

Baby abandonment in malaysia



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The problem of abandonment of babies that has become more serious over the years with more and more babies is being abandoned in our country. According to Syed Zahar, 2010, on Valentine's Day, charred remains of a baby, believed to be a few days old, and was found in a rubbish bin in Kuala Krai, Kelantan. On March 21, a newborn baby girl was found abandoned in the rubbish dump of a shopping mall in Ipoh, Perak. Then on March 26, a day-old infant was found dead in Kampung Melayu Subang. The latest data from the police showed that 65 babies have been dumped this year alone, 26 of them boys, 25 girls and the other 14 being foetuses. This brings the total to 472 cases since 2005, in more than half of which, or 258, the babies were found dead in our country and a total of 79 cases were reported on last year (The Star online, 2010). Official statistics reveal an average of 100 cases annually but these figures do not include abandoned babies who died after being abandoned or those babies that disposed off without a trace. So, this issue deserves urgent attention by everyone before it goes out of hand.

In our opinion, government should play an important role as to reduce the cases of abandoned babies by classify the abandoned baby cases as murder and attempted murder or enforced the law in our country. Those responsible for babies who die would be investigated for murder while abandoned babies found alive would be classified and investigated as attempted murder. Police should investigate and use modern technique such as the DNA test to identify the parents of the abandoned baby. Besides, police should also set up a special squad if they need to probe cases of abandoned newborn babies so as to track down the suspects swiftly. According to The Star on 17 August 2010, there is an 18-year-old factory worker and his 17-year-old girlfriend in

Malacca became the first couple in the country to be charged under the Penal Code for baby dumping. The couple pleaded guilty to the offence, which carries a maximum sentence of seven years' jail, a fine or both. This is the only way to bring those responsible for the death of a baby to justice. Many cases involving baby-dumping could not be resolved fast because of lack of information and expressed the need for public cooperation to help police to solve the cases. So, as a citizen in our country, it is now the time for the society had to be a " busybody", especially in matters pertaining to social problems.

An NGO in Malaysia has opened the country's first " baby hatch" for rescuing unwanted newborns as authorities' battle increasing cases of abandoned babies (VR Sreeraman, 2010). A " BABY hatch" is a place where an unwanted child might be left anonymously by parents. The hatch has a small door which a mother can open and place her baby on an incubator bed. Once the door is closed an alarm bell will alert the NGO's staff to the baby's presence, after the mother has left. Although the " baby hatch" helps to avoid newborn babies being abandoned at the roadside or in a rubbish dump, but many people feel that it seems to encourage pre-marital sex. However, the aim of the " baby hatch" is to discourage women, especially young unwed mothers, from abandoning their newborn and instead have them placed with caring parents. According The Star newspaper, the baby boy abandoned at the baby hatch on 27 June 2010 has been adopted. The baby hatch, set up on May 29 by OrphanCARE, received its first baby on June 27 when an unmarried couple in their early 20s left the newborn there. With the establishment of the baby hatch, government hoped there would be a

reduction in the number of babies being dumped. Besides that, NGO plans to place baby cots where mothers can leave their unwanted babies anonymously to save abandoned babies. Unlike the baby hatch, that the baby cots, which would be located at the premises of NGOs, were merely a place for women to place their unwanted babies. The baby cots would most likely be made of wood and designed with an umbrella-like shade to keep out crows and protect the child from the blistering heat. Once a baby is dropped in a cot, the NGO concerned would alert and contact the police and the welfare department. This objective is to protect the abandoned babies' lives.

Nowadays, cases of baby abandonment usually results from unwanted pregnancies. So, educating youths on the risk of having sex, especially unprotected sex are needed. Sex education should include in our school syllabus, not just implemented as a brief part of other subject like biology, moral and physical education, but as a subject on its own. From the many cases as we know, it was found that many youths did not know their own bodies. Some did not even know that they will get pregnant if they have sex. So, these provide the authorities with a good reason that it is time we had sex education in our schools as one of the subject. Knowledge is power and sex education is not about free sex. Sex education is about giving our children informed choices. Sex education will teach the child about his or her body, changes to the body at puberty, hormones, how to form stable meaningful relationships, responsible relationships, unprotected sex, consequences of having sex and how to say 'no'(Mariam Mokhtar, 2010). Awareness and education on sexual health will play a vital role in helping to

reduce the number of unplanned pregnancies and cases of abandoned babies.

Besides, Government or non-governmental organization should provide shelter homes for pregnant unwed girls and unwed mothers to solve the problem of abandoned of babies that has become more serious in our country. Basically a young mother would abandon her baby because she is afraid. She does not want to keep her baby and she just wants someone to take it, keep it safe, and make sure it gets a good home because she might be unmarried. Because of this, the welfare department officers will be on 24-hours standby to help those having such problems and give them counselling. They should also take the initiatives to identify cases of unwanted pregnancies in their respective areas and provide assistance to the mothers to prevent them from abandoning their babies. While caution need to be taken in implementing any measure as not to encourage young girls to be involved in sexual relationship before marriage, it is equally important to ensure that those who have already crossed the line do not shy away from seeking help and doing the right thing.

Most cases of abandoned babies were due to weak family institutions and where the responsibility of bringing up a child was left to other parties. So, parents and family members are actually also playing an important role to prevent the unwanted pregnancies so that it will not becoming rampant in our country. Most of the parents in our country are full time workers that force them to spend about 10 hours out of their house per day. As a result, most of their children are abandoning of love and time by their parents. Their parents are too busy with their work and career development. This situation

can cause lack of time between the family members. In relation to that their children tend to find others affection among their peers. It can contribute to their feeling in trying new things such as find someone who loves them or having sex with their partner. When parents come to know of their children are pregnant before they had married they will blame the whole world instead of helping them and providing the necessary support to them. Parents or family members should not blaming others if their children became pregnant or gave birth to babies conceived out of wedlock but take the necessary steps to support them in times of distress. As you all know, raising a baby as a young teenager is already tough but dealing with the stigma will let the parents and the child feel more pressure. This is why counselling from social agencies do their big part in helping these women deal with the discrimination.

In our point of view, teacher should teach young people commit to abstaining from sex until marriage to avoid unwanted pregnancies through education because people also believe that it is morally wrong for the people to have sex before they are married. Since sex is one of the natural force that one cannot resist, as human being we can resist having sex at the wrong time or we should use the effective contraception to avoid unwanted pregnancies. The use of effective contraception, such as the oral contraceptive pill and condom not only reduce the risk of getting unwanted pregnancies but also reduced the rate of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Syndrome) infection. We may not be able to stop our teenagers from having sex before marriage, but we can at least tell them about responsibilities and consequences of having unprotected sex before married.

Government and non-governmental organization should also set up a special school for pregnant teenagers to let them complete their education to ensure a better future for them. They should not be alienated and left feeling as if they have been excluded from the society when they got pregnant. The school will also take care of the needs of pregnant teens and this, indirectly, will rid of negative perception against them. Arguments that say setting up such school or the baby hatch would encourage teenagers to be involved in premarital sexual activities should be considered, but we should look at this by taking into consideration that it is already happening, baby dumping has already happened. So what is wrong with setting up the school to give them a venue, a place for them to seek help and save themselves from being trapped in the cycle further. I think we have to give them a second chance, which is more important. The reality is that it is already happening and we need to take action to address the problem, otherwise we will lose young individuals who could contribute to our country.

Last but not least, another way to overcome abandoned babies is to create awareness through media. Every country should have a common reminder to their citizen by advertising through any sorts of media whether it is newspaper, television, radio and etc. The citizen will also be educated not only through school but also through media. Media plays a huge part in creating awareness and by doing so it could help to minimize the rate of abandoned babies in the future. People who are not educated are the main problem to this cause because they don't know the value of a new born life and abandoned the baby for the sake of themselves. Through media can also promote ways to handle unwanted babies rather than abandoned them on

valleys or dustbins. The role of media is essential because it can deliver a message throughout the nation in a split second and at the same time a lot of people will receive their message at once. Media is the best and fastest way to promote or create awareness among other roles. Media serve as a constant reminder to people about how to react and prevent abandoned babies happening and to also promote alternative to donate the babies rather than to leave at somewhere and let the baby die off. In other ways of it is cruel to deal with the issue that way and the babies is paying the price for the mistake their adult are making. That is wrong because there are still so many ways to handle things and people prefer to handle things the wrong way to protect their dignity and to cover the shameful things that has happen to them. There is no dignity left for those who their abandoned babies in dark alleys so why care to protect them?

Baby dumping has become a hot topic with newspapers highlighting new cases almost every day. We think that, in solving the issue of abandoned babies, the main goal should be towards creating awareness among youths that abandoning of babies is not the easiest way out. We have to let them know there are places and people that can provide help and it's also these NGO's duty to reach out to those going through unwanted pregnancies.

Society too should play their part by understanding the problem and not discriminate unwed mothers. Accidents happen and human make mistakes are no way to redress an initial oversight. In conclusion, let's hope morals of the people in this country not deteriorate as we take this road towards achieving the status of a developed nation. After all, it's not much use in

having a first-world infrastructure and system when the citizens are still in a third-world state of mind.