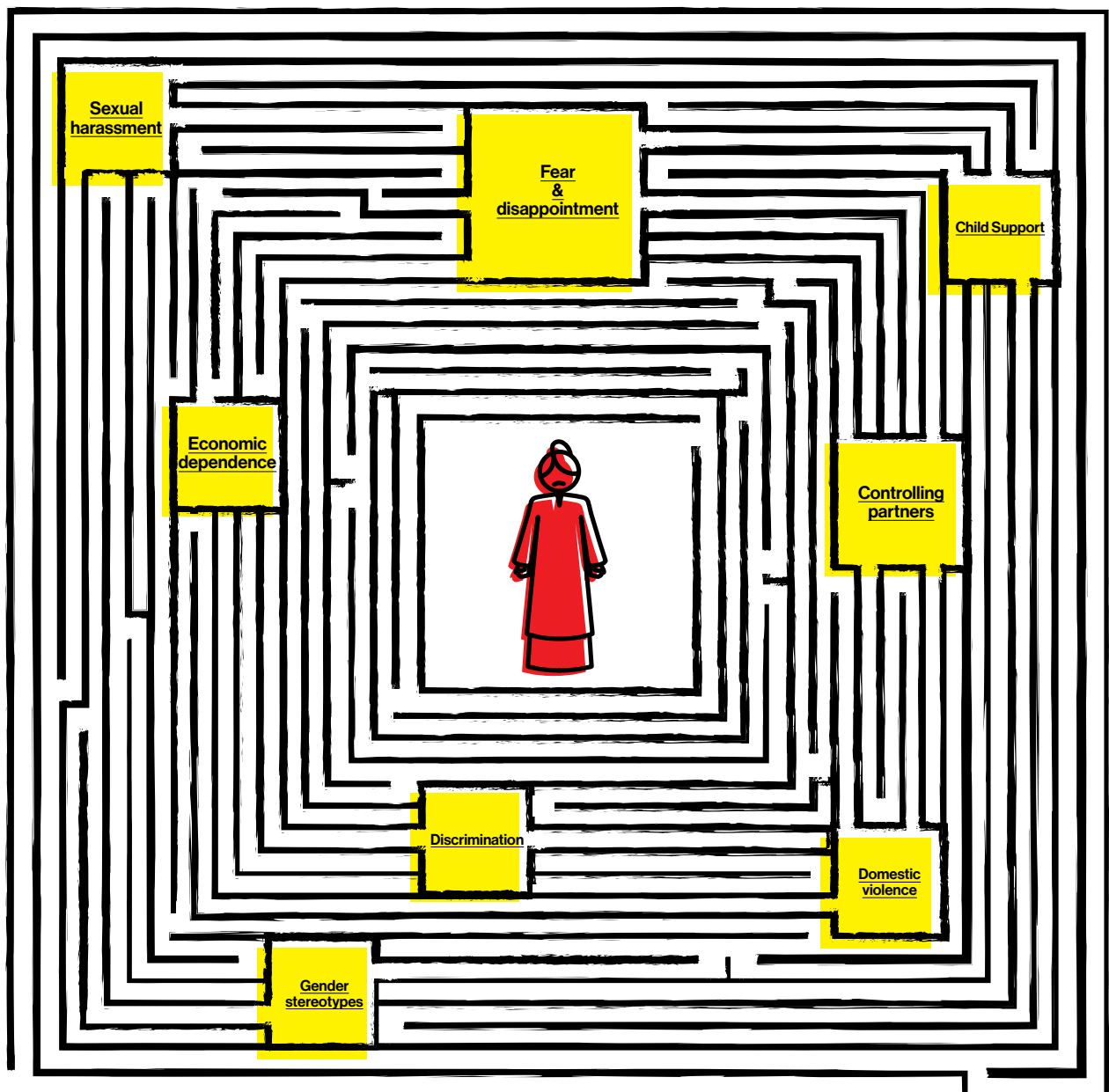


Freedom of Expression and Gender-Based Violence

A study on the impact of sexual and gender-based violence on cisgender women's freedom of expression & decision-making in public and political spaces.

Dr. Vinogiri Krishnan

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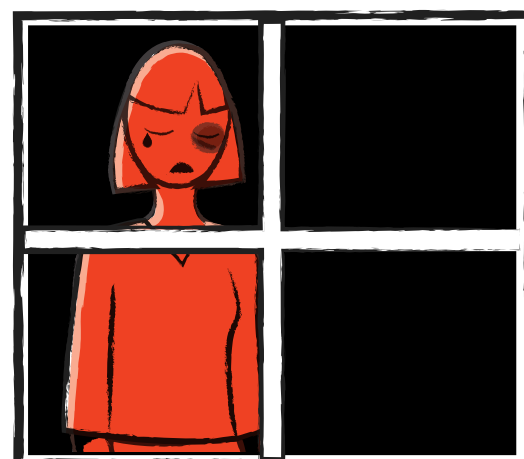
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Violence against women is a universal phenomenon that persists globally. Most time, the perpetrators of these violence are often well known to their victims. Gender-based violence (GBV) is recognized as one of the most severe and prevalent human rights violations in the world. Women and girls are statistically by far the most targeted as global estimates indicate that one in three women experience physical and/or sexual violence during her life¹. Domestic violence in particular continues to be alarmingly common and to be accepted as “normal” within too many societies.

Almost one third (30%) of all women who have been in a relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner. The prevalence estimates of intimate partner violence range from 23.2% in high-income countries and 24.6% in the WHO Western Pacific region to 37% in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean region, and 37.7% in the WHO South-East Asia region².

Globally as many as 38% of all murders of women are committed by intimate partners². In addition to intimate partner violence, globally 7% of women report having been sexually assaulted by someone other than a partner, although data for non-partner sexual violence are more limited. Intimate partner and sexual violence are mostly perpetrated by men against women.

Right of freedom of speech (FOE) provides the opportunity for women to share feeling emotion and most of all the wisdom which may vest in any one irrespective of the gender. The feeling may be of likeness or otherwise. It also empowers women to utter words for their favour, for their exclusive rights of inheritance, job, freedom of marriage, living and all others. Freedom of speech is the basic right associated with all other rights. If someone has to claim his right first of all he would enjoy the right of speech to express his views and claim his titles.



Gender based violence online as defined by the 'Association for Progressive Communication (APC)', incorporates "acts of gender-based violence that are committed, abetted or aggravated, in part or fully by the use of information and communication technologies"³.

Violence against women is also seen as a serious obstacle to development. Its impact on health and well-being of women has been shown to result in low productivity, high costs for treatment and police and legal process and indirect costs on other family members such as children who often bear the brunt. Research in regard to this in Malaysia is far and few. A study in 2000 was conducted by WAO involving 1221 respondents nationwide⁴.

Though the study has limitations because this was not a household study, yet it is the first study which gives a picture on violence against women in the country based on a large number of respondents. This study reports 36% physical intimate partner violence (both married and unmarried couples).

Women's freedom of expression is fundamental for the promotion and achievement of gender equality and non-discrimination. In Malaysia, dangerous trends of sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) that target what women say, think and do are fast being normalised.

The long-term effects of such speech and actions will mean that women and girls, cisgender and transgender alike, will bear the disproportionate cost of such discrimination and hostility, resulting in the normalisation of self-censorship, and discrimination and violence suffered with little to no redress. The reference to "freedom of expression" here includes issues of bodily autonomy and gender expression, expressed both offline and online.

The proposed project seeks to address the intersectionality of the forms of SGBV and discrimination women face in Malaysia, in three keys interlinking areas both offline and online:

- i. Women's exercise of their freedom of expression;**
- ii. Women's attempts to influence the gender equality discourse; and**
- iii. Women's decision-making and participation in public spaces, including political spaces and processes.**

The research aims to investigate the correlation and impact between restriction of freedom of expression faced by women and their public participation and gender-based violence.



Some important research questions constructed along the study period are:

- i. **What is the relationship between restriction of freedom of expression on women and sexual gender-based violence and their participation in decision making processes as well as public participation?**
- ii. **Availability, accessibility and efficacy of redress and remedies mechanisms in cases on SGBV related to freedom of expression online and offline.**
- iii. **What are the factors that contribute to freedom of expression or restriction of freedom of expression by women?**



“Recently, a woman from their community **was sexually abused by the driver who was supposed to bring her back...”**

(FGD 2)

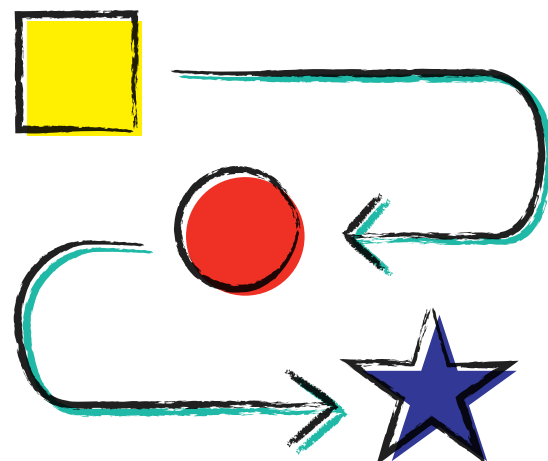
The research is driven by the dire need to fill in the plethora of silences surrounding women's experiences of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Malaysia and its impact on their ability to exercise their freedom of expression and access to decision-making spaces. While there are works and research done by academics and women's rights group around this topic, the diversity of women experiences in a country of multi-cultural background and secular legal system still left us with much to understand and learn.

EMPOWER's earlier study on online gender-based violence showed that women's differing identities when it comes to ethnicity, sexuality, age, economic class interact with power differently, and ultimately, producing different experience of violence. This research aims to explore further how the complexity of women's diverse identities affect a woman's access to opportunity, choices and voices.

Hence, the best way to understand the impact of SGBV on women's access to freedom of expression and decision-making spaces is not by beginning the research with a dominant conceptual framework but to anchor the research with women's everyday lives.

A qualitative approach is selected as the main research methodology. It provides opportunity and space for the women to describe their experiences from their own standpoint. It allows them to open up their hearts and to let their unheard voices and plights to finally come to light. A semi-structured questionnaire was prepared addressing 5 important topics:

- 1. How do the participants address their freedom of expression?**
- 2. Self-censorship or regulation in regards to their freedom of expression.**
- 3. Sexual gender-based violence due to freedom of expression**



- 4. Access to redress**
- 5. Impacts (negative and positive) in their lives**
- 6. Their hopes for the future of cis-gendered women in this country**

The interview sessions with all participants involved fully engaged conversations that involves not only taking in information, but also actively processing them and perceive and feel each and every woman's heartfelt experiences and finally, allowing these information to affect me, baffle me, haunt me, make me uncomfortable and upset, and take me on unexpected detours and toward people, knowledges, and experiences that have been overlooked and invalidated⁵.

This research acknowledges the limitation of gender as a single analytical category. Feminists had long embraced intersectionality – the understanding that women's lives are affected not just by their gender identity, but are changed and affected across multiple dimensions, identities and modalities of social relations. The intersectionality approach is especially pertinent to where Malaysia is situated today - the ethnic and religious based polarisation, political and religious conservatism, digital divide between urban/rural, and socio-economic disparity.

Therefore, it is crucial that we cease looking at women as a homogenous group with a singular experience to SGBV and acknowledge the various social relations within the category of women.

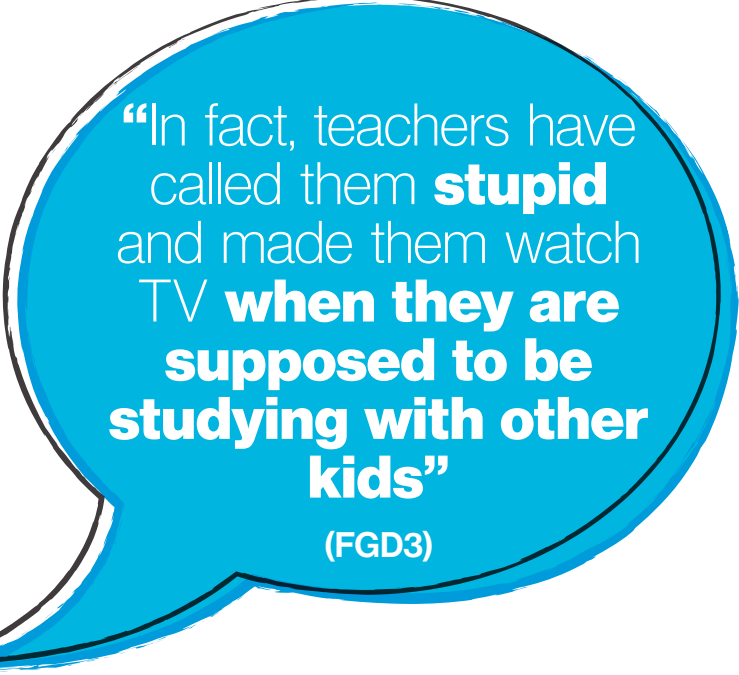
60 women were identified for this research based on four broad considerations:

- 1. Women impacted by dualistic dichotomy of femininity and masculinity and**
- 2. gender stereotype**
- 3. Women impacted by political and religious conservatism**
- 4. Women from marginalised and/or minority communities**
- 5. Domestic violence victims**

This research examines how these range of identities manifested itself based on social and power relations and produces a range of violence. To address the complexity and intersectionality of women's experience, the research adopted an *intra-categorical approach* – while acknowledging social categories produces stable and lasting power relations for women, it is important to maintain a critical stance towards these categories. The use of social categories is important to articulate the broader structural dynamics that transpire in the women's live realities.

Summary of participation:

- a. **4 participants engaged in a face to face interview with me (prior to MCO)**
- b. **53 participants engaged in a phone interviews with me since the start of MCO till the completion of all interviews**
- c. **3 participants participated by filling up the questionnaire and sending them back to me, as their time was limited for a phone interview but wanted to participate in this research**



“In fact, teachers have called them **stupid** and made them watch TV **when they are supposed to be studying with other kids**”

(FGD3)



This study was a qualitative study. Hence, data analysis was guided by both the study objectives and multiple readings and interpretations of the raw data (inductive). Thematic analysis is a method of identifying and reporting patterns. All participants' responses were recorded, then transcribed in detail and translated into English (when necessary). Transcripts of 60 participants totalled about 480 pages (average 8 pages per participant). Each transcript was read in detail in order to understand the content and its details and additional participants' narrative responses were explored as well.

The next step was to create codes in order to build a frugal and operational system of categories. Codes are “tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive of inferential information compiled during the study”⁶. The coding process for this study involved progressive coding techniques: open coding and axial coding⁷.

- i. Open coding: Refers to the process of generating initial concepts from data. Concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions discovered. This will be the process of identifying the relevant themes.
- ii. Axial coding: Categories and their related sub-categories and concepts for each theme were refined to form more precise explanations.



In this study, I identified and defined 5 categories/themes where each of those has a label (short phrase) and description of meaning. Next, I developed a hierarchical category system where links or relationships between categories/themes and sub-categories indicate a subordinate order. Finally, I used this system for 10 different groups of cis-gendered women (Table 2). Table 1 below shows the hierarchy.

1. Ways of exercising freedom of speech		2. Self-censorship or regulation		3. SGBV due to FOE		4. Access to redress		5. Impact on the whole	
1.1	Issues freely expressed	2.1	Challenges to express freely	3.1	Understanding SGBV	4.1	Experience reporting cases and the feedback received	5.1	Negative impacts
1.2	Challenging platforms to express freely	2.2	Reasons to restrict FOE	3.2	SGBV incidents that had big impacts in life	4.2	Reasons for not reporting cases	5.2	Positive impacts
		2.3	Being at risk due to FOE						

Table 2: The groups of cis-gendered women who participated in this study

No	Groups of women	Numbers of participant in each groups
1	Sex workers	11
2	Drug users	5
3	Orang Asli	12
4	Migrant workers/domestic workers	4
5	Refugees	3
6	Disabilities/B40/Religious minorities	4
7	Domestic violence victims	10
8	Married or in a partnership (including working mothers, housewives and foreigners married to Malaysian)	5
9	Single women (including single women with children)	4
10	Women living with HIV	2
Total participants		60

Demographic data

A. Table 3: States in Malaysia and numbers of participants from each state

States	Total participants (%)
Perlis	0 (0)
Kedah	4 (6.7)
Penang	7 (11.7)
Perak	14 (23.3)
Selangor	9 (15.0)
Kuala Lumpur	10 (16.7)
Negeri Sembilan	1 (1.7)
Melaka	1 (1.7)
Johor	2 (3.3)
Terengganu	1 (1.7)
Pahang	6 (10.0)
Kelantan	1 (1.7)
Sabah	2 (3.3)
Sarawak	2 (3.3)
Total	60 (100)

B. Table 4: Age-groups of participants

Age-groups (years)	Total participants (%)
18 – 25	8 (13.3)
26 – 35	22 (36.7)
36 – 45	15 (25.0)
46 – 55	13 (21.7)
>56	2 (3.3)
Total	60 (100)

C. Table 5: Ethnicity of participants

Ethnicity	Total participants (%)
Indian	15 (25.0)
Malay	14 (23.3)
Chinese	2 (3.3)
Punjabi	1 (1.7)
Sabahan	2 (3.3)
Sarawakian	1 (1.7)
Orang Asli	12 (20.0)
Others (mix)	5 (8.3)
Foreigners	5 (8.3)
Refugees	3 (5.0)
Total	60 (100)
Notes:	
Others (mix) – Malaysians who are from mix parentage	
Foreigners – Migrant workers who are all domestic workers and foreigners who are married to Malaysians	
Refugees – From Burma	

D. Table 6: Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation	Total participants (%)
Heterosexual	54 (90.0)
Homosexual (Lesbian)	4 (6.7)
Bisexual	2 (3.3)
Total	60 (100)

E. Table 7: Groups of participants

Categories	Total participants (%)
Sex Workers	11 (18.3)
Orang Asli	12 (20.0)
Migrant workers/ Domestic workers	4 (6.7)
Drug users	4 (6.7)
Drug users and sex workers	1 (1.7)
Any kind of disabilities	1 (1.7)
Religious minorities	1 (1.7)
Refugees	3 (5.0)
B40	2 (3.3)
Domestic violence victims	10 (16.7)
Single mothers with HIV	1 (1.7)
Housewives with HIV	1 (1.7)
Foreigners married to Malaysian	1 (1.7)
Married working mothers	2 (5.0)
Single women	3 (5.0)
Housewives	1 (1.7)
Single mothers	1 (1.7)
Working ladies in a relationship	1 (1.7)
Total	60 (100)

Freedom of expression

A. Table 8: Freedom to express freely

Categories	Total participants (%)
Yes	30 (50.0)
No	22 (36.7)
Depends on the situation	8 (13.3)
Total	60 (100)

B. Table 9: Preferred platforms to express freely

Categories	Total participants (%)
Online	13 (21.7)
Offline	30 (50.0)
Both (offline and online)	3 (5.0)
Neither (do not prefer online or offline)	14 (23.3)
Total	60 (100)

C. Table 10: Levels of restriction to express freely

Categories	Total participants (%)
Very restricted	28 (46.7)
Moderately restricted	11 (18.3)
Not restricted but with some challenges	18 (30.0)
Not restricted at all	3 (5.0)
Total	60 (100)

Sexual Gender-Based violence

A. All participants faced some sort of sexual gender-based violence in their lives.

B. Table 11: Physical abuse

Categories	Total participants (%)
Yes	39 (65.0)
No	21 (35.0)
Total	60 (100)

C. Table 12: Reported physical abuse or any kinds of SGBV to authorities for help (Police, NGOs, etc)

Categories	Total participants (%)
Yes	15 (25.0)
No	45 (75.0)
Total	60 (100)

D. Table 13: Suicidal ideations

Categories	Total participants (%)
Yes	19 (31.7)
No	41 (68.3)
Total	60 (100)

Thematic analysis, Findings and Conclusions for Each Group

A. Sex workers

Theme		
1. Ways of exercising freedom of speech		
Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
1.1 Issues freely expressed	Types of issues or matters expressed freely in daily lives	<p>“I express freely about gender equality and human rights...as I worked for my community and was a voice for my community.” (SG01, pg. 4)</p> <p>AR39, NM50 and SK57 stated that they were not free to express themselves due to the nature of work and low self-esteem (pg. 2)</p>
1.2 Challenging platforms to express freely	Comparison between online and offline platforms	<p>“Online platforms are more challenging for me as some people who know me because of my previous life as sex-worker would approach me on Facebook and talk about my old life.” (PA04, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Offline platforms like home and workplace are more challenging because...we can easily get hurt as we can see them and their facial expressions.” (SR40, pg. 3)</p>

2. Self-censorship or regulation

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
2.1 Challenges to express freely	The factors that affect freedom of speech	<p>“My challenge is my current partner because she controls me too much...this is very challenging and affect me deeply.” (SG01, pg. 6)</p> <p>“Very challenging because of me working as a sex worker and I am not able to reveal this to my family.” (AR39, pg. 3)</p> <p>“My family, worried for my young kids.” (RR41, pg. 3)</p>
2.2 Restrict FOE	The reasons to restrict freedom of speech	<p>“It happens...due to my work. Sometimes, clients will threaten us to have sex different ways and they will tell us not to say anything and I will feel ashamed.” (SR40, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Yes, some of my clients want to do many things on me sexually...I have to restrict myself from telling them because of the extra money that they are willing to give me.” (RR41, pg. 3)</p>
2.3 Being at risk	Being at risk due to FOE	<p>“Yes, some customers can be violent and I have to be careful.” (RR41, pg.4)</p> <p>“Yes...to be threatened by my boyfriend and pimp and if others find out who I really am, they will all talk badly about me and my own family threw me away.” (RA58, pg. 4)</p>

3. Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
3.1 What is SGBV?	Understanding SGBV	<p>“Yes.... violence involving sex. For example, there will be customers asking us to perform weird sexual acts.” (PA04, pg. 5)</p> <p>“For me, during sex work, clients are hard on me and rough with me during sex. That is all I know.” (AR39, pg. 4)</p> <p>“For me, I have faced violence sexually, where I was asked to perform sexual acts out of nature or painful ones.” (SR40, pg. 4)</p>
3.2 Real life SGBV incidents	SGBV that had big impacts in life	<p>“Was raped when I was 11 years old by someone, I know...and also when I was working as a sex worker.” (SG01, pg. 8 and 9)</p> <p>“Had a tough married life...got indulged in sex work and during that time got married to a man who used drugs and abused me. After getting away from him...got connected with a policeman who used me and pimped me for years. He threatens me by digging a hole to bury me if I do not do sex work for him.” (NM50, pg. 5)</p> <p>“Beaten by husband who was a drug addict... no education and he will beat me daily to go get money for drugs...trapped in sex work since then.” (SK57, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Was bullied when I was in detention (arrested for drug possession) centre...for a year.” (RA58, pg. 5)</p>

4. Access to redress

<i>Sub-categories</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Significant Statement Examples</i>
4.1 Reporting cases	Experience, reporting cases and feedback received	“Just a complain to the police on a person who was harassing me online.... nothing much was done, police informed me that this was normal and to follow up with them.” (SR40, pg. 6)
4.2 Not reporting cases	Reasons for not reporting cases	<p>“As for my rape, I was afraid that it would come out in the media and my family will get to know.” (SG01, pg. 12)</p> <p>“Because of my nature of work, being a sex worker. I have no face or say to report anything and have to fight all on my own.” (RR41, pg. 6)</p> <p>“I could not report my torture from the police man because he was a serving policeman.” (NM50, pg. 6)</p> <p>“No support and scared because I am not in position myself to report any cases as I am also considered for breaking the law.” (RA58, pg. 6)</p>

5. Impact

<i>Sub-categories</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Significant Statement Examples</i>
5.1 Negative impacts	Negative impacts on life	<p><u>All participants:</u></p> <p>Faced some kind of trauma, suicidal ideations, demotivation, effects on interpersonal relationships and denial of opportunities.</p>
5.2 Positive impacts	Positive impacts on life	<p>“...was a community leader.” (SG01, pg. 3)</p> <p>“...to lead life and life rightfully without giving up.” (PA04, pg. 9)</p>

Conclusion

1. Most of them do not have the freedom to speak or express themselves, pretty much restricted most of the times.
2. Challenges for them are mainly from their families and due to the nature of their work.
3. They are **usually at high risk to be abused sexually or physically if they speak up**. Most of the times, they are threatened by their partners, pimps or customers.
4. They understand sexual gender-based violence based on their daily life experience as sex workers.
5. Most of them **are not able to report any violence** that happens to them as they fear of being incarcerated for being sex workers and some of them are abused terribly by partners who are people of authority.
6. They believe that the gaps for them and their community is that **they do not have enough support especially from police and government, no empowerment and always judged and discriminated**. For those who had bad marriages before indulging in sex work, it was a difficult process to attain divorce as the religious authorities and counsellors usually support the men and not them.
7. **Their hopes for them and their community is to have more shelter homes and NGOs, to have emergency hotlines and to have police support them and not to abuse them when they are supposed to be protected from crimes and abuse.**

Theme		
1. Ways of exercising freedom of speech		
Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
1.1 Issues freely expressed	Types of issues or matters expressed freely in daily lives	<p>“I express freely on what I see as I have worked in an NGO before, health and gender, religion, sexual matter, gender equality and human rights.” (JS13, pg. 2)</p> <p>“I will express in a way that I don’t embarrass people but in nice words....free to express about sexual health but freer to express to people, face to face.” (LN34, pg. 2)</p>
1.2 Challenging platforms to express freely	Comparison between online and offline platforms	<p>“Challenging to express at home at workplace because sometimes people don’t really know us and we need to prepare before voicing out.” (MN14, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Challenging to express online because we will not be able to see the person and their expressions.” (AY35, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Challenging to express at workplace...my feelings get challenged. When I have something to express at work, sometimes she will not listen to what I have to say.” (SB 36, pg. 3)</p>

2. Self-censorship or regulation

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
2.1 Challenges to express freely	The factors that affect freedom of speech	<p>“Discrimination especially when women are drug users. No one understands us and we are always judged. Men who use drugs do not get discriminated as much compared to women using drugs.” (LN34, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Usually from the types of people I talk to or I express myself to.” (AY35, pg. 3)</p> <p>“I feel challenged and undermined. I have to voice out at work but when I am scolded for it, I have to apologise and have to let go my ego.” (SB36, pg. 3)</p>
2.2 Restrict FOE	The reasons to restrict freedom of speech	<p>“For me I feel, if there is a problem better to speak it out rather than keeping inside.” (JS13, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Sometimes when I give talks n schools and colleges, they will not understand if I speak straight from my heart and experiences.” (LN34, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Yes, sometimes. I can only share a little and have to filter much even when I am in trouble.” (SB 36, pg. 3)</p>
2.3 Being at risk	Being at risk due to FOE	<p>“Everything is risky. So, I will think thoroughly before doing or saying anything so that it is not risky when I do it for others or myself.” (MN14, pg. 4)</p> <p>“I don’t think about any risks when I am working for the communities and will always be prepared with answers. I just want to help everyone in need.” (LN34, pg. 4)</p>

3. Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
3.1 What is SGBV?	Understanding SGBV	<p>“For me for example, I am staying with her boyfriend and he cheated on me and he forces me for sex and when I said no, he tortures me and never lets me out. So, this is violence.” (JS 13, pg. 4)</p> <p>“For me it is like sex workers getting abused and pimps torturing them.” (MN14, pg. 4)</p> <p>“I have experience, being beaten and all. They think it is okay for them to do anything. It is not fair at all.” (LN 34, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Violence is always there and women must fight for their rights.” (AY35, pg. 4)</p>
3.2 Real life SGBV incidents	SGBV that had big impacts in life	<p>“JS13 was a child when her parents gave her away to her grandma and uncle who abused her. She ran away from home at age 12 and was homeless. Some people took advantage of her situation and took her with them and made gave her a job to pack powdered substance. Little did she know, she was packing drugs for them. She was arrested when she was almost 17 and was sentenced to death but she was pardoned by the King and was released from prison after 8 years where she started her life again. (Shared by JS13’s close friend, pg. 7 and 8)</p> <p>“Indulged in drugs as young as primary school... learnt from my grandfather and uncles. I was also harassed for sex from men to get drugs but I never gave in to that.” (MN14, pg. 5)</p> <p>“I got involved in drugs as young as 16 years old...peer influenced. Used many kinds of drugs and started pushing drugs as well. Worked with 6 people and when my boss was caught, I ran away. Got married with a pusher and after he was caught, I was still using drugs until I was caught by the police. I lost my kids to child services.” (LN34, pg. 5)</p>

		<p>“My ex-husband was a drug addict and each time he gets high, he will beat me and I started using drugs with him, was stupid but followed his steps... ..I have been in and out prisons about 10 times.”</p> <p>“Was dependant on drugs at very young age, stayed with drug addicts. I had to sleep with many men and pushers to get money for my supplies. My work salary was not sufficient....got influenced by peers from school, and brothers who smoke and drink all the time in front of me.” (SB36, pg. 5)</p>
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4. Access to redress

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
4.1 Reporting cases	Experience, reporting cases and feedback received	“I have helped many people to report their problems even though of the risks. I will leave it to God to protect me and I will still go police to help others in trouble. (MN14, pg. 6)
4.2 Not reporting cases	Reasons for not reporting cases	<p>“I couldn’t report on all the abuse I faced because I was a drug user myself. Also, I was scared because if I report on them, they can find me and do something to me.” (LN34, pg. 7)</p> <p>“Nothing much to report because I was a drug user and involved in thefts and crimes.” (SB36, pg. 6)</p>

5. Impact

5.1 Negative impacts	Negative impacts on life	<p>“Crying and getting depressed but crying helps. I stopped thinking of the past and kept thinking of myself, how to move forward.” (AY 35, pg. 7)</p> <p>“I was lost and needed money always for drugs and so I had to indulge in sex work and thefts-causing depression and trauma.” (SB36, pg. 7)</p>
5.2 Positive impacts	Positive impacts on life	“Resilient – I am very strong now because I have been alone all my life. Fall or rise, everything was on my own since I was young. I was never loved by my family.” (JS13, pg. 7)

Conclusion

1. Some of them are free to express themselves, especially those who are engaged in community empowerment programs for their fellow community people.
2. Some of them **go through discrimination at work spaces due to their past as drug users.**
3. Most of them are **not able to report their violence and abuse because they were drug users themselves, and involved in crimes like thefts and in sex work as well. They were all incarcerated before.** However, there is one person who constantly helps her friends or women in need to report their abuse cases to the police.
4. They believe that the gaps in their community are: women are generally soft when it comes to violence and abuse and it should start from the individual herself to fight and go out to seek help. Help is always there. People do not know their struggles as women drug users and get discriminated constantly. There is lack of awareness out there for women on the effects of drugs on them and their babies. **To quit drugs is not as easy as how people think it is, especially when they get dependent on it to continue living.**
5. Their **hopes are to have support from the government, to have more NGOs and shelters to support and motivate them always and to not be judged or discriminated anymore.**

Theme		
1. Ways of exercising freedom of speech		
<i>Sub-categories</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Significant Statement Examples</i>
1.1 Issues freely expressed	Types of issues or matters expressed freely in daily lives	<p>FGD 1 and 2: They are not free to express themselves besides being homemakers and mothers.</p> <p>FGD3: Mainly on issues related to their communities. Most times, they use their mobile phones and social applications to observe how their community is undermined.</p>
1.2 Challenging platforms to express freely	Comparison between online and offline platforms	<p>FGD 1 and 2: All of them do not have mobile phones. And it is challenging for them to express themselves freely at home or to authorities.</p> <p>FGD3: Challenging to express online as well as offline because no matter what, they will be undermined and harassed just because they are 'Orang Asli'.</p>
2. Self-censorship or regulation		
<i>Sub-categories</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Significant Statement Examples</i>
2.1 Challenges to express freely	The factors that affect freedom of speech	<p>FGD 1 and 2: Being women from this community is the biggest challenge for them</p> <p>FGD3: Most times, the challenges come from other Malaysians judging them always. They are a little freer to express offline but even this depends to the situation.</p>

2.2 Restrict FOE	The reasons to restrict freedom of speech	<p><i>FGD 1 and 2:</i> They are all restricted to express themselves.</p> <p><i>FGD3:</i> Mainly restricted even when they try to express themselves in social media, they see how other Malaysians condemn them using harsh words, on their living style, their religion and many more.</p>
2.3 Being at risk	Being at risk due to FOE	<p><i>FGD 1 and 2:</i> Before they agreed to participate, they were so scared that they will be at risk if they shared their plight for this study.</p> <p><i>FGD3:</i> Yes, if they tried to voice out about things that made them uncomfortable, they will get shot at with bad comments and words, which leads to depression and immense frustration.</p>

3. Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

<i>Sub-categories</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Significant Statement Examples</i>
3.1 What is SGBV?	Understanding SGBV	<p><i>FGD 1 and 2:</i> They do not really understand this term but after explaining to them, they related it to the 'violence' they receive from their homes and this country.</p> <p><i>FGD3:</i> They understood that violence is when we are not respected and treated as women and we do not matter even as human beings and also being forced to do things we don't like just because we are women.</p>

<p>3.2 Real life SGBV incidents</p>	<p>SGBV that had big impacts in life</p>	<p>FGD 1:</p> <p>They are not given things that are promised by the government. They have to use water from river as they do not have proper water systems. Mothers do not get much aid even when they can't afford. Delivery times are usually difficult. The 'Orang Asli' organisation have things for them, yet they will not give it to them until they keep asking them for it. Pregnant ladies from their communities often get ill-treated at some health facilities-using harsh words and not attending to them properly. After delivery, they have to go back home in the deep jungle by themselves and they can't afford the cost of the cabs.</p> <p>FGD2:</p> <p>Some men from the community get drunk and abuse their wives. Sometimes they are beaten up badly but unable to get help because they live in fear. Some of them have killed themselves. No support from government for their community. When they wait for their child birth, they do not get treated well and will not be given proper food. Recently, a woman from their community was sexually abused by the driver who was supposed to bring her back to her village after delivery but nothing was done in regard to this besides suspending the driver. Many women have died of childbirth just because they did not get quick assistance. Daily earnings are not constant, usually depends on their crops but sometimes even that get destroyed by the wild elephants there. Most of them do not get proper education in schools. They are always side-lined in school and treated differently. They are made to pay for all the fee that they can't afford and the children have to walk back and forth to school and home through the jungle and the distance is not a short one.</p>
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		<p>FGD3:</p> <p>One participant went through a lot of violence from her then husband who is not from the 'Orang Asli' descent. After many years, got the divorce and raised the son alone.</p> <p>The single ladies in the group had unpleasant experiences in school. They were bullied for being who they are and teachers were not supportive. In fact, teachers have called them 'stupid' and made them watch TV when they were supposed to be studying with other kids. They were always told that they will not achieve in education as students from this community are usually slow and not smart.</p> <p>Another participant shared her experience on having financial constraints with 4 young kids. They do not receive the aids that they deserve from their organization. She also shared the same incident about the woman from their community who got sexually abused by the driver.</p>
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4. Access to redress

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
4.1 Reporting cases	Experience, reporting cases and feedback received	
4.2 Not reporting cases	Reasons for not reporting cases	All of them are in constant fear to report anything at all for the matter as they are always undermined, trashed and treated badly by people from this country.

5. Impact		
5.1 Negative impacts	Negative impacts on life	All of them are living in constant fear and disappointment of not being appreciated and for being undermined always.
5.2 Positive impacts	Positive impacts on life	Still leading lives as strong women who look after their families and children without giving up. Even with so much pain faced daily, they have smiles on their faces and so much love to give.

Conclusion

1. Most of them **do not have freedom to speak, they are restricted and are fearful to voice out anything for that matter.**
2. Challenges for them are merely at home (spouses mainly), people outside their villages (other Malaysians) and government.
3. If they attempt to express themselves through some online platforms, **they get trashed badly with harsh words and are their community is always condemned.** They get depressed and frustrated because of this and this is one reason they do not use online platforms. If they express at home, they get beaten and violated.
4. All of them have gone through many kinds of violence in their lives: homes, schools, health facilities, NGOs dedicated to their welfare and government.
5. The **gaps** for this community are that:
 - a. No recognition as Malaysians and are always undermined
 - b. No proper access for redress whenever they are in any problems
 - c. Education for their community is biased and many opportunities are denied for them just because they belong to this community

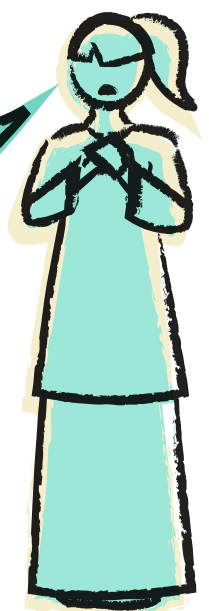
- d. Any acts of violence on them are not taken seriously and sometimes ignore. No justice for them usually. Many ladies in their community have committed suicide due to intense depression and trauma, all gone unheard.
- e. Government do allocate funding for them, yet these funds do not reach fully to their community

6. Their **hopes**:

- a. To be recognised as Malaysians and to be treated fairly
- b. To get all the same opportunities as other Malaysians
- c. No more discrimination, Orang Asli are Malaysians too
- d. They are proud to be themselves and of their communities and they want to be respected

“Discrimination especially when women are drug users.
No one understands us and we are always judged”

(LN34, pg. 3)



D. Migrant workers/ Domestic workers

Theme		
1. Ways of exercising freedom of speech		
Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
1.1 Issues freely expressed	Types of issues or matters expressed freely in daily lives	“Social observations, information of health and gender and religion and beliefs.” (II09, pg. 2)
1.2 Challenging platforms to express freely	Comparison between online and offline platforms	<p>“Workplace because it is always about taking care about customers at the place I work.” (SJ07, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Home because at home I get beaten and treated very roughly by my husband and I could not take it any longer and asked for divorce.” (II09, pg.3)</p> <p>“Everywhere is challenging because I am not educated and have fear to speak out my mind and thought.” (NM12, pg. 3)</p>
2. Self-censorship or regulation		
Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
2.1 Challenges to express freely	The factors that affect freedom of speech	<p>“The main challenge was due to my fail marriage with constant abuse from him.” (II09, pg. 3)</p> <p>“I don’t have education and always lived in fear here.” (NM12, pg. 3)</p>
2.2 Restrict FOE	The reasons to restrict freedom of speech	<p>“Family and previous abuse.” (II09, pg. 3)</p> <p>Other participants are restricted to express anything at all.</p>
2.3 Being at risk	Being at risk due to FOE	All participants were always at risk due to being migrant and domestic workers here.

3. Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
3.1 What is SGBV?	Understanding SGBV	<p>“My understanding is that based on my own story, he beats me when he wants sex from me. For 9 years I endured all this and he never changed so I had to leave him.” (IIO9, pg. 4)</p> <p>“For me, I have seen neighbors getting abused in my country.” (YN11, pg. 4)</p> <p>“For me yes, at work sometimes they get beaten up by their bosses.” (NM12, pg. 4)</p>
3.2 Real life SGBV incidents	SGBV that had big impacts in life	<p>“He had an affair with another and always beats me.” (IIO9, pg. 4)</p> <p>“I ran away from the place I worked...was taking care of an old person. His daughter abused me... hit me until my ear got hurt and lost my hearing from this ear for a month, beaten every day for 2 months. Once I had an infection in my bladder and was urinating with blood. I told her to bring me to doctor but she said I should just die. I suffered so much. I could have died if I did not run away.” (NM12, pg. 5)</p> <p>“I ran away...we were all forced to keep working non-stop. He made us work when were not well. My feet was swollen....i was in so much pain and still had to work. My feet became like this because I was made to use too much ‘Clorox’ for cleaning and the toxicity caused my feet to be infected.” (YN11, pg. 5)</p>

4. Access to redress

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
4.1 Reporting cases	Experience, reporting cases and feedback received	

4.2 Not reporting cases	Reasons for not reporting cases	<p>“I was scared of him and just avoided him and went away. Just kept all the pain in myself with my family’s support.” (I109, pg. 6)</p> <p>“I could not because I was always in fear and I managed to run away with the help of the neighbour.” (NM12, pg. 6)</p>
5. Impact		
5.1 Negative impacts	Negative impacts on life	<p>“Trauma and health problems as well as he used to kick me in the stomach that I have pains till now.” (I109, pg. 6)</p> <p>“Trauma, was always scared and felt like I will die getting beaten up and all I can think about is my kids. I just want to go back to them” (NM12, pg. 7)</p>
5.2 Positive impacts	Positive impacts on life	“Resilient-stayed strong for the kids.” (I109, pg. 7)

Conclusions:

1. Most of them **do not really have freedom to express due to lack of education or sense of belonging here.**
2. Challenges for them are due to lack of education and previous abuse, and they are at risk if they express anything at all to their employers here because if they do, they get physically or verbally abused.
3. They were abused either at home in their own countries or here where they came to work as domestic workers.
4. **They do not have proper access to redress as they are controlled by their employers and some of their employers have connections with higher authorities.**
5. Two participants who ran away from the place they worked at. only hoped to go back to Indonesia and another participant preferred to stay here as she was abused in her home country but has the freedom to live here without being controlled or abused.

Theme		
1. Ways of exercising freedom of speech		
Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
1.1 Issues freely expressed	2. Types of issues or matters expressed freely in daily lives	“Before being a teacher, I don’t talk about sexual matters but after I became a teacher, I realised a lot of matters must be taught to kids.” (TT53, pg. 2)
1.2 Challenging platforms to express freely	Comparison between online and offline platforms	“All platforms because we do not have proper documentations. Most of us are very scared to share our real experiences no matter what and they will have bad consequences if they open up.” (AZ52, pg. 3)
3. Self-censorship or regulation		
Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
2.1 Challenges to express freely	The factors that affect freedom of speech	“Being a refugee.” (AZ52, pg. 3) “Being a refugee here for the past 8 years with a child here.” (TT53, pg. 3) “Being a refugee, a Rohingya.” (RZ59, pg. 3)
2.2 Restrict FOE	The reasons to restrict freedom of speech	All of them are restricted from expressing themselves because they are refugees here.
2.3 Being at risk	Being at risk due to FOE	“Being a refugee, we can’t seek for what we want, for example education for our kids or to get help because of the violence we face.” (AZ52, pg. 4) “Always at risk of being harassed by authorities like police especially.” (TT53, pg. 4)

4. Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

<i>Sub-categories</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Significant Statement Examples</i>
3.1 What is SGBV?	Understanding SGBV	<p>“For us the violence is like, because we are married and we are not allowed to work. We need to depend on the man and listen to all that he says and decide.” (AZ52, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Women are always thought as servants and will need to give them anything that men ask including sex. They will easily humiliate us in public and they thing this is a great thing.” (TT53, pg. 4)</p>
3.2 Real life SGBV incidents	SGBV that had big impacts in life	<p>“I was born here to refugee parents. I was married at age 17 and didn’t know him. Abused by him and his family members.” (AZ52, pg. 5)</p> <p>“When I was young, and old man who was a relative molested me.” (TT53, pg. 5)</p> <p>“I was verbally abused in the lock up here when I was detained there for a month.” (RZ59, pg. 4)</p>

5. Access to redress

<i>Sub-categories</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Significant Statement Examples</i>
4.1 Reporting cases	Experience, reporting cases and feedback received	
4.2 Not reporting cases	Reasons for not reporting cases	All of them stated the same thing: They are refugees without documentation, hence no chance for them to seek help here especially when they are abused by the police.

6. Impact

5.1 Negative impacts	Negative impacts on life	“Suicidal ideations: I wanted to burn down the house along with me and my kids. I went to the extent of buying fuel as I was lost but I thought it back again and regretted.” (AZ52, pg. 7) “Trauma, impact on interpersonal relationships and denial of opportunities.” (TT53 and RZ59, pg. 7 and pg. 6)
5.2 Positive impacts	Positive impacts on life	All participants are resilient and caring for their kids with hopes.

Conclusion

1. It is quite challenging for them to express themselves regardless to type of platforms.
2. Their **biggest challenge to express themselves is because they are refugees here**. Hence, the restriction and how they are harassed by the higher authorities if they do speak up or express their problems.
3. All of them have encountered SGBV either at their home countries or from the authorities and their spouses/family members here in Malaysia.
4. They are **not able to get any access to redress because they are refugees and do not have any legal documentations to be here**.
5. All of them are going through so much problems in a daily basis and are deeply impacted.
6. The **gaps** in this community are:
 - a. That they are refugees and they do not have documentations and because of this they do not have platforms or places to seek help or make reports or to get education for themselves and their kids.
 - b. They do not have security and have to go through everything on their own.

- c. They are also being harassed by higher authorities as well and are made to pay large sums of money each time they get detained so that they do not get incarcerated.

7. Their **hopes** are:

- a. To get security and some opportunities in education and employment for their children to survive here.
- b. Government should also block all websites with sex elements and dark webs and just enforce license to sex workers to prevent all sorts of sexual abuse among women and children. Sex education is important for our future generation to grow safely.
- c. NGOs should dedicate into creating awareness on all this and men must be educated too on how to treat women and sex without consent is violence and rape.

“Very down and depressed **and keep thinking that my life was over**”

(KK44, pg.8)



F. Disabilities/B40/Religious Minorities

Theme		
1. Ways of exercising freedom of speech		
Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
1.1 Issues freely expressed	Types of issues or matters expressed freely in daily lives	<p>“No, I won’t really talk so much, I will observe the person first before sharing my thoughts with them.” (MN03, pg. 2)</p> <p>“With selected groups sometimes, if something about a specific race, I wouldn’t bring it up in public. Voicing out is there but selective.” (KJ05, pg. 4)</p> <p>“One example, when I was admitted in the hospital, I noticed a janitor who was working hard with backache....I called and asked her why was she working with a backache and she told me I was the only one who asked her and she has to support 2 children. I posted her picture and her story on her daughter’s FB page and live became better for them.” (VP19, pg. 2)</p> <p>“Because sometimes when we pry and talk about it, we get into trouble. So, I will observe but I will not interfere. Why must we get into trouble because of others.” (IS02, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Even if someone is talking about this or I am hearing about it, I will share it only with my husband or mom.” (MN03, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Challenging at home because they will have their own thoughts and answers and not necessarily talk about it with me. At workplace, there are some rules and we are not supposed to bring up certain matters.” (KJ05, pg. 4)</p>

1.2 Challenging platforms to express freely	Comparison between online and offline platforms	“Home because we need to see their mood swings and how they are before we speak out to them. They will not be able to accept what we are trying to say.” (VP19, pg. 3)
2. Self-censorship or regulation		
Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
2.1 Challenges to express freely	The factors that affect freedom of speech	<p>“People have bad mouthed me and I will get angry but I’ll keep quiet.” (MN03, pg. 5)</p> <p>“Usually family-old mother and young daughter and at work.” (KJ05, pg. 5)</p> <p>“Challenges came from those who are reading my posts online. The posts are not for them but they take it wrong and backlash me.” (VP19, pg. 3)</p>
2.2 Restrict FOE	The reasons to restrict freedom of speech	<p>“I started working since I was 18 years old and after becoming a manager after 2 years. At the age of 40, I became fed-up. Sometimes, out of ten things I am saying or doing at work, two things will be interpreted wrongly by others.” (KJ05, pg. 5)</p> <p>“...when the hiring manager was condemning another person who is doing all his work properly, I wanted to voice out that moment that he was wrong but I had to restrict myself....because I would have been branded for contemplating with the staff or would have affected that person as well.” (VP19, pg. 4)</p>
2.3 Being at risk	Being at risk due to FOE	<p>“I prefer to stay quiet rather than having people talk bad about me.” (MN03, pg. 5)</p> <p>“There are things in the hotel when staff are not allowed to do like sleep during break. I did go to the office and voiced out my ideas, to allow them to sleep during their breaks. Times like this, I feel threatened.” (KJ05, pg. 6)</p> <p>“I have known people who got nothing else to do but to talk about others.” (VP19, pg. 4)</p>

3. Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
3.1 What is SGBV?	Understanding SGBV	<p>“Means very violent during sex.... abusing and torturing.....and through words too.” (MN03, pg. 5 and 6)</p> <p>“I only can think that man and woman fighting and violence between them, seeing who is more powerful and domestic violence.” (KJ05, pg. 6)</p> <p>“I wish a man can respect her as woman alone, not as her role as a mother or wife. Both genders are equal.” (VP19, pg. 5)</p>
3.2 Real life SGBV incidents	SGBV that had big impacts in life	<p>“My ‘step-daughter’ (an orphan that I provided shelter and love for), abused me sexually and physically. She did all kinds of sexual stuff on me. I won’t even know what she will be doing at me or on me.” (IS02, pg. 3)</p> <p>“My 5-year-old daughter was sexually abused by a neighbour’s son who was 20 or 21 years old at that time....It was horrifying to hear her tell me that he took out her panties and licked her private part for a long time while asking her to play with his private part.” (MN03, pg. 7 and 8)</p> <p>“One of my uncles abused me, I was between 2 – 4 years old. He will beat me, pinching me so hard until I have blisters, slap until I couldn’t hear and has asked me to hold his penis....Each time I see him later part of my life, I will go berserk and have hysteria and shout and scream.” (KJ05, pg. 7)</p> <p>“I was going out with a contractor...I trusted him a lot. He cheated on me and my money. I thought it was over between us and he came to my tuition centre drunk...started blackmailing me and that he will tell my mother that we slept together.....started taking all my jewellery...I had nothing to give him anymore, and he started hitting me against the wall and there was a blood clot in my head.” (VP19, pg. 6)</p>

4. Access to redress

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
4.1 Reporting cases	Experience, reporting cases and feedback received	<p>“We reported on both the men, that boy who sexually abused my kid and my husband’s sister’s husband who hit my girl once so violently. He filed the reports. We brought to the hospital to check my daughter. Thank God he didn’t penetrate her. The police did bring the boy for interrogation and took photos but after that it was just let go. They gave reasons that I reported it too late and not at the time of the incident and there was no existing evidence, therefore they wouldn’t be able to process it further.” (MN03, pg. 9)</p> <p>“I always go to the police station...usually couples fight in the hotels, and friends who get molested by customers. I will go to the police to report all these cases, especially for friends who don’t have husbands around and get sexually harassed.” (KJ05, pg. 10)</p>
4.2 Not reporting cases	Reasons for not reporting cases	<p>“Never reported all this to the police, I wanted to many times but I was scared it be getting worst. Was so intimidated by him.” (VP19, pg. 8)</p>

5. Impact		
5.1 Negative impacts	Negative impacts on life	<p>“So much of suffering yet I endured all with her cause I considered her as my ‘daughter’. “I still cared for her, I kept feeling sorry for her. I was the one who cared for her when she was so weak and tested positive for HIV. She has slit her hands to stop me from leaving her and refuses to take her medications for HIV.” (IS02, pg. 5)</p> <p>“I was depressed, because making wrong decisions. I tried to commit suicide but I think God helped me. This was when I was pregnant at 17.” (KJ05, pg. 11)</p> <p>“Felt useless as I was prominent and I was looked up as I was running 2 tuition centres but no one knew what I was going through and felt so useless.” (VP19, pg. 9)</p>
5.2 Positive impacts	Positive impacts on life	<p>“Resilient-helping others to fight their problems.” (KJ05, pg. 10)</p> <p>“Empowering roles-lost a limb because diabetic yet, independent and strong (a mother and a wife now).” (VP19)</p>

Conclusion

1. Some of them are free to express themselves but most of them are still restricted.
2. It is still challenging for them to express themselves either online or offline due to family members, work and others who are usually judgemental.
- 3. Most of them are still very restricted to express themselves because they get undermined at work for being vocal or smart and at home with their family members.**
4. They all feel that they will be at some kind of risk if they express themselves to their family members, work superiors or from people online.

5. All of them have encountered SGBV. **One of them had a horrendous experience where her 5-year-old daughter then was sexually molested by a 21-year-old man who was her neighbour's daughter.**
6. Some of them did report SGBV cases to the police. However, as for the child 'sexual-abuse' case, the perpetrator was let go after interrogation just because the parents reported this incident a little late.
7. Some of them **hesitated to report their abuse due to the fear that it will get worst if they did as well as being intimidated by their abusive partner.**
8. All of them are impacted with all that happened to them yet they are all still resilient.
9. The **gaps** in their community are:
 - a. Ego and societal judgement in this society. Once things like this don't exist anymore, gender-biases will not be there anymore.
10. Their **hopes** are:
 - a. They all felt relieved to have someone to spend a lot of time to just listen to them share their problems as people don't really take time to share and feel their problems and they hoped for more research like this to take place, to hear unheard voiced.
 - b. To have people read and get all relevant information on a daily basis. Everyone must know what is going on, to learn things and be prepared.
 - c. Being disabled and being difficult financial situations did not stop us from living our lives despite all the miseries we went through, so all women must be empowered to live positively.

Theme		
1. Ways of exercising freedom of speech		
Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
1.1 Issues freely expressed	Types of issues or matters expressed freely in daily lives	<p>“Gender equality-to my daughter and her children especially, they need to know parents are important.” (AA06, pg. 2)</p> <p>“Religion and beliefs-usually about my faith.” (JR08, pg. 2)</p> <p>“Gender expression-very important, I will always make sure I look good because personality is very important.” (KK44, pg. 2)</p> <p>“Information on health and gender-need to be politically correct, if not you will get attacked.” (PV51, pg. 2)</p>
1.2 Challenging platforms to express freely	Comparison between online and offline platforms	<p>“Workplace, because their level are like managerial position...and we have to listen to their instructions. No 2-way communication.” (AA06, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Online because a lot of people are there observing.” (JR08, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Workplace, because I am single mom and my work clients are usually men and bigshots. Instead of approaching me for my work skills or brains, I will always have sexist comments.... they will try to touch me and ask me out.” (NP10, pg. 3)</p>

		<p>“Workplace-I feel afraid on how they look at me or talk about me. Recently, I am going through domestic abuse and my boss is male.” (PG 38, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Online, social platforms like Facebook are viewed by millions and there is not respect for us.” (KK44, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Offline because expressing offline means seeing people face to face and it will be difficult to be calm in front of them when they are showing discomfort or tantrums to me.” (KB45, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Offline, people are going to judge you and sometimes ask you questions that can make you upset.” (RE46, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Online, because I have to be politically current and make sure I do not offend anyone.” (PV51, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Offline, we need to evaluate a lot if express offline as we will know the person and we know about them.” (UD55, pg. 3)</p>
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2. Self-censorship or regulation

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
2.1 Challenges to express freely	The factors that affect freedom of speech	<p>“Mostly my family...their lifestyles are different from mine... some won’t listen at all to what I have to say.” (JR08, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Clients who are mostly men from my previous work. Dreaded to go to work all the time and had fear.” (NP10, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Usually family members, they will hurt me and even if I feel hurt, I don’t tend to hurt them.” (VJ15, pg. 3)</p> <p>“My mind itself, I feel very doubtful and the mind feels cloudy.” (PG38, pg. 3)</p>

<p>2.2 Restrict FOE</p>	<p>The reasons to restrict freedom of speech</p>	<p>“No freedom of speech to say no to be treated terribly and worst, my own boss used my status and looks to get clients.” (NP10, pg. 3)</p> <p>“...I went through hell because of fighting for 2 children from the school where I was a teacher, where they were molested by the headmaster. I went to court for 2 years. I won the case for them but JPN asked if I would like to transfer from the school during the court case and I told them I want justice. They replied, “Sorry to say that you cannot get justice, just cannot!” I cannot forget these words.” (KK44, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Yes, sometimes when I like someone, I won’t approach them because I feel humiliated of my past but we are humans and we have feelings too.” (KB45, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Previously yes, when I was so oppressed during my first marriage but now no more.” (RE46, pg. 4)</p>
<p>2.3 Being at risk</p>	<p>Being at risk due to FOE</p>	<p>“Yes, because of my previous experience, I learnt to keep my kids away from work.” (NP10, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Yes, at home and the output is all the violence that has happened on me.” (PG38, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Yes, when I was with him. I won’t be able to voice out or allow me to do what I want to do.” (PV51, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Yes, in my personal life, and also at workplace.” (UD55, pg. 4)</p>

3. Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
3.1 What is SGBV?	Understanding SGBV	<p>“Like a man hit a woman also verbally. The person will do so much to impress their partner but get hurt when treated like this.” (AA06, pg. 4)</p> <p>“My own past life, when you love someone, you should understand that person and not by raising your hand to her or to have affairs with other.” (JR08, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Violence means abuse, to be honest I was abused for a long time.” (NP10, pg., 4)</p> <p>“Violence is usually about fighting and things that can cause fight.” (VJ15, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Based on what I have observed and see around me but I never knew this will happen to me as well someday.” (PG38, pg. 4)</p> <p>“It means how women are treated by men and always made as a weak gender.” (KK44, pg. 4)</p> <p>“I have gone through this myself throughout my marriage life.” (KB45, pg. 4)</p> <p>“...I allowed him to do the damage and let’s not blame him alone. I had my faults as well, its just that our relationship became like this. I just want to help others come out from violence. Freedom is a choice; bondage is also a choice.” (RE46, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Never actually had awareness, I just read articles and used to think why women didn’t leave abusive relationships. Sometimes you don’t understand until you go through yourself.” (PV51, pg. 4)</p> <p>“I never know such things exist until I faced it myself. This changed me tremendously.” (UD55, pg. 4)</p>

3.2 Real life
SGBV
incidents

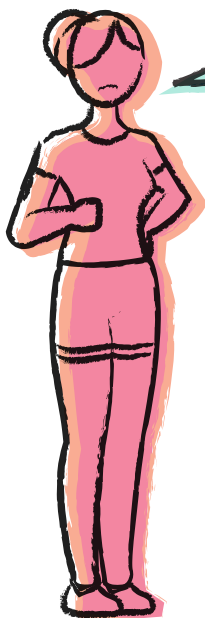
SGBV that had big
impacts in life

“I was a teacher for disabled kids. My husband knows about my work but never understood me. He will teach my kids that I am a crazy mother. I left the job. He was having affair as my kids were growing up. He went to the extend to consult a psychiatric doctor and got me admitted in mental hospital for 15 days. He comes there and laughs at me every day. Until now, he hasn't sign any divorce papers....he has married another girl and has a daughter with her. He has punched me on my face until my teeth was shaken up and refused to take me to the clinic. Due to the abuse and getting beaten up badly, if we stayed together, we would have killed each other.” **(AA06, pg. 7)**

“Problems started after we had kids. He hardly came home and start fighting and beating me up. Then I found out he has another woman; it became worst and the children had no food and I had to ask people for help. He never married me. I had to get a letter to show the government that I am not married but was abused and have 2 kids with the abuser.” **(JR08, pg. 5)**

“No matter
how I express,
**I will be labelled
and undermined.”**

(TS54, pg. 4)



“I was very young, got married at 20 and parents’ choice. Married to a very rich and prominent and well-known man’s son in Malaysia. He was so abusive and used drugs and meth. I was continually beaten up; had concussions, slip discs and much more. He even used our intimate photos that we had taken before marriage and created a FB account and added people to it and then used my photos and asked them to bank in money for my personal photos. When I was pregnant with my second baby....he went crazy and took a chair and hit me on my stomach. I was hurt badly. Went to hospital and the doctor said that the baby died, 7 months. I had to push out my dead baby girl even when I didn’t want to. They carried her away and I only saw her head and curly hair. They closed it because if there is a death certificate for her, it would have become a police case. They paid the doctor to cover up, and they injected me. Before passing out, I saw them covering her with newspaper and white cloth. They paid the doctor around RM 15k and I don’t what they did to her body.” **(NP10, pg. 6)**

“I have been married for the past 11 years. I will get so much beating from him and also the extend where I was admitted in the hospital, I was hit in the middle of the road with face bleeding and fracture in my legs and hands. After that, he left to Singapore and he had affair. Whenever, I tried to speak up as a wife, he will beat me.” **(VJ15, pg. 6)**

“I got married at the age 21. The biggest mistake was that. He drinks alcohol and I never liked it. We always end up fighting. He will hit me and chase out of the house. I didn’t see the outside world too much. I couldn’t take it anymore when he hit my son. I was so dependent on him; I do not know how to manage without him. The day I walked out of the court carrying the status ‘divorcee’ I cried because I was ashamed of my status and myself.”
(KK44, pg. 5)

“I got married when I was young, and it was love marriage. He was a typical man because his mother raised him to think a woman has to do everything on her own without sulking even when she is not well. He will always hit me each time when I voice out my discomfort. I was beaten up when I was pregnant with my first baby and baby passed away at birth. I started having lots of problem with him when my next baby was 3 months. I tried to work things but didn’t help.”
(KB45, pg. 5)

“I got married at age 23, after 3 months knowing him. His mother and him could not actually accept me fully because I am from a mix parentage. I was treated badly by them but I still changed everything for him. There were times I was beaten up badly but I stayed on thinking things will work out. After running away, I went back to him when he apologised to me and after 3 months he started back. The worst thing he did was to run away with my two girls and disappeared for 7 years. I was in the house where he left me for a week motionless and almost died.” **(RE46, pg. 6)**

“I met him when I was 21 and he was 7 years older. We were in the same line of work. The violence was early in the relationship and I was always blamed. He gaslighted me and was manipulative. I was scared to leave him as he uses my weakness against my family and close friends. He was a pathological liar, cheated on me, was violent on me and keep me locked up for days will threaten me if I wanted to leave him. Once I tried to leave and the violence was extreme. He used a knife at my throat and strangled me and kicked me a lot. And then I got pregnant, he told me he would change after we had the baby and I believed him. He never changed and was violent with my dad and my baby. She got hurt and he blamed me that I was the bad mom.” **(PV51, pg. 5)**

“I was married at a young age...to a prominent man. He stopped me from excelling and I abided by him. I thought he was looking out for me but he was jealous. This happened before our wedding and when I voiced out to him, we end up quarrelling. I wanted to call off my wedding by we were engaged for a long time and he manipulated my family and I had to marry him. I was crying on my wedding day. After marriage, he restricted me slowly. He used violence to control me and yet he got the support for it from my family. Day by day things became worst, so much bruises, blood. My nose was broken, got hurt at my stomach so badly at one point I couldn't even go to bathroom. I am such a small sized person. My head was so painful all the times due to being beaten up every day.” **(UD55, pg. 6)**

4. Access to redress

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
4.1 Reporting cases	Experience, reporting cases and feedback received	<p>“I made police report, twice. Police never take much actions as he was very clever to manipulate them. Police were all men and they seem to protect the man. They know we are weak and they take advantage.” (AA06, pg. 7)</p> <p>“Police because at that time he came back from Singapore and hit me so badly that I couldn’t take it anymore.” (VJ15, pg. 6)</p> <p>“Police in 2016 when he hit me but they let him off with warning. When I reported the 2nd time after being beaten badly, they took down the report.” (PG38, pg. 7)</p> <p>“Reported my abuse many times to the police. Nothing much was done; they do not really interfere when it comes to family matters. I have even asked them, “Will you only take actions if I turn up dead one dead?” and they replied yes (jokingly to me). (KK44, pg. 7)</p> <p>“After he kidnapped my children. They managed to track my children and I got them after 7 years.” (RE46, pg. 7 and 8)</p> <p>“About 15 police reports. My lawyers gave me the right advice and it cost money. I can’t imagine how it is for people who do not have money.” (PV51, pg. 7)</p> <p>“I made a lot of police reports. My violence was not taken seriously but when it involved my kids, and when the counsellor stood up for me, they acted upon it. But nothing much was done because he was a very influential leader.” (UD55, pg. 7)</p>
4.2 Not reporting cases	Reasons for not reporting cases	<p>“At that time, I was still young in my 20s and everything was about love. I continued enduring it till I couldn’t anymore and left to my parents” (JR08, pg. 6)</p> <p>“I could not because the police were all his father’s contacts.” (NP10, pg. 8)</p> <p>“Feared what society will think and felt humiliated.” (KB45, pg. 7)</p>

5. Impact

5.1 Negative impacts	Negative impacts on life	<p>“Trauma, depressed-children also gave up on me at some point. All 3 sons went into drugs because mother has no husband, no divorce letter and my daughter is also having marital problems.” (AA06, pg. 8)</p> <p>“Health problems because he used to kick me so much in the stomach. Thought about suicide but thought about children.” (JR08, pg. 7)</p> <p>“Suicidal ideations-when I lost my baby, but I had strong friends who stood by me. I have cut myself and wanted to die many times. I did it because I lost my baby and he takes away my kids.” (NP10, pg. 9)</p> <p>“I tried to kill myself, poke the knife through my veins due to family quarrel. He beats me and he was telling me about his girlfriend. I could not take it; I took a knife. My father in-law took me to the hospital.” (VJ15, pg. 7)</p> <p>“Battling for child custody and to get separation from him.” (PG38, pg. 8)</p> <p>“Very down and depressed and keep thinking that my life was over. Mental abuse and torture. Had many thoughts to die.” (KK44, pg. 8)</p> <p>“The worst depression was when my son was taken away from me by him. Suicidal ideations was there but I think of my only son.” (KB45, pg. 7)</p> <p>“Trauma, depression, suicidal ideations and stopped me from continuing to work.” (RE46, pg. 9)</p>
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		<p>“Used to cut myself, some were there for me but many didn’t want to be in this drama and I had to still depend on him. I lost my family and friends at one point because I didn’t listen to them when they wanted to help me, as I thought all that he did to me was out of love” (PV51, pg. 8)</p> <p>“I went into deep depression and was like a zombie and hospitalised. I attempted suicide and was rushed to the hospital and was still with him that time. I did this because I was beaten in the public by him and humiliated for no reason. He covered it up and told me not to tell the police and was by my side all the time.” (UD55, pg. 8)</p>
5.2 Positive impacts	Positive impacts on life	<p>“Went into spiritual ways and let karma take place.” (AA06, pg. 8)</p> <p>“I worked hard to bring up them and I had to be away from them a while, stabilising. I thank my father and mother to support me.” (JR08, pg. 7)</p> <p>“I took all the pain to change my life. Life has not been fair to me but I had to go through to become who I am today.” (KK44, pg. 9)</p> <p>“After my mother passed away, I had no one. I called my ex and told him that we should not go on like this but just focus on the son and he asked me that he wants to be in his son’s life and I agreed.” (KB45, pg. 8)</p> <p>“Empowering other women to fight violence and to live.” (RE46)</p>

Conclusion:

1. All participants come from **various backgrounds**. Most of them are educated and are in stable and good professions.
2. Most of them have challenges to express themselves freely online as well as offline (especially at work) due to their status as single separated or divorced women.
3. Most of them have **experienced restrictions in regard to FOE and some of them are still restricted due to low inferiority complex and depression**.
4. They are all victims of horrible abuse and violence by their partners or spouses and are deeply scarred and impacted for life.
5. Some were not aware of SGBV until they experience it themselves. Most of them never anticipated such fate due to lack of awareness.
6. **All of them were physically, sexually and verbally abused. They have lost babies during pregnancies, still suffer physical pains until today due to the impact of all the beatings they have endured many years, still battling for child custodies and divorce for few years, almost died due to the violence or suicide and many more.**
7. Most of them made police reports yet the abusers who were married to them were all given warnings the first time and let go. The reports were only constructed when they come in the next time. However, **they never got the rightful justice**. Only when it involved children being abused or kidnapped by the abusers that the reports were taken seriously and steps were initiated to rescue the children. **Domestic violence in this country is still not taken seriously as there are no specific laws to punish the abusers who are legally married spouses**. Those who are not married legally are always ignored unless they have the money to afford legal advice and lawyers to take up their cases.
8. Some of them could not report their abuse because they were either blinded by love at such young age when they thought that getting beaten is a form of love or because their spouses or their in-laws were all prominent and influential people in the society and country.

9. Gaps that still exist for domestic violence are:

- a. Police doesn't take domestic violence seriously and police are usually men and protect men and not us. Women are being afraid and not standing up for their rights. Islamic law here in Malaysia is not the real law. The law depends on the men and not us who are tortured all ways just because we are legally married to them.
- b. Based on their experience, some NGOs and services are advertising their organization but we are not getting the help we need. For example, when one of the participants went to seek help from 'Sisters of Islam', no one helped her just because they know her prominent father in law. She even contacted WHO 'Jabatan Kebajikan' but no help from any. In Malaysia, all fault falls on the woman even when she gets pregnant. That is why many babies are thrown and dumped because babies from unwed Malay mothers will not be given the father's name anymore. So, to avoid their babies being called names and denied everything in the future, they throw away their babies not knowing what to do.
- c. Grey area in regard to the security and protection for women. For example, when one of the participants went to the police, her experience was that, they were not going to do anything until she showed them bruises that are still bleeding or if the man tells that he is going to kill her in front the police. Women are not even able to get restraining order if they are not legally married or afford RM 15, 000 to get this order. How are they going to show bruises for emotional abuse? They do not get help when the abuser is someone prominent or in high position. There is no help for domestic violence victims like us until they die or get murdered.
- d. The only actions the authorities take is when a child is abused along the way because there are laws for this.

- e. Public watch real life situations when we are beaten in the public by our abusive partners, like a movie is going on. Rarely, people come to help.
- f. No expertise for certified implementors in NGOs to help women, usually only volunteers. No proper guideline for domestic violence. Helplines for us are not helpful at all. Counselling made no differences for us, but led towards break up. No freedom for abused victims and mothers to live their lives freely.
- g. Society is so judgemental and ruining our lives. Stuck in traditional culture where women are trapped and undermined always. 95% of the comments are towards the women and not men.

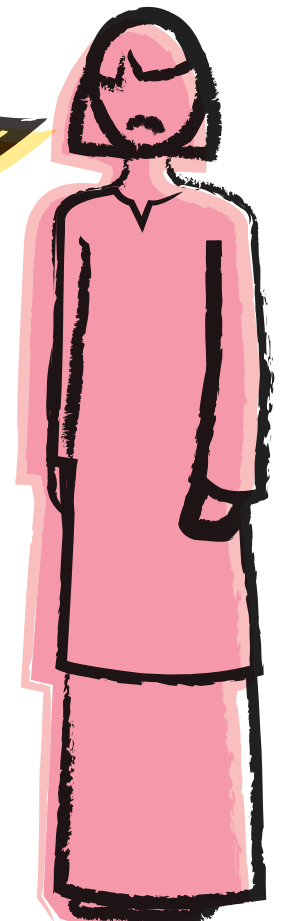
10. Their **hopes** are:

- a. Malaysia should recognise woman and given all the equal rights and to get justice in regard to law. Law must be fixed for women like us. We need strong security.
- b. For parents to bring up their children right and with awareness. Education is the key. Societal ideology must change, judging people and labelling people should not exist anymore.
- c. Government should have plans to help single mothers as many of us go through domestic violence. Police should give punishments for abusers and not just warnings.
- d. There should be guidelines for us to get all the relevant help. Giving warnings the first time to abusers might result in death for the abused women.
- e. Have courses for everyone regardless race and religion before they get married and nurture mental health so that they will know what to expect in a marriage. We need democracy here. We need to be free to express.
- f. Empowerment to build strength for women is needed. We shouldn't be stigmatized anymore. The impact is too much to bear.

- g. Men must groom their sons to be better fathers, husbands and sons. Schools must teach all this from the very start on morale values and all the awareness.
- h. Domestic violence victims should document every single abuse from day one and send it to those that they really trust as evidences.

“Trauma, was always scared and felt like **I will die getting beaten up and all I can think about is my kids...**”

(NM12, pg. 7)



H. Married or in partnership (including working mothers, housewives and foreigners married to Malaysian)

Theme		
1. Ways of exercising freedom of speech		
Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
1.1 Issues freely expressed	Types of issues or matters expressed freely in daily lives	<p>“Gender equality-I am from Nepal and we are thought that women are always superior and divine.” (DN17, pg. 2)</p> <p>“Use to be people pleaser before and express fully to people I am closer and if I am not close to them, I will be cautious and observe first.” (NN33, pg. 2)</p> <p>“Lots of videos to express-gender equality and feminism.” (LK48, pg. 2)</p> <p>“Sexual matters-medical advice based on my experience.” (TS54, pg. 2)</p> <p>“Human rights, politics, information of health and gender.” (SM60, pg. 2)</p>
1.2 Challenging platforms to express freely	Comparison between online and offline platforms	<p>“Online, in social platforms we could be misunderstood online because they can’t see our expression and body language.” (DN17, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Online, when I post online there is no tone, no interaction and no feelings. People might interpret wrongly.” (NN33, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Both platforms are equally challenging, because I am not born and bred here in Malaysia. Online can be challenging for me because I always get random comments and messages on how I look and appear.” (LK48, pg. 3)</p>

		<p>“Home and workplace. At work, even though I have 10 years’ experience, they look at my qualifications.” (TS54, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Workplace because our points might not be important to them and there are always job hierarchy that they follow.” (SM60, pg. 3)</p>
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2. Self-censorship or regulation

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
2.1 Challenges to express freely	The factors that affect freedom of speech	<p>“Usually for me, family but I don’t fight it because I do not want to hurt others.” (DN17, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Sometimes in college or work place, I find people with different mentality. Sometimes, I get different feedback and they say things I don’t agree with.” (NN33, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Sometimes external factors (others being difficult on us) and sometimes it is internal (own thoughts on others perceptions).” (LK48, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Jobs and people, I work with. Feel disturbed and mental torture.” (TS54, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Family and job. Balancing responsibilities because have family and at the same time, have to commit to work.” (SM60, pg. 3)</p>
2.2 Restrict FOE	The reasons to restrict freedom of speech	<p>“Yes. I have a cousin brother...becoming an alcoholic and always picks up fights each time he drinks. I tried to advise him but it didn’t convince him. I decided to let go and not express myself to him.” (NN33, pg. 4)</p> <p>“No matter how I express, I will be labelled and undermined.” (TS54, pg. 4)</p> <p>“...sometimes I do stop expressing myself in workplace because my points or views will not be an interest for them since they are superiors and they do not want to hear from you.” (SM60, pg. 3)</p>

2.3 Being at risk	Being at risk due to FOE	<p>“Yes, because behind my head, I will think if what I do or say will backfire me.” (DN17, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Yes....a fight broke up between my friend and her boyfriend and it was getting louder and suddenly he punched her in the restaurant. I jumped and hugged her and scolded him back. The fight could have turned back to me and I could have gotten hit.” (NN33, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Yes, it is historical actually. I had an abusive childhood.” (LK48, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Yes, at work they will keep picking on you and jeopardize my work just because I speak up and express myself.” (TS54, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Yes, the risk is higher at work when you express at work because you will be noted as a person who goes against and once, they see small mistakes in us, there is no chance of growing in the institution.” (SM60, pg. 4)</p>
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3. Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
3.1 What is SGBV?	Understanding SGBV	<p>“The first thing that comes to my mind is domestic violence that happens at home, men beating women. Rarely we see women hitting men because they abuse men differently, and violence happens to children too. Many people don’t share and they think it is okay to be hit and many do not know how to differentiate between violence and discipline.” (NN33, pg. 5)</p> <p>“When it happens between different gender, when one gender is violent to another gender and really something not acceptable.” (LK48, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Sexual harassments and mental torture based on my own experience.” (TS54, pg. 4)</p> <p>“It is an act that is against to an individual because of their gender.” (SM60, pg. 4)</p>

<p>3.2 Real life SGBV incidents</p>	<p>SGBV that had big impacts in life</p>	<p>“I was sexually harassed by my boss. I realised that he did this because the way I dressed and he will harass me every night through messages and on what he wants to do to me.” (DN17, pg. 5)</p> <p>“My parents divorced when I was a baby. My mom was 25 when I was 7 and they both were very young. I stayed with dad and another lady and their daughter a while and it was like a Cinderella story. They will send me to school but they will not allow me to speak to anyone and I do he beat me at home. He will tie me up outside and put in dogs cage and many more. When I was 10, he made me bald and made me go to school like that. I realised I was abused when I was 12 and they talk bad things about my mom and to make me think I don't have any other place to go. He started talking things that he shouldn't talk to a daughter and that's when I decided to go back to mom.” (NN33, pg. 6)</p>
		<p>“I was using Grab services and was alone. Driver was friendly but after sometime, he started making inappropriate comments about the activities I should be doing with husband sexually and started talking about my looks and body.” (LK48, pg. 5)</p> <p>“I was trying to help my girl colleague who had some troubles with a boy who was harassing her. I talked to him through her phone and was polite to him and asked him not to disturb her. He found out my mobile number and started calling me and harassing me sexually and he found out where I was working and threatened to talk badly about me to my parents.” (TS54, pg. 5)</p> <p>“At younger age, during secondary school a student called me a slut in front everyone. At work, religion and gender discrimination when it comes to those at higher positions. (SM60, pg. 4)</p>

4. Access to redress

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
4.1 Reporting cases	Experience, reporting cases and feedback received	
4.2 Not reporting cases	Reasons for not reporting cases	<p>“I did not have the knowledge about this at that time in 2008, that I should report sexual harassment.” (DN17, pg. 6)</p> <p>“I was very young and didn’t know what to do. I kept contradicting myself and, in my head, my father loves me, I keep telling myself that. Was very confused.” (NN33, pg. 8)</p> <p>“Was in shock but I did update my husband on the details of the car and driver. I did report it to Grab.” (LK48, pg. 6)</p> <p>“Because I was much younger and now, I am still working and I need a job as its income and have a family.” (SM60, pg. 6)</p>

5. Impact

5.1 Negative impacts	Negative impacts on life	<p>“Even when I was depressed, I fought it by channelling my energy elsewhere. I dress differently like wearing longer skirts and dresses but he still commented on me and I realised it was not the way I dress but it was him, he can still imagine me naked.” (DN17, pg. 7)</p> <p>“Will often stand at the edge of building and think of jumping but I held it and I also called Befrienders, mostly at age 24. Every time I get these thoughts, I try my best to come out of it. I will just go to sleep.” (NN33, pg. 8)</p> <p>“Grew up always not feeling safe because of abusive childhood. Attempted suicide at young age because was in sexually abused relationship.” (LK48, pg. 7)</p>
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		<p>“Trauma, mentally disturbed.” (TS54, pg. 6)</p> <p>“Trauma, impact on interpersonal relationships, prevent me from participating in public discourse online or offline.” (SM60, pg.6)</p>
5.2 Positive impacts	Positive impacts on life	All of them are resilient and being strong and fighting all hardships.

Conclusion

1. Most of them are free to express online or offline, but depending on the situation and the place.
2. Their **challenges are mainly from work or public.**
3. Most of them are **restricted in regard to FOE at work places as the superiors undermine their ideas and opinions and use their positions and higher qualifications to demotivate them.** They encounter verbal abuse at work space and mental torture. Some of them were sexually harassed by their bosses.
4. All of them are aware of SGBV and have experienced it themselves.
5. One participant who is currently in a partnership has experienced immense child abuse and torture from her own father and his partner and still is facing the consequences in the form of mental disturbances (depression and anxiety). Another participant was verbally abused (sexually) by a Grab driver.
6. All of them did not report these incidences due to being very young, no support or no awareness on what are the next steps.
7. The **gaps** are:
 - a. The main thing is communication. People don't seek help because of the fear of being judged.
 - b. Mainly no awareness and no strict laws to punish wrong doers. People still think it is okay to be hit and do not know how to differentiate violence and discipline.

- c. Gaps in education and culture. It is still a taboo and that will be the biggest gap. There is not enough public safety to talk about all the important issues. Our awareness and education levels are not proper compared to overseas to provide the awareness we need like sex education.

8. Their **hopes** are:

- a. Governments should have SOPs for women to take up strong roles as well.
- b. People must realise that everyone is stuck to their mentalities. Everyone must take a step back and reflect on themselves and think alike. No one owns anybody. People must understand themselves and fix whatever and country must provide more awareness for domestic violence, child abuse, harassments at work and come up with strict laws to punish the perpetrators.
- c. People must be open to report and help those who do not have a voice.
- d. Socially, more work can be done in terms of inter-rational harmony and for us all to live peacefully because we are all humans. There is still fragmentation in the country and championing human rights is very important.
- e. We need to incorporate sex education with psychology element starting from the young children because we can teach them about wrong doing and actions that can lead to bad things based on people's movements and characters. Martial arts must be made compulsory so they will know how to secure themselves.

I. Single women (including single women with children)

Theme		
1. Ways of exercising freedom of speech		
Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
1.1 Issues freely expressed	Types of issues or matters expressed freely in daily lives	<p>“Politics-active member of a women NGO. Sexual matters-very free to express about this matter.” (KV37, pg. 2)</p> <p>“I am comfortable being who I am as for my gender. I dress up more like a man, people who perceive me will know that I am interested in female compared to males. This is something I don’t express freely but I let people know with my dressing and personality.” (AD42, pg. 2)</p> <p>“I don’t really express much or speak freely in general.” (UU56, pg. 2)</p>
1.2 Challenging platforms to express freely	Comparison between online and offline platforms	<p>“Online, because people always have something bad to say about you online because they don’t know about you at all.” (KV37, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Home and workplace. The challenge is wondering if people are accepting what you are saying but when you express online, you are just typing it and people will read and they won’t need to see me.” (AD42, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Online because there is no privacy and what ever we post can be made viral.” (ND43, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Home and workplace. Difficult to approach people.” (UU56, pg. 3)</p>

2. Self-censorship or regulation

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
2.1 Challenges to express freely	The factors that affect freedom of speech	<p>“Mainly parents and relatives. They are very typical and are living for the sake of the society.” (KV37, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Public and my job. Staying in a society and in this country and LGBT not fully accepted. I will never be able to be free to express myself as it will jeopardize my work and life.” (AD42, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Sometimes people will harass us for things we post in our account and this will hit us back.” (ND43, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Depends to whom I am expressing myself to. Some will backstab me.” (UU56, pg. 3)</p>
2.2 Restrict FOE	The reasons to restrict freedom of speech	<p>“Yes, being in Malaysia, I grew up in a society where LGBT is not accepted and during my early years, I had very low confidence in speaking, especially to a group of people.” (AD42, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Yes, at work. I will share my opinions but they would not accept it but blame me instead.” (ND43, pg. 3)</p> <p>“I am actually very helpless now. I don't feel like talking or expressing anything anymore because I don't have anyone besides my very young kids.” (UU56, pg. 3)</p>
2.3 Being at risk	Being at risk due to FOE	<p>“People had made me fragile and try to break me because I am a woman.” (KV37, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Yes, I still go through discrimination from others just because I am different but don't let this affect me.” (AD42, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Yes. I will get bullied and that makes me sad.” (ND43, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Yes. Once my sister's husband has slapped me when I expressed myself about something to him.” (UU56, pg. 4)</p>

3. Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
3.1 What is SGBV?	Understanding SGBV	<p>“It means like I am female and often, females are physically weaker than men and hence they are abused if they are expressing themselves.” (KV37, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Fully in terms of violent actions or words from a male to female, male to male or female to female.” (AD42, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Discrimination on women, where women are always categorised as the weak ones and to be violated always.” (ND43, pg. 4)</p> <p>“I have faced it myself.” (UU56, pg. 4)</p>
3.2 Real life SGBV incidents	SGBV that had big impacts in life	<p>“...i was somehow made to fall in love with my cousin's husband without me knowing. What I remember was I was suddenly married to him as he came to get me from my house. All this happened 5 months before I came to my senses. Argument started when I found I was pregnant, 9 weeks. I felt so used and abused. As I was fighting him stopping him from touching me, I fell down and bled so much and miscarried. Bedridden for a month. He abused me after that and told me that I can go back to my family as he used me. I tried to hang myself but fell and my jaw got dislocated a bit. My next partner was abusive too, stayed with him for 4 years. He has hit me so badly, that my ears and head were hurt badly. He always locks me up and abuse me emotionally.” (KV37, pg. 6)</p>

“Most challenging period would be when I was growing up. Being different and LGBT, I was not accepted by my parents. Received harsh comments by my mother especially. I lacked confidence and lived in fear on what people will think of me for many years.... feeling not worth was in me until my early 30s. This hindered me from being able to maximize my full potential and I could have done better if I was given the opportunity to be who I am and if my parents were kind to me and accepted me.: **(AD42, pg. 5)**

“I was going through intense body shaming while I was in school. I was big sized. Fellow students in my boarding school will call me names loudly. I was humiliated like this for a long time, 5 years. I was hurt so deep and still am hurt until now. I cry alone each and every day in the bathroom.” **(ND43, pg. 5)**

“I got married when I was 18. I married him despite my family’s disapproval. I had no kids for 10 years. Got pregnant after that, one after another. During my second pregnancy, I found out that he was having affair. He denied and told me that she was like a sister. He left with her when I was 4 months pregnant but my family brought him back. 2 weeks before delivery, I found out he was in contact with her and when I asked him, he beat me so badly till my lips tore, and my face was bleeding and I was pregnant yet he didn’t bother. I avoided this and told him we should talk later because worried for the baby. I went to give birth and he was not around. He left that day it has been three years. I tell my children he is dead when they ask me and recently, I found out that he is married to that girl and has a boy with her.” **(UU56, pg. 5)**

4. Access to redress		
Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
4.1 Reporting cases	Experience, reporting cases and feedback received	
4.2 Not reporting cases	Reasons for not reporting cases	<p>“I didn’t want to complicate things and wanted to close these chapters. I wanted all to end and to forget about it. I believed in karma.” (KV37, pg. 7)</p> <p>“At the time, I had so much fear on all of them because they were like gangsters.” (ND43, pg. 6)</p> <p>“I was so young and I married him when I was 18 and had two kids. Love blinded me and I could not report on him.” (UU56, pg. 7)</p>
5. Impact		
5.1 Negative impacts	Negative impacts on life	<p>“Battling anxiety for 3-4 years. I did seek help after not being able to fight it myself.” (AD42, pg. 7)</p> <p>“Depression for a long time.” (ND43, pg. 6)</p> <p>“Attempted suicide but stopped after thinking of my boys.” (UU56, pg. 7)</p>
5.2 Positive impacts	Positive impacts on life	<p>“I have become independent and upgraded myself always. I am talented and tell myself that I am worth so much. I put myself high and look for those who can match me and my heart and competence.” (KV37, pg. 8)</p> <p>“They have undermined me so much yet I fought it all and proved that weight is not a factor at all to judge someone. I studied well and went to the university and have a degree.” (ND43, pg. 7)</p> <p>“Staying strong because of kids.” (UU56, pg. 7)</p>

Conclusion

1. Most of them are free to express but some of them are **still restricted because they are still single, single mothers or homosexual.**
2. Some of them are restricted to express themselves **due to their sexual orientation or due to work colleagues or because of being single mothers were abandoned by their spouses without any warning.**
3. All of them were aware of SGBV as they have all faced some sort of violence in their lives. **Some were violated (body shaming) and bullied in boarding schools, some were verbally abused just because of their sexual orientation and some were abused sexually and physically by their spouses.**
4. All of them did not report their abuse simply because they didn't want to complicate things by doing so, being intimidated by their bullies and some were so in love with their partners that they were willing to accept and endure every pain.
5. Some were so depressed that they attempted suicide and were severely depressed, traumatized and have daily anxieties. Yet, they are all resilient to live their lives.
6. The **gaps** are:
 - a. Generation gaps and no gender equality in this country.
 - b. Mental health is taboo in this country.
 - c. Women are always taken lightly and seen as weak souls always and that gives others to be dominant on them and treat them wrongly.
 - d. There is no safety and security for women especially when they are at worst situations like being abused or abandoned by their husbands. After being single mother for 3 years, one of the participants was verbally abused daily and encountered sexual harassments. They looked at her terribly and asked me to sleep with them all because I am young and a single mother.

- e. One of the participants have tried calling 'Befrienders' at her lowest time and she did not get the support needed. She wanted to talk to someone but they responded only the next day through 'Whatsapp' and it was not very friendly but it was more like a Q and A session. This kind of response will not help people who are suicidal.

7. Their **hopes** are:

- a. There should be freedom or women in the laws. All media and channels should be made available, and awareness should be created from schools itself. Parents have to be educated on gender equality on how to create a safe platform for their kids.
- b. It may take many years for everyone to have freedom of speech but what may help to get there would be to have active communities and groups that bring women together or LGBT in general and provide safe spaces for them to be themselves and express themselves. This will motivate them to live rather than living a fearful life just because one is LGBT.
- c. We need strong women leaders to lead us and create safe platforms for us. We need support systems to live better and safely. We need empowerment to keep living independently without fear and awareness for everyone on how much we are suffering here.

Theme		
1. Ways of exercising freedom of speech		
Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
1.1 Issues freely expressed	Types of issues or matters expressed freely in daily lives	<p>“I speak freely on matters related to my work (HIV) and also talk freely offline in forums, like the ones organized during ‘World AIDS Day.’” (IS16, pg. 2)</p> <p>“Sexual matters-only for the community.” (SM47, pg. 2)</p>
1.2 Challenging platforms to express freely	Comparison between online and offline platforms	<p>“Online because sometimes what we are trying to send out through our posting, they won’t understand or sometimes get the wrong idea.” (IS16, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Home, it is easier to express myself at work space and for my community as I am comfortable with them but it is different at home, very restricted.” (SM47, pg. 3)</p>
2. Self-censorship or regulation		
Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
2.1 Challenges to express freely	The factors that affect freedom of speech	<p>“Usually, for it is the situation and the people around there, so I won’t be able to share certain important matters because they can’t accept what I want to share.” (IS16, pg. 3)</p> <p>“Mostly family, my husband’s family do not know my status and I have to be very cautious.” (SM47, pg. 3)</p>
2.2 Restrict FOE	The reasons to restrict freedom of speech	<p>“Yes, after getting married for the second time, I have to restrict much due to my status and his family not being aware of my status.” (SM47, pg. 4)</p>

2.3 Being at risk	Being at risk due to FOE	“Yes, those who didn’t know about my status will now know about me when I speak freely about this, related to work. The risk is for them to brand me and will avoid me after this.” (IS16, pg. 4)
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3. Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
3.1 What is SGBV?	Understanding SGBV	<p>“For me, I have not gone through but I have gone through emotional distress and it is very scary experience for any woman.” (IS16, pg. 4)</p> <p>“Do not know how to explain but aware what violence is.” (SM47, pg. 4)</p>
3.2 Real life SGBV incidents	SGBV that had big impacts in life	<p>“When I was married for the second time, he abused me mentally. The pain is intense and cannot be medicated. I keep rewinding all that he says to me and that was very bad for me. He will say all sorts of nasty things and bring my soul down.” (IS16, pg. 5)</p> <p>“I was infected through my first husband. I was pregnant with my 4th kid. He has abused me, punching and kicking me always. He passed away soon after. Someone informed our families about me infected. I was then isolated. No one wanted to touch my new born baby and my other kids. A staff nurse told my mother about my illness and gave her a pair of gloves and told her to wear those when she was going to bathe my baby. My mother never touched my baby and washed the bathroom with disinfectant each time we used it. My sister was telling my mother not to keep me there as she was scared mosquitoes that bit me will bite her as well and transmit the virus to her. Shortly after, I married again and he was abusive sexually and emotionally. I divorced him after 5 months.” (SM47, pg. 5)</p>

4. Access to redress

Sub-categories	Description	Significant Statement Examples
4.1 Reporting cases	Experience, reporting cases and feedback received	“Just to the religious department because he didn’t want to divorce me. I could not move on. The department was helpful and expedited my divorce.” (IS16, pg. 6)
4.2 Not reporting cases	Reasons for not reporting cases	“I didn’t report the abuse on my 2 nd husband because he was my choice and I was thinking of my kids and didn’t know where to get help.” (SM47, pg. 7)

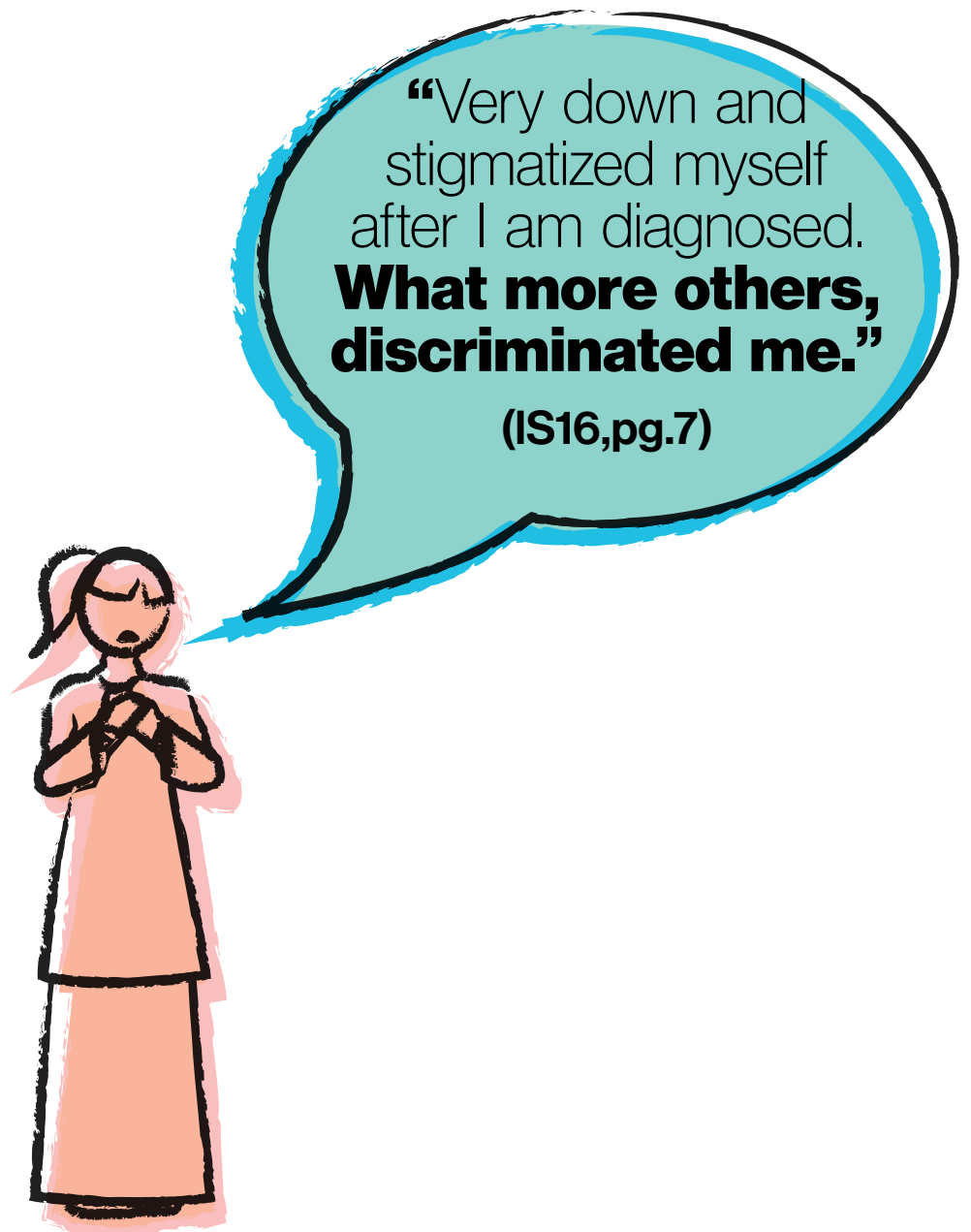
5. Impact

5.1 Negative impacts	Negative impacts on life	<p>“Very down and stigmatized myself after I am diagnosed. What more others, discriminated me.” (IS16, pg. 7)</p> <p>“Did try to kill myself by eating many pills and at the same time, drove the car recklessly to kill myself through accidents but somehow I came to my senses. When I was first diagnosed, no would want to eat with me or eat what I cooked.” (SM47, pg. 7)</p>
5.2 Positive impacts	Positive impacts on life	<p>“Leading an NGO for HIV population now and empowering them.” (IS16, pg. 7)</p> <p>“Fought it and worked with the HIV community.” (SM47, pg. 7)</p>

Conclusion

1. All of them are only free to express themselves to their community which consists of 'People Living with HIV (PLHIV)'.
2. **Challenges to express freely are usually because of their family members as they are usually not aware of their status. Their health conditions restrict their FOE and puts them at risk because besides their community members and their current spouses, no one from their families or circle of friends know about it.**
3. They have gone through SGBV themselves. **Some were abused physically and sexually** as well as being **terribly discriminated by own family members and health care workers** who were supposed to provide care and support and not otherwise.
4. They have not reported the abuse they faced to the police due to the fear of not having a support especially for their children without their spouses but one of the participants has reported her situation to the religious department to expedite her divorce.
5. They were all **severely impacted and had attempted suicide but never gave up and are living their lives strongly for their children and empowering PLHIV in a daily basis.**
6. The **gaps** for this community are:
 - a. Sometimes from the aspect of religion and law, men are more favoured and they get more priority than women. Women are always looked low and our fights are not taken seriously.
 - b. Gaps in the health system itself for people with HIV. They are still discriminated and judged. Health care workers must spread proper awareness especially to the family members of HIV patients as well as give concern and care to them not otherwise
7. Their **hopes** are:
 - a. There should be specific platforms for women to be heard and to be known.

- b. There must be proper and strong women leaders in politics, who can stand up for women and not those who look for publicity and glamor but to help women out there and be a role model.
- c. Malaysia always hold on to customs and men are always made dominant and women are made weak. This must change. Awareness is important for everyone. We need more NGOs like CAKNA worldwide to protect women like me and create more empowerment programs for us.



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the whole world pretty severely, the main limitation was to interview the participants face to face. I succeeded in interviewing the first four participants this way but 'Movement Control Order (MCO)' was enforced on the 18th of March 2020 which limited my access to connect with the participants nationwide. It was really difficult in the beginning to get participants who would need to speak to me via telephone calls.

The next limitation was the token of appreciation of RM 30 for each participant. While many of them received this amount happily and some were so happy to be heard that they didn't want the token, I lost some potential participants mainly belonging to the marginalised or vulnerable populations, due to this small amount. They told me that it should be at least RM 50 and RM 30 was too little for them.

I accomplished 60 participants from all the states in Malaysia except Perlis. I had contacts and tried hard until the end to get at least one from here, but those potential ones were either hesitant to participate or not happy with RM 30.



Even though the pandemic was a real challenge to get participants in the beginning, I did not give up and persevered to get participants from various backgrounds with many important, meaningful stories yet with tough battles. I started connecting with my contacts from other NGOs, friends, family and also through online platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp.

I started getting participants who had much to share and who were grateful to me and this research to have their voices out and to be finally heard. I also made some connections with people from some NGOs who do monthly visits to 'Orang Asli' villages to carry out medical camps there and to provide them with some monthly needs. I had the chance to join them on their missions after the 'Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO)' took place and met women there who had so much to share with me.

I created infographics to be shared in some women's groups in Facebook and WhatsApp and that helped me garner more participation for this research to be successfully carried out. Besides this, I was also invited to talk about sexual gender-based violence and to share my thoughts and experience on 'FB Live' and I was truly grateful to speak on this important yet still a taboo and to be able to spread awareness for many women who are still battling their immense pains in silence.

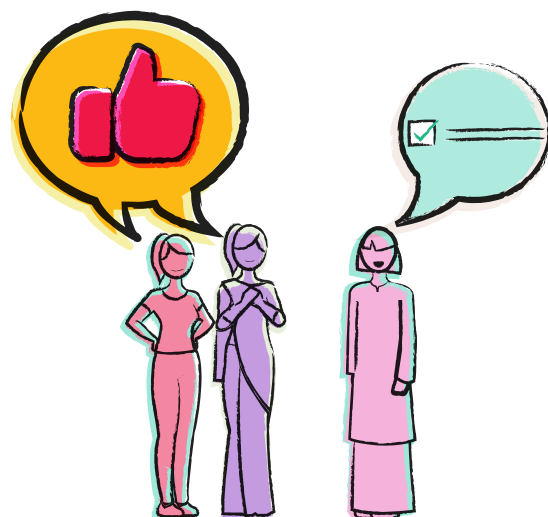


1. Organize workshops for women (at workplaces, NGOs, workplaces) – can collaborate with other NGOs and ministries

- a. To empower women on the reality of violence and the implications to themselves and their children (physical and mental health)
- b. To educate them on how to protect themselves from the beginning (not to wait when things get worse and the worst that can happen, death) and also to teach them how to identify early indicators on sexual and gender-based violence
- c. Mental health support

2. To work with maybe media platforms like national radio or TV stations

- a. To have sessions weekly or biweekly to be the voice to reach out to all those who need help and guidance but not free to speak up
- b. Sessions can be like simple talk shows on the reality of gender-based violence – raw experiences from the field and share success stories on how survivors fight through to live and also real stories on how many succumb to the violence
- c. Also, important to empower women to protect their young from being abused along – how to stop at the beginning rather than being in denial and to accept the abuse
- d. Also, important to spread awareness to everyone in general – to educate people on how it is important to control temper for example and violence never solves anything



3. To work with schools to educate children

- a. To empower children and educate them on what is abuse and what to do when there is even the slightest indication of abuse being inflicted on them or others
- b. Empower them to stand up to bullies and to report all wrong doings on them immediately
- c. Educate them on abuse and harassment inflicted online through all the social media

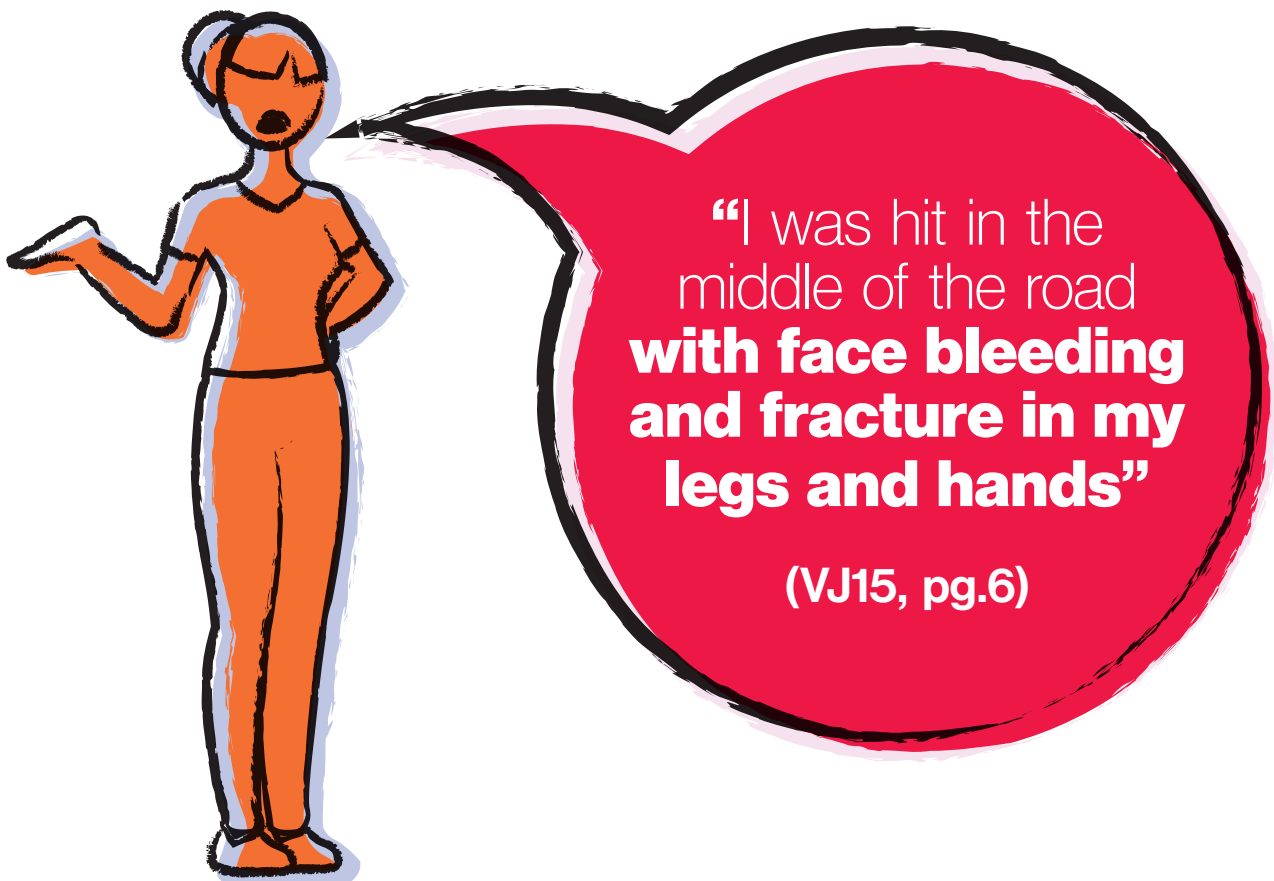
4. To set up a Facebook page to be the voice and to reach out to women who need help

- a. Post videos or statements that can help women in distress – sending out positive messages, ways to know abuse and to fight it and to escape abuse

5. Lastly, to work with relevant ministries towards stronger policies of protection and justice for women

- a. To also get more projects and research to document the 'reality' in the field – the bigger the data set, the stronger the justifications would be to insist on stricter policies and punishments
- b. To implement stronger protection measures who go in to report the first time – not to be sent home after the first report but to be taken seriously
- c. To provide the space for women to be bold to report any kinds of abuse without any fear
- d. To have stronger punishments for perpetrators and rehabilitate those who are unable to manage their anger/temper
- e. To work hard for those who really are vulnerable (i.e., refugees, undocumented, Orang Asli, children, single mothers, sex workers, transgenders, etc)

- f. Murder is a crime but why violence that causes more damages in and out a human being is never taken seriously while the person is alive and still salvageable? What is the point of taking actions after the person is murdered or after the person kills themselves? Prevention is better than cure.



“I was hit in the middle of the road **with face bleeding and fracture in my legs and hands**”

(VJ15, pg.6)

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1. Semi structured questionnaire used for the 60 women

Semi-structured Interview

Qualitative research study to investigate sexual gender-based violence against cisgender women's freedom of expression and decision-making in public and political spaces

Section 1: Background Information

1. Pseudonym/ Brief name¹
2. Age
3. Ethnicity
4. State resided in at the time of interview
5. Partnership status (single/married/in a relationship)
6. Who do you live with? (alone or with family members)
7. Any dependants?
8. What is your gender identity?
9. Can you describe your gender expression, as in how do you express yourself?

Feminine	Masculine	Androgynous/ Genderless	Depends on your daily mood
Notes:			

1. How would you describe your sexual orientation? (who are you attracted romantically?)

Heterosexual	Homosexual	Bisexual	Lesbian	Queer	Others
Notes:					

2. What do you do for a living?
3. Which category do you fall in?

Sex worker	Orang Asli	Migrant worker	Drug User	Any kinds of disability	Religious minority	Asylum seeker/ Refugee
Domestic worker	B40	None above, feel free to specify:				

¹Research ID will be coded with the first letter of the forename and the first letter of the surname with a number

Section 2: How Do You Exercise Your Freedom of Expression (FOE)

1. Do you consider yourself as someone who expresses their ideas/opinions/identities/self freely in general? Yes/No
2. What social platforms do you use to express your FOE?

Online Platforms	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	WhatsApp/ WeChat/ Viber/ Telegram	Blogs	Others
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Notes:

Offline Platforms	Home	Workplace	Educational Institutions	Public spaces (Forums, Rallies, Shopping malls, Parks, etc)	Mainstream media	Others
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Notes:

Which platform are you most active at and why?

Have your social media post been picked up by tabloids, or media? If yes, how frequent and which media?

Does your FOE change when you use the specified platforms above? If yes, why?

3. What do you usually express?

A	Social observations and commentaries
B	Creative expression or content in the form of writing, songs, videos, visuals, etc
C	Information of health and gender
D	Gender expression/self-identity (i.e. through clothing, mannerisms, make-up, etc)

E	Politics (i.e. views on political affairs, country, etc)
F	Religion/belief (i.e. views on your beliefs, etc)
G	Sexual matters (i.e. your sexual orientation, sexual expression, sexual and reproduction health, etc)
H	Gender equality or feminism (i.e. promoting equality between genders, sharing feminist ideas, etc)
I	Human rights (i.e. sharing information on anti-discrimination, specific issues faced by specific communities, democratic processes, etc)
J	Other causes

- How do you decide what to express or what to post? What are the determining factors?
- Which platforms are more challenging for you to express yourself in terms of: your identities and self-expression, ideas, opinions, and thoughts?

A	Online and other communication platforms (i.e. Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc)
B	Home
C	Workplace
D	Educational institution
E	Public spaces (i.e. forum, events, public rally, shopping malls, parks, etc)
F	Others
Why do you feel it's challenging to express yourself in the platform/s above?	

Section 3: Self-censorship or regulation

- To what extent are you able to freely express certain things like your identity, ideas, opinions, thoughts and others?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all free	Very restricted	Moderately free	Free but with little challenges/ constraints	Very free without any constraints
What are your concerns/challenges (i.e. family, job, backlash, state persecution, etc)?				
How do you feel about your concerns or challenges? What are the factors that contribute to these challenges?				

- What is the impact of these concerns or challenges to you?

1	2	3	4	5
Affect you deeply	Affect to some extent but not too deep	Moderately affected	Very minimal affect	Not affected at all

Do these challenges affect your ability to express yourself, taking on leadership roles or in decision making processes?				
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i. Have you stopped, limited or restricted yourself from expressing yourself, ideas, opinions or thoughts? If yes, please share some relevant experience (what kinds of issues, topics or things that you feel, require you to exercise self-censorship).

3. Do you still stop or restrict yourself? Yes/No

a. If yes, why? What are the factors that causes you to restrict yourself in expressing yourself (i.e. family, job, arrest, harassment)?

4. Have you considered to not take up a leadership or decision-making roles or restrict yourself from these roles in the past? Yes/No

a. If yes, what are the factors that causes you to restrict yourself from taking up leadership or decision-making roles (i.e. family, job, arrest, harassment)? Please share your experience.

b. Do you think differently now? If yes, why?

5. While expressing yourself, do you think your identity, status or anything at all about you, place you at higher risk than others? If yes, why

Section 4: Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) due to Freedom of Speech (FOE)

1. What do you understand with sexual gender-based violence (SGBV)?

2. Do you think SGBV is a problem in your community and this country? If yes or no, why?

3. What were the responses that you have received when you are expressing yourself:

a. Online?

b. Offline?

4. Have you ever experienced any of the following for expressing yourself either online or offline?

A	Intimidation (speech or action that incite fear, could be physical or sexual)
B	Harassment (physical, verbal or sexual)
C	Backlash (negative comments or criticism)
D	Exclusion (being isolated or excluded from group)

E	Shaming and humiliation (body shaming, slut shaming, etc)
F	Guilt tripping (make you feel guilty specially to make you do something) and gaslighting (manipulate you psychologically and make you question yourself and your sanity)
G	Doxxing or dissemination of personal information or photos without your consent (i.e. legal documents, private photos or videos)
H	Boycott
I	Denial of opportunities
J	Smear campaigns or slander (to falsely accuse you especially to the public)
K	Stalking
L	Threatening you (to report you to the police, Islamic department, employers, family or others)
M	Aggression or violence
N	Others

5. Could you share any recent or previous incident that impacted you significantly in regard to SGBV?

What happened?	
Where and when did this incident happen?	
How long did it last for?	
Who were the perpetrators (did you know them or were they complete strangers)?	
Did this incident reoccur?	
What was the impact of this incident to you?	
How did you manage the situation? i. What were your coping mechanisms? ii. Who were your support system?	

Section 5: Access to Redress

1. Based on your experiences of aggression and violence, have you reported any cases?

A. If YES:

Where and who did you report them to (social media, police, Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission, human resources department, others)?	
What kinds of case/s did you report?	
How many times have you reported your case?	
What were the factors that motivated you to report the cases?	

What were the actions taken after your report?	
Were you satisfied with the outcome of your report/s? If yes, why? If No, why?	
How do you think the process in reporting a case to the respective authorities, could be improved?	

B. If NO:

Why did you not or hesitated to report your case/s?	
How many times did you fail to report your case/s?	
What are the factors that demotivated you from reporting your case/s?	
What do you think could have encouraged you to report cases of aggression or violence without hesitation or being doubtful?	

Section 6: Impact

1. What are/were the overall impacts of restriction of FOE on you?

A	Any kinds of trauma, stress, anxiety, low self-esteem issues, other psychological impact on mental health
B	Suicidal ideations
C	Denial (i.e. in opportunities, exclusion, isolation, termination of employment)
D	Impact on interpersonal relationships (i.e. partner, family members, friends, colleagues, etc)
E	Prevent you from participating in public discourse online or offline
F	Demotivates you from taking up any leadership or decision-making roles
G	Stop you from continuing work that you are passionate above (i.e. activism, public speaking, workshops, etc)
H	Positive impacts on you (i.e. motivates you to take up more empowering roles, made you more resilient, gained more strength in regards to gender based violence and security and others)
I	Other impacts

Section 7: Conclusion

1. Do you think there are gaps in protection or prevention of gender-based violence, especially in regards to freedom of expression?
2. Could you summarise on what would make it easier for you in Malaysia to express yourself, ideas or opinions freely across various platforms online or offline?
3. Any other comments before we end?

-End of questionnaire-

2. Informed consent form

This informed consent form for cisgender women in Malaysia and who we are inviting to participate in this research titled, **“Qualitative research study to investigate sexual gender-based violence against cisgender women’s freedom of expression and decision-making in public or political spaces”**

Name of Lead Researcher: Dr. Vinogiri Krishnan

Name of Organization: Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (EMPOWER)

Name of Sponsor: United Nations Trust Fund (UNTF)

Name of Project: Qualitative research study to investigate sexual gender-based violence against cisgender women’s freedom of expression and decision-making in public and political spaces.

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

- Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)
- Certificate of Consent (signature/thumbprint if you choose to participate)

Part I: Information Sheet

Introduction

I am Dr. Vinogiri KS and the lead researcher for ‘Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor’ (EMPOWER). We are conducting a research to explore sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and the various forms of discrimination that women in Malaysia encounter in a daily basis. I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research. You do not have to decide immediately, whether or not you will participate in this research. Before you make your decision, you

can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about this research. This consent form may contain words that you do not understand and if so, please ask me to stop as we go through the information and I will take time to explain. If you have questions later, you can always ask me.

Purpose of this research

Women's freedom of expression is fundamental for the promotion and achievement of gender equality and non-discrimination. In Malaysia, SGBV in the form of extremist speech or actions usually mean that women are unable to participate in the public sphere effectively. Thus, the long-term effects of such speech or actions will mean that girls or women (cisgender or transgender) will have to bear the disproportionate cost of such discrimination and hostility and resulting in the normalisation of self-censorship, discrimination and violence suffered with little to no redress. Therefore, this study seeks to address the intersectionality of the forms of SGBV and discrimination women face in Malaysia as well as to explore the availability, accessibility and efficacy of redress mechanisms in regards to SGBV online and offline.

Type of Research Intervention

This research will involve your participation in either a one to one in-depth interview or in a focus group discussion (FGD) that will take about 40-50 minutes.

Participant selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because we feel that your experience as a woman in this country can contribute so much to our understanding and knowledge of SGBV and discrimination among cisgender women.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. If you choose to participate, the choice that you make will have no bearing on your job or any work-related evaluations or reports. You may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

Procedures

We are asking you to help us learn more about SGBV, discrimination in terms of restriction of freedom of expression or speech, availability and efficacy of redress mechanisms and other factors that contribute to the restrictions and discriminations women face daily in this country. If you accept to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part either in a one-to-one in-depth interview or in an FGD with 5 or lesser persons. This discussion will be guided and moderated by me, Dr. Vino (moderator and interviewer for this study). The interview or the FGD will start with me making sure you are comfortable. We can also answer questions about the study that you might have. Then we will ask you questions based on a semi-structured questionnaire and give you time to share your knowledge and experience. The questions will be about yourself first and then about your experiences in regards to your decision-making roles, how you exercise your freedom of expression offline or online, types of discrimination you have faced and how you overcome your challenges, SGBV and freedom of expression and access to redress. The FGD or interview will take place in a comfortable place for you. No one else but you or the people who take part in the FGD or interview and myself will be present during our sessions. The entire discussion will be recorded with voice recorders (with your consent) but no one will be identified by name on the recordings. The recordings will be stored safely with password protected software. The information recorded is confidential and no one else except me, Dr. Vino and Ms. Nabilah will have access to the recordings. All recordings associated with you will be destroyed after 6 months.

We will not ask you to share your personal beliefs, practices or stories and you do not have to share any knowledge or experience that you are not comfortable sharing.

Duration

This entire study will take place for about three months. During this period of time, we will only visit you once to either have the FGD or the one-to-one interview, which would approximately take 40-50 minutes. We will also follow up with you in regards to the completed findings and report.

Risks

If the discussion or interview is on sensitive and personal issues that could make you feel uncomfortable and disturbed, you do not have to answer or take part in that particular discussion. You do not have to give us any reason for not responding to these questions. We will try our best to make the sessions as comfortable as possible for you.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to you but your participation in this study is very precious and will be very helpful for us understand the topic SGBV and the various forms of discrimination women in Malaysia face in a daily basis.

Reimbursements

You will not be provided any incentive to take part in this research. However, we will give you RM 30.00 for your time taken to participate in the FGD or one-to-one interview.

Confidentiality

We will not be sharing information about you to anyone outside of the research team. The information that we collect from this study will be kept private. **Your identity will not be revealed** at any point and **you will be kept anonymous** throughout. We will give you an identifier like a mixture of your first and last name with a number (i.e. MX 1). Only the researchers will know your identifiers. We will also ask you and the others who have participated in the FGD to not talk to people outside the group about what was said in the FGD. We will ask each and every one of you to keep every discussion confidential. However, we will not be able to stop or prevent participants who were in the group from sharing things that should be confidential.

Sharing the results

Nothing that you tell us today will be shared with anybody outside the research team and nothing will be attributed to you by name. The knowledge that we get from this research will be shared with you and your community in the form of a summary of the results. This will ensure everyone to learn and gain from this study and to spread awareness to their communities.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so and choosing to participate will not affect any part of your life. You may stop participating in the interview or discussion at any time that you wish. I will give you an opportunity at the end of the session to review your remarks and

you can ask to modify or remove portions of those, if you do not agree with my notes or if I did not understand you correctly.

Who to Contact?

If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact any one of us at the following: Dr. Vino or Ms. Nabilah at +603-79604977 or reach out to us at EMPOWER. This study has been reviewed and approved by United Nations Trust Fund Committee and we will make sure that all participants are protected from harm.

You can ask me any questions about any part of this research study, if you wish to. Do you have any questions?

End of Part I

Part II: Certificate of Consent

I have read the foregoing information about this research study, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print name of participant: _____

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

DD/MM/YYYY

If illiterate ¹

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Print name of witness: _____ **Thumb print of participant**

Signature of witness: _____

Date: _____

DD/MM/YYYY

¹A literate witness must sign (if possible, this person should be selected by the participant and should not have any connection to the research team). Participants who are illiterate should include their thumbprint as well.

Statement by the researcher/person taking consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

1. One-to-one in-depth interview between the participant and interviewer

OR

2. FGD session with others (the most; 5 people in an FGD session)

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about this study and all the questions asked by the participants have been attended to and answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF will be provided to the participant.

Print name of researcher/person taking consent: _____

Signature of researcher/person taking consent: _____

Date: _____

DD/MM/YYYY

End of Part II

3. Infographics used in social media (WhatsApp and Facebook) in regard to this research



i. Timeline of this research

No	Tasks	May				June				July				August				September
		1st week	2nd week	3rd week	4th week	1st week	2nd week	3rd week	4th week	1st week	2nd week	3rd week	4th week	1st week	2nd week	3rd week	4th week	
1	Interviews face to face before MCO-completed 4 participants																	
2	Transcripts sent to Bella for four participants																	
3	Started phone interview-1 participant																	
4	Revising semi conducted questionnaire to a simpler version																	
5	Recruiting 55 potential participants- 1 from each state, 1 from each group at least																	
6	Carrying out phone interviews for all participants – target is 55																	
7	Editing, analyse, proof-reading, layout																	
8	First draft report with preliminary findings																	
9	Final research report																	
Completed and submitted on 22nd September 2020																		

Indicators:

Completed before 18March2020 (MCO)	
Ongoing	
Completed	