

Women advised to know their rights

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KOTA KINABALU: Women should know of their rights in society and take the initiative to get more information about them so that they will know where to turn to in times of difficulty.

At the closing of a Women's Rights Seminar here, Wednesday, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Vice Chancellor, Datuk Kamaruzaman Ampon said there are many platforms oppressed women can turn to, but not many know how to go about it.

"Women should know of their rights and get more information on what to do when they are involved in any problems they are not sure about how to deal with, for example their rights in a polygamous family, who they should turn to if they are pregnant before marriage or if they are raped," he said.

He said seminars such as this, are important in creating awareness, in educating and to provide an understanding on these issues to women.

"Among the main topics spoken about today concern women's rights in a polygamous family, baby abandoning, and women's rights in the civil and syariah court," he added.

In this regard, Kamaruzaman explained that both men and women must understand their roles when it comes to a polygamous family so that its Islamic con-



Kamaruzaman

cept is not misunderstood.

"Apart from that, violence in a family has also become a 'silent crime', leading to victims getting injured physically, mentally, emotionally and even sexually."

These situations, he said indirectly leads to social ills such as teenagers running away from home, drug abuse, gangsterism and abortion which is becoming more and more common nowadays.

Meanwhile, Sabah Women Lawyers Association President, Noor Azah Abdul Rahman spoke on women's rights in civil and syariah law and touched on the various laws and penalties enacted in the two judicial systems.

Another speaker, Sandakan Syariah High Court judge, Raja Mazelan Deraman who spoke on women's rights in a polygamous family explained the meaning of such marriages and what should and should not be done according to Islamic understanding.

The last speaker, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Prof. Madya Dr. Harlina Halizah Siraj on the other hand spoke on baby dumping and unrestrained sexual activities.

She said to fight, reduce and eradicate these things from happening, parents play the most important role, in educating their children on these issues.

The one-day seminar was organised by the UMS Women Staff and Housewife Club (Kesumba), UMS Islamic Affairs Unit, and the Sabah Women Lawyers Association.