze the information about the problems and obstacles of the law implementation, the interviews in person were conducted with the key informants involving the law-making process, the law implementation and the NGOs, which were related to the law of Victims of Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E. 2550. The semi-structure interview, consisting the questions related to the spirit of the law and the obstacles under their supervision, was applied. Then, all of the information was gathered and analyzed considerably.

Review Literature

Women as Victims

From criminological theory, the concept of victimology which is the study of victims (Sutheesorn, 2003), can used to explain why women tend to be targets of violence. Benjamin Mendelsohn used the term victimology in 1947 to explain the relationship between victims and criminals; he found that most victims are acquainted with the criminals, which relates to how the perpetrator of violence against women is generally from their own inner circle. Hans von Hentig, who wrote "The Criminal and His Victim: Studies in the Sociobiology of Crime" described thirteen categories of persons who could easily be victims; among these thirteen classifications is being female. The thirteen classifications include 1) the young, 2) the female, 3) the old, 4) immigrants, 5) the depressed, 6) the mentally defective and deranged, 7) the acquisitive, 8) the dull normals, 9) minorities, 10) the wanton, 11) the lonesome or heartbroken, 12) the tormentor and 13) the blocked, exempted, or fighting.



Von Hentig thought that the victims themselves might lead to their own victimization. (Siegel, 2011). This relates to modern attitudes towards violence against women such as victim blaming, where the victim is held at fault for the harm that befell them. One example illustrating this is attitudes towards rape or sexual assault, where a woman is blamed for being assaulted due to not dressing properly or wearing clothes that are too revealing. An exhibition in Thailand in June 2018 called “Social Power Exhibition Against Sexual Assault” using campaign hashtag #DontTellMeHowToDress was initiated by Ms. Sirinya Bishop and Mr. Nat Prakobsantisuk aiming to raise awareness that clothing is not the primary factor for why people are raped. (The Standard, 2018). The exhibition brought out clothing of rape victims to show that the relationship between a woman’s clothing and her possibility of being raped is a myth. Still, the status of women in society needs to be further deconstructed.

Concept of Feminism

Most people’s perceptions of feminism involve the role of women in society, the gender pay gap, or domestic violence; in her work, “Feminism”, Jane Freedman mentioned that the concept varies, and there are three groups of feminism including liberal feminism, Marxist or socialist feminism and radical feminism. However, the most commonly accepted meaning is that feminism is concerned with females’ inferior status in society, as women face discrimination because of their sex or gender. (Freedman, 2001). When discrimination occurs due to gender bias, this could be identified as gender-based violence, as violence against women is subset of the gender-based violence Karen Boyle cited from the European Institute for Gender Equality. (Boyle, 2019). Additionally, the Strategic Framework on Violence Against Women: 2015–2018 stated that violence against women is a form of gender-based violence caused from the unequal distribution of power between men and women resulting in the devaluation and subordination of women and the violation of fundamental human rights and freedoms. (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2015). While the previous three waves of feminism strived to prevent women from being second-class citizens who were kept inside the home without the right to vote or work outside the house, social constructs still largely advantage men; as an example, men tend to earn a higher salary, even for doing equal work. Additionally, in some cultures, the image of women is that of only being a mother and doing the housework; without economic opportunity, the power inside the household primarily belongs to men. This could be a precursor for women being the target of domestic violence.

CEDAW in the Beginning of Women’s Rights Awareness

Since UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979, all of the member states were encouraged to end the discrimination against women in all forms. It could be said that CEDAW has been one of the Human Right’s treaties to end the inequality between genders. (UN Women, n.d.).

The three core concepts of CEDAW included the non-discrimination, the substantive equality, and the state obligation, (Partners for Law in Development, n.d.) which have been the essential cores to help women gain equality in all areas. According to the research on the comparison between CEDAW and the Victims of Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E. 2550, none of the articles in CEDAW mentioned the issue of the violence against women. Nevertheless, the article 16 targeting on the Marriage and Family Life has apparently concerned about the women’s rights in marriage, such as the rights to choose and to decide for herself independently.

Most importantly, it was clear that CEDAW has made two crucial steps of progress for women’s right. Firstly, it raised awareness of the member states to examine the law within their countries in order to amend the



ones with discrimination against women. Secondly, it urged the society to end the discrimination against women, especially in concern of domestic violence, shortly with a result in passing the Victims of Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E. 2550.

Research Findings

Violence Against Women

As shown in the timeline above, the major threat that women have faced in the past that still has not been eliminated is violence. There are many forms of violence against women; the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defines the meaning of violence against women as any form of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse towards women. (United Nations, 1993). Apart from these forms of abuse, other forms of violence towards women include sexual exploitation, sexual trafficking, and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation or forced marriage. Moreover, in other social contexts, violence could include such forms as honor killing, economic abuse, political violation, elder abuse, dowry-related violence, or acid throwing. (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), 2010). Considering its many forms of violence, domestic violence is an issue that many can relate to as it affects many people in the global community and has a significant negative impact on both the physical and mental health of family members. In the worst cases, domestic violence leads to the death of the abusers or victims.

Violence can take place at any stage in women's life; if it happens to girls under 15 years old, it is called child abuse; if it happens to women above 65, it is called elder abuse, and if it happens between husband and wife, it is called 'Intimate Partner Violence' (IPV) or domestic violence. However, IPV is not limited to husbands and wives, but the people who have an emotional bonding or intimate relationship without marriage. (Thananowan, 2014). In these instances, women could be considered the victims of violence if they are victims of physical violence, sexual violence, or psychological harm. Because of this, there are many mechanisms for the state to intervene to stop violence within the family.

The United Nations is one of the organizations that continue to support the plight of women. Its members and a sub-organization, UN Women, encourage the global community to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. As mentioned earlier, the root causes of violence against women stem from the structural power imbalances between women and men. The book, "Violence in Couple and Women's Health" divides the causes of violence into four categories; the first category is the structure of society, in which men are praised more for their accomplishments than women are. This patriarchal system is one determinant of violence. Secondly, violence can be due to factors at the institutional and the societal level that increase the risk of domestic violence; these factors include the unemployment rate, crime rate, community drug problems, pornography, and violence from the mass media. A third cause is men's economic power over women. Fourthly, at the individual level, the study has shown that men have a greater tendency than women do of being violent against their partner when they are in a relationship. (Archavanitkul et al., 2003). Furthermore, if a person has experienced or been exposed to violence when they were young, it is likely that they will use violence to deal with problems in the future. (Unicef UNICEF and the Body Shop, 2006). Alcohol, drugs and stress could also be the factors that trigger domestic violence. (State Government of Victoria, n.d.).

Statistics from the World Health Organization show that women are victims of domestic violence at a rate of 7 women per day; however, there are only 30,000 women around the world per year that file a lawsuit against

their abuser. (Suvetwethin, 2018). In Thailand, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security released statistics on domestic violence between January to March 2018 showing that there were 5 victims of domestic violence per day, or 83.6% of the world average. (Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, 2018) (Thai Civil Rights and Investigative Journalism (TCIJ), 2018). This statistic varies due to the fact that there are many institutions collecting data on women in Thailand. In actuality, criminologists report that the actual number of domestic violence cases may be higher due to the number of unreported cases, as women sometimes refuse to report their own case for fear of being stigmatized and abused by the system. Women often fear losing their husbands, as they may be dependent on them for a living. This is one of the reasons why the reported numbers on domestic violence from the police are lower than the number collected from hospitals.

Each year the statistics gathered from each organization must be reported directly to the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. This is to comply with the law on the Victims of Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E. 2550, Section 17. At the moment, there are 12 organizations that report to the Ministry. (Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, 2011).

Nevertheless, even if the statistic mentioned earlier is not exact, it shows that domestic violence still frequently occurs in Thai society. From the number of victims that came to the Peung Dai Centre, the data collected by the Ministry of Public Health since 2007 (the year that Thailand implemented the Law on the Victims of Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E. 2550) are as follows:

Table 1 Number of Victims Using the Service of Peung Dai Centre

Year	Number of Victims Using the Service of Peung Dai Centre (Ministry of Public Health)	Cases / Day
2007 / 2550	19,067	52
2008 / 2551	26,631	73
2009 / 2552	23,499	64
2010 / 2553	25,744	71
2011 / 2554	22,565	62
2012 / 2555	20,572	56
2013 / 2556	31,866	87
2014 / 2557	13,999*	38
2015 / 2558	23,977	66
2016 / 2559	20,018	55
2017 / 2560	21,218	58

Remark: in 2014, the number of the victims was lower due to an organizational shift in the method of data collection to using the OSCC application

The numbers above show that 10 years after implementation of the victim protection law, the number of cases is roughly the same. This shows that domestic violence still exists in Thai society. On the other hand, social workers interviewed also believe that the high number of victims of domestic violence could mean people have learned more about the Law on Victims of the Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E. 2550 and claimed their legal rights through the criminal justice channel provided according to the law.

As the causes of domestic violence are rooted in societal norms and people's mindsets, enacting laws might make people more aware of the consequences if they commit violence within the household. In this case, government and parliament, two relevant authorities in the lawmaking process, should step in to intervene in the



patriarchal culture that frames Thai cultural beliefs; however, in the legislative process, laws concerning this social issue are frequently delayed in the policymaking process. In 2007, the National Assembly passed the Law on the Victims of Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E. 2550. One of the key informants mentioned that the success of this law being passed resulted from the high statistics on domestic violence in society and pressure from national activists and international organizations campaigning against violence towards women. The Ministry proposed the bill to eliminate all forms of violence against women through the legislative process, which later caused the Victims of Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E. 2550 to come into effect. This article will examine and analyze the law in order to examine the problems during the lawmaking process, the drafting of the law and the law's implementation.

Legislation Process

In order to enact legislation that will help prevent domestic violence towards women, it is necessary to understand the Thai legislation process.

Laws in Thailand are varied and hierarchical. (Laohattapongpuri & Panpruang, n.d.). This means that how the law is enacted depends on the authority responsible for that type of law. In this regard, the Victims of Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E. 2550 is an Act which was passed by the Ministry through both government and parliament. Since the law was enacted in 2007, the National Legislative Assembly was appointed after the coup d'état by General Sonthi Boonyaratglin, and Mr. Meechai Ruchuphan served as President of the National Legislative Assembly from 11 October 2006 to 20 January 2008.

The parliamentary system in Thailand is bicameral, consisting of the House of Representatives and the Senate. However, since 1932, when a coup d'état occurs (of which there have been 13), the National Legislative Assembly will be set up as the parliament. The National Legislative Assembly shall act as the three components of parliament, which are 1) the House of Representatives, 2) the Senate and 3) the National Assembly; this means that the National Legislative Assembly will be the only house working as all three components. (Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand (Interim Edition), 2006).

Since the National Legislative Assembly was downsized to one house, the National Legislative Assembly passed laws using fewer procedures than when the laws were passed through both the House of Representatives and the Senate. After the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security passed the bill to government in 20 July 2005, the bill was sent to the Office of the Council of State for scrutiny; after it was finished, the bill was sent back to the government and the Prime Minister, Surayud Chulanont sent it to the National Legislative Assembly on 25 March 2007. The National Legislative Assembly had its first meeting and approved the sending of it to the Committee on Children, Youth, Women, the Elderly, the Disabled and Human Security to consider the draft bill; the committee took a month (from 19 April 2007–17 May 2007) to study the bill. The bill was then sent back to the Second and Third Sitting of the National Legislative Assembly on 6 June 2007, and the bill was approved by the National Legislative Assembly and came into force after its 90 days of publication in the Government Gazette.

The procedure for passing a law through Parliament is compared to that of passing a law via the National Legislative Assembly in the next figure:

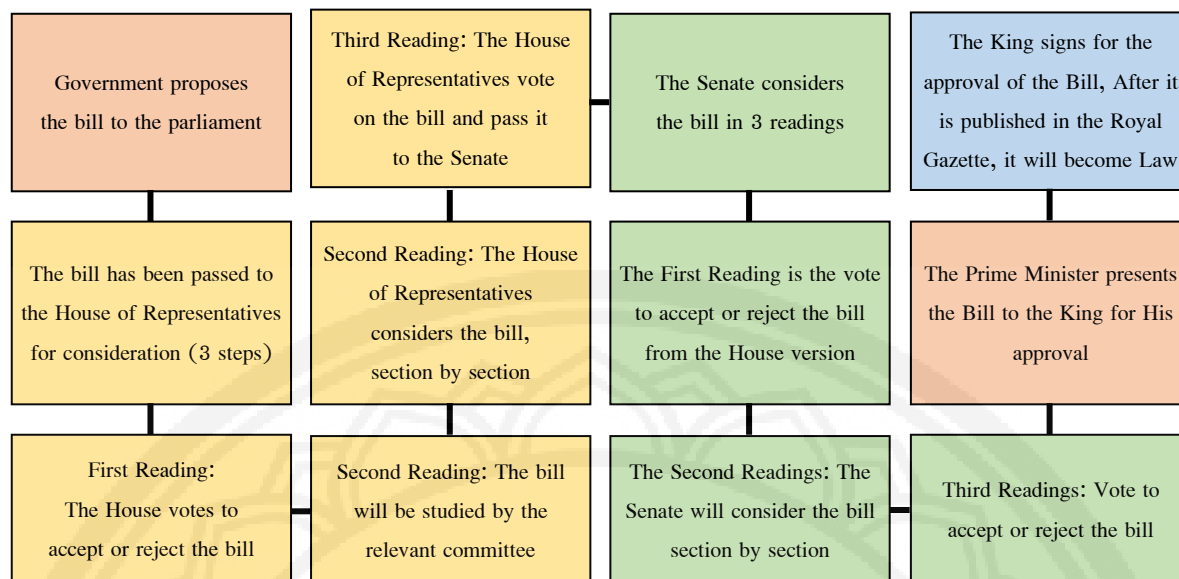


Figure 1 The Law Making Process in Parliament (Boondech, 2011)

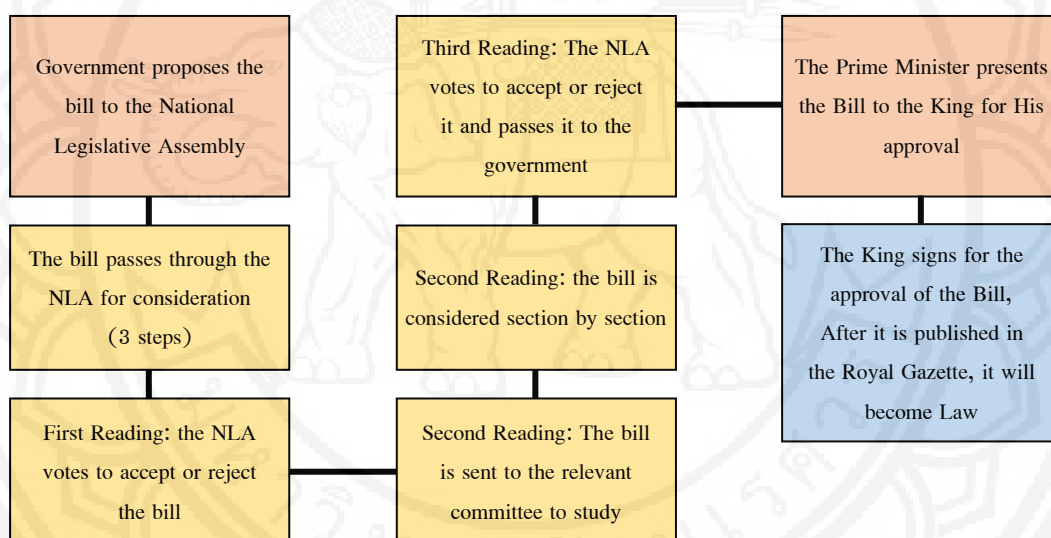


Figure 2 The Law Making Process in the National Legislative Assembly Acting as Parliament

Comparing the legislative process of the Parliament and the National Legislative Assembly shows that under parliamentary consideration, a bill may take longer to be passed through both houses. Alternatively, having the National Legislative Assembly working as the House of Representatives and the Senate makes it easier to pass a bill due to the fewer number of parliamentary procedures.

Throughout the legislative process, the 18 sections of the Victims of the Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E. 2550 successfully became a law. By interviewing a person that has worked on the bill drafting process and the criminal justice process, I have identified obstacles and problems that might occur during both the law making process and the implementation process.



The Spirit of the Law

The bill was written about 10 years before it became law in 2007. There are three reasons behind the law's design; first, it was written to protect women from domestic violence as statistics show that most of the time, women are the target of violence within the family and the number of the domestic violence victims was rising. This was illustrated by an increasing global awareness of women's rights as a human rights issue and the United Nations General Assembly's ratification of CEDAW. Pressure from the international community accelerated the call for each country to enact laws to protect women from violent behavior caused by alcohol or drug addiction, economic pressure from unemployment and poverty, past child abuse, a lack of communication and coping skills, mental illness or even feelings of worthlessness or low self-esteem. If a legal framework exists to manage violent behavior within the family, it could potentially lower the number of victims and help meet the global demand to end violence against women. The second reason is to change the Thai mindset that domestic violence is not illegal. Traditionally, Thai people regard domestic violence as a family issue that should be private and where other people should not intervene. By having laws against domestic violence come into effect, it might create awareness that violent behavior should be avoided because it is actually illegal. Thirdly, the law aims to avoid treating violence within the family as a criminal issue. It does not intend to treat the abusers, which are normally the husbands, as criminals. However, the law allows them a second chance to change their violent behavior by entering them in a program that helps them rehabilitate to become a better person for their family. As a result, the husband will not be jailed or possess a criminal record, and maybe rehabilitated for alcoholism or treated for other mental illness. Furthermore, a trial under the criminal justice system might put the man under pressure, which could increase the chance that they might use even more violence when they return home.

As stated in section 15, the primary objective of this law is to preserve the harmony of the family. The court shall try to achieve compromise amongst the litigants while following the principles of protecting the victim's rights and preserving the status of the marriage.

The Implementation

Some researchers have already assessed the Victims of Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E. 2550. Research from Sunisa Chongwatana (Chongwatana, 2009) and Pol. Maj. Gen. Adul Narongsak (Narongsak, 2010) both mentioned the same problems with implementation being the lack of clarification on various issues such as the terms, definitions and proper procedures from implementation agencies such as the police and authorities to be in accordance with the law. Moreover, it was also difficult to integrate the work between police and the court-appointed team when a case involving domestic violence occurred.

From interviews with the persons who drafted the law, the persons working under the criminal justice system and NGOs, I have outlined the three main problems as follows:

1. Problems Due to the Law and the Law Making Process

This problem can be described in terms of three major issues:

1.1 The Terminology

The terminology in section 3 stated that "**Competent official** means a person appointed by the Minister for execution of this Act, including the **administrative or police official** under the Criminal Procedure Code" while the competent official described in section 10 pointed out that "the competent official of **not lower than the superior administrative or senior police official** under the Criminal Procedure Code who is entrusted by the minister shall have the power to impose provisional remedial measures or means in favour of the domestic

violence victim...”, this is noticeable that those two types of competent official from section 3 and section 10 are different in ranking of the competent official and this could effect when the law was implemented.

From one interview, it was clear that the competent official described in section 3 must be trained by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security to help police who have not received training on gender-based violence to work on the case. However, there have been cases where no one meeting the requirements of section 10 had been assigned by the minister to work as a competent official.

1.2 No Written Support Mechanism after the Law Comes into Force

The lawmakers did not design a mechanism to support the law after it came into force. When it comes to rehabilitating the abusers, no budget or other support mechanisms for rehabilitation were available. In this case, the abusers had to pay for rehabilitation by themselves according to the law. Additionally, with no handbook or written rule to support the law, it will be much more difficult for an official to perform their duties under the new system.

1.3 No Law Assessment and No Possibility to Amend the Law

The law does not have an authority department to assess its outcomes. One interviewee stated that the law should be reviewed at least every five years as the only currently available evaluation of the law was research from specialists, academics or people within the criminal justice system.

Even if proper assessment of the law was performed, there is currently no agency to amend the law if problems occur. People who believed that the law should be amended need to use another venue to announce that the law should be reviewed; however, no single responsible authority has taken that advice and tried to amend or revise the law. Furthermore, there was an attempt by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security to try to rewrite the law in order to help eliminate existing problems from the Victim of the of Domestic Violence Protection Act, and it went through the same system under the name of the law on Supporting the Development and Protection the Family Institution which had passed the National Legislative Assembly on February 2019.

2. Problems with Implementation

2.1 Conflicts with the Criminal Code

Police and other assessment sources mentioned that domestic violence is not treated according to the law (the Victims of Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E. 2550) as police officials often use the Criminal Code to file lawsuits against the abusers. Some police said that acts of physical assault will not only violate one section of the law; in practice, it might be combined with other delinquencies where the act exceeds the maximum punishment of the Victims of Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E. 2550. Generally, physical assault will violate at least one section of the law.

2.2 Lack of Valid Procedures for Agencies

When a case of domestic violence has occurred, police did not know how to deal with the situation in an appropriate manner. In these cases, they always treat the case according to the criminal code and unintentionally neglect using the law against domestic violence. Frequently, police officials are the first responders in domestic violence cases since they generally occur at night, when no multidisciplinary team is present. If no sufficient work procedure is followed by each agency, it is difficult to conduct the case according to the Victims of Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E. 2550. Moreover, when existing work guidelines are available for the competent official, they are still too complicated for the official to follow; each agency has



faced this same problem. As a result, victims often do not know their rights according to the law, police officials do not know how to act in accordance with the law, and the multidisciplinary team does not know there is a case when it occurs. These are some reasons why the current law is ineffective.

2.3 Problems with Bureaucracy

Government officials are frequently transferred within their department; this includes police officials as well as officials from the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. This job rotation makes continuity difficult. When police trained to work on domestic violent cases move to another police station, work under that official's supervision stops and it can take sometimes for a newcomer to be trained and work adequately on this issue again.

3. Suggestions from NGOs

3.1 Change People's Mindsets on Domestic Violence

The mindset that domestic violence is a family problem and that people should not interfere needs to change. Frequently, when husbands and wives have gone to the police station due to domestic violence, the police have not charged them with violating any laws. Usually, the police try to reconcile the couple and let them return to their homes once they have calmed down. For this reason, the cycle of the violence will likely continue and potentially lead to more severe violence such as the death of one partner. Other times, battered wife syndrome occurs, which is where the wife continues to be abused for a substantial amount of time.

One other problem NGOs face is that when women decide to go to the court, government officials try to persuade them to change their mind and not file charges against their husbands. Government officials who are not trained in gender-based violence cases usually try to ask the victim to see the problem as a normal household problem. This creates a situation where women find it difficult to solve the problem using the justice system.

3.2 Lack of Knowledge-Sharing on the Law

Stakeholders who work with victims of domestic violence or women's rights need to be trained and information needs to be adequately distributed to assist women in protecting their rights under the criminal justice system. The new system should encourage collaboration between the community, the government and NGOs.

The government and NGOs need to work together to aid people in seeking help according to the law. Moreover, the information should be sent directly to the foundations and information should be shared so that the NGOs know how to manage cases and help government agencies work correctly under the law.

3.3 Networking and Teamwork

As mentioned earlier, NGO workers, social workers, psychiatrists and other related government agencies (including the competent officials) must work together as a multidisciplinary team. To help with this, forums or workshops are necessary to train these stakeholders to work as a team and get to know each other.

At the moment, to make it easier for the multidisciplinary team, there is some training from both the government sector and NGOs to simulate their work in order to set a strong multidisciplinary team. However, this is still just a small group of people; it should be trained regularly and include other related agencies (not only social workers), such as the police, the state attorney and the Court in the training program. Most of all, the responsible ministry should assign the agency to be the leader of the training center and summon the multidisciplinary and the criminal justice system team to join in.



Conclusion

The origin of domestic violence derives from the gender disparity in the family; in this sense, one place where incorrect attitudes on the subject need to be eliminated is within the family. The law on Victims of Domestic Violence Protection Act B.E. 2550 was designed to help people realize that violence against women is prohibited and should be eliminated, and to protect women and help them seek legal protection. However, systematic problems occur due to the fact that there is currently no agency to help disseminate the law to the community and that related agencies under the criminal justice system are more familiar with the criminal code more than the previously stated law. Moreover, the terminology was unclear and both written support for the law implementation and law assessment for possibility to amend it did not conduct at the appropriate time. As a result, officials rarely use domestic violence laws when dealing with domestic abuse cases. Also, there is currently no coordination between related agencies such as the police and social workers to help them work according to the law; as victims do not know their legal right to be protected from domestic violence, related agencies and NGOs should help guide them. The last problem related to the subject is the bureaucratic reshuffling of positions, which creates negligence in dealing with gender-based violence in that area and results in additional time needed to retrain officials.

To make the law more effective, some sections of the law that are in opposition to the spirit of the law need to be amended; however, strong agencies and competent officials are more important in changing people's mindsets to understand the laws and how they benefit them. Most importantly, the knowledge on violence against women should disseminate to the related agencies and both network and teamwork should build among the related departments in order to make it easier for the law implementation which women will benefit in the end. Even though the law from ten years ago will be soon be replaced with a new law, it is better to learn from past systematic, bureaucratic and networking mistakes as the lessons learned from the past are one small step to address the issue of violence against women in society.

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