A Contribution to the Study of Working Women's Sexual Harassment in Algeria, Including its Causes and Prevention

AMTTOUT kamel[*]

University Tahri Mohamed of Bechar (Algeria),

Email: amttout.kamel@gmail.com

Abstract: This study attempts to highlight the phenomenon of sexual harassment as a form of violence, namely towards working women, since it has become part of Algerian society's everyday life. Moreover, the researcher has used the descriptive approach to identify this phenomenon, determine its gravity, and recognize its causes and effects.

One of the most significant findings is that sexual harassment of working women is not viewed as a social problem related to social construction or as an imbalance in the value structure. Furthermore, it is characterized as social behaviour that happens in the context of interactive relationships between people in their family or professional lives, which may threaten working women's families and employment stability. This requires serious treatment of this phenomenon by adopting deterrent strategies.

Keywords: sexual harassment; violence; working women; *Algerian society.*

Introduction

"You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women" (Astha, 2019, p. 50)Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Sexual harassment is considered within the Criminal Psychology Branch, which is interested in investigating the variables that lead an individual to commit this crime, which is one of the societal issues that is kept concealed and discreet to preserve the family's reputation. Because of the fear of social stigma, the situation of sexual harassment is deteriorating in all societies and has even become a significant aspect. It is important to note that different investigators in different disciplines, such as sociology of delinquency and crime, are interested in investigating this phenomenon as a flagrant violation not only of women's but also

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[*]**Corresponding author**

of society's moral and social standards, as well as a negative indicator of the success of the process of socialization.

Sexual harassment is a social problem that affects people of all ages and both genders, particularly women, who are regarded as sexual creatures. This phenomenon takes various forms, including sexual comments, hints, and expressions involving the request or pursuit of a sexual relationship. Unless the victim does not welcome such verbal and nonverbal gestures, she may become harassed.

It is noted in social reality that certain social groups, especially working women, are subjected to a number of various kinds of violence, from verbal to physical to sexual. These lasts are not necessarily motivated solely by sexual desire; rather, they may be motivated by bullying, force and a desire to humiliate the other side.

When we discuss this issue at Algeria's level, it is like the rest of the world, where sexual harassment has become an obsession and a nightmare. Accordingly, addressing the issue of sexual harassment of working women in Algeria has posed numerous political, legal and social problems since Algerian society has recently shown great anger and anxiety because of the repeated harassment experienced by many women.

In this context, the study's problem, which relates to understanding the phenomenon of sexual harassment of working women in Algerian society, can be consolidated into the pivotal question: what role can a sociological researcher play in his understanding of the phenomenon of sexual harassment of working women in Algeria?

In order to shed more light on the aspects related to the central question, this study attempts to answer the following sub-questions:

- What do we mean by sexual harassment? What are its different forms?
- What are the factors leading to the phenomenon of sexual harassment of working women in Algerian society?
- What are the most important consequences of sexual harassment of working women?
- What are the strategies that women, the state, and civil society rely on in confronting acts of sexual harassment?

1. Methodology

1.1 Objectives of the study

The current study's objectives are derived from the following rationales:

- This study looks at sexual harassment as a social issue.
- Considering sexual harassment of working women to be a form of

violence against them.

•Determining the causes and factors that contribute to the prevalence of sexual harassment of working women

•Explaining the main consequences of sexual harassment against working women.

•Attempting to develop a preventive strategy to combat the phenomenon of sexual harassment of Algerian working women in society.

1.2 The importance of studying

The significance of this study stems from the seriousness and sensitivity of its subject matter, sexual harassment of working women. In addition to the negative views of some members of society on working women that are disrespectful and inferior. These factors have, in one way or another, increased the vulnerability of women workers to harassment, in addition to their relative adherence to religious values and increased rates of sexual arousal. These factors have led to its spread and had a negative impact on it. So, it is an essential topic that demands understanding, interpretation, and foresight of future trends in order to actualize it and develop policies to handle it.

1.3 Study Approach

Since this article's topic is theoretical, the research depends on an analytical-descriptive approach, in which he attempts to monitor and analyze various literatures on the issue of sexual harassment of working women. He also looks into the elements that contributed to its emergence and its effects, particularly on working women. All in the effort to create a thorough strategy that aids in the creation of preventative strategies to decrease its risks and attain functional stability for its sufferers.

1.4 Study Themes

The article is broken up into the following themes to help readers fully understand the subject and draw applicable conclusions:

•The first theme: Defining and discussing the study concepts.

•The second theme: Forms of workplace sexual harassment against working women.

• The third Themes: Causes and factors of sexual harassment of working women.

•The fourth Themes: Towards developing preventive strategies to reduce harassment of women in the workplace

2. Defining and discussing the study concepts

This study contains concepts that need to be consistently controlled in order to investigate the "phenomenon of sexual harassment of working women. Consequently, it is essential to regulate the basic concepts discussed in this study:

2.1 Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is one of the concepts that is hard to measure, due to the differences in determining the nature of this behaviour, whether it is sexual or just undesirable behaviour, as it "makes the victim feels uncomfortable about what is happening to her (sex) from the offender." Not only that but adding the word "sex" to it indicates committing a heinous indecency crime. Sexual harassment is a planned assassination of nobility, purity, and serenity. In brief, it is a murder of humanity.. (Sunnri, 2009, p. 29)

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The researcher has noticed that the use of gender describes the characteristics of men and women as socially complex characteristics. Furthermore, this latter is unrelated to the differences in reproductive organs. On this basis, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has outlined the definition of sexual harassment as any actions of an unwanted sexual nature that have different forms that begin with touch and end with sexual intercourse.

According to "Kathleen's" vision, harassment is a collection of actions committed by men against women that, as a whole, reflect women's low social status and thus creates sexual harassment disparities in power, possession, and exploitation between men and women on social and cultural levels. (Kathleen M, 1998, p. 4)

From the foregoing, this harassment could be physical, verbal or written. It incorporates multiple realities and is a form of violence that manifests itself in numerous ways. According to a lawman, "without a doubt, no one can define sexual harassment, which is human behaviour that evades any attempt to stop it, because the victim's daily suffering is not perceived to have a stable amount.(Simian, 2005, p. 15)

Finally, sexual harassment is deliberate sexual behaviour by a harasser who is not wanted by the victim, causing sexual, psychological or moral abuse of the

victim, who is often a woman. In recent years, it has evolved into child victims, and the victim can be exposed anywhere, whether in public or private settings.

2.2 Sexual harassment at work

In the context of the definition of sexual harassment at work as unwelcome conduct by the recipient (victim), it is therefore usually justified to adopt the "standard of inappropriateness" that consensual sexual conduct is allowed during the prohibition of abuse in the workplace. Staff members are also able to freely demarcate the conduct with which they will tolerate, preventing the harassers from avoiding responsibility by claiming that no harm was intended..(Deirdre, 2015, p. 03).

3. Forms of workplace sexual harassment directed at women

When the application for employment is conditional on sexual intercourse or when unwanted sexual behaviour is very severe and widespread, the employee will work in a terrible atmosphere. Hence, the courts have set varying standards for sexual harassment depending to the conduct and the person who engages in such harassment. In the end, each case turns to its own facts: how the behaviour was cruel, who did so, and how that perverted behaviour affected the victim of the harassers.

3.1 Bullying Behaviour: A Chain of Harm

Sexual harassment behaviour can range from petty abusive words or actions to forced sexual activity and rape. While the law does not specify a minimum level of harassment, the general rule is that the more severe the behaviour, the fewer times it should occur.(Boland, 2005, p. 26)

3.2 Sex Requests

This sort of sexual harassment behaviour often occurs when the superior (manager) suggests or promises benefits, such as a promotion or pay raise, if the victim engages in sexual behaviour. These requests include the following: (Boland, 2005, p. 27)

- Asking women to spend some time outside work.
- Inviting a woman to an affair.
- Requesting or engaging in sex with women.

3.3 Sexual intimidation

This type of coercion occurs when there is a warning that the employee will lose his or her job unless he or she agrees to participate in sexual behaviour. For example, telling someone to go to a hotel to negotiate a rise or asking someone to provide sexual favours to avoid transfer.

3.4 Hostile work environment

This form of crime was first recognized in 1980 with the adoption of the Equality and Employment Opportunities Commission Guidelines on Sexual Harassment. A hostile work environment is created when the environment becomes intimidating or abusive to such an extent that it changes working conditions.

• The hostile environment is determined by examining how frequently the behaviour occurs, how severe it is, and how it affects the victim.)

• The actual behaviour (the nature, type, how often, how long, and where the behaviour occurs)

• The individuals involved (the age and gender of the parties, and the number of accused persons).

• It makes no difference whether the accused harasser is in a position of power.

• It is unclear whether the behaviour has a negative impact on the workplace.

• It is unknown whether there have been any other instances of sexual harassment in the workplace.

4. Causes and factors of sexual harassment of working women

There are various factors that contributed to the spread of this phenomenon at the workplace, which we summarize in the following points:

4.1 Absence of religious restraint

According to studies, the absence of religious motive is usually a cause of deviation, where the deviation is outside the common and possible predictions of the social system guided by Stanley Cohen's definition. In this case, the love of adventure is dominant, as is the diving into the world of lust without evoking fear of God Almighty. Thus, the faith spirit must be infused among various groups of society as a preventive measure before entering the world of taboos and encroaching upon God's frontiers.

4.2 Failure to report a working woman who is a victim of sexual harassment

Many women do not file a lawsuit for workplace or outside-of-work harassment in order to protect their reputation or avoid being accused of dishonouring them. As public morals and order worsen, women find themselves accused rather than victims.

5. Effects of sexual harassment on employees, employers and society

Undoubtedly, sexual harassment reflects a state of disease that poses a great danger to the individual, society and the entire world. The latter lives in a sexual

revolution that exceeds all limits. A high wave of erosion and sexuality heralds the collapse of civilizations and social values**.** (Hakmat, 2020, p. 77)

Sexual harassment can have devastating consequences for working women, especially when it is accompanied by a variety of physical and physiological symptoms. According to Einarsen and Hoel's research, victims of sexual harassment express distress, threat, and frustration, as well as stress, trauma, anger, loss of appetite, loss of self-confidence, and absence from work." (Yie & Ping, 2021, p. 30) This has a negative impact on work. Victims may lose their jobs or work-related experiences such as training, or they may believe that the only solution is to resign, and women working in low-income groups are more likely to accept sexual harassment because they cannot afford to lose their families' income. Compliance with unwanted sexual demands is accompanied by a loss of self-esteem and confidence in one's own abilities. It also takes courage to confront the harasser, especially in societies where such behaviour is widely tolerated. It is unusual for victims of sexual harassment to have any experience with taking action that may result in further harassment or violence, resulting in protracted legal battles and additional economic and mental tolls on the oppressed.

Sexual harassment, on the other hand, causes workplace tensions that impede teamwork and collaboration during work performance. Aside from increasing absenteeism among women workers in particular, it may also be the hause of valuable employees resigning or losing their jobs, even if they have a good job. According to a study, "2.8 million people have resigned from their jobs due to sexual harassment, causing problems and destabilising the working environment."(Yie & Ping, 2021, p. 30).The intolerance of sexual harassment leaves the institution in a bad situation on the assumption that victims complain and declare their situation. Moreover, in a growing number of countries where judicial proceedings may successfully lead to compensation and fines for harassed victims.

It is worthwhile to mention that some social groups, particularly women, are perceived as the lowest gender or sexual objects. Both men and women frequently perceive this as sexual harassment. Harassment has become an unavoidable part of life and work, and there is nothing that can be done about it. It is common in these circumstances, but it is hidden behind the silence. However, societal perceptions are changing increasingly, as some research studies have recognized that sexual harassment impedes the achievement of gender equality and has negative effects on enterprise efficiency and people's well-being, impeding productivity, development, and appropriate action.

In addition to the above, the table provides a summary of these effects on organizations and individuals:

Table (01): *Shows the effects of sexual harassment on individuals and organizations*

Implications on individuals	Implications on organizations
– Back off at work	– It decreases productivity and increases team conflict.
– Loss of career and income; dropping	– Decreases success and meeting of financial goals
– Humiliation and objectified by gossip and scrutiny	– Decreases job satisfaction
– Loss of trust in the environment and people	– Increases loss and absenteeism of staff members and expertise.
–Extreme stress upon relationship with others	– The image of the organization will suffer financially and reputation-wise when complainants take the issue to court.

Source: Table prepared by the researcher

6. Towards developing preventive strategies to reduce harassment of women in the workplace

Based on the format of the study in this article, this section of our paper focuses on developing practical strategies to address the sexual harassment of working women. These solutions not only have the potential to help individuals, but they also have the potential to improve society as a whole by significantly reducing harassment.

First, the state plays an important role in preventing future workplace sexual harassment and assisting victims, particularly working women in the private and public sectors. As a result, further revision and reformulation of laws in accordance with current variables is required.

Sexual harassment is reduced by worker solidarity as well as theformation of a supportive working group culture and environment. This is especially true in jobs where coworker cooperation and solidarity are enshrined in order to maintain job stability; as a result, mutually supportive employees are less vulnerable to such violations.

It should be noted that imposing the concept of passive reinforcement to deal with colleagues (perpetrators) involved in the sexual harassment case might appear unpleasant at first. However, by training in the use of appropriate tone, words, and body language, the perpetrator can not only realize his own actions without tension, but also reduce the likelihood of committing a similar act in the future. (Qayyun & Radiq, 2021, p. 24)

Human Resources (HR) departments must improve reporting systems and create a safe environment in which employees can report sexual harassment. The human resources department should provide explicit instructions on the features of harassment, what constitutes prohibited behaviour, and what disciplinary action will be taken against the perpetrator. All sexual harassment reports, in particular, must be treated as confidential in order to protect the victim from direct repercussions such as pity. etc. (Qayyun & Radiq, 2021, p. 25)

7.Findings and recommandations

• The study has revealed an important crime in Algerian society in recent years, which is sexual harassment of working women. It has mentioned its expansion in place (East, West, North, and South Algeria) and its spread over time to the point where the situation became one of intense anxiety and fear for working women and their families, even for society as a whole.

•The impacts of sexual harassment validates all the vocabulary of criminality and terms of deviance, and it is not possible to describe the reality of this crime and the extent of its damages. In additioon, it causes physical and psychological damage and deprives women of living a normal life, in addition to feelings of inferiority as a result of feelings of helplessness and fear entrenched time after time.

• A great suffering experienced by the families of the victims of sexual harassment in Algeria. This latter includes material suffering in all its manifestations, psychological suffering (love of revenge, extreme hatred of harassers (criminals) and loss of trust in the working environment.

• Appreciate the effectiveness of the security media to secure various groups, such as working women, from becoming victims of the crime of harassment. Moreover, the law on protecting individuals from sexual harassment in the workplace should be reinstated in coordination with the Ministry of Justice, which includes the establishment of a "sexual harassment map" at the national and local levels that works on prevention and vigilance and advocates for women in and outside the workplace.

• Attention to the psychological, social and economic aspects, the promotion of human rights and the establishment of freedoms of all kinds would advance the humankind's financial and civilized status. Additionally, it would solve many of the problems facing the State and society and protect the individual and the community from all the causes that encourage him or her to commit the crime or make him or her vulnerable to it.

• the strength of everyone's commitment to the moral model, which energizes him or her against various daily temptations and makes him or her

indifferent to various outside pressures, no matter how severe, necessitating correction and reform to become a viable individual and providing some form of community security guarantee.

• A professional strategy or policy should be informed by the latest sociological theories, psychology, and criminology without neglecting to learn about and benefit from foreign experiences. Effectiveness in the face of criminal and perverse behaviouris not based solely on the method of preaching and mentoring, but on the involvement of all—individuals, families, civil associations and relevant bodies—in any strategy or policy for the prevention of crime and delinquency, including sexual harassment of women working in Algeria.

Conclusion

At the conclusion of this study, it can be said that crime and delinquency are phenomena in every human society. Algerian society, like others, is witnessing numerous crimes and perversions, including the crime of harassment of working women. It has seen a clear decline in the roles of its official and unofficial institutions and a clear change in the hierarchy of values over at least the last three decades. Moreover, harassment of working women is a serious crime in which the perpetrator deliberately seeks to violate the honour of the victim by force, threat or intimidation.

It can be said that the crime of harassment of working women is an act of an abnormal person and a complex act that overlaps factors and motives. Moreover, the history of the crime leads us believe in the multiple thrusts of factors and motives in its interpretation. It has no single factor or motivation inherent in its occurrence. It is established that there are combined motives that contribute to the demand for the commission of the crime, which has been achieved by the strong working connection between all the variables examined. It is also evident that the latter has implications for the woman, the family and society, which necessitates the development of preventive strategies to reduce them. Although it is difficult to study both in theory and in the field, in particular the process of moving the subject from a social to a sociological context. The cumulative scientific knowledge in this area, particularly those related to the sociological, psychological, legal and security aspects.

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