

## Dark Portrait of Domestic Violence: A Case Study of Domestic Violence Victims in Binjai, North Sumatra

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### Abstract:

*Domestic violence (DV) against women is a form of abuse that has severe physical and psychological consequences for victims. This study aims to explore the experiences of DV victims in Binjai, North Sumatra, and the psychological and physical impacts they endure. The research employs a qualitative approach with a case study method. The subject of this study is a female DV victim who shared her experiences of violence inflicted by her husband, resulting in physical, psychological, and social changes in her daily life. The findings indicate that the victim suffers from psychological trauma, including anxiety, fear, and sleep disturbances, as well as physical effects such as bruises and hair loss. The violence also leads to decreased social interaction, causing the victim to become isolated from her surroundings. This study highlights the importance of women's empowerment, social support, and medical assistance for DV victims, as well as the need for intervention from authorities and relevant institutions to protect women's rights. The study's implications emphasize the necessity of both preventive and curative measures against DV cases and greater attention to women's protection within households.*

**Keywords:** *Domestic violence, psychological impact, physical impact, women*

### 1. Introduction

Domestic Violence (DV) is one of the social problems that continues to rise and has become a global concern, particularly regarding its impact on women. Domestic violence not only causes physical injuries but also has significant psychological effects such as trauma, anxiety, and depression. According to data from the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) in 2022, domestic violence still dominates cases of violence against women, with physical, psychological, and sexual violence continuing to increase each year. This phenomenon highlights the need for more in-depth research on the impact of domestic violence on victims, particularly women who are often the most vulnerable group.

Previous studies have identified various negative effects of domestic violence on women. For example, research by Suryakusuma (1995) shows that the psychological effects of domestic violence are often more severe than the physical effects. Victims tend to experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, as well as eating and sleeping disorders. Additionally, research by Sutrisminah (2012) revealed that domestic violence impacts women's reproductive health, including menstrual disorders and other health risks. However, studies focusing on the specific experiences of domestic violence victims, particularly in the social and cultural context of Indonesia, are still limited.

This study aims to fill the gap in the literature by examining the experiences of domestic violence victims in Binjai, North Sumatra. This research uses a qualitative

approach with a case study method to explore the victims' experiences in depth, including the psychological, social, and physical impacts they face. By gaining a deeper understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence, this study is expected to contribute to efforts in preventing and addressing domestic violence through a more holistic approach.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to providing deeper insights into the experiences of domestic violence victims, particularly in the context of Indonesian society. Therefore, the findings of this research can serve as a foundation for the development of policies for women's protection as well as psychosocial intervention programs that are more effective in helping domestic violence victims recover and rebuild their lives. Furthermore, this study also highlights the need for collaboration between the government, non-governmental organizations, and the public in creating a safer environment for women.

## 2. Methods

This study aims to explore in-depth the cases of domestic violence (DV) experienced by women in Binjai City, North Sumatra Province, using a qualitative case study approach. A case study was chosen because it provides a deep understanding of phenomena occurring within a specific context, with clear limitations on the scope of the cases being studied (Creswell, 2016).

The target of this study is a female domestic violence victim, selected through purposive sampling, who is considered able to provide relevant information regarding her experience with domestic violence. The research procedure begins with the selection of the subject, followed by in-depth interviews to gather as much information as possible about the case.

The primary instrument used in this study is an open interview, which allows the researcher to obtain direct perspectives from the informant regarding the domestic violence incidents. The data collected through the interviews are then analyzed by categorizing the information into relevant themes to reduce unnecessary data. After the reduction process, the remaining data will be organized into a detailed narrative, revealing the informant's thoughts and experiences. The conclusions drawn are general, yet remain within the scope of the case study in order to maintain the focus of the research.

## 3. Result

This study aims to understand the impact of domestic violence (DV) on a female victim living in Binjai City. The subject of the study, with the initials K, is a 28-year-old woman with a high school education. She married at the age of 20, and her marriage lasted for 4 years before ending in 2020. Currently, K is a single parent with one child from her marriage.

The psychological impact experienced by K is significant. She revealed having ongoing difficulty sleeping, which she directly associates with the trauma from the violence she experienced. The subject said:

*“Yes, because I still remember the domestic violence incident.”*

This indicates that fear and trauma still haunt her to this day. Furthermore, the subject stated that she often cannot eat normally due to continuous anxiety and fear:

*“Yes, I definitely can’t eat either.”*

K also added that whenever she sees a man, especially her ex-husband’s face, she feels anxious and fearful, showing signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The subject said:

*“If I’m anxious, it’s there because the trauma is still there, so just seeing his face makes me scared.”*

The physical impact on K is very noticeable. After experiencing significant physical violence, K reported that her hair fell out as a result of stress and physical trauma. The subject also experienced an overall decline in physical condition, which she described by saying:

*“Yes, once I start thinking about it, my hair falls out, and I drop immediately.”*

Furthermore, the subject revealed that the violence inflicted by her husband left bruises on her body, which she felt were very painful:

*“My body hurts, all bruised.”*

The physical violence included punches, kicks, and slaps, which caused ongoing pain and discomfort. The social impact experienced by the subject is also quite severe. K reported that her in-laws forbade her from leaving the house or interacting with others, which led to her social isolation. This affected her relationships with neighbors and friends. The subject only shared the details of the violence she experienced with her mother, which made her feel estranged from her surrounding social environment.

Additionally, the further psychological impact is reflected in changes to K's mindset and emotions. The violence experienced by the subject disturbed her thinking, making her feel unable to think clearly, increasingly paranoid, and unable to make decisions. K admitted:

*“I became easily suspicious, feeling scared whenever someone talks to me or looks at me.”*

This indicates the psychological effects of domestic violence, where the subject feels unsafe and unable to trust others. Additionally, K suffered from physical health issues, such as more intense menstrual pain and frequent dizziness, which further shows the deeper physical and mental impact of domestic violence.

These findings are consistent with previous studies that show women who are victims of domestic violence are at greater risk of experiencing physical, emotional, and social disturbances compared to those who are not victims (Suryakusuma, 1995). The psychological impacts on the subject include sleep disturbances, anxiety, and trauma,

while the physical impacts involve hair loss and bruises on her body. The social impact is seen in the subject's social isolation, and the effect on her mindset and reproductive health is reflected in behavioral changes, inability to think clearly, and physical health issues such as menstrual pain and dizziness.

#### 4. Discussion

This study reveals various impacts of domestic violence on female victims, encompassing physical, psychological, and social aspects. The findings show that victims of domestic violence experience sleep disturbances, anxiety, and deep psychological trauma. The subject of the study stated that she felt unable to sleep and was extremely anxious after the violence incident, and the trauma made her feel fearful when seeing a man. This reflects the impact of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which is often overlooked in studies of domestic violence. Furthermore, the victim also experienced physical effects, such as hair loss and bruises on the body, due to the physical violence she endured. These effects show that domestic violence not only leaves temporary physical wounds but also causes long-lasting physical damage.

Social impact is also an important part of the findings. The subject was isolated from her social environment due to her family's prohibition against interacting with others. This led the victim to only share her experience with her mother, showing that the available social support was very limited. This social isolation worsened the victim's psychological condition and hindered her recovery. This study is consistent with previous studies that show victims of domestic violence often experience social isolation, which can worsen trauma and slow the recovery process. Additionally, the impact on the victim's mindset and emotions is profound. The victim feels fearful and anxious, often finding it difficult to make decisions and becoming more paranoid. This shows that domestic violence can deeply damage a victim's mental health.

This study provides a broader understanding of the physical effects of domestic violence, which are often neglected in previous research. Findings regarding hair loss and bruises due to physical violence confirm that the physical effects of domestic violence are not only temporary. These damages can have long-term effects on the victim's overall health. The findings regarding psychological trauma such as anxiety, fear, and post-traumatic stress also offer new insights into how domestic violence affects the victim's mental health, which is often harder to detect and address compared to physical effects. In addressing domestic violence, two approaches can be applied: curative and preventive.

**Curative Approach:** This approach aims to provide treatment and recovery for victims. Family education is very important to ensure that family members adopt a more humane parenting style and refrain from violence. Education is also essential for teaching families how to recognize and report domestic violence and providing them with skills to protect themselves from potential violence. Moreover, awareness of the consequences of domestic violence should be built within families so that all members can be more sensitive to signs of violence and actively participate in preventing it. It is also crucial to educate prospective spouses on how to build harmonious relationships based on mutual

understanding and free from violence. In this context, mass media should be filtered so as not to reinforce domestic violence images, and society needs to be educated to be more caring and responsive to domestic violence cases in the surrounding environment.

**Preventive Approach:** This approach focuses on preventing domestic violence before it occurs. In this approach, educational sanctions for perpetrators of domestic violence are necessary to provide deterrence and reduce the likelihood of future violence. Furthermore, incentives should be given to individuals or communities who play a role in reducing and eliminating domestic violence. Providing handling models suited to the victim's condition and family values is also important to ensure the effectiveness of resolving domestic violence issues. In this regard, bringing the victim to receive medical treatment or counseling early on can prevent deeper trauma and accelerate the victim's recovery. Meanwhile, resolving domestic violence cases with an approach based on compassion and ensuring the victim's safety is the right way to minimize negative impacts on the victim's future life and avoid resentment toward the perpetrator. The government must also act quickly and decisively in responding to domestic violence practices by referring to the Law on the Elimination of Domestic Violence (PKDRT), so that domestic violence cases can be handled more effectively.

This study also has limitations, as it only involves one subject who is a domestic violence victim. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all victims of domestic violence. Future research should involve more subjects with different backgrounds so that the findings can be more representative. Broader studies could also explore various factors, such as socio-economic and geographical differences, that may affect the experiences of domestic violence victims, as well as understand the factors influencing their recovery process.

## 5. Conclusion

This study aims to uncover the impacts of domestic violence on women from physical, psychological, and social perspectives, as well as to explore approaches that can be taken to prevent and address domestic violence. The findings show that domestic violence victims experience various impacts, such as sleep disturbances, anxiety, psychological trauma, as well as physical impacts like hair loss and bruises on the body. Social impacts are also evident, where victims experience social isolation that worsens their psychological condition. Domestic violence causes serious mental disturbances and can destroy the victim's quality of life, both in the short and long term. To address this issue, preventive and curative approaches should be applied simultaneously. The curative approach includes family education, increasing awareness of the impact of domestic violence, and providing skills to report and avoid domestic violence. The preventive approach, on the other hand, involves giving appropriate sanctions to perpetrators of domestic violence and providing physical and psychological support for victims. This study emphasizes the importance of the role of the government, family, and society in reducing the prevalence of domestic violence and providing better protection for victims.

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