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INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDY

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Proposed Topic on Current Issue	BABY DUMPING IN MALAYSIA

TOPIC: BABY DUMPING IN MALAYSIA

BOTA: A pair of young lovers were arrested by the police this January for concealing the birth of a baby and then disposing its body into Sungai Perak near the Perak Water Board pump house in Teluk Kepayang, Bota, article from *malaysiakini* (Bernama, 2020).

Born and bred in Malaysia, where rich cultures intertwine together to form our society, I am very proud to be part of this giant family. However, I was recently made to think what had happened to our society today. Baby dumping cases in Malaysia are on the rise and constantly appearing on mass media. Malaysia is becoming a popular spot for dumping, but instead of garbage dumping, it is baby dumping which is becoming more common nowadays. To define, baby dumping means the act of irresponsible so called “parents” who dump innocent babies after birth or younger than 12 months at any place without taking care of the babies. As innocent souls continue to be abandoned, one more worrying issue is that the majority of the people involved in this embarrassing behavior are teenagers. With the on-growing baby dumping cases in Malaysia, I have decided to do research and discuss on the topic “*Baby Dumping in Malaysia*”, aiming to help raise awareness among the Malaysians to curb this social issue.

Due to the ongoing pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) unfortunately, there are limitations to my research as most of my research are based on findings from the Internet and the newspapers. However, from my research I can definitely say that there are many causes contributing to the rising baby dumping cases in our society. One of the causes is the lack of sex education, leading to teenage pregnancy. Most parents and schools do not inject knowledge of sex into the children’s mind since young. Parents assume that their children will understand everything when they become adults. They give minimal responses and unclear explanation to their children when asked about sex, claiming that they are too young to know about sex. On the other hand, schools face similar problems, as sex education is not implemented as a teaching subject. Most parents and teachers think that their refusal to teach children about sex come out of love and protection, as they feel like it is their responsibilities to protect teenagers from negative influences. However, overprotection does the damage here, because the more they try to hide, the more the children want to know. At the age

of puberty, teenagers started to feel curious about the differences between boys and girls. Out of curiosity, teenagers started to try things they have not tried before. Unprotected sex happens and hence teenage pregnancy occurs. The pressure of taking care a baby at a young age without any prior knowledge hence urged teenagers to make immature decisions, namely baby dumping.

Nevertheless, the force of closest family members also proves to be an important factor. Problems such as family break ups more or less cause the younger generation to be involved in this irresponsible act, because an abrupt change in the family environment might be a heavy blow to teenagers. A healthy family plays an important role in a teenager's life. Teenagers find it difficult to adapt to family break ups hence they will find new relationships that can occupy their loneliness without thinking thoroughly the consequences such as unexpected pregnancy and baby dumping. Teenagers are too young and not ready to face divorce or family break ups. They may find alternatives such as new relationships to get back what they have lost. This is what causes open sexual relationships among the younger generation nowadays. Besides, the lack of family support can cause teenagers to make incorrect decisions. When unexpected pregnancies happen, family members blame the teenagers instead of giving moral support and help them. At a state of low self-esteem, feeling ashamed and facing negative perceptions from the society, youngsters would simply abandon the baby. Hence, it is clear that baby dumping can be a result from family problems.

Findings from research also illustrate that teenagers dump their baby when they have no capability to raise the baby on their own. Most of the teenagers are still students whose daily expenditures are fully supported by their parents. There are times when teenagers need to work part-time to be able to support for their own daily stuffs, imagine raising a baby. To raise a baby, a strong financial support is a must, besides supporting the daily expenditure for the baby for baby milk, diapers and more, they need to take care and give love to the baby. Being a full-time student, the baby becomes a burden for teenagers, as most of their time is being allocated for studies, assignments and tuition, to take out more free time to take good care of the baby is just too much workload for them. Furthermore, teenagers lack parenting skills. They do not know the

correct way to feed, bath or teach the baby, some might not even know how to change the diapers. Out of desperation, they chose to dump their babies because taking care of a baby is way out of their capability, be it financially, physically or mentally.

In addition, there are too many factors contributing to baby dumping, lack of moral and religious belief, rape crisis, peer influence as well as cyber sex, and influence from widespread access of pornographies, the list goes on. Literally, baby dumping will have negative impacts individually, to the family, community as well as the country. Individually, baby disposal could have psychological effects on the emotions of the mother, especially depression due to the guilt of abandoning the baby. The mother will only get weaker, and if she does not have the moral support needed, this might ultimately lead to suicidal acts. Moving on to the impact to families, criticism will shower the family of the perpetrator and the whole family would be dishonored. Lastly, baby dumping affects the society and country as well, bad image and negative views from all around the world, unhealthy society developed as baby dumping acts are replicated by others, these are all issues that will arise.

While baby dumping cases in Malaysia continue to skyrocket, every one of us must play our part in tackling this issue. The key is that all parties work together. To start off, parents must provide religious education so that children can distinguish between right or wrong. Parents should also supervise their children's activities, so that children's mind are not poisoned. Sex education should be provided to teenagers, not only about the mechanics of sex but also on learning how to protect themselves and respecting their bodies. This is needed to encourage responsible sexual behavior and avoid unwanted pregnancies that causes baby dumping. Parents are the role model in shaping their children's personality, the best way is to communicate with their children, let the youngsters know that parents are always supporting them. No matter what happens, family should always stick together.

The mass media can also play their part by organizing programs on television or radio about the importance of protecting themselves. Experienced psychologists and sex therapists could be presenters of the programs where on-air call sessions for discussions about sex can be carried out to provide useful sex knowledge to the

teenagers. Non-government organizations can also give help and support to individuals suffering from unexpected pregnancies, rather than looking down on the pregnant teenagers, it is important that we guide and help them find the correct way. Finally, the government should impose stricter rules such as restricting teenagers from checking in to hotels or motels without parents or guardians, this is to reduce free and open sex among teenagers. Campaigns and talks to create awareness among teenagers about baby dumping should be organized regularly, where students and teenagers should be encouraged to join. In the end, teenagers should be properly taught and not fall for the “If you love me, you will have sex with me” line.

In conclusion, there are many factors that lead to baby dumping. This crisis should be addressed immediately before the situation worsens and threatens the future of the country. In this case, all parties must cooperate and work together to solve this problem in order to live happily and healthily in future. Throughout my research, I found out that the awareness of unprotected sex and sex education showed significant link to Malaysia’s baby dumping issues. It is important that teenagers have useful knowledge on sex to protect themselves. I feel that teenagers tend to make the wrong decisions when they are at a state of despair, hence we should show care for them. With this case study, I hope that the future generation will learn how to protect and love themselves, with aspirations that baby dumping cases in Malaysia are minimized. Babies are priceless gifts from God, instead of viewing them as trash to be dumped away, we should learn that they are gifts to be treasured.

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