

# The Importance of Sign Language Use in Post-Sexual Abuse Treatment Models for Women with Deafness

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## ABSTRACT

The case against women with deafness is the lowest recorded case, but that does not mean that the data is not available but that the victims do not know how to complain about the sexual harassment cases they face. The leading cause of issues against women with deafness is not handled correctly; there are communication barriers, namely the use of different languages. People with deaf use sign language to communicate. There is no handling of sexual violence against deaf people, yet that uses the distinctive approach of deaf communication. This article emphasizes the communicative modality through sign language, added in Post-Sexual Harassment Treatment for Deaf Women. This study aims to see the importance of using sign language for handling cases of sexual harassment in women with deafness. The study was conducted on 166 respondents from various professions and two sign language experts. As a result, 54% of respondents suggested using sign language in the model for handling cases of sexual harassment.

**Keywords:** *Women with Deafness, Bisindo, Sexual Harassment.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Cases of violence against women continue to increase every year. The assumption that women are weak creatures in moral considerations makes women included in a vulnerable group. One of the violence that occurs against women is sexual harassment, not only for non-disabled women but also for women with disabilities [10]. Data in 2020, recorded 77 cases of violence against women with disabilities. The case against women with deafness is the lowest recorded case, but that does not mean that the data is not available but that the victims do not know how to complain about the sexual harassment cases they face [12].

The Indonesian Association of Women with Disabilities as an organization that accommodates the aspirations of women with disabilities shows that cases of sexual violence against women with deafness processed by the authorities always experience obstacles, including (1) the inability of the police to understand the flow of cooperation in the handling process, (2) the occurrence of miscommunication during the preparation of the BAP because the sign language used by the deaf is not understood by the relevant parties, and (3) the absence of a comprehensive handling model that is in accordance with the characteristics and needs. Women with deafness victims of sexual violence. This means that there has been no serious handling of cases of sexual violence against women with deafness.

Sexual harassment that is often carried out by people closest to the victim makes handling cases difficult [13]. Victims are afraid to report so that the psychological effects experienced by victims do not get proper treatment [4]. The results of the study victims of sexual violence will experience mental disorders in the form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Some of the other disorders include acute stress (ASD), major post-abuse depression (MDD), post-abuse behavior disorder (CD), and negative and irrational thoughts [2].

Another factor that causes cases of sexual harassment of the deaf to not be handled properly is language deprivation experienced by the deaf. Language deprivation in the deaf has occurred since childhood [5]. Language deprivation usually occurs in children with deafness in childhood, approximately the first 5 years of a child's life, when brain development is at its golden age. At this age the child's brain is developing rapidly to learn language. Children learn languages from the people around them, especially families. Usually the family will teach the child to speak using voice and verbal language. These sounds and verbal language are codes that cannot be caught by children with deafness. As a result, children do not get access to language learning so that language development in children with deafness is hampered.

Language deficiency has long-term consequences affecting neurodevelopment to the point where children may find it difficult to develop the language skills that

are the basis for the fluency of the communication process for the purpose of learning at the next level. Impaired language skills in children with deafness also have an impact on the gender gap experienced by men and women in later life, even getting worse [7]. This happens because the deaf who experience language deprivation may not be able to debate and discuss critically considering they have a language barrier.

This incident makes the language of children with deafness limited to basic sign language with minimal vocabulary [8]. Gerkatin, which stands for the Indonesian deaf welfare movement, tries to solve this problem with Bisindo, which is recognized as the language most widely spoken by the deaf. Bisindo was chosen because its structure is close to the deaf culture so that Bisindo exists more than SIBI [14]. Sibi is a sign language with complex sentence structures accompanied by affixes, the use of sibi is uncomfortable for the deaf because it is impractical, besides that, the sibi structure adopted from American sign language is also considered incompatible with the deaf culture in Indonesia.

Therefore, to reduce the psychological impact caused by people with hearing impairments, they need to get treatment. To receive proper treatment so that they can survive as before the sexual harassment incident occurred, they need to be accompanied by working professionals, namely psychologists/counselors and teachers/professionals. Sign language that can translate the treatment given so that women with deafness who are victims of sexual harassment can live better lives and have good psychological well-being.

This study uses Bisindo in the syntax of handling deaf women who are victims of sexual violence. The use of Bisindo has advantages, including: (1) therapy that focuses on the characteristics and needs of the deaf, (2) helps other parties in understanding the forms of communication used by the deaf so that there is no misunderstanding by both parties, (3) improve communication and reading skills [1]. Based on these problems, this article aims to: (1) describe the use of

Bisindo in cases of sexual harassment of deaf girls, (2) explore the need to develop a model for handling victims of sexual violence according to the characteristics of women with deafness. There is no handling of sexual violence against deaf people yet that uses the characteristic approach of deaf communication, so this article emphasizes the communicative modality through sign language which is added in Post-Sexual Harassment Treatment for Deaf Women.

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1. Participants

The survey needs assessment of deaf women who were victims of sexual harassment was conducted on 166 respondents from several cities in Indonesia containing responses to cases of sexual harassment that occurred in deaf women. The ages of the children in question ranged from 11-18 years. The COVID-19 pandemic situation made the survey conducted online by the Google Form platform, the link was shared via Whatsapp Apk for one month to several groups such as special education teacher unions, Indonesian deaf organizations, students, and the community. The collected data is then analyzed, the types of respondents involved in the study are presented in table 1 and figure 1 below.

Table 1. Respondent profession

No	Profession	Frequency	Percentage
1	Practitioner	1	1%
2.	Teacher	105	63%
3.	Lecture	8	5%
4.	Women's Organization	2	1%
5.	Gerkatin	5	1%
6.	Principal	1	1%
7.	Supervisor SLB	1	1%
8.	Scout	1	1%
9.	Students	38	23%
10.	Public	4	2%
Summary		166	100%

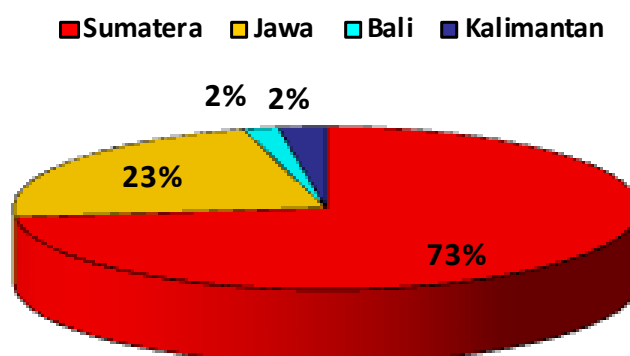


Figure 1. Distribution of respondent by island

## 2.2. Assessment Tools

Needs Assessment, the scale used to collect need assessment data, which consists of questions about sexual harassment of deaf women, socialization of the handling of sexual harassment in deaf women, frequency of cases of sexual harassment in deaf women, and bisindo needs in handling cases of sexual harassment for deaf women. aspects that will be seen are the need for the use of signals, the need for bisindo in handling models, the development of models according to the characteristics of the needs of the deaf. Data collection using a questionnaire with a Likert scale to determine the needs of the developed model, table 2. Data analysis using quantitative descriptive methods [6].

**Table 2.** Needs Criteria

Criteria	Score
Once	3
Sometimes	2
Never	1

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of using sign language in the procedure for handling sexual harassment of women with deafness is as an effort to fulfill non-physical accessibility. Non-physical accessibility relates to how information, communication and technology can be used or understood by persons with disabilities. So that people with disabilities, especially people who are deaf, have their rights fulfilled in getting the same treatment after the sexual harassment they experienced.

Efforts to handle cases of sexual harassment can be done in several ways, namely training; through pharmacotherapy, cognitive restructuring techniques, and rational use of behavioral emotive therapy. This study asked for opinions from 166 respondents regarding the importance of using sign language in the procedure for handling sexual harassment of deaf victims of sexual harassment. The results are shown in Figure 2, 137 participants out of 166 participants said the importance of using sign language in sexual harassment handling procedures.

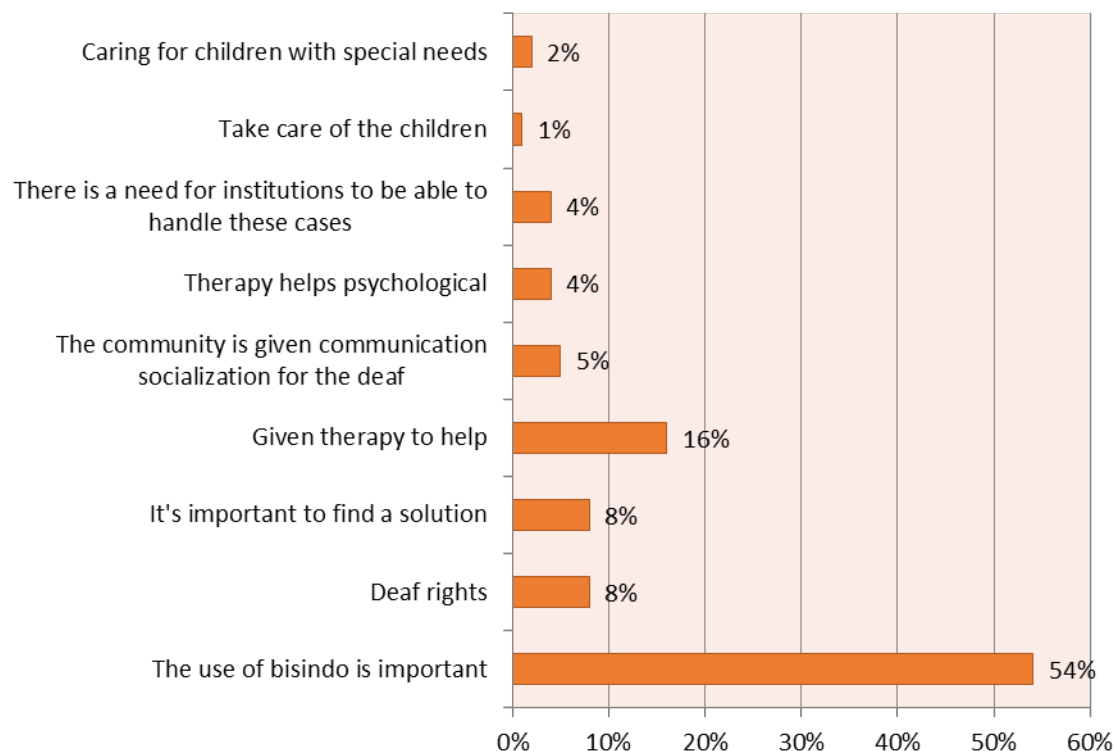


**Figure 2.** Sign Language-based Therapy Needs from Participants

### 3.1. Use of Indonesian Sign Language (Bisindo)

Sign language in Indonesia is divided into two, namely Sibi and Bisindo. Sibi is a sign language system adopted from American Sign Language (ASL) while

Bisindo is a sign language that was born from the diversity of the deaf culture in Indonesia [9]. 89 of 166 participants stated that the use of Bisindo was important, while 13 participants stated that the use of Bisindo was part of the rights of the deaf. Figure 3 shows the dynamics of participants' answers to the use of Bisindo.



**Figure 3.** Dynamics of Participants' Answers Using Bisindo

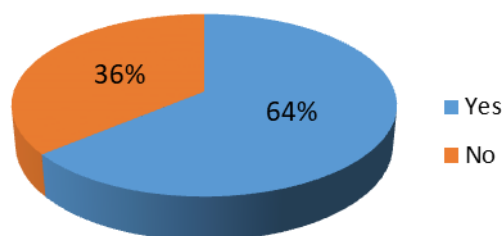
### 3.2. Choosing a Model to Handle Sexual Harassment

The model for handling sexual harassment that is in accordance with the characteristics of the victim will have an effect on the expected impact of the handling model. The handling of child cases in Indonesia is guided by the Regulation of the State Minister for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection concerning Guidelines for Handling Victims of Violence, including: a. identification services; b. health rehabilitation; c. social rehabilitation; d. back; e. legal aid; and f. social reintegration.

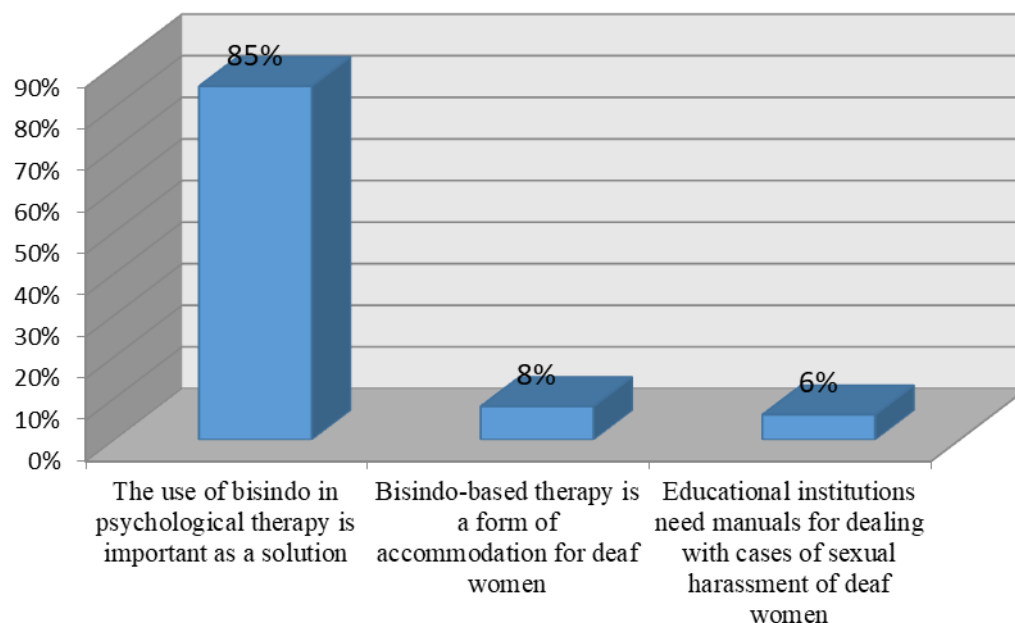
After the process of identifying victims of sexual violence against women with deafness, the next step is

to provide health rehabilitation services that can help victims recover from cases of sexual violence they face. The model for handling sexual harassment that has been used for people with disabilities is the REBT model for blind children and children with disabilities [3]. Research [11] shows that there is a significant effect on the impact given after the REBT therapy process is carried out.

In this study, 166 participants were asked about the need for special therapy for people with disabilities. The results in Figure 4 show that 106 participants answered that there is a need for special therapy for people with disabilities, especially the deaf. The qualitative data of respondents' responses is shown in Figure 5.



**Figure 4.** Special therapeutic needs for persons with disabilities



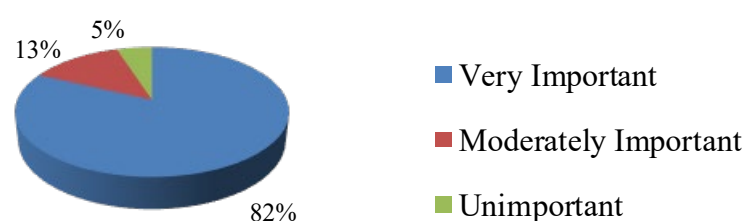
**Figure 5.** User feedback on Indonesian sign language mediated therapy (Bisindo) for women with deafness

### 3.3. Bisindo-based sexual harassment handling model

The selection of the right sexual harassment handling model will also have an effective impact in providing positive results in handling cases of sexual harassment for deaf victims of sexual harassment. The REBT model was chosen because the results of previous studies showed a positive impact in handling cases for

persons with disabilities [11]. The choice of bisindo used was based on input from sign language experts, where the sign language used was regionally based. This is applied by considering the factor that cultural diversity in Indonesia also affects sign language culture. Figure 6 showing the importance of use of sign language in sexual harassment case handling models for women with deafness.

### Need service for REBT with bisindo for women with deafness victims of sexual harassment.



**Figure 6.** Need service for REBT with Bisindo

## 4. CONCLUSION

The characteristics of communication in children with deafness cause disturbances and problems in resolving cases of sexual violence. The needs analysis results indicate that it is necessary to use sign language in service intervention strategies designed after sexual harassment. Sign language as a communication pattern for children with deafness is important to consider in

efforts to handle cases of sexual harassment. Age is limited to 12 years until adulthood. Victims of sexual harassment, especially women with deafness who will receive intervention, are women who have good Indonesian sign language skills.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Marlina, Yuninda and Zulian understand the ideas presented. Yuninda and Zulian developed theories and verified analytical methods for sexual harassment handling procedures. Marlina and Dea to investigate the research findings and adapt the findings to the characteristics of women with deafness. All authors discussed the results and contributed to the final manuscript.

Yuninda and Zulian simplify the selected treatment model, namely REBT. Dea developed cue keywords that women with deafness could understand and created sign pictures. Marlina wrote the script based on the findings of Yuninda, Zulian and Dea.

Marlina led the script writing. All authors provided critical feedback and helped shape research, analysis, and manuscripts. Yuninda and Zulian designed a model and framework to analyze the data handling model. Dea surveyed the sign language used in the field. All researchers organizes studies and is responsible for overall direction and planning.

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