



Sexual Abuse of Children Between the Social Characteristics of the Algerian Family and Punishment from a Legal Perspective: A Content Analysis of Sexual Abuse Cases from the Judicial Council of Batna Province



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Abstract

Algerian society is distinguished, unlike many other societies, whether Arab or Western, in that it is a society consisting of conservative families characterized by conservative social characteristics, that is, characterized by their social upbringing based on respect for customs and traditions, but with recent years, extraneous phenomena have emerged that do not correspond to the characteristics. The aforementioned, where what is known as sexual assaults appeared, and here the aim of this study becomes clear, as it aims to clarify one of the most important forms of sexual assaults that are practiced on an age group characterized by weakness in terms of their physical and emotional build, this latter practiced by the majority of age groups, in addition to In addition to urban areas, it is concentrated in rural areas, and this has resulted in effects both on the abused individuals and their families. In addition, the sexual assault that we will specialize in studying, as previously mentioned, affects categories with precise characteristics, which is the category of children, and we will explain through this article these actions and the foundations that govern them, in addition to their effects and consequences on the child in particular.

Keywords: sexual assault; prostitution; punitive legal system; Social characteristics.

Introduction:

Algerian society, in its various forms, has witnessed widespread developments across multiple social domains—educational aspects, social upbringing—and economic dimensions, including diversification of income sources and improvement of living standards. Politically, there have been advancements in the management of various societal institutions, both formal and informal, as well as in the cultural sphere, including recreational aspects. These aforementioned areas have been influenced by several factors, most notably global openness, commonly referred to as globalization, modernity, postmodernity, and other related terms used as influential factors, in addition to technological advancements. These factors generally exert a positive influence across most domains, serving as a means to achieve the objectives of societal structures and maintain balance among them.

Conversely, these factors can also have negative impacts when adopted informally, affecting the latent functions of societal systems and manifesting negative consequences.

Among the most affected domains, considering society as an open system with intertwined positive and negative aspects, is the social domain, in which individuals perform roles with varying objectives. Some actors across different systems pursue their goals using methods that contravene legal norms, whether these goals are psychological, social, or material. The Subcommittee on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, under the World Health Organization in its 150th session, emphasized that any sexual exploitation—for example, in cases of vulnerability or power imbalance, including threats or financial or social gains—constitutes abuse. One of the most prominent social issues is behavior that contradicts accepted norms, traditions, and customs, most notably the phenomenon of sexual abuse of children. This phenomenon takes multiple forms and is perpetrated by various actors, involving interactions between formal social systems, such as the family, and informal systems, such as peer and neighborhood groups. This issue will be further clarified in this article.

1. Problem Statement:

Algerian society, like other societies, is a system characterized by traits derived from its customs, traditions, and inherited mentalities within families, including those shaped by the exposure of individuals and family units to other societal systems. The interaction between these systems has resulted in hybrid and foreign phenomena in Arab societies in general, and in Algerian society in particular, as well as within the same system. Algeria, as the context of this study, exhibits diverse characteristics across regions—from north to south, east to west—ranging from open to conservative communities, with varying traits that manifest in individual behaviors.

These characteristics reflect societal features, which are formed based on customs, traditions, and norms. Positive behaviors and phenomena contribute to societal development and individual success, whereas negative phenomena—such as theft, fraud, and, more notably, social practices like sexual abuse and child abduction—have also persisted historically. These phenomena affect different societal groups based on age—children, youth, and other age groups—gender, and social status, including citizens and working individuals. Sexual abuse is perpetrated through various means, as noted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, through the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Committee, which defines it as: *“the depiction of any child, by any means, engaged in real or simulated sexual activities, or any depiction of a child’s sexual organs primarily to satisfy sexual desire”* (Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Committee, 2014, p. 4).

This study focuses on the phenomenon of sexual abuse against children and its resulting effects, as *“sexual abuse exposes the child to psychological pressures that affect their mental well-being and social behavior, generating psychological trauma”* (Zardoum Khadija, 2017–2018, p. 14). The article aims to present the methods used by perpetrators, the categories of actors involved, and approaches for addressing this issue through the following question:

Research Question:

- What is the role of sexual abuse against children in reconstructing the social characteristics of the Algerian family, and how does legal punishment intervene?

Hypothesis:

- Sexual abuse of children plays a role in reshaping the social characteristics of the Algerian family, countered by legal sanctions.

2. Significance of the Study:

This article highlights the rapid evolution in time and space of sexual abuse practices against children. Algerian society has witnessed multiple forms of this phenomenon, which are deviant behaviors that contradict the social characteristics of the community. The study aims to illuminate these deviant behaviors, despite the inherent positive traits of Algerian families, and to clarify the locations, institutions, and individuals involved, as well as the disruption caused to society in general and to families in particular. The study focuses on children as the primary affected group.

3. Objectives of the Study:

The objective is to analyze the phenomenon in order to clarify its details for members of society. Sexual abuse is typically hidden and secretive, occurring in various locations. The study identifies the groups engaging in these behaviors, the resulting changes in Algerian societal characteristics, and the impact on individuals—both perpetrators and victims. These effects extend to institutions tasked with combating this phenomenon, such as the Algerian judiciary, which seeks to impose sanctions on perpetrators for the protection of abused children.

4. Research Methodology:

The study adopts the **case study method**, which falls under qualitative methodologies. This approach focuses on capturing the meaning of statements or behaviors, with the researcher concentrating on studying individual cases (Morse & Angros, 2004–2006, p. 101). It is considered “*the scientific method used in the study of individual, group, and societal cases, focusing on the diagnosis of each researched and analyzed case*” (Aqil Hussein Aqil, 2012, p. 141).

5. Scope of the Study:

5.1. Geographical Scope:

The study was conducted at the **Judicial Council of Batna Province**, an institution under the Ministry of Justice. The council encompasses various roles, including judges, clerks, technical and administrative staff, prison administration personnel, lawyers, notaries, judicial officers, auctioneers, judicial experts, and mediators. In addition to traditional services, the council has introduced **electronic services**, such as the electronic prosecution system and the judicial record database, employing modern technologies to handle cases involving ordinary and exceptional criminal offenses.

5.2. Human Scope:

The research population includes cases of **sexual abuse involving children** in the Batna judiciary. According to Algerian law, and in line with Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights

of the Child (adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989 and ratified by Algeria under Presidential Decree No. 92-461), a child is defined as “*any person under the age of eighteen unless they reach the age of majority earlier under applicable law*” (Official Gazette, 1992, p. 2319). This study focuses on children under 18 who have been victims of sexual abuse.

6. Study Sample:

Cases were selected through **non-probability sampling**, which “*applies to case studies aimed at delving into various behaviors, reflecting the limitations in covering the target research population and the lack of statistics on the phenomenon*” (Morse & Angros, 2004–2006, p. 310). Within non-probability sampling, **convenience sampling** was employed, meaning that the sample was drawn from the research population based on the researcher’s discretion (Morse & Angros, 2004–2006, p. 311). The selection was purposeful, including individuals who were either perpetrators or victims of sexual abuse, in alignment with the study’s objectives.

7. Research Technique:

The study employed **content analysis** of the selected cases. This approach “*often relies on communication materials available in records, newspapers, magazines, broadcasts, and other information sources not collected firsthand by the researcher. The primary approach is qualitative, focusing on text analysis without resorting to quantitative measurements*” (Abdelghani Emad, 2007, p. 84). We adopted **qualitative content analysis** of the cases presented later in this article, as it “*allows for quantitative or qualitative extraction for the purpose of interpretation, understanding, and comparison*” (Morse & Angros, 2004–2006, p. 212).

8. Conceptual Definitions:

8.1. Sexual Abuse of Children:

The Johns Hopkins Aramco Healthcare Center defines sexual abuse of children as “*engaging a child in sexual activity by an adult or an older child in a manner that the child cannot comprehend or consent to, which is inconsistent with the child’s developmental stage and violates societal customs and traditions. Sexual abuse can be direct, such as touching the child’s private parts, inducing the child to touch the abuser’s private parts, or rape; or indirect, such as exposing or showing the child’s private parts, exposing the child to sexual images or pornography, forcing the child to speak sexual words, or photographing the child in sexualized positions*

Sexual abuse differs from **prostitution**, which Henriques defines as “*any sexual act purchased with money, or sexual acts habitually performed for profit by individuals*”. The distinction lies in the absence of consent and financial consideration in sexual abuse, unlike prostitution, which involves mutual consent and monetary exchange (Adel Shaib, 2010, p. 61).

Operational Definition of Sexual Abuse:

From the above, sexual abuse of children can be defined operationally as any sexual act performed on a child, or involving the child in sexual activity, without the child’s consent.

8.2. Social Characteristics:

Definitions of social characteristics vary, but one describes them as “*social traits that distinguish individuals in a society and influence their behaviors toward a particular situation. These traits are reflected in variables such as educational level, living standard, customs, and traditions, despite differing theoretical perspectives on individual behaviors, particularly criminal behavior*” (Asma bint Abdullah Al-Tuwaijri, 2011, p. 16).

In this study, **social characteristics** aim to clarify the traits that reflect individual behavior in societies, as highlighted in sociological theories, including the behavioral approach in social theory. Deviations in individual behavior that conflict with social characteristics are understood in psychology, as noted by experts like Robert Bokok, as “*unconscious processes that fall within understanding actions in group contexts, whether conscious or unconscious, as Freud explained, to comprehend individual behavior in terms of motives*” (Jamal Mohamed Abu Shanab, 2008, p. 36).

9. The Sociological Aspect of Child Sexual Abuse as Inhumane Behavior According to Sociological Theories:

Starting from the premise that child sexual abuse represents a deviation from societal values and norms, Robert Merton defines **deviant behavior** as “*behavior that clearly departs from the standards set for people in their social conditions*” (Khoula Zerouki, 2014, p. 62). Additionally, deviant behavior is described as “*behavior that is non-conforming or potentially leads to non-conformity, i.e., actions that do not align with societal values, customs, and traditions. Deviant acts are measured against other actions and behaviors*” (Khoula Zerouki, 2014, p. 63).

The social and sociological perspective on individuals engaging in behaviors that violate norms and customs traditionally labeled such individuals as “*delinquents*,” focusing on their social and environmental characteristics and considering deviance as a result of the delinquent individual’s circumstances. However, modern approaches challenge this view, emphasizing the study of delinquent behavior itself rather than the circumstances. Albert Cohen notes that “*to study deviant behavior in sociology, one should focus on the deviant behavior rather than the individuals*” (Khoula Zerouki, 2014, p. 81). According to this approach, it is not the environment that creates the deviant individual, but rather the individual’s own traits and predispositions that lead them to deviate from societal norms.

10. The Psychological Aspect of Child Sexual Abuse as a Mental Disorder According to Psychological Theories:

“*Sexual gratification through means rejected by moral and religious values, condemned by customs, traditions, and social laws, or when a person loses control due to a psychological disorder, confirms the link between sexual deviance and mental disorder*” (Adel Shaib, 2010, p. 1).

Sexual deviations are also defined as “*obtaining sexual satisfaction in an unlawful manner through sex trade and prostitution or other sexual services in the realm of deviance*” (Adel Shaib, 2010, p. 1).

Psychological studies have examined the families of some offenders, selecting a number of criminals and investigating whether their ancestors had hereditary defects, referring to the emergence of mental

and psychological disorders. This test was highlighted by Goring, who noted that “*the similarity in criminal behavior between parents and children can be attributed to heredity, with this similarity reaching 60%*” (Jaber Nasr Eddin, 2022, p. 4).

Child sexual abuse is considered by psychologists as a **mental disorder** due to its classification as a sexual deviation. For instance, a study in Egypt indicated that sexual disorders, including indecent acts and prostitution, are considered psychological disorders (Ghanem Mohamed Hassan, 2006, p. 360).

In terms of deviance, it is described as “*the presence of variation and disturbance in an individual when their behavior differs qualitatively and quantitatively from acceptable social norms, and when the individual ignores societal standards and expectations, they are considered psychologically disturbed*” (Qassem Hussein Saleh, 2015, p. 30).

Thus, from the psychological perspective, sexual abuse is behavior that violates societal norms, representing deviance and reflecting mental or psychological disorders according to experts.

11. Case Studies of Child Sexual Abuse – Judicial Council of Batna, Indictment Chamber (2000–2022, pp. 3–5):

11.1. Case One

(Source: *Unpublished Decision, Indictment Chamber, Judicial Council of Batna, Docket No. 00935/21, Decision Date: 20-02-2022*)

The victim, **A.S.R.**, born on March 22, 2005, in Batna, was abducted and raped before reaching 18 years of age. At 6:00 a.m., the victim left her father’s house, taking her clothes, mother’s jewelry, and mobile phone. Her father filed a police report, and at 9:00 a.m., a man called claiming his intention to marry her and instructed her father not to inform the police, claiming he had met her via Facebook.

The father returned to the police to contact the suspect, who initially promised to return the girl but then broke his promise and turned off his phone. Police investigations revealed that the SIM card was used by another individual. During a police ambush, the primary suspect escaped. A third person in contact with the suspect was arrested, revealing that the abduction initially stemmed from the suspect seeking a bride, and the third party had agreed, citing transportation issues. The girl was taken to the capital, stopped by the gendarmerie, and later brought to the house of the abductor’s brother. She was then forced to engage in sexual acts. The abductor later misled the victim into believing she would be handed over to the police by his friend, but it was a deception orchestrated by the abductor’s wife.

Medical examination confirmed recent and past sexual intercourse, including anal penetration, and tearing of the hymen.

Subsequently, all involved parties—the abductor, his two friends, his mother, and his wife—were arrested. The court charged them with **rape of a minor under 18, incitement to immorality, and corruption of morals**, and referred the case to the primary court.

11-2. Second Case (Source: Unpublished Decision, Indictment Chamber, Batna Court of Justice, Table Date 01/05/2010, Decision Date 24-01-21).

The case of **M.F.Z.** involves the felony of **rape and incitement of a minor**, born on **14-05-2004**, who had not yet reached 18 years old in the Batna Province, concerning **immorality and corruption of morals**. The minor was **15 years old** at the time she left her home in 2019, when her mother filed a complaint regarding her daughter leaving the house, knowing that she was staying at home. She fled from home but later presented herself voluntarily to the police station, where she was heard in the presence of a representative from the Observation Department in the Open Environment regarding the circumstances and reasons that led her to leave home. She indicated that her parents were divorced, and according to her, she was treated well by her mother, but the treatment changed after she was **abducted by a group of individual**, She indicated that her parents were divorced, and she believed she had been treated well by her mother, whose behavior changed after the girl was kidnapped by a group of individuals—a case handled by the National Gendarmerie. The kidnappers' relatives contacted the girl's mother and offered her money in exchange for withdrawing the complaint, which she accepted.

She also stated that she fled from her mother's home because her mother was using her for prostitution and inciting her to debauchery. Her mother had taken her, along with her lover, to a farm in the wilaya of Batna, where they consumed hallucinogenic pills. The mother then went off with her lover, leaving the girl in the same place, where she was subjected to sexual assault by a friend of her mother's lover, resulting in the loss of her virginity.

After the mother became aware of this, she informed the girl that it was all done for financial compensation. The girl then moved to live with her mother in the lover's home. The mother would go out every night with her clients, leaving the girl behind, and the friend would repeatedly force sexual intercourse on her violently.

After a period, the mother fell ill, and the girl was forced to engage in sexual acts in her mother's place for an amount of 2000 DZD. After examination by a forensic doctor, it was confirmed that she had indeed been subjected to violent sexual assault, leading to the rupture of her hymen.

Subsequently, the mother was arrested. She admitted that her daughter had been sexually assaulted by her lover's friend and had previously been assaulted by the four individuals who kidnapped her.

After the file was transferred to the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Batna Court, it was determined to be a case of rape against a minor.

11-3. The Third Case: (Source: Unpublished Decision, Indictment Chamber, Batna Judicial Council, Docket Number 00231/21, Decision Date 25-04-21).

The case (M.W.), born on 24-07-2004 in the wilaya of Batna, was subjected to violent sexual assault by an individual at his residence, which was under construction. An initial investigation was opened, during which the victim was heard. She stated that the perpetrator contacted her and offered to drive her after she informed him that she was going to her aunt's house. When she got into the vehicle with him, he suggested taking her to a doctor after she complained of abdominal pain. After leaving her

aunt's house, he asked her to accompany him to his residence under construction to check on the progress of the works. Upon entering his home, she sat on a double bed, where he lay on top of her, lifted her clothes, sexually assaulted her, and ruptured her hymen, resulting in bleeding. He then took her to a private clinic, but they did not find the doctors there.

When the suspect was heard, he stated that he had been in a romantic relationship with her for two years, that they communicated by phone and via Facebook, and that she had willingly gotten into the vehicle with him. He claimed that she lay down on the bed herself, removed her jacket, remained in a very short skirt, began caressing him, and surprised him by undressing. He confirmed that he was accustomed to caressing her at her request.

The victim stated that she had previously engaged in some ordinary sexual practices with him, such as kissing, hugging, and anal sex. After they had separated for four months and then reconciled, he lured her—according to her—to his home and forcibly had sexual intercourse with her. She stated that she had previously engaged in sex with him willingly, but the deflowering was by force. He then took her, along with her cousin, to a private clinic.

After conducting a psychiatric evaluation of the accused, it was determined that he bore full criminal responsibility for his actions, namely the sexual assault.

11-4. The Fourth Case (Source: Unpublished Decision, Indictment Chamber, Batna Judicial Council, Docket Number 01791/19, Decision Date 26-01-20).

The case (Q.Z.), born on 02-07-2001 in Barika – Batna. At around 16:00, the security services of the Barika district in the wilaya of Batna received a report from a child stating that he had been kidnapped and detained by an individual. The child was sitting beside the railway line in Barika when a person approached him, asked him to accompany him, and, after the child refused, pulled out a large knife and placed it under his neck, forcing him to go to old shacks in Barika, where he spent the night. The perpetrator attempted to sexually assault him, took his phone, and ordered him to steal money and jewelry from his parents. He released him to carry out the theft and arranged to meet the next day. The perpetrator attempted to assault him again, but the child tried to escape; however, the kidnapper caught him after he fell to the ground. He then took him to an abandoned house, threatened him with a weapon, and attempted to have sex with him. At that point, the victim fled to the police.

After the kidnapper was arrested, he denied the allegations and accused the kidnapped child of approaching them to ask for hallucinogenic pills. However, the kidnapped child confirmed that he had been sexually assaulted. The investigating judge decided to forward the case file to the Public Prosecutor, concluding that there was evidence and indications of the accused committing the assault. The Indictment Chamber confirmed the violent sexual assault with the assistance of two persons, particularly after the forensic doctor's report indicated an old act at the victim's organ, a deep opening in the anal sphincter muscle, traces of sexual assault, and assessed a temporary disability of 5 days.

11-5. The Fifth Case: (Source: Unpublished Decision, Indictment Chamber, Batna Judicial Council, Docket Number 01760/19, Decision Date 26-01-2000).

The case (Gh.S.), born on 24-10-2004, aged 15 at the time of the sexual assault in 2019. The victim's mother filed a complaint with the security services of the wilaya of Batna against the perpetrator, stating that her son had been beaten and sexually assaulted by an individual who came to their home and asked the boy to go with him to buy Eid clothes. Upon reaching the location, the perpetrator pulled out a knife in front of the child, took him to a deserted place, ordered him to undress, and had sex with him. After finishing, he dressed and asked the victim to accompany him to the wilaya of Jijel. The victim went along but managed to escape and returned to his family home in the middle of the night, finding the door locked. He went to the security services in the morning, where he met his mother, who was filing a missing person complaint.

The child stated that he had known the perpetrator for a month, as he had worked with him selling vegetables. After examination by the forensic doctor, the sexual assault was confirmed, with compounded injuries in the anal area, swelling on the head, confirmation of violent sexual assault, and a temporary disability of 3 days.

11-6. The Sixth Case: (Source: Unpublished Decision, Indictment Chamber, Batna Judicial Council, Docket Number 00226/22, Decision Date 08-05-2022).

The case (B.Kh.R.), born on 16-05-2005 in the wilaya of Batna, and the case (J.A.), born on 03-06-2005. The two victims were subjected to violent sexual assault by individuals, along with the misdemeanor of inciting minors to debauchery and corruption of morals, abducting a minor, and the misdemeanor of violating the privacy of individuals' lives by taking photographs without their consent—assault against males.

According to the statements of one of the victims, he met the accused, stayed on the street for two days until his father found him, and stated that the accused was accustomed to having sex with them multiple times in a warehouse. He confirmed that the accused was also accustomed to asking them to roll cannabis cigarettes inside his car and to consume them. The accused placed his hand on the victim's sensitive areas—the buttocks—pulled him toward him, and after one of the victims refused, beat him and sexually assaulted him from behind. He then took him to the mountain and repeated the act, then at his home after giving him a quantity of drugs, which the victim consumed before the act, and filmed him multiple times afterward while drinking alcohol.

The accused's phone revealed videos of the two victims: one filling glasses with red wine, and the other being embraced by the accused in an indecent manner. The forensic doctor's testimonies for both victims confirmed that they had been subjected to sexual assault. After the videos and photos were shown to the accused, he initially confessed but then retracted his confession.

12- Presentation and Analysis of the Results of the First Hypothesis in Light of Sexual Assault

12-1. Characteristics and Features of the Study Sample:

Table (01): Shows the Age Variable of the Victim

Age of Victim at the Time of Incident	Frequency	Percentage
[15-16[03	50%

Age of Victim at the Time of Incident	Frequency	Percentage
[16-17[02	33.33%
[17-18[01	16.66%
Total	06	100%

Source: Prepared by the researcher.

From the table above, it is clear that the highest percentage, 50%, corresponds to the [15-16[age group, followed by 33.33% for the [16-17[age group, and 16.66% for the [17-18[age group. These age groups correspond to the childhood stage as defined by Algerian law based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the UN General Assembly.

The sociological significance of sexual assault on this age group can be explained by changes in the characteristics of the family system to which the individual belongs, where parental supervision has diminished, allowing the individual to interact with actors outside their age group, along with a lack of parental awareness of their children's social situation.

Table (02): Shows Gender Characteristics

Gender of Sample Individuals	Frequency	Percentage
Male	02	33.33%
Female	04	66.66%
Total	06	100%

Source: Prepared by the researcher.

The table above shows the gender characteristics of the sample, with females representing the highest percentage at 66.66%, compared to 33.33% males. The cases indicate that females are more exposed to sexual assault than males, despite the existence of the second type of sexual assault, which targets males.

The sociological explanation of the sexual assault phenomenon reflects changes in the social and behavioral characteristics of individuals. Sexual deviations have emerged in Algerian society, especially same-sex offenses by males, which were rare in previous years compared to the number of individuals committing assaults today.

Table (03): Reflects Urban/Rural Social Affiliation of Sample Individuals

Social Affiliation of Sample Individuals	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	03	50%
Rural	03	50%
Total	06	100%

Source: Prepared by the researcher.

The table above shows the social affiliation of the sample individuals, revealing equal percentages between urban and rural groups, each representing 50%.

The percentages in the table confirm that social affiliation does not affect exposure to sexual assault. This can be explained by the changes occurring in Algerian rural areas, where social characteristics between rural and urban communities have become more similar, meaning the social affiliation variable does not influence sexual assault exposure.

Table (04) – Reflects the Age Characteristics of the Perpetrators and Their Roles

Gender	Role of Perpetrators	Contribution to Assault	Sexual Assault	Contribution to Abduction for Sexual Assault	Total
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Perpetrator	04	66.66%	02	22.22%
	Friends	02	33.33%	02	22.22%
Female	Perpetrator's Mother	/	/	02	22.22%
	Other Female Groups	/	/	03	33.33%
Total		06	100%	09	100%

Source: Prepared by the researcher.

The table above illustrates the categories contributing to the assault. Two types of groups appear: the first group includes the individuals committing the sexual assault, and the second group includes those contributing to the abduction to facilitate the sexual assault. The highest percentage related to the groups facilitating abduction for sexual assault is 55.55% female versus 44.44% male.

The mentioned percentages reflect a contradiction in the social characteristics of Algerian society, where females—whether mothers, sisters, or wives—can contribute against other females and facilitate assaults on them. In extreme cases, a wife may assist her husband in assaulting another female, as shown in one case where she left her husband with an abducted girl, allowing him to engage in sexual activity with her in exchange for financial gain, such as monetary compensation or gifts. Even more concerning is the involvement of a caregiver mother, who plays a key role in the family system and is considered one of the most important pillars of family structure and, consequently, society.

It is evident that the characteristics of the victims vary between females and males. Sexual assault by males against males is considered a relatively recent phenomenon in Algerian society. Most of the victims are under 18 years old—children—and, alarmingly, some family members participate in facilitating sexual assaults, reflecting characteristics that contradict societal norms.

12-2. Presentation and Analysis of the Hypothesis Results

- **Analysis of Subject Categories: Social Change in the Characteristics of Algerian Families in the Context of Sexual Assault on Children:**

- The social characteristics of individuals within the family have undergone radical changes, both at the level of parents and children. This is due to the breakdown of family relationships, where the family, especially regarding minors, no longer has knowledge of their children's whereabouts. As shown in the cases above, children aged 14 or 15—whether male or female—are exposed to sexual assault and may engage in behaviors inconsistent with the characteristics of Algerian society. For example, one case involved a minor presenting herself in an unfinished residence, lying on a bed, and performing actions that were the primary cause of sexual assault through sexual exploitation. Additionally, the perpetrator's mother facilitated the assault, which directly contradicts her role as one of the most important actors in family construction, since the family is a social system responsible for social control and guiding the behavior of its members, who lack full understanding of societal values, customs, and traditions.
- **Subject Category: Contribution of Social Media in Building Illegitimate Social Relationships That Facilitate Sexual Assault:**
- Social media, imported and adopted by communities in developing countries, often brings negative behaviors. This was exploited by a minor—the childhood group—who used Facebook to meet a young man, develop an emotional relationship, and then transition into a victim of sexual assault. This reflects the negligence of the authorities responsible for supervising all imported content, disregarding the particularities of Algerian society. It also highlights the Algerian family's failure to provide oversight or guidance for their children.
- **Subject Category: Punishment by the Algerian Judiciary:**
- The Algerian judiciary plays an important role in cases of sexual assault against children by relying on forensic doctors to confirm assault cases, especially when families have failed to protect their children. Perpetrators may be punished with imprisonment, with the law imposing the maximum penalties for both primary perpetrators and contributors to sexual assault. Article 336 stipulates that anyone committing the crime of rape (sexual assault) is punishable by 5 to 10 years of imprisonment. If the rape involves a minor under the age of 18, the penalty is 10 to 20 years of temporary imprisonment (Penal Code, 2014, p. 130).
- **Subject Category: Drugs and Hallucinogens as Means of Sexual Assault:**
- Furthermore, drug use and addiction to hallucinogens are major factors contributing to sexual assault and behaviors that contradict the social characteristics of individuals in Algerian society. These substances impair an individual's awareness of their actions and behavior. Despite these risks, there is no known awareness program for families and individuals through seminars, educational lectures, or television programs addressing this phenomenon.
- **Subject Category: Effects of Sexual Assault on Children:**
- Sexual assault has become widespread in Algerian society due to multiple factors previously mentioned. It produces significant effects on individuals as minors and victims. Socially, it can lead to deviant behavior, where the individual becomes accustomed to delinquency and may attempt to normalize it as an activity, potentially causing harm to others. Such individuals often develop psychological disorders and engage in behaviors contrary to societal customs and traditions, considering them normal, using them to satisfy personal desires, instincts, or objectives, or to transfer their experience to others. This ultimately increases the number of deviant actors—not only in terms of count but in terms of their behavioral influence—whose deviant behaviors may escalate into criminal acts.

General Conclusion:

- Sexual assault on children contributes to disrupting the development of social characteristics within Algerian families, whereas legal punishment plays an important role in Algerian society, especially in contrast to the declining role of the family.

In light of the hypothesis that sexual assault contributes to disrupting the social characteristics of Algerian families versus legal punishment, the following points are evident:

- **Prevalence:** Sexual assault on children contradicts the customs and traditions of Algerian society and has become widespread. These practices affect all members of society, including fathers, mothers, grandparents, sons, and daughters, as well as individuals in various professional roles. These acts have increasingly occurred with flexibility and without objection from members of society.
- **Role of Penal Institutions:** Penal institutions have contributed by establishing a legal system that imposes the maximum penalties on perpetrators and on individuals who facilitate such acts.
- **Family Neglect of Educational and Supervisory Roles:** Families have experienced a form of alienation, whether due to technological advancement or prioritizing financial provision, resulting in a lack of parental supervision over children during their studies and transitions to educational institutions.
- **Lack of Family Awareness:** Families often provide children with mobile phones and long-term internet access without guidance, effectively turning the family into a “financial bank” while neglecting other essential family roles.
- **Role of Social and Psychological Specialists:** These specialists often fail to fulfill their awareness and preventive roles within educational institutions, which include social or psychological specialists, as awareness programs, sessions, and workshops have become merely formal functions rather than active preventive measures.
- **Recommendations for Algerian Society:**
 - Organize workshops attended by all parents, divided across weekdays, to raise awareness about the situation of their children.
 - Enforce punitive laws widely to deter perpetrators and recognize as victims only those who have been subjected to violence against their will.
 - Develop a national strategy to combat sexual assault against children, including specialists and financial resources to facilitate its implementation.

Conclusion:

From the discussion presented in this article on the topic of sexual assault on children and its role in disrupting social characteristics versus legal punishment, it is evident that there is a clear dysfunction across all active societal entities. This begins with the family, which has abandoned its essential roles and, in some cases, exists only on paper in municipal records. Additionally, there is a need to enhance the effectiveness of legal punishment to penalize those who engage in deviant behaviors, as well as to address the absence of the educational role of schools, which have become institutions focused primarily on achieving high quantitative success rather than fulfilling their broader educational mission.

Given the failure of these societal entities to perform their roles, it becomes imperative for families to provide proper care, guidance, and supervision for their children. Parallel societal institutions cannot compensate for the family's abandoned responsibilities; therefore, efforts must focus on reestablishing family integration, combating the alienation imposed by modern communication technologies, and facilitating social reintegration.

Developing effective strategies always requires the inclusion of the family in fulfilling its duties—emphasizing that the family's role is primarily educational rather than merely providing material support. Families should collaborate with educational institutions to restore balance to individuals, as society functions as an integrated system in which each subsystem—from the family to schools, to state institutions such as civil society—must perform its respective role.

Moreover, the roles of social and psychological specialists should be activated in all institutions, including the judiciary, in close collaboration with families. Social and psychological counseling should be made mandatory, alongside healthcare institutions, through analyses and other interventions that can help reduce deviant behaviors.

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