**Obstacles facing Social Services Offices of Family Protection Department in Jordan, Types of their Beneficiaries and Staff Requirements from the Viewpoint of Employees and those concerned with their Technical Affairs**

**معوقات مكاتب الخدمة الاجتماعية بإدارة حماية الأسرة وأقسامها في الأردن وأنماط متلقي خدماتها واحتياجات وأمنيات كوادرها من وجهة نظر بعض موظفيها ونظرائهم المعنيين بشأنها الفني**

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**Abstract:**

This study aims at answering the questions: What are the obstacles facing social services offices at Family Protection Department in Jordan? What are the patterns of beneficiaries receiving services? What are the requirements and aspirations of staff from the viewpoint of employees and those concerned with technical affairs?

The study used the qualitative research method based on both individual and group semi-structured interviews, brainstorming and focus groups conducted with a deliberate sample of those concerned with family protection social services offices in Jordanian governorates covering 47% of a total of 17 offices and 18% of workers at these centers who add up to 45 employees.

The study results revealed that social services offices of the Family Prevention Department face 20 obstacles, beneficiaries are victims of sexual and physical aggression cases; their employees have eight training requirements and seven expectations from the Ministry of Social Development.

**Key Words:** Social Services Offices, Family Protection Department, Obstacles

**Introduction:**

The family enjoys large significance in the Jordanian society due to its largely effective social role. Its importance and ways to protect its entity, strengthen its bonds and consolidate its values were mentioned clearly in Jordanian national documents. For example, the Jordanian constitution in item (4) of article (6) stated that “the family is the foundation of society and is based on religion, morals and love of the homeland. The law preserves its legal status and empowers its bonds and values” (Prime Ministry, 2015).The Jordanian National Charter of 1990 also stressed the need for the state to provide motives for family formation and dignified life. The “We are All Jordan Initiative 2006” also called for promoting the rights of children and women through integrating their national frameworks with their international counterparts which have been ratified, signed or joined by Jordan (Jordan National Council for Family Affairs, p 2).

In its section on society, Jordan’s 2025 Vision (2015) also suggested a group of initiatives related to family development such as care for the elderly and enhancement of the role of the family through improvement of fatherhood and motherhood and widening the scope of participation of guardians in education (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2015).

Despite the importance of the family institution in Jordanian society, its functions have been reduced to two main ones only: 1- Having children, raising them and caring for them. 2- Discharging the charged emotions of their members (Al Zaghal, 1989). Families now face the challenges of violence in its four forms: physical, sexual, psychological and neglect. This violence usually involves the more vulnerable members of a family such as children, women, the handicapped and the elderly. Violence in the Jordanian society has been confirmed as taking place through the statistics of official interventionists obtained from field studies. For example, the number of family violence cases dealt with by the Family Protection Department at the Public Security Directorate has risen from 295 cases in 1998 to 7865 cases in 2015 (Ministry of Social Development, 2016). This rate of change is estimated at +2566%.

Survey results about the status of Jordanian families (National Council for Family Affairs, 2014, p 76-77) indicated that family members acknowledge the spread of violence in their families. (1.3%) admitted that high levels of violence took place in their families, whereas, (5%) acknowledged average levels of violence. The survey results also revealed that physical abuse is the most abundant form of violence taking place in families. Its main form is beating (46.7%), followed by psychological abuse in its two forms, cursing (23.6%) and shouting (23%). Deprivation represented (4.2%) of family violence. Results also showed a relationship between violence and a family’s social class, background, place of residence and type. Violence is more abundant in low-income families (7.2%). In average-income families, it represents (5.5%) and in high-income families, it has a rate of (2.4%). It is also more widespread in rural families (6.9%) than urban ones (4.3%).It is also more abundant in the Madaba governorate (1.63%) and Balqa governorate (1.61%) in comparison to families living in the Aqaba and Ajloun governorates (both 1%). Rates are also higher in extended families (6.8%) than nuclear ones (4.6%) and individual ones (2.1%). Results also revealed that 51.2% of families view violence as a private matter, which should not be reported to official bodies, whereas, 53.9% of families were afraid of reporting crimes or offenses to public security apparatuses in case they witnessed them. Only (1%) of families have resorted to official institutions in the past should violence have taken place within them.

The Ratrout (2009) study revealed the effect of family size on violence. It was found that a family of six practiced the most violence towards its children, revealing that the larger the family, the larger the possibility of violence being carried out against its children. The same study also revealed the patterns of violence against children in light of the characteristics of their parents or caregivers. Physical violence came first with a rate of (43.1%), negligence formed (25.7%), negligence combined with physical violence (18.8%) and sexual violence (10.4%). The highest rates of perpetrators of such forms of violence were fathers (45.8%) and (80.6%) of persons who practiced violence against children did not drink alcohol. Also, (85.4%) of families which carried out violence against their children lived within long distances from their relatives.

In another study on the social and economic properties of family violence cases (National Council for Family Affairs, 2013), it was revealed that around half of the cases witnessed repeated acts of violence and that multiple forms of violence were performed against the same victim. The study showed that violence is concentrated in low-income families and those with more than one wife. In addition, the properties of most perpetrators and victims and the main causes of violence were revealed. Perpetrators are males of low education and poor communication and discussion skills. Victims are mostly low educated females and the causes are mostly family differences.

Because of the challenge of family violence in the Jordanian society, efforts to confront it began in 1997. These efforts witnessed the Public Security Department establishing the Family Protection Division at the Shmeisani police station, which was later promoted to a department now known as the Family Protection Department. This department has its headquarters in the Amman governorate and has divisions in other Jordanian governorates. It operates in partnership with the ministries of National Development and Health and includes in its divisions 16 social services offices (Ministry of Social Development, 2016)

This study comes as an effort to diagnose, evaluate and intervene in the Family Protection Department’s 17 social services offices dispersed throughout the governorates. It comes following complaints reported by some of those offices’ workers

regarding the obstacles they face during work, the difficulty of some cases they deal with and failure to respond to their training requirements, which they circulate in their professional forums.

The remaining part of the study consists of two parts. The first is a theoretical one and includes the formation and development of the system of protection against family violence in Jordan, a statistical perspective of the trends of family protection cases in Jordan and the scientific justification to the occurrence of family violence and its effect on the roles of social specialists. The second part is practical and includes the study justifications, importance, objectives, problem, methodologies, results, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions.

**Theoretical Framework:**

1. **The Emergence and Development of the Family Violence Protection System against Family Violence in Jordan:**

The core of family protection in Jordan began in 1997 (Ministry of Social Development, 2016) which witnessed the formation of a division for family protection at the Shmeisani police station. This step resulted from a sexual offence incident against a foreign tourist and her lack of satisfaction towards the way she was treated by the officers she met at one of the Jordanian police stations[[1]](#footnote-1). This led her to file a complaint to her country’s embassy in Amman against the officers she met at the police station. This resulted in a number of consequences, most importantly, the Public Security Directorate’s determination to introduce a new police unit specialized in sexual assault cases and family protection and to build the institutional capacities of that unit and its employees according to best practices derived from the British experience. The Family Protection Division dealt with 39 cases during 1997.

The division was promoted to a department in 1998. The Public Security Directorate also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Health involving the establishment of forensic medicine and mental health clinics at the Family Protection Department and its divisions. It also signed another memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of[[2]](#footnote-2)(1) Social Development regarding the establishment of social services offices at the department and its divisions to provide social services to victims of family violence. This agreement led to the formation of 16 offices which dealt with thousands of cases to be discussed below.

The National Council for Family Affairs Law No 27 was issued in 2001 and stated the council’s objective in Article (4) as being: “to enhance the status of the Jordanian family and amplify its role in society. This shall enable it to contribute to preserving the moral and civilizational heritage of the Islamic world in line with the economic, social and cultural changes taking place in the Kingdom. To achieve this goal, the council works specifically on achieving the following: 1- Contributing to setting the development plans, policies and strategies related to the family and its members and following up their implementation. 2-Contributing to improving the family’s quality of life, caring for it, enhancing its role and enabling it to meet the requirements of its members and ensure their safety. 3- Contributing to the family’s advancement, protecting and maintaining its stability and preserving its cohesion and identity. 4- Supporting the efforts of various social institutions and agencies, in public and private sectors, concerned with family affairs and achieving coordination and integration between these parties (Ministry of Social Development, 2006).This law led to the establishing of the National Council for Family Affairs. The council consists of a board of trustees and a technical secretariat. The Board of Trustees is chaired by Queen Rania Al Abdullah and includes representatives from the public and private sectors, whereas, the technical secretariat is directed by a secretary general and the directors connected to him.

In 2004, the Ordinance of Shelters for Family Protection No 48 was issued to support Article No 4 of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour Law No 14 of 1956 and its amendments (Ministry of Social Development, 2015). This ordinance and the instructions for licensing protection shelters No 15 of 2009 issued pursuant thereto led to regulating the work of battered women’s care homes amounting to three in total.

The first is Dar Al-Wifaq Osari in Amman which opened its doors in 2007. The second is the Jordanian Women’s Union shelter licensed in 2012 and the third is the Dar Al-Wifaq Osari in the city of Irbid which started working in 2015.

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In 2006, the National Framework for Family Protection was issued and contained a methodology for working with family violence cases (National Council for Family Affairs, 2006). The Family Protection Law No. 6 of Jordan was issued in 2008 (Ministry of Social Development, 2006). The Prevention of Human Trafficking Law No. 9 was issued in 2009. In 2015, the Dar Karama for victims of human trafficking was opened pursuant to its memorandum of association issued in 2012 and pursuant to the anti-human trafficking law. A replacement for the 2006 National Framework for Family Protection was issued in 2016 with the same name (National Council for Family affairs, 2016). However, it failed to name the parties concerned with its three stages, which are discovering, reporting, immediately responding and intervening, major operations (estimating danger factors, case management and case conference etc.) and the limits of soft intervention among them based on the coordination of organizational efforts and cooperative action. In 2017, a new version of the Family Protection Law of 2008 was issued for many positive reasons (Ministry of Social Development, 2016) such as the redefining of the family, ensuring obligatory reporting of cases, involving sharia judiciary, settling of family disputes and using (cctv) technology in courts and determining judicial bodies.

According to the above-mentioned, it is clear that the creation of the family protection system in Jordan was a result of administrative interventions primarily and legislative ones secondarily.

Despite the many efforts focused on enhancing the family protection system in Jordan, the results were not as expected. The Family Protection Department and its partners such as the ministries of interior, social development and health failed to win the King Abdullah II Award for Excellence despite the department participating in the award’s seventh version in (2013/2014) and the mentioned ministries participating in the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh versions.

The (Ratrout, 2009) study aimed at identifying the system programs of the Family Protection Department and their effectiveness in changing the situations of families which carried out violence against their children in Jordan. The study population consisted of all families registered as having been involved in cases of violence against their children in the Amman governorate with their cases being reported to the Family Protection Department during the period from 1/1/2007 until 31/12/2007. The total number of such cases was 576. A regular random sample of 25% was extracted amounting to 144 cases. Another intentional sample of 25 workers out of a total of 70 was extracted from the various department divisions (forensic medicine, psychiatry, social services office, reception and security investigation) to find out their opinions towards possible change that can be made to the families dealt with by the Family Protection Department programs. Results showed that 42.4% of interviewees said that the department’s reception procedures were average. Regarding the measurement of these people’s satisfaction towards this services, around 48.6% expressed a large level of satisfaction and 38.2% expressed average levels of satisfaction. Also, 80.6% of those studied and who had carried out violence against their children said they went through a comfortable security investigation. Regarding the services of the social services office, 86.1% of those studied mentioned that they had benefited from the family and social counseling sessions. 74.4% indicated that they had acquired the right information about social upbringing methods, while 9% of the sample mentioned that their families had received repeated cash assistance services. The study sample expressed its satisfaction towards court services, whereas, results showed that the majority of studied families did not benefit from the services of the administrative governor except that of writing obligations against abusive individuals. Regarding the psychiatric office service, results revealed that the majority of studied families did not benefit optimally from it and the levels of satisfaction of benefitting families were average to low. Regarding the forensic medicine office, it was revealed that most of the studied families did not benefit satisfactorily from its services, whereas, there was a high level of satisfaction among benefitting families. The results also revealed that the relationship between the parents of the abused child after receiving the services of the Family Protection Department was average, closer to low. Also, the level of interaction between the members of the abused child’s family after receiving the Family Protection Department’s services was closer to weak. The study also revealed that the relationship of the abusive family with its extended guiding family after receiving the department’s services was average closer to weak. The study revealed that there are positive correlative statistically significant relationships at significance levels of 0.01 and 0.05 between the service of enrolling the child/children in social care homes, the abused child’s situation under the supervision of the behavioral supervisor pursuant to a judicial order, the abused child being subjected to a psychiatric diagnosis, the abuser being subjected to a psychiatric diagnosis, the abusive person receiving psychiatric medical treatment, the improvement of the relationship between the abused child’s parents, more interaction among the family members and an improving relationship between the abusive family and its extended guiding family. The study results also revealed that the attitudes of workers in the Family Protection Department programs towards the change that could happen to families, which practiced violence against their children, was negative and pessimistic in total.

These results have led to the following derived recommendations: The urgent need to review the programs and services provided by the Family Protection Department to avoid danger factors surrounding violence-related families. The introduction of a survey system revealing the level of satisfaction of sectors receiving the services towards the services provided to them through the governorate offices. Increasing levels of effective cooperation and coordination between the Department and remaining institutions concerned with family violence cases. Designing and implementing a training program to raise the effectiveness of workers, especially social and psychological ones, and to change their negative attitudes.

**2- Trends towards Family Protection Issues in Jordan Statistically:**

After collecting data concerned with family protection issues in Jordan from the Family Protection Department and the Ministry of Social Development and after processing this data statistically using some descriptive statistical coefficients such as arithmetic means and time series, the following was concluded:

1. The annual average of family abuse cases according to data collected between 1998 and 2015 was (39.4) cases as shown in Table No. (1). This shows that the Family Protection Department and its partners deal with an average of 4000 family abuse cases against both genders annually.
2. A fluctuation in the rate of change of numbers of family abuse cases during the period from 1998 to 2015 according to the data outlined in Table No. (1), indicating that there are unknown factors other than the interventions of the Family Protection Department and its partners.

**Table (1): A distribution of the numbers of family abuse cases dealt with by the Jordan Family Protection Department according to their year of registration during the period from 1998 to 2015, their arithmetic means and change rates**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year | No. of cases\* |  Change %\*\* |
| 1998 | 295 |  |
| 1999 | 531 | 80 |
| 2000 | 631 | 18.83 |
| 2001 | 564 | * 10.62
 |
| 2002 | 661 | * 17.19
 |
| 2003 | 1178 | 78.21 |
| 2004 | 1423 | 20.79 |
| 2005 | 1796 | 26.21 |
| 2006 | 1764 | * 1.78
 |
| 2007 | 2944 | 66.89 |
| 2008 | 4312 | 46.46 |
| 2009 | 6416 | 48.79 |
| 2010 | 8605 | 34.11 |
| 2011 | 7931 | * 7.83
 |
| 2012 | 7874 | * 0.71
 |
| 2013 | 7873 | * 0.01
 |
| 2014 | 7606 | * 3.39
 |
| 2015 | 7865 | 3.40 |
| Arithmetic mean\*\* | 3903.83 |  |

* \*Source: Ministry of Social Development, 2016.
* \*\* Source: researcher’s calculations.

Based on Table No. (2):

1. The annual average of cases of family abuse against women which were referred to the Dar Wifaq Osari in Amman according to data for the years between 2007 and 2015 was (572) cases. This is shown in Table No. (2) and indicates that the Ministry of Social Development deals with an average of 572 abused women annually.
2. The number of women subjected to family violence referred to the Dar Al Wifaq Osari in Amman was 8.72% of all cases dealt with by the Family Protection Department during the period between 2007 and 2015 according to Table No. (2). This indicates that a tenth of all cases dealt with by the Family Protection Department are in need of sheltering services.
3. A fluctuation in the rate of change of the numbers of family abuse cases against women who were referred to the Dar Al Wifaq Osari shelter during the period from 2007 to 2015 according to the data in Table No. (2). This indicates that there are unknown factors affecting this issue other than the interventions of the Family Protection Department and its partners.
4. The annual average of children accompanying their mothers who were referred to the Dar Al Wifaq Osari shelter during the period from 2007 to 2015 was 126 male and female children as indicated in Table No. (2). This confirms that family violence contributes to the homelessness of children and their mothers.

**Table (2): Distribution of the numbers of women victims of family violence referred with their children to the Dar Al Wifaq Osari shelter in Amman in the period between 2007 and 2015, their rates out of the total numbers dealt with by the Family Protection Department, their arithmetic means and rates of change**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year | Total No. of cases\* | No. of women referred to Dar Al Wifaq Osari shelter in Amman and their percentages | No. of children accompanying their mothers in Dar Al Wifaq Osari shelter |
| No. | % of total | % of change of numbers of those referred to the shelter |
| 2007 | 2944 | 290 | 9.85 |  | 54 |
| 2008 | 4312 | 501 | 11.61 | 72.75 | 70 |
| 2009 | 6416 | 806 | 12.56 | 60.87 | 105 |
| 2010 | 8605 | 734 | 8.52 | - 8.93 | 158 |
| 2011 | 7931 | 505 | 6.63 | -31.19 | 138 |
| 2012 | 7874 | 699 | 8.87 | 38.41 | 165 |
| 2013 | 7873 | 615 | 7.81 | -12.01 | 192 |
| 2014 | 7606 | 526 | 6.91 | -14.47 | 110 |
| 2015 | 7865 | 472 | 6 | * 10.26
 | 138 |
| Arithmetic mean | 6825.11 | 572 | 8.75 |  | 125.55 |

* \*Source: Ministry of Social Development, 2016.
* The remaining data was collected and calculated by the researcher.

Based on Table No. (3):

1. The annual average of cases of children subjected to family abuse who were referred to care homes during the period between 2013 and 2015 was (209.33) cases as is indicated in Table No. (3). This reveals that the Ministry of Social Development deals with a rate of 209 cases of abused children annually.
2. The percentage of cases of children subjected to family violence who were referred to care homes was 2.68% of the total number of cases dealt with by the Family Protection Department during the period from 2013 to 2015 according to Table No. (3). This indicates that 3% of cases the department deals with are in need of sheltering services.
3. The high rate of change of the numbers of cases of children subjected to family violence during the period from 2013 to 2015 according to the data outlined in Table No. (3). This indicates the poor effect or even the total absence of child violence prevention programs.

**Table (3) Distribution of numbers of child victims of family violence from both genders referred to care homes in Jordan in the period between 2013 and 2015, their percentage out of the total number of cases dealt with by the Family Protection Department, their arithmetic means and their rates of change**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year | Total No. of cases\* | No. of children from both genders referred to care homes and their averages |
| No. | % from total | Change % of numbers of those referred to care homes |
| 2013 | 7873 | 178 | 2.26 |  |
| 2014 | 7606 | 185 | 2.43 | 3.93 |
| 2015 | 7865 | 265 | 3.36 | 43.24 |
| Arithmetic mean | 7781.33 | 209.33 | 2.68 |  |

* \* Source: Ministry of Social Development, 2016.
* The remaining data was calculated by the researcher.

The main features of family abuse cases in Jordan can be revealed as follows:

1. Cases of family violence referred to the Family Protection Department are highly fluctuant. They rise at times and fall at others. This indicates the absence of regulation through effective and efficient communal interventions that ensure their constant fall in numbers.
2. Victims of family violence are among the women and children sectors.
3. The majority of family violence cases (88.57%) dealt with by the Family Protection Department did not receive sheltering services. This indicates that these victims received other forms of services such as socially related ones (e.g. guidance, direction and awareness raising or administrative ones such as binding guarantees and commitments).
4. The rate of women subjected to family violence who enroll in Dar Al Wifaq Osari is (8.57%) of the total number of cases dealt with by the Family Protection Department. This is higher than the rate of children enrolled which is (2.68%).
5. Family violence results in 572 women and 126 of their children resorting to Dar Al Wifaq Osari in Amman annually.
6. The nature of intervention into family violence should be therapeutic and not precautionary.

**3- The Scientific Explanation of the Occurrence of Family Violence and its Effect on the roles and tasks of Social Specialists:**

Violence takes place in various community institutions among which is the family. It affects the vulnerable members of families according to their ages such as children and the elderly or according to their gender such as women or according to their deficit such as the disabled. Violence has many reasons interacting between each other as expressed by the introduction to the analysis of agents used by the World Health Organization. Violence, described as a problem with a social interior and health manifestations, results in its occurrence among the vulnerable members of a family due to the interaction of four factors, which are:

1. Individual factors connected to the abused person such as his young age, his excessive use of alcohol, his suffering from depression or unstable personality, and his low level of education, his low income and his witnessing or suffering from violence during childhood.
2. Factors related to the relationship context of the vulnerable person such as marriage problems, unstable marriage and male dominance in the family such as regarding him the source of orders, financial problems such as low income, unemployment, debts etc., and difficulties facing the family in carrying out its remaining duties, especially raising and caring for the children.
3. Community factors represented by weak community deterrents against violence and regarding it as something normal and non-punishable by law, the low income of the local community where the family lives and weak social guardianship (the man does not provide for his family).
4. Social factors such as the traditional view to the relationship between males and females, where the female must be subordinate to the male as he is her guardian, leading to social norms supporting violence as a means of social regulation (World Health Organization, 2002, p 91- 124).

Based on the understanding, interpretation, regulation and forecasting by social specialists of these factors, their roles and professional tasks are formed. They cannot carry out these roles without scientific, practical and moral preparation in the field of social work or social service. Their roles in the area of family protection can be summarized as follows:

1. Protecting those vulnerable or subjected to violence through effective and efficient interventions. This includes providing social awareness to a defined sector about a certain issue such as providing awareness to childcare givers about child growth, the art of dialogue with teenagers, individual counseling to a specific case such as a person preparing for marriage and group counseling to specific cases such as female survivors of violence who teach their vulnerable counterparts.
2. Protecting those vulnerable or subjected to violence by diagnosing and evaluating their cases and intervening for them.
3. Providing family development services to those requesting them and measuring their levels of satisfaction after receiving them. Such services target married couples and those about to get married.

The roles of social specialists stemming from their professional tasks in the area of family protection are as follows:

1. Preventive tasks to stop the occurrence of family violence. This promotes human rights, takes into consideration social culture and goes line in line with best international practices.
2. Treatment tasks based on estimating danger factors in the surroundings of those vulnerable or subjected to violence, controlling them with effective and efficient interventions and managing their cases through a comprehensive method that concentrates on the victims, their families and their local communities.

The roles and tasks of social specialists can be measured pursuant to performance indexes of which the main ones are:

1. The number of annual recorded cases of family violence compared to their general average.

The annual average of family violence cases in Jordan dealt with by the Family Protection Department during the period from 1998 to 2015 was (3903.83) cases. When dividing this average into two stages, it can be revealed that the average number of cases registered at the Family Protection Department during the period 1998- 2007 was (1178.7) and is lower than the number of cases registered during the period 2008-2015, which was (7310.26). This indicates the weakness or maybe absence of the preventive role of social specialists.

1. The percentage of family members who admitted to population and family health surveyors of having been subjected to violence compared to those whose cases reached official authorities.

Population and family health surveys carried out in 2007 indicated that 22.2% of surveyed women had been physically or sexually abused by their husbands once. 40.1% of these women were subjected to permanent and continuous abuse. 2.5%, 0.4%, 23%, 15%, 10%, 7% and 3% of those women sought assistance from doctors, civil society institutions, mothers, fathers, sisters, the police and health specialists consecutively (Department of Statistics, 2007). Also, the number of women victims of family violence who were referred to the Wifaq Al Osari shelter during 2007 was (290). Through these statistics, it is clear that the preventive role of social specialists is weak if not totally absent.

1. The number of annual family abuse cases being followed up.

The total number of family abuse cases registered at the social services offices of the Family Protection Department in Jordan between 1997 and 2017 was (60000) cases from among which (21494) cases are still being followed up at a rate of 477 cases being followed up by each social specialist working at the social services offices. The total number of these specialists is 45 (Ministry of Social Development, 2017, p 15). This reveals the high burden on the shoulders of social service offices as shown in Table No. (4). It should also be taken into consideration that the National Framework for Family Protection against Violence (National Council for Family Affairs, 2016) failed to separate psychological services from social ones. It integrated them into one group containing the following: assessing the psychological condition of the abused and his family, conducting social studies on the abused and his family, providing family and psychological counseling services, providing victims with sheltering services, rehabilitating and integrating perpetrators, developing parental skills, managing hotlines for children, women and their families, providing social and economic empowerment services and organizing awareness campaigns.

**Table (4): Distribution of family abuse cases followed up by 17 social services offices in Jordan during the period from 2007 to 2017 and their arithmetic mean**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Year | No. of cases\* |
| 2007 | 1236 |
| 2008 | 3190 |
| 2009 | 5336 |
| 2010 | 6061 |
| 2011 | 5227 |
| 2012 | 5416 |
| 2013 | 4746 |
| 2014 | 4697 |
| 2015 | 5523 |
| 2016 | 5330 |
| 2017 | 5271 |
| Arithmetic mean\*\* | 4730.27 |

* \*Source: Ministry of Social Development, 2017, p 15.
* \*\*Source: the researcher’s calculations.

**Practical Framework:**

1. **Study Justifications, Importance, Objectives, Problem and Methodology:**
2. **Study Justifications:**
3. The absence of any previous study dealing with the issue of obstacles facing social services offices at the Family Protection Department and the requirements of their employees. This is a pioneering study in this area.
4. Estimating the training requirements of social workers at social services offices connected to the Family Protection Department to suggest what is needed to meet these requirements.
5. Determining the aspirations of the social workers at the social services offices at the Department in the aim of explaining them to their administrative reference (Ministry of Social Development).
6. **Study Importance:**

The importance of this study stems from its expected outputs (answers to its questions), which should help, should they be adopted by those concerned, to provide feedback to social safety development initiatives stipulated in the Jordan Vision 2025 (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2015), to develop the National Framework for Family Protection against Violence (National Council for Women’s Affairs, 2016) and to achieve the objectives of the Ministry of Social Development’s Strategic Plan for the period 2017- 2021 regarding the development of human resources (Ministry of Social Development, 2017).

1. **Study Objectives:**

The study has two types of objectives: the first lie in the question that says: What are the obstacles facing social services offices at the Family Protection Department and its divisions in Jordan? What are the trends of their service recipients and the requirements and aspirations of their workers from the point of view of some of their employees and those concerned with their technical affairs including officials at the Ministry of Social Development? The second type of objectives is related to the questions stemming from the main question as follows:

1. What are the obstacles facing social services offices at the Family Protection Department and its divisions in Jordan from the point of view of some of their employees and those concerned with their technical affairs including officials at the Ministry of Social Development?
2. What are the trends of recipients of services of social services offices at the Family Protection Department and its divisions in Jordan from the point of view of some of their employees and those concerned with their technical affairs such as officials at the Ministry of Social Development?
3. What are the training requirements of workers at social services offices at the Family Protection Department and its divisions in Jordan from the point of view of some of the workers and some of those concerned with their technical affairs such as officials at the Ministry of Development?
4. What are the aspirations of employees working at social services offices at the Family Protection Department and its divisions in Jordan from the point of view of some of the workers and those concerned with their technical affairs such as officials at the Ministry of Social Development?
5. **Study Problem:**

Following the Jordanian Public Security Directorate establishing a headquarters for the Family Protection Department and divisions in governorates in 1997, a partnership agreement was signed between the directorate and the Ministry of Social Development in 1998. This agreement resulted in the establishment of 17 social services offices for the department containing 45 male and female social workers whose work involves providing social services to victims of family violence. The average annual number of such cases during the period between 1998 and 2015 amounted to (3903.83) and cases followed up between 2007 and 2017 had an annual average of (4730.27).

As social workers working at social services offices at the Family Protection Department and its divisions showed negative and pessimistic attitudes towards their work, as revealed by the Ratrout (2009) study, and as their workloads while following up cases were very large as revealed by a report by the Ministry of Social Development (2017), and as their professional roles within the partnership methodology is vague according to the data provided by the National Framework for Family Protection against Violence (National Council for Women’s Affairs, 2016), this study comes to investigate the obstacles facing their offices’ operations and the trends of service recipients. It also aims at estimating their requirements and determining their aspirations from the point of view of some of them and from the point of view of some of those responsible for their technical affairs such as officials at the Ministry of Social Development. In other words, this study came to answer the main question and sub-questions raised in the ‘objectives’ item.

1. **Study Methodology:**

The study used the qualitative research method, which is based on semi-structured interviews of both individual and collective types and related brainstorming and focus groups applied to a deliberate sample of those concerned with social services offices at the Family Protection Department and its divisions throughout the governorates. The sample consisted of 47% of the total number of offices, which is 17, and 18% of workers at those offices, who amount to 45 male and female employees. The offices studied were North Amman (Family Protection Department headquarters), Balqa, East Amman, Irbid, Mafraq, Rusaifa, as well as, the director of the Rusaifa Home Shelter for Women and those concerned with the Family Care and Social Security Department at the Ministry of Social Development, who were the director and the protection department officer.

1. **Study Results, Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions:**
2. **Study Results:**

To answer the study’s first sub-question, the interview method was used with some of those concerned with social services offices such as employees and those following up their technical affairs. Results revealed that social services offices at the Family Protection Department and its divisions face 20 obstacles from the point of view of some of their employees and those concerned with their technical affairs such as officials from the Ministry of Social Development. These obstacles are as follows:

1. The vagueness of the professional roles of social workers such as case diagnosis, evaluation, intervention and follow up.
2. The marginalization of social workers by administrative officers upon conducting case conferences.
3. The absence of a technical reference for social services offices at the Ministry of Social Development headquarters between the directorates of juvenile care and family care.
4. The overlap of powers and responsibilities between partner bodies and the dissatisfaction of office workers as a result. For example, administrative officers in social services centers (who are of a security background) interfere with the role of social workers appointed by the Ministry of Social Development leading to ambiguous roles. Security officers do not inform social workers working with them in the offices about cases referred to the courts. They also ask them to arrange commitment instruments to be signed by offenders (such as husbands who abuse their wives). Most of these officers lack scientific, practical and moral preparation in the field of social work and have job titles as social workers even though they report to their majors at security departments and not to the managers of the social services centers in which they work.
5. The large numbers of files open for follow up. Child cases have reached around 20,000 and following them up is difficult due to lack of transportation. Women cases also lack high valuing.
6. The absence of danger factor evaluation standards for cases in general and sexual abuse cases in particular before, during and after their victims are referred to care homes.
7. The absence of (legal) release criteria for cases from care homes, especially cases of sexual abuse.
8. The oldness of the case study form used currently and the difficulty in developing decisions based on its results, It also contains a check box for the police officer's decision.
9. The difficulty of referring or hosting victims of violence in care homes, especially sexually assaulted girls, after the legal adaptation of their cases by public prosecutors. The reasons behind this difficulty are the technical directorates at the ministry headquarters on one hand and the late arrival of some cases to the social services offices due to prolonged police procedures on the other hand.
10. The absence of technical orientation of social workers by the concerned parties at the ministry headquarters.
11. The dependence on some office directors as behavioral supervisors. This could increase their work loads and sometimes prevent them from following up registered cases.
12. The absence of work descriptions for social workers and the lack of awareness of the importance of such job description cards during their work.
13. The absence of clear procedures (procedural guide) for dealing with cases upon their diagnosis and during intervention. These procedures can also be misused during internal or external implementation (social services offices and partners from within the Ministry of Social Development and beyond).
14. The case files' lack of data and information upon transferring cases from one administrative unit to another such as transferring them from social services offices to shelters. This weakens the process of making decisions and implementing them.
15. Lack of engagement of social workers working in social services offices by the officers of the Family Protection Department in case study conferences. Also, the characteristics of the case conference directors lack professionalism and workers lack awareness of the mechanisms related to the conducting of a case conference, its time and venue.
16. Threats by some ministry directors to some workers in social services offices of being moved to other departments. This leads to poor job security, which is amplified by their psychological sufferings and lack of allowances such as those granted to their counterparts in other administrative departments.
17. The unclear lines between authorities and responsibilities between the family and juvenile care directorates at the level of difficult cases worthy of entering care homes. Each of the two directorates throws the ball in the other's court leading to the humiliation of the social workers in front of the police officers of the Family Protection Department.
18. The absence of a computerized system to follow up and evaluate cases and the absence of electronic communication between social services offices and their partners from within and outside the Ministry of Social Development.
19. Poor resources such as lack of means of transportation (cars), small buildings and lack of supplies.
20. Increasing demand for the offices' services and the complexity of cases needing intervention.

Based on the above, the study has answered to its first sub-question by saying that social services offices at the Family Protection Department and its divisions face 20 obstacles from the point of view of some of their employees and those from the Ministry of Social Development concerned with their technical affairs.

To answer the study’s second sub-question, the interview method was used with some concerned employees at the social services offices and those following their technical affairs. Results reveal that the social services office at the Family Protection Department deals with two or more cases of sexually assaulted girls daily and that the remaining offices deal with categories shown in the table.

Therefore, the study has answered its second sub-question by saying that social services offices at the Family Protection Department and its divisions provide their services to both physically and sexually assaulted cases from the point of view of some of their employees and those from the Ministry of Social Development concerned with their technical affairs.

**Table (4): Distribution of family abuse cases followed up by 17 social services offices in Jordan during the period from 2007 to 2017 and their arithmetic mean**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Year | No. of cases\* |
| 2007 | 1236 |
| 2008 | 3190 |
| 2009 | 5336 |
| 2010 | 6061 |
| 2011 | 5227 |
| 2012 | 5416 |
| 2013 | 4746 |
| 2014 | 4697 |
| 2015 | 5523 |
| 2016 | 5330 |
| 2017 | 5271 |
| Arithmetic mean\*\* | 4730.27 |

* \*Source: Ministry of Social Development, 2017, p 15.
* \*\*Source: the researcher’s calculations.

To answer the study’s third question, the brainstorming method was used with some of those concerned with social services offices including employees and followers of their technical affairs. The study results reveal that there are eight training requirements for social workers at the social services offices as follows:

1. Practical applications of legislations related to protection such as the juvenile law.
2. Psychosocial evaluation of cases.
3. Altering behavior of juveniles and behavioral treatment.
4. Conducting deep interviews with cases, especially girls cases
5. Body-language communication.
6. Dealing with indicators of mental illnesses such as suicide tendencies and depression.
7. Measurements for calculating danger factors for cases and their practical applications.
8. Case management through the participation method.

Therefore, the study has answered its third sub-question by saying that there are eight training requirements for social workers at social services offices. These requirements need to be met by the Ministry of Social Development through an effective and efficient training program.

To answer the study’s fourth sub-question, the brainstorming method was used with some of those concerned with social services offices such as workers and followers of technical affairs. Results revealed that workers at the social services offices anticipate from the Ministry of Social Development to carry out seven things that reflect their aspirations as follows:

1. To receive bonuses the same as their colleagues in other administrative departments.
2. An evaluation of the danger factors surrounding the employee.
3. Securing necessary work requirements such as means of transportation.
4. Senior employees meeting workers at the social services offices.
5. Providing separate buildings other than those of the Public Security Departments.
6. Justice to the employees in light of the results of their efforts.
7. Concerned bodies carrying out their roles in the area of family counseling and guidance.

Therefore, the study has answered its fourth sub-question by saying that there are seven expectations (aspirations) for social workers at social services offices, which must be adopted by the Ministry of Social Development.

Based on the study’s answers to its four sub-questions, it has answered its main question by saying the following: the social services offices at the Family Protection Department and its divisions face 20 obstacles, provide their services to sexually and physically assaulted cases, have eight training requirements for their employees and their workers have seven expectations from the Ministry of Social Development.

1. **Study Conclusions:**
2. The large number of technical and administrative obstacles facing social services offices at the Family Protection Department and its divisions indicating the failure of the National Framework for Family Protection against Violence of 2007 and its 2016 counterpart in eliminating them.
3. The complexity of the cases receiving the services of the social services offices at the Family Protection Department.
4. The large number of training requirements of social workers in the area of family protection and the absence of parties who measure and meet them.
5. The large expectations of social workers from the Ministry of Social Development in the form of administrative problems and the absence of those who can solve them.
6. **Study Recommendations:**
7. To develop the National Framework for Family Protection against Violence to include setting the roles and tasks of concerned institutions and those working for them.
8. To professionalize Jordanian social work according to the initiative outlined in the Jordan Vision 2025.
9. **Study Suggestions:**
10. Establishing a family protection directorate at the Ministry of Social Development.
11. The human resources directorate at the Ministry of Social Development should provide job descriptions for workers at social services offices/ social protection in the form of cards.
12. The National Council for Family Affairs should modernize the National Framework for Family Protection against Violence in light of the experiences of field workers and the framework should contain clear items in the area of evaluation of danger factors and indicators.
13. The Legal Affairs Unit at the Ministry of Social Development should prepare a procedural guide for child protection cases inspired by the Juvenile Law.
14. Lines should be drawn between the authorities and responsibilities of the Public Security Directorate and the Ministry of Social Development regarding their dealing with cases subjected to violence in accordance with the role expected from each of them and in light of legislations and the operation management method.
15. The National Council for Family Affairs should determine the requirements of conducting a case conference and the characteristics of those participating in such conferences and those managing them.
16. The Directorate of Social Societies Development at the Ministry of Social Development should establish a database for social services offices and their internal and external partners.
17. Objective standards should be set for the follow up of open cases.
18. Bonuses for employees of social services offices should be based on their tasks and volumes of work.

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1. Source: An interview with some of those who worked at the Family Protection Division since its establishment in 1997. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)