

**SNATCH THEFT: LEGAL ISSUES PERTAINING TO LAW,
PUNISHMENT AND ENFORCEMENT IN MALAYSIA WITHIN
THE CONTEXT OF PENAL CODE**

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It is our hope that through this research, we would provide a minor solution to other parties who are dealing with snatch theft cases directly to reduce the crime rate in this country.

Thank you.

ABSTRACT

This project paper focuses on the law provided by the Penal Code with regards to snatch theft cases. As snatch theft cases in Malaysia have yet to cease and still continue to rise at an alarming rate, there is a need to look at the form of sanctions provided under the Penal Code to determine the adequacy of the current law.

The main reason for punishment provided by the law is to deter the person and others from doing the same offensive act. However despite the harshness of the current punishment up to a death sentence, snatch theft cases still continues to rampage our society. The issue here is should other forms of punishment be considered and incorporated into the Penal Code in order to put a stop to this menacing act.

Another issue discussed is the question on the effectiveness of the current enforcement by police and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in curbing snatch theft.

It is submitted that the current law provided in the Penal Code are already sufficient and the forms of punishment imposed onto snatch thieves is already appropriate considering the type of society that Malaysia has. However, the enforcement by the police and NGO's alone is insufficient in curbing snatch theft and cooperation by the public is essential. Through proper coordination between the police, NGO's and the public, the vision where Malaysia is free from snatch theft cases in the future might just be possible.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Snatch theft is generally explain as a criminal act of forcefully stealing from a pedestrian's while employing rob and run tactics. It is typical for two thieves to work together and ride a moped to make theft and escape. A person steers the vehicle while another does the act of theft itself. However, some snatch thieves work alone or do not use a motorcycle to rob. In Malaysia, some instances of snatch theft have caused fatalities through subsequent act of violence. This combined with the apparent lack of enforcement by the police over crime has prompted outrage among its citizen enough to take justice into their own hands in apprehending thieves.

During the month of June and July 2004, the local media especially the press have been provided with reports of crime and violence in Malaysia. There have been many reports of crime cases including snatch theft. Various suggestions on how to combat this crime have been offered by the authorities, politicians, journalist and other ordinary Malaysians. For example, the range of better lighting in dark places, the installation of close circuit television (CCTVs), educating the public and inevitably greater law and order of enforcement.

The Emergency Ordinance (Crime Prevention & Public Safety) 1969¹ stated the punishment against snatch theft which is detention for two (2) years without trial. If the police is convinced that the suspects had committed the offence under this ordinance, those suspects may be held for sixty (60) days after which the Internal Security Minister could decide to detain them or not.

¹ Emergency Ordinance (Crime Prevention & Public Safety) 1969