

SOSYAL SAĞLIK DERGİSİ

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EXPOSURE OF INTRA-FAMILIAL SEXUAL ABUSE AND SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

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Öz

Aile sosyal bir kurumdur, bu sebeple toplumsal değişimlerden etkilenecek yapısal olarak dönüşebilmektedir. Tarihsel süreç içerisinde ailenin yapısı, tanımı ve işleyişi farklılıklar göstermektedir. Toplumun ve ailenin değişimi bir gerçekliktir. Doğal hukuk dediğimiz yazısız hukuk kuralları kapsamında, din ve gelenekler üzerinden tanımlanan ailenin değişimi, süreç içerisinde aile bireylerinin yapmış oldukları tercihler doğrultusunda meydana gelebilmektedir. Aile toplumsal olarak maddi ve manevi değerleri kuşaktan kuşağa aktarma işlevine de sahiptir. Bu kapsamda aile değerlendirilirken tarihsel süreç içerisinde ele alınması gerekmektedir. Aile yapısının dönüşümüne etki eden unsurlardan biri yazısız hukuk kuralları iken bir de pozitif hukuk kuralları olarak adlandırılan yazılı olguların da etkisi yok sayılamaz. Bu kapsamda kültürel kabuller ve devlet yaptırımlarının etkisinde aile içi cinsel istismarı değerlendirilmek amacıyla bu araştırma yapılmıştır. Araştırmada cinsel şiddetin tarihsel süreçte aile içindeki yeri açıklanmıştır. Bir problem olarak aile içinde yaşanan şiddetin mahrem ve gizli olması gerektiği yönündeki kabullerin aile içi cinsel istismarın ifşa olmasına engel olduğu düşünülmektedir. Burada doğal hukuk kurallarının ailenin gizliliğine ve mahremiyetine etkisi tartışılmaktadır. Araştırmanın amacı ailenin sosyal bir kurum olması olgusundan yola çıkarak toplumsal değişimi ve süreçte ailenin değişimini sağlayacak, aile içinde cinsel istismar sorununun çözümüne destek olacak bilgiler sunmaktır. Bu çalışmada aile içi çocuğa yönelik cinsel istismar sorununun çözümü için öncelikle bu durumun ortaya çıkarılması gerekliliği ifade edilmiştir. Bu kapsamda okul sosyal hizmeti modeli önerilmiş ve bu modelin nasıl çalışacağı ve yapılacağı hakkında değerlendirme yapılmıştır. Cinsel şiddet, mağdur kişinin hayatını derinden etkileyen bir sorun olarak kabul edildiğinde bu sorunun çözümü için okullarda sosyal hizmet uzmanlarının varlığı önem arz edecektir. Okul sosyal hizmeti sadece aile içi cinsel istismar suçunun tespitinde değil bu vakaların önlenmesinde ve rehabilitasyonunda da önemli bir yere sahiptir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: COVID-19, şiddet, sağlık çalışanları, sağlık profesyonelleri, Web of Science.

AİLE İÇİ CİNSEL İSTİSMARIN İFŞASINDA OKUL SOSYAL HİZMETİ

Abstract

Family is a social institution; therefore, it can undergo structural transformations influenced by societal changes. Throughout the historical process, the structure, definition, and functioning of the family have varied. Change in both society and family are a reality. The transformation of the family defined through religion and traditions under the unwritten laws of natural justice can occur over time, based on choices made by family members. Family also serves the function of transferring material and spiritual values from generation to generation at a societal level. When evaluating the family in this context, it is essential to consider its historical development. While unwritten legal rules, often referred to as natural law, are a factor influencing the transformation of the family structure, the impact of written rules, known as positive legal rules, cannot be ignored. In this regard, this research was conducted to evaluate intra-familial sexual abuse under the influence of cultural norms and state sanctions. This study elucidated, the historical role of sexual violence within families. It is believed that societal assumptions regarding the necessity of violence within the family to remain confidential and clandestine hinder exposure to intra-familial sexual abuse. Here, the influence of natural legal rules on the privacy and confidentiality of the family is discussed. The purpose of this research was to provide information that, starting with the notion of the family as a social institution, addresses societal change and facilitates the family's adaptation to change, contributing to the resolution of sexual abuse issues within the family. In this study, addressing the resolution of intra-familial child sexual abuse, the necessity of first

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revealing this situation is emphasized. In this context, a school social work model was proposed, and an assessment was made regarding how this model operates and is structured. When sexual violence is acknowledged as a problem profoundly affecting a victim's life, the presence of social workers in schools becomes crucial for addressing and preventing these cases and for rehabilitation. School social work is not only instrumental in identifying intra-familial sexual abuse but also plays a significant role in preventing and rehabilitating such cases.

Keywords: *Violence, sexual abuse, and school social services.*

INTRODUCTION

Any sexual incidents involving family members, apart from consensual sexual relations between spouses, are evaluated under the umbrella of sexual violence, if they involve or are witnessed by other family members. Sexual abuse is defined as any form of sexual conduct directed towards a child that; constitutes a crime. When examining the consequences of intra-familial sexual abuse on individuals, it is observed that it causes serious damage to their personality development and social identities. This study explored how intra-familial sexual abuse can be exposed. The problem addressed in this study is the notion that acts of violence within the family can be protected within the family's privacy and may manifest as undisclosed situations in societal domains. Particularly, the revelation of intra-familial sexual abuse incidents is a challenging issue, as seen in research, and even in studies conducted within the family, it is stated that the issue remains confidential. This study is important for the detection and empowerment of individuals who have experienced intra-familial sexual abuse before further harm occurs. It is acknowledged that sometimes sexual violence remains concealed to preserve family unity, but in such cases, the damage inflicted on victims may be overlooked. This issue is a significant public health problem that needs to be addressed and requires concerted efforts in terms of advocacy and intervention.

In this study, intra-familial sexual abuse has been evaluated within the framework of both unwritten legal rules, i.e., cultural norms, and positive law, which encompasses written state regulations. Within this context, the prevention and detection of intra-familial sexual abuse has been examined from a legal perspective. The inclusion of sexual abuse in laws, explanation of its presence, and sanctions under positive law have been elucidated. Additionally, the failure to expose the crime of intra-familial sexual abuse and the internalization of this situation have been interpreted within the scope of natural law. The sanctions imposed by natural law rules regarding intra-familial cultural values and the transformation of these values based on historical or geographical factors have been discussed. Simultaneously, the impact of positive legal rules that determine legal sanctions on intra-familial sexual abuse within the process of disclosure was evaluated. While contemplating the problem of non-disclosure of intra-familial sexual abuse, the question of which institution or organization can reach a broader audience has been considered. In this regard, emphasis has been placed on the role of schools and social work professionals under the umbrella of schools.

1.VIOLENCE

1.1. The Concept of Violence

It is essential to assess and define the concept of violence comprehensively, considering both its emergence and impact, as violence encompasses broad-ranging issues. In this context, violence is expressed as actions directed towards oneself or others, involving threats, physical harm, verbal harm, symbolic harm, and even death (Doğan, 1996: 421). Providing a universal and singular definition of violence is a challenge. This difficulty arises from the

nourishment of violence through human thought and social policies, resulting in different meanings and effects for individuals and societies. For this reason, it is not possible to establish a universally valid standard definition of violence when examining its sources, causes, dimensions, and manifestations (Ayan, 2007: 7). Moreover, technological advancements have contributed to changes in the dimensions, types, and definitions of violence. From this perspective, it can be said that violence is a dynamic and evolving phenomenon.

1.2. Intra-Familial Violence

Family violence, or domestic violence, can be defined as the perpetration of physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, economic, or other forms of violence by one or more individuals within a family towards one or more other family members. Recognized as a universal violation of human rights, domestic violence poses a significant threat to the health of family members and public health in general. As highlighted by Dahlberg and Krug (2002), domestic violence is a serious public health issue.

In a study on domestic violence (Vatandaş, 2003; 19), three characteristics related to domestic violence were discussed:

1. The victim and perpetrator of domestic violence often share a marital relationship, which can, in a sense, legitimize domestic violence through the marriage certificate, seen as a document that allows such actions.
2. In traditional societies, both perpetrators and victims of domestic violence share privacy, supported by conservative beliefs within the family. Within this context, family issues, especially instances of violence and abuse, can be concealed, with the belief that such matters should remain hidden within the family. Therefore, exposing domestic violence and conducting research on the subject can be challenging.
3. Perpetrators and victims of domestic violence typically cohabit within the same household. However, even if they no longer live together, the violence and abuse perpetrated by separated siblings, former spouses, individuals who have left their homes, or former romantic partners can still be influenced by the understanding developed during their time sharing the same residence.

While societal structures and policies are often held responsible for violence outside the family, the responsibility for domestic violence is usually taken on by family members, allowing such incidents to remain hidden. Consequently, these barriers to disclosing domestic violence can hinder our understanding of the prevalence of domestic violence.

1.2.1. Intra-Familial Sexual Violence

According to the definition provided by the Directorate General on the Status of Women (2008), sexual violence, defined as subjecting someone to forced and unwanted sexual intercourse or compelling a person into a risky and shameful sexual relationship, can also occur within the family. The family is generally a social institution consisting of individuals

connected through kinship, marriage, or other legal means, living together in the same household. Individuals within this group fulfill their sexual, psychological, social, and economic needs. Domestic violence is defined as actions or neglect by one family member that endangers the life integrity or independence of another member, harming to their personality. In the context of the family, domestic sexual violence refers to the use of sexuality as a means of perpetrating this type of violence, occurring among family members.

2. SEXUAL ABUSE

2.1. Sexual Violence

Attempting to engage in sexual intercourse against someone's will, verbally or physically, can be defined as sexual violence. The perpetrator of sexual violence may seek to inflict violence on the victim through sexual intercourse or behaviors involving sexuality.

Sexual violence is a form of violence in which sexuality is used with the intent of threat or coercion. This type of violence is often more difficult to articulate compared to other forms of violence, as it is frequently concealed due to societal norms and religious beliefs, and sometimes even enforced by society (Bölükbaşı, 2015). Fromm (1998: 36) evaluates this type of violence as a perversion. The perpetrator of violence experiences both the desire to mistreat and humiliate the victim physically and the sensation of sexual arousal and gratification. Fromm, emphasizes that at the core of all these behaviors lies the desire for gratification.

Child sexual violence refers to the use of a child for sexual purposes. Forms of child sexual violence include watching child pornography, spying on the child in their private spaces, engaging in sexual intercourse in front of the child, forcing early marriage, making sexual jokes with the child, raping or attempting rape, addressing the child sexually, permitting the viewing of sexually explicit films or magazines, providing support in such matters, showing genitals to the child, engaging in sexual conversations with the child, and other situations (UNICEF, 2013). Child sexual violence is defined as "sexual abuse".

2.1.1. Sexual Abuse

The World Health Organization (WHO) has defined child sexual abuse as the coercion of a child into a sexual act that the child may not fully comprehend, and the child's consent or approval is not present. This type of abuse entails the perpetrator's behavior aimed at satisfying their sexual desires using the child's responsibility, trust, and power relationships (World Health Organization [WHO], 2002). According to research findings, the most prevalent age range for child sexual abuse is reported to be between 6 and 10 years old. It has been observed that female children are more susceptible to sexual abuse compared to male children. Sexual abuse is predominantly perpetrated by individuals known to the victim. Although the situation is complex for children exposed to sexual abuse, there are some indicators. Difficulty in walking and sitting, the presence of a sexually transmitted disease, advanced knowledge of sexual matters, withdrawal, depression, difficulties in peer relationships, aversion to physical contact, sleep disturbances, or avoidance behaviors

towards the family are among the identified signs (Finkelhor, 2014; Putnam, 2003; Rispen, Aleman, and Goudena, 1997; American Academy of Pediatrics, 2013).

Based on estimates derived from research conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO), the average prevalence of sexual violence against children is reported to be around 25% for female children and approximately 8% for male children (Aloa and Molojwane, 2008: 12). While sexual abuse varies depending on time, society, and the mode of identification, children in the age range of 7-13 are considered the group at the highest risk of sexual abuse (Finkelhor, 1994: 48). Furthermore, disclosure of sexual abuse is acknowledged as a highly challenging issue. Many cases of sexual abuse remain hidden because they are known only to the victim and perpetrator (Runyan and Zolotor, 2011: 622).

2.1.2. Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment

Sexual assault is a term used to describe sexual violence directed towards adults. Within the framework of our written legal rules, sexual assault under the Turkish Penal Code, is expressed as follows:

“TCK 102: Sexual Assault: A person who violates the bodily integrity of another through sexual behaviors is punished with imprisonment for a term of five to ten years upon the complaint of the victim. The distinctive feature of the crime of sexual assault is the violation of bodily integrity with the intention of satisfying sexual desires, contrary to the consent of individuals over the age of 18, whether they are women or men. The commission of the crime using force, threat, or deception against the victim, causing the victim to lose consciousness, or taking advantage of the victim’s unconsciousness is considered an ‘aggravating factor’” (Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü, 2020).

This article explains that the crime of sexual assault occurs through actions such as touching, fondling, kissing, or penetrating the body with an organ/object. Sexual acts that do not involve physical contact are not considered within the scope of this crime. Furthermore, in cases where this crime is committed within the family against a spouse, an investigation can only take place if the victim files a complaint (Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü, 2020).

Within the framework of our written legal rules, a distinction has been made between sexual assault and sexual harassment, as expressed in the Turkish Penal Code, as follows:

“TCK 105: Sexual Harassment: A person who sexually harasses someone, upon the complaint of the victim, is sentenced to imprisonment for a term of three months to two years or to judicial fine; if the act is committed against a child, the sentence is imprisonment for a term of six months to three years. Sexual harassment involves verbal or written acts or bodily movements that do not involve physical contact with the victim’s body but are aimed at satisfying sexual desires” (Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü, 2020).

The concept of sexual harassment within this article encompasses behaviors such as sending sexually explicit messages/photos via any communication channel, exposing genitals, undressing, and expressing a desire to engage in sexual intercourse through body language. The perpetrator can be of the same or different gender. In such cases, an investigation requires the victim to file a complaint (Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü, 2020). In the prosecution of sexual assault crimes, the victim's complaint and statement are crucial. As these individuals are considered adults, the victim must file a complaint for the application of the mentioned law.

In this study, the concept of "sexual abuse" is being evaluated. However, the information provided above includes the terms "sexual violence", "sexual harassment" and "sexual assault" to better understand the scope of sexual abuse and to highlight the differences with other concepts. From this perspective, it can be inferred that sexual violence serves as an umbrella term encompassing sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual abuse. According to Gültaş and Gündüz (2008: 49), our laws use the term "sexual assault" for actions that harm individuals' sexual integrity, specifically for crimes committed against adults aged 18 and above. However, for individuals under the age of 18, the term "child" is defined, and the term "sexual abuse" is used for sexual behaviors towards children. Harsher penalties are envisaged for the crime of sexual abuse of children compared to sexual assault.

2.2. Sanction of the Crime of Domestic Sexual Abuse According to Written and Unwritten Rules

The sanctioning of domestic sexual abuse within the context of this section is evaluated under both natural law principles, which encompass unwritten legal rules, and positive law principles, which consist of legal rules based on written texts. From this perspective, it is possible to examine the cultural and penal sanctions imposed by both natural and state-imposed legal frameworks. To express this more comprehensively:

Natural Law Principles: Natural law principles refer to the rights that individuals inherently possess without distinctions based on religion, language, race, geography, or gender. The most significant difference between natural law and positive law is highlighted by the fact that the sanctions of natural law are based on unwritten rules. The formation of these rules is influenced by natural laws and religious values, making them essentially unwritten.

Positive Law Principles: Positive law, on the other hand, consists of rules enacted by the state, often in conjunction with the constitution and statutes. These rules are codified and put into effect in a written form. They are subject to the conditions and governance of the respective country and can be adapted according to the circumstances and administration of the state. The state, exercising its sovereignty, has the authority to establish these rules. In this context, we can consider positive law principles as written legal rules.

Firstly, within the scope of our written legal rules, if we were to evaluate intrafamilial sexual abuse: initially, within our positive law, the phenomenon of intrafamilial sexual abuse is recognized as a crime. Intrafamilial sexual abuse is defined as sexual relations among

individuals with a blood relationship and legally prohibited marriages between relatives. From a psychological perspective, sexual relations between individuals with a familial bond, whether formal or not, are also considered as intrafamilial sexual abuse (Karaosmanoğlu, 2020). Nevertheless, when it was realized that this concept was not comprehensive enough, with the enactment of the Turkish Penal Code, sexual violence gained a different dimension in terms of positive law. It is regulated under the title 'Crimes Committed Against Sexual Integrity'. Under this title, sexual assault, sexual abuse of children, sexual intercourse with minors, and sexual harassment are separately defined and regulated.

When examining our written legal regulations, acts of sexual abuse perpetrated against children up to the age of 15, whether committed through threat, coercion, deceit, or any other means, and regardless of whether the offender inserted any organ or other object into the victim's body, are crimes that must be legally punished, and they are treated as public offenses. In legal decisions, while emphasizing the age of the victim, particular attention is given to the victimization of children in the age range of 15-18. However, in cases involving conditions such as disability, restriction, or mental illness, instances of sexual abuse of children within this age range are investigated within the scope of public prosecution without awaiting a complaint.¹

Sexual exploitation is considered a concept used in the context of applying sexual violence to children. Within the framework of positive law, when it comes to sexual exploitation, the Turkish Penal Code expresses it as follows:

"TCK 103: Sexual Exploitation of Children: A person who sexually exploits a child shall be punished with imprisonment for a term ranging from eight to 15 years. Some acts constituting this offense include any kind of sexual behavior committed against children who have completed the age of 15, have developed perceptual abilities but have not reached the age of 18, based on coercion, threat, deception, or any other factor affecting the will; any kind of sexual behavior committed against children who have completed the age of 15 but have not developed the ability to perceive the legal meaning and consequences of the act; any kind of sexual behavior committed against children who have not completed the age of 15." (Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü, 2020).

However, engaging in sexual relations with a person who has not reached the age of consent is expressed as a separate offense under a distinct title.

"TCK 104: Sexual Relations with a Minor: A person engaging in sexual relations with a child who has reached the age of 15 without the use of force, threat, or deceit shall

¹ Article 103, Article 104, and Article 105 of the Turkish Penal Code regulate sexual exploitation offenses. Additionally, Article 103/2 and Article 105/2 of the Turkish Penal Code specify that sexual exploitation offenses against children in the age range of 15-18 will be investigated within the scope of public prosecution under certain circumstances. This information is derived from the relevant articles of the Turkish Penal Code.

be punished with imprisonment for a term ranging from two to five years upon complaint.” (Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü, 2020).

Within the same article, if the offense is committed between individuals subject to a marriage prohibition or by adoptive parents or foster parents, a penalty ranging from ten to 15 years is imposed (Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü, 2020). When examining intrafamilial sexual abuse within the scope of positive law, it is observed that there is no specific sanction for it. This is because intrafamilial sexual abuse is construed as consensual sexual relations among adults with a blood relationship. In cases of consensual sexual relations among individuals with a blood relationship, even if based on consent, if one lacks legal capacity or if one of the individuals is under the age of 15, legal sanctions are applicable. However, this situation is evaluated not as intrafamilial sexual abuse but as sexual abuse.

In 1952, efforts were made to legislate against intrafamilial sexual abuse; however, these attempts resulted in failure. The rationale provided included the rarity of such crimes in Turkey, the concern that enacting such a law could increase false accusations, the belief that intervention within the family was unnecessary and could potentially harm the family. Presently, the scope of this offense has been narrowed, and punishment is determined only when very close familial relationships are involved. However, in such cases, lack of consent and the use of force are prerequisites. Otherwise, in the context of consensual adult relationships within the family, there is no legal sanction in positive law (Uçar, 2003: 126). Our written legal regulations define and prescribe penalties for child sexual abuse within the family in this manner.

If we were to evaluate the intrafamilial sexual abuse offense within the context of natural or unwritten legal rules, examining the historical context of intrafamilial sexual abuse reveals that during the pre-Islamic era in Arab society, it was considered legitimate to marry stepmothers. Accordingly, when a man died, his son wishing to marry his stepmother could carry out this action (Kasapoğlu, 2003). While such unions were deemed legitimate, they were not considered socially acceptable. These types of marriages bear similarities to the levirate practice in ancient Israel. In ancient Israel, a woman accepted as part of her deceased husband’s inheritance had to marry him to continue the lineage of the inheritor. Similarly, in Arabia, these types of marriages are expressed through a patriarchal family structure. Despite the absence of legal sanctions, Arabs view such marriages negatively, defining them as disgraceful (Cin, 1988). According to religious sources, after the death of Ebu’l-Kays Ibnü’l-Eslet, a respected family from Medina, his son Kays desired to marry his father’s widow. However, the woman opposed this request by reminding Kays that he was her son and felt the need to consult Prophet Muhammad. When the situation was conveyed to Prophet Muhammad, verses 22 and 23 of Surah Nisâ were revealed (Taberi, 2020).

In the Quran, it is explicitly stated which situations are covered by the prohibition of intrafamilial sexual abuse, emphasizing that not adhering to this prohibition is a sin.

“Nisa 22: Except for what has already occurred. Indeed, your fathers and their marriages were shameful, and their deeds were evil.”

“Nisa 23: Prohibited to you [for marriage] are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your father’s sisters, your mother’s sisters, your brother’s daughters, your sister’s daughters, your [milk] mothers who nursed you, your sisters through nursing, your wives’ mothers, and your stepdaughters under your guardianship...” (Yazır, 2002: 123-124).

Religious rules are considered a set of unwritten laws aimed at maintaining social order. Within the scope of natural law, intrafamilial sexual abuse is expressed as something that should not occur and is deemed inconsistent with societal morals. Simultaneously, it is seen as prohibited by religion due to the harm it inflicts on the family structure.

When considering intrafamilial sexual abuse within the scope of natural law, it is observed that at some point in historical development, it was accepted in societies as a type of relationship that should exist. Research suggests that the prohibition of intrafamilial sexual abuse has been employed politically or for the improvement of races for health reasons. From a biological perspective, the prohibition of intrafamilial sexual abuse has ensured the formation of a heterogeneous human race. The mixing of genes has led to the continuity of a healthy generation. In contemporary times, cousin marriages are medically seen as causing disabilities in children born from such unions. Socially, external marriages historically connected groups economically and politically, facilitating the pooling and shared utilization of resources. In contrast, internal marriages were preferred as they preserved the structure of the group and prevented the dispersion of resources (Bittles, 2001; Hamamy, 2012).

Debates surrounding the prohibition of intrafamilial sexual abuse often revolve around whether such abuse has a natural or cultural origin. Among researchers, some, such as Hobhouse, Westermarck, and Lowie, argue that the prohibition of intrafamilial sexual abuse is instinctual. On the other hand, others, including Briffault, McLennan, and Lord Avebury, believe that this prohibition is rooted in sociological reasons (Raglan, 1931: 167). According to sociologist Edward Westermarck, cousin marriage is detrimental to the continuation of the species, and therefore, humans have instinctively moved away from cousin marriage. Westermarck contends that sociological factors such as endogamy and exogamy align with biological factors such as mating within the same lineage and mating outside the lineage (Raglan, 1931: 167). However, despite the acknowledgment of the instinctual existence of the prohibition against intrafamilial sexual abuse in humans, it is observed that this prohibition is violated even in societies where it is banned. Therefore, the contemporary perception of the prohibition of intrafamilial sexual abuse in our society as taboo and immoral can be considered a result of the challenges in enforcing and implementing this prohibition, even when it is acknowledged to exist instinctually in humans.

Antropolog Bronislaw Malinowski was one of the researchers who believed that the prohibition of intrafamilial sexual abuse had a cultural origin. Contrary to Freud's assertion

that sexual impulses emerge in pre-adolescence, Malinowski argued that sexual impulses take shape during adolescence and become significant during this period (Kottak, 2002: 422). Malinowski's theory maintains that pre-adolescent impulses do not involve sexuality. According to him, with the emergence of sexual impulses during adolescence, intrafamilial sexual abuse occurs when the child directs these impulses towards the closest person in their vicinity. He also contended that this situation should be culturally accepted. According to Malinowski, intrafamilial sexual abuse is associated with the disruption of family relationships and role structures among members as the family model is destabilized throughout this process. Alongside the taboo of intrafamilial sexual abuse, sexual tendencies have shifted towards individuals outside the family and relatives, and this has been culturally accepted. These accepted norms have been transmitted to future generations (Kottak, 2002: 423). The sexual relationships described here, occurring at that time, were accepted because they were aimed at the continuation of the human species, especially in cases where the entire tribe consisted of a single family. However, in contemporary times, this situation is not naturally accepted as stated because the historical process described involved obligatory mate selection within the family due to population scarcity, whereas today there is no such necessity given the abundance of the human population.

A widely accepted perspective is that the prohibition of intrafamilial sexual abuse is universal. Despite being practiced in different ways across cultures and societies throughout human history, the existence of a prohibition against intrafamilial sexual abuse is almost universally acknowledged. This prohibition is closely tied to the ethical values, moral standards, and social norms of a society. Nevertheless, in some societies, there have been historical instances where intrafamilial sexual abuse was legitimized (Sancar and Yaşar, 2009: 246). However, generally, the prohibition of intrafamilial sexual abuse is considered a common feature of human societies (Can, 2002: 24).

When evaluating the issue of intrafamilial sexual abuse from a natural law perspective, the following points are generally emphasized: Intrafamilial sexual abuse is deemed immoral in almost all societies. However, there are rare instances, such as in cultural events like the marriage of siblings from a ruling lineage, where the prohibition against intrafamilial sexual abuse is known to be overlooked. As the closeness of biological ties diminishes, so does the taboo on sexual relationships (Sarı, 2007). The definition and sanctions for the crime of intrafamilial sexual abuse against a child are articulated in this manner in our unwritten legal principles.

3. INTRA-FAMILIAL SEXUAL ABUSE TO A CHILD

In literature reviews, it is demonstrated that instances of intrafamilial sexual violence typically occur within the family setting and are directed towards children. Factors such as the occurrence of this type of sexual abuse within the institution of the family, considered a private domain socially, contribute to its difficulty in being exposed, as it is deemed unacceptable by society and raises fears of family breakdown (Şahin and Beyazova, 2003: 47-51). Due to their age or the sociocultural context they are in, children often find it

challenging to perceive sexual violence directed at them. Furthermore, even if they notice sexually suggestive behaviors, children may hesitate to interpret behaviors from their families, with whom they have established a trust bond, in a negative light. Children may choose to remain silent, fearing harm to their families and potential societal pressures (İlkkaracan, 1996).

According to a study conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO), men's behaviors of controlling women typically manifest themselves in forms of physical and sexual violence. It is stated that the desire of men who engage in violent behavior to control and dominate women is rooted in a drive for control dictated by gender roles in society. Therefore, men's learned patterns of control behaviors can lead them to exert control over women through violence (WHO, 2002: 47). The use of sexual violence for control purposes can highlight the representation of power by the male individual in patriarchal societies, employing violence to maintain and control this power within the household. This situation may be socially accepted and considered legitimate when used to control and protect the family. However, when violence is considered a violation of human rights, it is recognized as an unacceptable situation.

3.1. Causes of Child Sexual Abuse within the Family

When examining domestic sexual violence, it is observed that there are various and complex reasons behind it. Generally, the causes of violence, particularly domestic sexual violence, can be categorized into three main headings: biological, psychological, and social factors (Çimen, 2008). Among biological and psychological reasons, mental disorders such as certain psychiatric illnesses and antisocial personality disorder can be considered primary factors. Individuals with antisocial personality disorder may exhibit irresponsible, impulsive, and thoughtless behavior. They may engage in criminal behaviors and derive pleasure from such actions. Therefore, antisocial personality disorder is considered among the biological causes of violence (Akhan, 2009). The presence of mental disorders in individuals can also be considered a biological factor contributing to the commission of sexual abuse crimes.,

When socially evaluated, violent behavior is considered a learned action, with the family environment being the most significant source of this learning. Individuals raised in an environment where violence is prevalent within the family during childhood and adolescence are observed to have a higher tendency to exhibit violent behaviors. Additionally, social factors such as the acceptance of violence by society and its transmission from generation to generation can play a role. Moreover, socioeconomic factors such as poverty, social pressure, and unmet expectations are also among the social causes of violence (Akhan, 2009). The legitimization of violence due to accepted norms within the family is also observed. Factors that can be considered within the scope of natural law, such as the belief in the role of violence in child rearing, the openness and sharing of sexual relations within the family, and the expression of patriarchy through violence, are among the social causes of violence. Among the social causes of domestic violence, interpersonal dynamics hold a significant place. Factors such as low levels of marital satisfaction,

ideological differences, and race and religion distinctions can particularly influence the emergence of violence. Additionally, disparities in income among family members, lack of communication, and excessive dependence on marriage are part of these dynamics. Especially, the display of aggressive behaviors by individuals plays a crucial role in the occurrence of violence (İçli, 2003).

3.2. Effects of Sexual Abuse Crime in Family

In homes where domestic violence occurs, children are often the closest witnesses to the violence. However, in some cases, children can also be direct targets of violence. Research frequently observes that children who are victims of violence tend to display introverted behaviors, experience low academic performance, harbor fears, encounter communication problems, and hesitate to attend school due to reluctance to ask questions about their friends' families (Çınar and Yaman, 2019). Moreover, children growing up in a violent environment may exhibit behaviors reflecting the violence, and concepts such as peer bullying are often explored in research within this context.

Generally, children tend to internalize the violence and anger present in their environment. In such situations, even though children may initially wish to escape from the violence, they might feel a sense of responsibility within the family, hindering them from acting. This internalized pattern of relationships can lay the foundations for dependency in abusive relationships during their adulthood. In the context of a child growing up in a violent family, this could mean that when exposed to violence later in life, the individual may choose to remain silent. Particularly in cases of intrafamilial sexual abuse, it is observed that a child who has not experienced a normal childhood and has assumed different roles may find it exceedingly challenging to establish healthy relationships in the future (Karakuş and Kesici, 2015).

Children who are victims of violence can experience negative effects from a developmental perspective. Among these effects are the negative impact on self-esteem development, disruption of body awareness, weakening of self-concept, reduction of self-soothing skills, and the emergence of destructive consequences in self-protection situations. Research indicates that children who have experienced violence may become individuals who perpetrate violence in the future. Children learn through modeling the violence they witness, and this negatively affects the child's personality development. Particularly, victims of sexual abuse are known to have an increased risk of emerging as individuals who commit sexual abuse during adulthood due to their exposure to sexual abuse in childhood (Genç, Taylan, Adıgüzel, and Kutlu, 2017).

3.3. Confidentiality of Sexual Abuse Crime in Family

One dimension of domestic violence is the reluctance of the victim to report the violence due to emotional closeness with the perpetrator. Individuals experiencing domestic violence may feel guilt when the perpetrator is subject to legal action, trial, arrest, or conviction. This sense of guilt complicates the reporting process. Similarly, reporting violence when the

perpetrator is the breadwinner can lead to rejection by the victim and other family members (Çınar and Yaman, 2019).

The relationship between violence and cultural norms is determined by factors such as societal norms, values, and beliefs. Widespread beliefs and norms in society can normalize, ignore, or cover up violent incidents. Additionally, culturally defined gender roles can contribute to the prevalence and acceptance of violence. On the victim's side, cultural norms and societal pressure can be inhibiting factors in reporting and sharing incidents of violence (Özerkmen and Gölbaşı, 2010: 31; Gölge, 2012).

In the research, it is emphasized that the disclosure of the crime of sexual abuse within the family is influenced by both natural and positive legal rules. Based on the problem of the secrecy of this crime, the following suggestions are presented for problem resolution.

4. INTRA-FAMILIAL SEXUAL ABUSE AND THE PROBLEM OF KEEPING IT HIDDEN

4.1. Proposed Solutions to the Problem

The importance of social work intervention is significant in changing societal perspectives and reintegrating children who have experienced sexual abuse and their families into society. Research indicates that families with cases of intrafamilial sexual abuse often exhibit a history of violence and crime, along with communication problems among family members. This highlights that sexual abuse is not merely an individual problem but also a concern for the family and society. Social work professionals play crucial roles in intervening in such cases to ensure the safety of children and meet the psychological support needs of the family (Turgut, 2019; Karasu, 2018). In this context, social work professionals actively contribute to increasing awareness of the existence of intrafamilial sexual abuse cases, conducting efforts to prevent such cases, and guiding victims through the treatment process. Consequently, by facilitating the reintegration of child victims of sexual abuse and their families into society, social work professionals can contribute to a positive change in societal perspectives (Lamb and Edgar-Smith, 1994).

The profession of social work aims to enhance the quality of life by providing services tailored to individuals' needs. Particularly, it intervenes in the problems experienced by children and family members, seeking to strengthen their communication with each other and society (Kongar, 1972). The social work profession focuses on resolving the issues faced by individuals who experience violations of rights or victimization for various reasons across all segments of society. To achieve this goal, social work professionals engage in various fields such as health, education, justice, social support, and security. They develop and implement intervention models to protect the rights of victims and address their grievances (Aktaş, 2004; Seyitoğlu, 2016: 14).

In addressing the issue of intrafamilial child sexual abuse, there is a need for multidisciplinary efforts, and the effectiveness of social work professionals with specialized training in the field needs to be enhanced. Solving this societal problem requires conducting individual sessions at the micro level to empower abused children. At the mezzo level, family meetings

should be held to strengthen the family, and at the macro level, policy improvements and government support should be implemented to create suitable environments for these efforts. The recommendation of the study is that these processes should be carried out through social work units established in schools. The professional group that needs to be employed in this field is social work professionals.

4.2. History of School Social Work in the World and in Turkey

The history of school social work practices began with the reform movements that emerged in the early 20th century in the United States. It independently emerged in cities such as New York, Boston, and Hartford in the years 1906-1907 (Jozefowicz et al., 2002: 39). During this period, the need for social work services in schools arose with the goal of improving students' academic success and addressing families' requests for social assistance. School social work developed various methods to respond to students' academic, emotional, and social needs. Initially, school social work engaged in activities such as visiting students at their homes, communicating with parents, and ensuring students' attendance at school to help them achieve success in their education processes. Additionally, school social work employed different intervention models, such as group therapy, individual therapy, and family therapy, to assist students in coping with challenges they faced in school. Over the course of the 20th century, school social work practices evolved into a widely used service in all educational institutions, from preschool to university. Today, school social work plays a crucial role in increasing students' academic achievements, addressing psychological issues, meeting families' social needs, and planning students' future lives. School-based social work, much like its initial implementation in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom in the early 20th century, became prominent in many countries after compulsory education laws were enacted (Jarolmen, 2014, 310). The motivation behind the enactment of compulsory education laws was the desire to end poverty and illiteracy.

In countries where school social work is implemented, the responsibilities of these units vary based on the needs, policies, and issues of students in each country. In other words, culture and the surrounding environment determine the focus of social work intervention. For example, in Canada, the role of the school social work professional is to intervene in crisis situations, resembling the United States in this aspect (Jarolmen, 2014: 312).

In Germany, the social work profession conducts community-based work to address societal issues. Therefore, social work professionals working in school social work units address not only individual concerns but also cater to the entire school population. Within this framework, they collaborate with students, teachers, parents, and other school staff to identify and address issues that arise in the school, develop solution proposals, and implement them. This approach is rooted in taking responsibility for the problems of every segment of society and finding common solutions (Jarolmen, 2014, 319).

In Ghana, school social work started in 1950 with the aim of ensuring access to quality education for disadvantaged children. During this period, school social work units worked to

meet the educational and social needs of students. School social work professionals provided psychosocial support, counseling, guidance, social services, and rehabilitation services to enhance students' academic and social achievements. Additionally, work with families was conducted to encourage the attendance of disadvantaged children in schools. In Ghana, school social work plays a significant role in promoting social justice and equality.

Based on these examples, it is evident that the scope of school social work varies between countries. It focuses on addressing social issues that need to be resolved according to the country's policies and is tailored to the specific needs of each region.

School social work is defined as a specialized field of social services that operates in educational institutions to address and prevent the problems students encounter, ensuring the sustainability of the educational process (Yeşilkayalı and Bölükbaşı, 2017: 251-252). It can be stated that school social work practices began in Turkey in the 1960s. In 1961, at Istanbul University, a medico-social center was established with the assignment of psychiatrists, psychologists, and social work professionals to provide services to university students (Özbesler and Duyan, 2009: 20-21).

A significant concrete development in Turkey occurred with the publication of the Ministry of National Education Counseling and Psychological Counseling Services Regulation in the Official Gazette dated April 17, 2001, and numbered 24376 (Resmî Gazete, 2020). This regulation envisages the employment of social work professionals in guidance and research centers to be established or already existing. However, it is observed that this practice has not fully taken root in the field.

For the implementation of school social work in Turkey, it is essential to make legal regulations. With the realization of these legal regulations, the opening of school social work units in all educational institutions should be made mandatory (Reçber, 2020).

School social work has been adopted and implemented by many countries worldwide. Research shows that school social work contributes significantly to the field. Social work professionals who deeply understand societal issues can lead to important positive changes at individual and societal levels. The late initiation of school social work implementation in Turkey may lead to some challenges in addressing various social problems, such as intrafamilial sexual abuse.

4.3. Building School Social Service Oriented to Problem Solving

School social work is a structuring with a long history worldwide and is currently under construction in Turkey as well. School social work units play a significant role in addressing the problems faced by society, making their value considerable.

Education is a lifelong process that begins in the family and continues in schools. Therefore, the collaboration between the family and the school is crucial for children to complete their psychological and social development and enhance their academic achievements.

Continuing education at home reinforces positive behaviors and is necessary and valuable in this regard (Babahanoğlu and Başer, 2017: 655).

In the construction process of school social work units, prioritizing pilot implementations and measuring the quality of the study is essential. In this context, considering that violence is observed in different forms in every socioeconomic level and culture, it would be appropriate to establish these centers by selecting schools in a few different socioeconomic levels within the province. In this regard, both the value of school social work units can be measured, and the necessary elements in the process can be identified and strengthened. Considering population density in different geographical regions of the country, provinces can be selected, and within these provinces, the initial districts where the unit will be established can be chosen based on the number of hospital admissions due to violence. At least two school terms should be allowed for the operation of these units, and end-of-year reports should be requested from the units. These reports will only contain preliminary information for identifying the problem because intervention in cases of domestic violence is a challenging issue that requires revealing the issue and respecting the privacy of the family. Even a single disclosure of intra-familial sexual abuse by these units is valuable. This situation will ensure the recognition of the units and encourage children to seek help from them throughout the process. It is recommended to establish a committee at the ministerial level to facilitate collaboration between school social work units and the institutions that will support them in the process. This committee should hold periodic meetings to evaluate cases of intra-familial sexual violence and sexual abuse against children and contribute to the preparation of a national action plan. Additionally, local working technical committees should be established under this committee to carry out activities related to the implementation of the action plan.

While school social work units are intended to be the focal point in the disclosure of intra-familial sexual abuse crimes, the involvement of other supporting institutions will enhance the effectiveness of this unit's operations.

In the school social work model, social work professionals collaborate with psychological counselors and teachers to address unwanted behaviors and learning difficulties of students, implement intervention plans for issues such as depression, school refusal, and anxiety disorders, and provide psychological support to children. This collaborative approach also involves working with mental health experts outside the school environment. This approach aims to tackle problems both inside and outside the school environment, serving as a crucial tool to enhance students' academic achievements and assist them in coping with psychological and social challenges.

The ecological approach focuses on the relationships between individuals and their environments. Social work professionals employing this approach seek to understand these relationships and intervene professionally to address an individual's place in their surroundings. Within the scope of this approach, issues such as emotional problems within

the family, conflicts with parents or siblings, socio-economic inadequacies, intra-familial violence, neglect, and abuse are addressed.

Children may need psychosocial support in addressing problems stemming from themselves, the school environment, or family relationships. Therefore, seeking professional help is necessary for resolving children's issues. This assistance is provided with the aim of improving children's mental health and providing psychosocial support (Kılıç, 2014). School social work professionals, who are experts in this field, develop interventions at the school, family, and community levels and provide counseling services to support the child.

Social work professionals should strive to ensure active parental involvement in their children's education processes. In line with this goal, collaborating with the community to effectively manage resources and supporting at-risk students and families are among the key responsibilities of school social work (Dupper, 2013). A student who becomes empowered within the family or community will also strengthen individually.

Social work professionals in the school social work process should have a good understanding of individual child dynamics and establish a system for collaboration with families, teachers, school administration, and other staff (Özkan and Kılıç, 2014: 400). To ensure family involvement, Shepard and Rose have developed a model called The Empowerment Model to strengthen the partnership between families and schools. This empowerment model consists of four steps (Giordani, 2011: 2):

- The first step involves establishing basic communication. Parents connect with their child's teacher and the school through parent-teacher meetings.
- The second step is the empowerment of families and homes. It involves improving the child's learning environment at home and enhancing the parent's support during this process. Developing the parent's skills to assist the child with homework can be given as an example.
- The third step is to strengthen social connections outside the home. Parental effectiveness is increased by helping other families.
- The fourth step is advocacy. Parents are empowered as they collaborate with local, community, and state institutions to improve education.

In the established or to-be-established school social work units in our country, efforts can be made to expose intra-familial child sexual abuse by implementing this model. The proposed school social work model aimed at addressing the problem of keeping sexual abuse within the family hidden is expressed in this manner. In addition to this model proposal, operational suggestions are as follows: the child's application to the unit should not be expected in school-based social work units. This is because if child sexual abuse were a situation as natural and simple as expressing it, there would be no need for the existence of these units. In this context, while units carry out their activities, the use of drama games to communicate with children and gain their trust may be necessary. If the social work professional has not received drama education, it is necessary to establish a trust bond primarily by playing group games with children within the scope of group activities in social work. In this process,

families can also be invited to participate in the activities. It should be remembered that conducting a private interview with the child and calling the child to the social work unit during the child's educational period can be stigmatizing when a situation is identified or suspected. In this context, if units only carry out activities related to exposing the crime of sexual abuse, individuals who come to the unit may be exposed due to their reasons and their educational lives may be negatively affected. In this context, the flexibility of the unit's working hours should extend beyond the school's educational hours, or meetings can be held in another institution in a suitable meeting environment. The units working in a way that includes other social work interventions can camouflage their efforts to expose the crime of sexual abuse. Additionally, if regular meetings are held with every child in the school, studies on the topic can remain inconspicuous. Conducting interviews with every child for the resolution of the problem will also be healthy. Open-ended questions can be asked during these interviews with the aim of exposing intra-familial sexual abuse, and support can be sought from psychologists and child development experts during the interview process.

CONCLUSION

Research indicates that only a small fraction of sexual violence crimes are reported to legal institutions. It is generally asserted that these cases often involve incidents of sexual violence outside the home. Studies in this field identify various reasons why individuals may not disclose or file complaints about sexual violence. Some of these reasons include: not wanting to recall the incident by narrating it, fear of retaliation or harm from the perpetrator if a complaint is lodged, disbelief that others will trust their account, fear of being accused, feelings of shame, experiencing shock and helplessness, the belief that nothing can be done about the situation, the perception that the perpetrator will not be held accountable, lack of trust in legal and justice systems, fear of societal pressure and reactions from family and peers, and accepting the violence as normal. These reasons can be influenced by both written and unwritten legal norms. In this context, the disclosure and sanctioning of intra-familial sexual abuse have been discussed within the framework of natural and positive/written and unwritten legal rules in the research.

Social values and natural legal rules, which prioritize the protection of the family over the individual and increase the pressure on children and women, often contribute to the concealment of sexual abuse. In rare cases when it comes to light, victims are exposed to the risk of new abuse and discrimination. This situation is further reinforced by institutional approaches. Positive legal rules, including the state's criminal sanctions, tend to decrease the sense of trust in the legal process due to instances of improper application, leading victims to fear being blamed and resulting in the secrecy of the experienced sexual abuse.

The aim of this planned study is to explore alternative approaches to situations where there is insufficient access to information about sexual violence as a societal taboo, leading to the inability to address this issue effectively and indirectly.

To begin, explanations were provided regarding the concept of sexual abuse for the purpose of defining the problem. Subsequently, assessments were made about the process of intra-familial sexual abuse. While it is often assumed that individuals who perpetrate sexual violence or those who commit sexual abuse within the family have psychological issues, society tends to protect them by categorizing them. However, research indicates that individuals who commit sexual abuse against children often engage in such actions intentionally and with determination, and they may not necessarily have psychological or physical problems.

In families where intra-familial sexual abuse occurs, it is often noted that parents are emotionally distant from their children, and at the same time, sexually explicit behaviors at home are considered normal (Herman, 1992; Lanning, 2001). The most common defense mechanism among family members involved in sexual abuse incidents is the mechanism of denial. However, in addition to denial, pathological defense mechanisms such as downplaying the incident, rationalizing sexual violence, and distorting reality by finding justifications are frequently observed in these individuals (Green, 1996; Lanning, 2001). Social isolation is commonly seen in cases of intra-familial sexual abuse, and these families are often observed to be closed off from the outside world. This situation indicates that these families are aware that the incidents are not normal or ordinary. The tendency for families to be closed off makes it difficult to uncover instances of sexual abuse. There is a close relationship between insufficient parental supervision, intra-familial conflicts, the weakness of the emotional bond established with the child, the presence of violence used to discipline children, the observation of violent behaviors and the potential for criminal activity in children in later stages, and the existence of a case of intra-familial sexual abuse (Krug et al., 2002). In family-oriented societies, including Turkey, the disclosure of sexual abuse cases is often perceived as an intervention in family integrity. This perception can hinder both the revelation of sexual abuse against children and the rehabilitation processes for the victimized children.

In this research, the question of how to uncover intra-familial sexual abuse has been addressed. While seeking an answer to this question, the definition of intra-familial child sexual abuse has been initially discussed, highlighting the reasons for the secrecy surrounding these situations. The problem has been identified through primary explanations, followed by the presentation of a proposal to address the issue. In the context of this proposal, the problem-solving stages are explained in the research. The suggestion involves the establishment of School Social Work Units in schools, and through these units, efforts are made to expose cases of intra-familial sexual abuse. It has been emphasized that the collaboration of the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Services is necessary for the establishment of School Social Work Units in every school.

Based on the information expressed in the research, the conclusion is that the cessation of violence in intra-familial sexual abuse is possible through processes that require increasing

the strength of the victim both individually and socially. Therefore, every revealed case of sexual abuse presents an opportunity for the improvement of society. Consequently, individuals need to be empowered by their families and communities. Social workers are individuals capable of fulfilling this role, as they can provide motivational interviews and follow-up support for individuals. To address the issue, social workers should also provide training as part of preventive services. Sexual education should be given to individuals at an early age, teaching concepts such as personal space/privacy, as well as providing education on confidentiality and privacy in schools for children. This is essential because discussions or education on these topics within families are often considered culturally inappropriate in our society. To provide this education to children, School Social Work Units should be established in schools, and these units should be staffed by social work professionals. This is because social work professionals receive training in identifying potential cases of intra-familial sexual abuse and intervening in such situations as part of their undergraduate programs. In this context, it is aimed that school social work will conduct preventive, therapeutic, and rehabilitative work for the resolution of intra-familial sexual abuse issues. The planned school social work model for achieving this goal is presented in our research.

Conflict Of Interest Statement

There is no potential conflict of interest in this study.

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