

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**DELVING THE UNDERLYING FACTORS OF
HOMELESS WOMEN WHO WORK AS
PROSTITUTES IN KUALA LUMPUR CITY
CENTRE**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis delve the underlying factors of homeless women who work as prostitute in Kuala Lumpur City Centre. This study adopted a qualitative approach through in-depth interview and observation among ten (10) homeless women who work as prostitutes. The respondents ages ranged from 31 to 60 years old. Out of ten respondents, six of them are Malays, two Indian (one respondents were converted to Islam), one Chinese (converted to Islam) and one Bumiputera Sarawakian. All ten respondents are among Malaysian nationality. The operation findings of this study is divided into four aspects: location, pimp-controlled prostitution, time and people involved. In term of location, majority of the respondents performed their activities at hotels. Among ten (10) respondents, eight (8) of them are self-employed prostitutes. Majority of the respondents provide sexual services at night (six respondents). Through the experience and perceptions, they indicated that homeless women who work as prostitutes in Kuala Lumpur are among Malays, followed by Indian. The first underlying factor of homeless women who work as prostitutes is poverty where most of the respondents have a very low income, among the urban poor and lack of affordable housing (primary and secondary homelessness categories). The second underlying factor is migration (to find the jobs, follow their husband and running away from home). The third factor is peer influence such as respondent's friends, husband's friends and their own husband that influenced them to become prostitutes. The fourth factor is financial constrain (do not have any financial sources to support their lives). The fifth factor is family breakdown, for example the death of the husband or divorced. The sixth factor is low literacy which lead themselves to easy trapped and allured into prostitution. The seventh factor is violence (had experienced domestic violence and were among the victims of sexual abuse). The eighth factor is loneliness which influence respondent to engage in prostitution. The ninth factor is drug addiction, where majority of the respondents work as prostitutes to earn money to buy drugs. Finally, the tenth factor is frustration – a new factor emerge from this study – where respondent indicated that she was frustrated with her husband because of having another relationship. The findings of this study revealed that the respondents faced two types of risks which are health (having infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and sexual transmitted disease (STD)) and safety (experienced been beaten, abused and threatened). In term of predicaments, some of the respondents experienced unwanted pregnancy, refusal payments by clients and stigma from the society. Finally, the respondents indicated that stigma, lack of affordable housing, and drug addiction are three top barriers for them to leave this job. This study conclude that, the issues of homeless women who work as prostitute is still open for more debates. In some situations, women become homeless and/or prostitutes due to being the victim of situations (domestic violence, syndicate, family breakdown, financial problem and others) or their own individual choices. However, the factors surrounding homeless women who work as prostitutes are found almost similar to the international trends.

Keywords: homeless women, prostitution, operation, underlying factors, risks, predicaments, barriers, Kuala Lumpur City Centre

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