

The Role of Educational Institutions in Protecting Youth from Social Problems

Merabet Chaouki¹, Salem Yakoub², Faouzi Louhidi³, Abdelbasset Houidi⁴, Bouzeghaia Beya⁵

¹University of El Oued (Algeria). Email: merabet-chakoui@univ-eloued.dz

²University of El Oued (Algeria). Email: salem-yakoub@univ-eloued.dz

³University of El Oued (Algeria). Email: faouzi-louhidi@univ-eloued.dz

⁴University of El Oued (Algeria). Email: abdelbasset-houidi@univ-eloued.dz

⁵University of El Oued (Algeria). Email: bouzeghaia-beya@univ-eloued.dz

^{1,2,3,4} Social Development and Community Service Laboratory

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ABSTRACT:

There is no doubt that the most important asset owned by nations and peoples is human wealth, because it is one of the most fundamental pillars for building societies and one of the most important elements responsible for development in all fields. This has led developed countries to attach great importance to youth, as they are the main actors in achieving their goals. Youth constitute the sector relied upon in all social, cultural, economic, and scientific activities. They are the ones who build, construct, preserve, and defend the constants of the nation. Accordingly, the responsibilities of the nation become great in confronting the reality experienced by its youth and lived by its members, especially in view of the serious challenges imposed by the age, which carry within them social problems mixed with some youth violence. This has sometimes led to the loss of innocent lives, which used to characterize Algerian youth. Since human awareness is scientifically formed as a result of the influence of several institutions, including the educational institution, which in turn performs several functions to protect youth from all the challenges imposed by the age, especially cultural and social ones, we

therefore ask: What is the role of educational institutions in protecting youth from social problems?

Keywords: educational institution, youth, social ills.

FIRST: YOUTH AND SOCIETY:

The youth category is considered one of the most important groups that contribute to building and developing society. It is its indispensable backbone. This concept, namely youth, expresses characteristics mainly represented in strength, vitality, energy, the ability to endure, and the ability to produce at a certain stage of an individual's life. Youth have a major role in developing society, building it, and preserving its constants. Their role is not limited to a specific field only, but rather intersects with all political, social, and economic fields, as well as the various sectors of development. Among their most important characteristics and roles as a force for social change are the following:

- Youth are the most ambitious group in society: The process of change and progress has no limits for them. They are the basis of change and the force capable of bringing it about. Therefore, attracting their energies and employing them

should be a priority for all institutions and social groups seeking change.

- Youth are the group most eager for change: They are the most prepared to accept what is new, deal with it, and be creative in it. They are also the most capable of adapting easily without confusion, which makes their role essential in bringing about change in their societies. (1)
- Intellectual enthusiasm among youth: Youth possess tremendous energy that greatly helps them move toward progress and vitality in interacting with various political, social, and cultural data. Development in these fields has its primary source in the ideas and vitality of youth.
- Youth are a tremendous social force: There is no doubt that the youth category is the predominant and most numerous group in all countries. In Algeria, this category represents 70 percent of society. Naturally, they are the most active and dynamic. Therefore, they can change a great deal through participation in development work in all fields and contribution to its reform. They can also engage in civil society institutions and contribute to voluntary work, considering that these institutions contribute greatly to bringing about development in the country, advancing service to the nation, and laying the foundations for future generations so that their conditions may be better.
- The spirit of initiative among youth: Youth possess great initiative and honorable competition in creativity and innovation, which encourages them to launch their ideas and create initiatives, institutions, and associations in various fields, all of which contribute to the

development of society according to their work.

- The role of youth in voluntary work and public services: Such activities take place in cities, rural areas, and popular neighborhoods alike. Their participation in various voluntary works is capable of building and strengthening their personalities, enhancing the spirit of citizenship among them, making them contribute to helping others, and enabling them to offer their communities their positive energies and strength in health fields.
- Learning about local matters: There are public affairs in society and other local affairs. It is human nature that one's knowledge of everything that exists is limited. Therefore, what distinguishes youth is their knowledge of the matters that concern the society in which they live, learning about it, and acquiring knowledge of its history, features, characteristics, and needs, which enables them to develop and improve it.

There is also a set of characteristics that distinguish youth in our present era, which must necessarily be taken into consideration, including the following:

- Youth have opportunities for education and learning more than ever before, due to the knowledge explosion and the multiplicity of contemporary sources of learning, as well as the relationship of this to the economic life of society. Therefore, they represent a fundamental force in economic and social development, which requires employing this in the direction that achieves satisfaction of the youth's need to learn everything that is new, useful, and contemporary.
- Youth, by virtue of their psychosocial formation and the characteristics of their

personality at this age stage, which coincides with adolescence and with the physiological and psychological transformations it imposes in terms of patterns of thinking and attempts to build a special identity, tend to reject standards, levels, top-down directives, and the authority exercised by adults over them in various forms within the home, at school, in administration, and in all institutions of society that symbolize authority.

SECOND: YOUTH AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS:

Algerian youth today suffer from several social problems, such as unemployment, spinsterhood, divorce, the scourge of drug addiction, and the outcomes of scientific and technological development.

1- The Scourge of Drugs and Its Impact on Youth:

We all know that when an enemy seeks to corrupt a nation, he turns to corrupting its youth. This danger lies and worsens when the energies of some young people are driven toward drug abuse, which has become a source of concern because of the severe harm it causes to individuals and societies. There is hardly any country in the world that does not suffer from this dangerous scourge, as everyone is targeted by drug-trafficking gangs.

The danger has reached an alarming level because its victims are increasing and falling in a number of countries around the world, foremost among them the United States of America.

The problem of drugs is severe for our youth, as it threatens their lives and destroys their dreams because of the destruction and ruin produced by this disease. It is not limited to addicts only, but threatens the entire social entity.

There are a considerable number of young people in the prime of life who have been deprived of their professional future and deprived of living their lives normally, to the extent that they have lost normal life with their families, which has led to the disintegration and loss of the family. Among addicts, there are those who were deprived of seeing their daughter at birth because they were in prison; another lost his brother, who fell in front of him after taking an overdose, so the dead went to the grave and the living went to prison; and another blames bad companions who made him enter the battle of drugs, causing him to lose his hoped-for glory.

The tragedies are many, to the extent that they have become the main concern of security and judicial authorities on the one hand, and psychologists and sociologists on the other.

One professor of sociology says: Drugs and white poisons, until the late nineteenth century, were considered the scourge of remote societies, whether in the East or in Latin America. Therefore, it was natural at that time to find a country such as Britain making opium a profitable trade for itself. When China tried to stand against this trade, the First Opium War broke out during the period from 1834 to 1842, ending with China's defeat and its concession of its losses in the war.

When the United States of America was afflicted by the scourge of drugs, it called for an international conference to study ways of combating opium and its derivatives. The Shanghai Conference, held in 1909, was the starting point on the path of international cooperation to combat drugs.

The conference participants explained that drugs afflict humans with lethargy and lack of movement, or slow response, loss of feeling, and the loss of sensation toward any aspect of life. Drug users and users of white poisons justify their continuous use by claiming that they experience episodes that elevate them

above the environment of reality, making them forget their worries and personal problems. However, the effect of narcotic substances soon disappears, and they return to their painful reality. Thus, the conflict between the effect of the drug and their reality makes the user pay the price for both, namely his reputation and comfort.

Sociologists and psychologists agree that the use of drugs and psychotropic substances causes abnormal states of activity and decline in the brain cells, tissues of the central nervous system, and its fibers, which leads to hallucinations and reactions that are observed in the individual while under the influence of drugs.

They also said that psychological and social studies conducted on drug and poison addicts throughout the world have unanimously agreed that the most important causes of their use are the following:

- The desire to try everything and imitate adults. This desire is behind the addiction of most young people in the world to alcohol and drugs.
- Rebellion and escape under harsh social and living conditions, such as the separation of parents, or feelings of injustice and persecution by others.
- Turning to drugs as a treatment for psychological conditions, or the mistaken belief that drugs have an effect in stimulating sexual contact.
- Escaping from the pressures of life and its many problems.

This scourge requires in-depth studies, scientific academic research, study days, or national and international seminars in which the efforts of educators and reformers at various levels are combined.

2- The Outcomes of Scientific and Technological Development:

In this age, humanity has witnessed many scientific developments, and developed countries have established many theories and ideas that initially resulted from multiple cultural, political, economic, and social systems, and then from the traps of globalization, whose principles have exceeded the limits of reason and thought, religion, belief, culture, and society.

Scientific and technological progress in this age, despite its material and recreational benefits, has provided good opportunities and broad fields for thought and creativity that were not previously available to youth. New conditions and situations have emerged that facilitated the process of production and developmental contributions for many social sectors, to the extent that psychologists considered this scientific progress to be a reason for enabling the individual to move rapidly from the world of childhood to adulthood and intellectual and mental maturity.

The flow of information research and the spread of media, communication tools, and media software are not hidden from us. This had a clear impact on education and socialization, which must be used to improve the condition and future of youth.

Despite all of this, however, this progress carries within it serious problems, grave difficulties, and fatal horrors from whose dangers only those whom my Lord has mercy upon can be saved.

It has complicated people's interests to a great extent, so what was natural is no longer sufficient for living a decent and normal life.

Let us mention, by way of example, what negatively resulted from two modern means of communication: television with its satellite channels, and the Internet.

As for television with its satellite channels, it has played a major role in destroying a large

segment of youth. It has affected their beliefs and led them astray, and affected their morals and corrupted them, while we still believe in its great benefits, which appear in the following functions: the informative function, the cultural function, the educational function, the recreational function, and the social function.

Among the negative aspects resulting from television programs, which had a major impact on the lives of children, adolescents, and youth educationally, socially, health-wise, and psychologically, are the following manifestations:

- Limiting reading.
- Increasing violence and delinquency among children first, and then among adolescent youth second. In a study conducted on this matter, it was found that the rate of violence on the small screen had increased to 7.65%. More precisely, it was found that the films and programs shown present one act of violence every ten minutes, 3.7% of harmful violence viewing in every children's film, and 0.1% in every police film.

From here, we say that it is necessary for parents in the family and educators at school to intervene in order to rescue youth before accidents and assaults occur, and to stop aggression by any means of guidance and counseling. By this, we mean preventive education.

- Arousing sexual instincts through poor series and degrading plays broadcast by many satellite channels in several languages widespread among people, which leads to deviation, then madness, and finally crime.
- Parents' anxiety about their children and the confusion, bewilderment, and psychological disturbance they feel concerning their children's conduct in

the present and the future. The reason for this is emotional scenes and provocative films that have been able to transform children from pure angels into dangerous thieves and sinful aggressors.

As for the Internet, with its temptations and attractions, it has brought many suspicious sexual communications and dangerous criminal games, which have awakened criminal motives among adolescent youth and led a considerable number of young people into misdemeanors and crimes with undesirable consequences.

We would not be going too far if we said that it is a double-edged sword. If it is used well, then it is beneficial and a blessing; otherwise, it becomes a great calamity and a major loss, not only in material and financial terms, but also in belief, morals, conduct, and dealings.

This was due to what electronic industry merchants undertook by presenting topics of violence as a commodity that stirs within children and adolescent youth their hidden instincts and dormant harmful tendencies. The dangers and harms of the Internet are not far from the minds of wise people today, given the conflicts, assaults, and injustice against the weak that occur through it, at a time when its owners have nothing but material gain as a result of its morally uncontrolled openness, its liberation from restrictions and social controls, and the absence of supervision over it.

In these programs, there is a wide field for raising doubts that affect belief, and for devilish discussions that make the individual quickly influenced by the doubts presented to him because of the weakness of his religious culture. Many programs and topics that destroy minds have come to glorify killers and praise criminals, which has made some adolescents imitate the scene and apply it to reality, regardless of the material loss and loss of lives it may lead to, as happens in the countries of

the First World, which claim civilization but not true refinement.

All these developments have left youth with many serious and frightening psychological problems, including:

1. A state of loss of identity and inability to discover and know oneself, as youth have come to fluctuate between not knowing themselves on the one hand, and not knowing what others want from them on the other.
2. A state of psychological alienation caused by the destructive systems and ideas produced by globalization, which sweep away with their currents all the prevailing values in society that stand before them.
3. A feeling of loneliness, as many young people are unable to open up and form social relationships with others.
4. The catastrophe of drug addiction, which has spread widely and whose danger has intensified among youth circles, not only in our country, but also in a large number of countries around the world, in varying percentages.

All of this has weakened religious restraint and the fear of Allah, Glory be to Him, so a large number of young people have become distant from the guidance of Islam and its lofty principles, and have been thrown into the furnace of corruption, misguidance, and behavioral deviation. (2)

These problems are reflected, even when in reality they are not as serious as they appear, in the mood of youth and their ability to produce (3), as well as in their academic achievement. The problems that youth suffer from today cause them to lose ambition and move with heavy steps toward achieving their goals, especially educational ones.

Third: The Role of Educational Institutions in Achieving Intellectual Security and Cultural Development for Youth:

Education is one of the main approaches to changing the concepts and ideas of societies. Therefore, it is necessary to enable it to contribute effectively to achieving security and cultural development for society. However, the main concern of most educational institutions is directed toward transferring academic or study content into the minds of students. For this reason, there is rarely any surplus of time or effort left to carry out necessary educational tasks for shaping a mature and balanced personality for our students, preparing them for their role in societal development, and protecting them from forms of intellectual or behavioral deviations.

However, the challenges that surround us and the dangers that are approaching our security require an awakening to what our educational institutions must do regarding their educational responsibilities.

There must be serious discussion to strengthen intellectual security through these educational institutions, and practical plans must be prepared to activate the role of male and female teachers and university faculty members, without limiting this to holding a lecture or organizing a seminar after which the attendees disperse without benefit.

Education is the most appropriate entrance to change and correction. Education is concerned with forming correct concepts, values, and ideals and strengthening them in the minds of the young. It is also responsible for building attitudes and regulating their direction. The school and the university must carry out their share within a framework that is scientifically and carefully planned, and in partnership with the family, the mosque, the media, and other relevant institutions.

The aim is to help youth rationalize their awareness and protect their minds from deviant ideas that cause doctrinal disorder, religious extremism, moral dissolution, behavioral deviation, and bloody violence.

Prophetic care for concepts was evident in many of the Prophet's hadiths, such as his saying – MOHAMED (المؤمن من أمنه الناس على أموالهم وأنفسهم) : In the Prophetic definition, the believer is one who is an oasis of security for his society in terms of their lives and property. This is a new societal dimension in the concept of faith issued from the mouth of Prophethood.

I believe that we need to begin some procedures to activate the role of educational institutions in schools and universities:

First: Including intellectual security in educational curricula within its appropriate context. Despite its importance, we find that it is not explicitly stated. Therefore, the term, its issues, and emphasis on it must be introduced into all general education courses. It can also be included as a university requirement.

The scholars of the principles of jurisprudence made among the objectives of the noble Sharia the “preservation of the mind,” which is a purpose broader in its meaning than “intellectual security,” and they clarified the legislative rulings that achieve this purpose.

Second: Developing teachers' competencies and convictions in teaching methods and ways of dealing with students, refining their skills, and raising their awareness of the intellectual challenges facing the Islamic nation, so that they may be more capable of achieving objectives with their students through mechanisms of sympathetic dialogue.

Presenting realistic models and practical training is a better means of acquiring skills. Here, we mention the wonderful model presented by the Prophet MOHAMED in his dialogue with the young man who surprised his gathering with a strange request, which was to allow him to commit adultery. As for those who

were in the gathering, they could not tolerate that, so the people turned to him and rebuked him, saying: “!مه مه” But the Prophet MOHAMED asked the young man to come closer to him and spoke with him without citing to him a Qur'anic verse or a hadith. Rather, he asked him: (أترضاه ؟...لأمك). Then he ended the dialogue with a compassionate touch and a sincere supplication: (اللهم فوضع يده عليه، وقال: “اللهم اغفر ذنبه وطهر قلبه”).

The result was the Prophet's success in removing the strange idea from the young man's mind without having to destroy that mind.

Third: Paying attention to student activities and developing their programs. Through these activities, some social values can be developed among the young, such as responsibility, tolerance, and the spirit of belonging, through seminars, scenes, and dialogues, while enlightening students about the challenges facing the Islamic nation in general and their societies in particular. This also includes forming critical thinking, encouraging them to express their opinions, and correcting wrong concepts.

We know how the Prophet MOHAMED cared for youth through constructive activities in learning, building, sports, and horsemanship. His mosque was a lively arena for all these activities. He also followed up on any extremist ideas and treated them at the time using the approach of: (ما بال أقوام قالوا كذا وكذا). When he heard that a group of his companions had said, some of them: “I will not marry women,” others: “I will not eat meat,” and others: “I will not sleep on a bed,” he praised Allah and extolled Him, then said: “ما بال أقوام قالوا كذا وكذا؟ لكني أصلي وأنام وأصوم وأفطر وأتزوج النساء فمن رغب عن سنتي فليس مني”.

Security is a precious fruit of faith and righteous action, and it is not the result of a dreamy wish or empty noise. This is what Allah Almighty promised the believers: (4) **وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّن بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا**

Fourth: Developing curricula and improving the teaching-learning process: As a result of the knowledge and technological revolution, the challenge facing the school increases in the field of providing efficient education to confront globalization, in terms of the content, methods, and means of education. No matter how competent the teacher may be, the effect is not complete, nor are the objectives achieved, except through the qualitative development of the remaining elements of the teaching and learning process, the content of the curriculum, and the sources used in its application. (5)

Fifth: Being keen to seek jurisprudence and beneficial knowledge, because seeking knowledge corrects our mistakes in understanding the method, enlightens us about the path, guides us to what is right, protects us from slips and obstacles, and leads us to happiness in both worlds. The honor of knowledge and its people is sufficient as a virtue. (6)

CONCLUSION

Finally, through what we have addressed in this intervention concerning the problems from which youth suffer, we conclude that today, more than ever before, we are in need of treatment and remedy, through clarifying the ways and methods that guide and direct. The sources of this correction are many and varied; however, we focused on educational institutions, which have a prominent role in correcting youth behavior. Perhaps one of the most important things they can instill in youth is education through values and the

implantation of these values among young people, especially noble Islamic values. They are a successful means for elevating the mind, developing noble behavioral virtues, and they are an important reason for reform and integrated and solidary social construction.

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