

Interrupted Childhood: An Analysis of Vulnerability and Sexual Violence

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Abstract

Introduction: Sexual violence against children and adolescents constitutes a serious violation of human rights, directly affecting the dignity, physical integrity, and psychological development of the victims. It is a complex phenomenon influenced by social, cultural, economic, and legal factors, occurring in various contexts such as family, institutional, school, and digital environments. The inherent vulnerability of childhood, combined with power imbalances between adults and children, increases the incidence of this form of violence, which is often marked by silence, underreporting, and social normalization. *Objective:* This article aims to analyze sexual violence against children and adolescents through the lens of vulnerability, seeking to understand its main forms, causes, and consequences. *Methodology:* The methodology adopted is explanatory, based on a bibliographic review of legislation, legal doctrine, academic studies, and institutional data. *Results:* The results obtained from the literature demonstrate that most cases occur within the family environment, and are frequently perpetrated by individuals close to the victim. The results also demonstrate that the consequences of child sexual abuse are profound and long-lasting. From a psychological standpoint, victims may develop disorders such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, learning difficulties, and low self-esteem. In addition to the psychological effects, child sexual abuse generates significant social repercussions. Many victims face stigmatization and social isolation, which hinders the building of healthy interpersonal relationships and compromises their socialization process. Another relevant aspect identified in the literature refers to institutional limitations in addressing child sexual abuse. In this sense, it is observed that confronting child sexual violence against children and adolescents requires a multidisciplinary and integrative approach, involving not only the legal system, but also sectors of health, education, social assistance, and public security. The coordinated action of these institutions is essential to guarantee the comprehensive protection of victims and to promote a safer and more welcoming social environment. *Conclusion:* The study concludes that combating child sexual violence requires coordinated action by families, society, and the State, as well as effective public policies focused on prevention, protection, and accountability. This makes it essential to promote educational initiatives that encourage dialogue and awareness, as well as the continuous training of professionals who work directly with children and young people.

Keywords

Childhood, Sexual Violence, Vulnerability