

FAMILY AND CULTURAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE LIFE OF BOYS LEAVING HOMES IN GUJRANWALA

Balal Idrees

Department of Sociology, Trust College
of Commerce, Arts and Science
Mandi Bahauddin. PAKISTAN.
bilalalvi2002@yahoo.com

Umar Manzoor

Department of Sociology
University of Gujrat
Gujrat, PAKISTAN.
umarmanzoor14@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

In the present study, 'runaway boys' refers to those boys who spend at least one night outside from their home without the consent of their parents and have the age cohort of 11-19. This research aimed at to unearth the family and cultural factors which affect the boys in Gujranwala to run away from home. A sample size of 99 children was drawn with the help of simple random sampling technique. The analysis of the results demonstrated that Lack of education, Ideological differences between parents and Children, Child neglecting, forced child labor, sexual abuse, family problems such as being force to live with one parent after they get separated, dispute amongst the parents were all affective in their running away from home.

Keywords: Run Away Boys, Family and Parents Problems, Child Abuse

INTRODUCTION

Recently many social scientists particularly Psychologists have paid their attention towards the issue of boys running away from homes. Children's right movements for the last two centuries are working for the rights of children. UNICEF, Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education, Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Provincial Social Welfare Departments, International and national NGOs and other UN agencies are working to protect children from abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination and support the establishment of a system of juvenile justice. But the situation is still unfortunately unsatisfactory for those child and adolescent who are runaway from their homes and lived in streets and at rural areas of Pakistan.

Children on their puberty or teenage stage are very difficult to handle. It is the time of human growth and development. Family plays a very vital role to support the children at this important time period. Many people view the family as a "heaven in a heartless word," offering physical protection, emotional support and financial assistant. Perhaps this is why people living in families tend to be happier, healthier and wealthier than people living alone (Goldstein & Kenny, 2001; US Census Bureau, 2005)[1]. In this key stage conflict arises between young adults and their parents. Both parents and adolescents are having a hard time to understand each other's views and opinion. In most of the cases today young generation are slowly losing their control when it comes to moral issues. Infants are totally dependent on others for care. The responsibility for providing a safe and caring environment typically falls on parents and other family members. For several year (at least until children begin school) the family also has the job of teaching children skills, values, and beliefs. Overall, research suggests nothing is more to produce a happy, well adjusted child than being in a loving family (Gibbs, 2001) [2]. But on the contrary adolescents desired to get run from the rules. They always seek to establish their own rights without thinking of the possible consequences. They

are driven by their own desires and beliefs and they even choose to reject the opinion of their parents and other people who are older than them. This disagreement between both parties often leads towards some serious problems. All children are naturally insecure and immature emotionally as it is a part of growing process. Each day they become more secure when family is a close knit one with proper freedom for communication and to express their emotions. But if family fails to meet the love for children, children become unstable and try to escape from that atmosphere to get freedom. The family is the first and most important setting for child rearing ideally, parents help children become well integrated, contributing member of society(parsons and bales 1955)[3].

Teens that are running away from home are associated with different forms of problems. According to psychologists running teens are usually triggered by complex emotional problems. Since they are still in the age of puberty they are not yet aware of the danger of running away from home. They pay more attention on the idea that their parents are no longer there to support and listen to their needs and issues. Sometimes they also misinterpret the words of their parents towards their actions and behavior. Running teens also feel deep rejection from their families. On the other hand there are more serious reasons why several teens are running away from their homes. Child abuse is one of the most undesirable reasons why teens choose to run away from their homes. Family violence also victimizes children. Each year, there are roughly three million reports of alleged child abuse or neglect, about 1500 of them involving a child's death. Child abuse entails more than physical injury; abusive adults misuse power and trust to damage a child's emotional well being. Child abuse and neglect are most common among the youngest and most vulnerable children. (Besharov and laumann, 1996)[4].

According to many social workers and NGOs in Pakistan that they have encountered multiple cases of teens that ran away from their homes due to child abuse and even prostitution. Running away from their homes is the best and only way for them to live a peaceful life. There are many other factors (Overprotective parents, family problems, lack of education, undesired marriages) also trigger teens to run away from homes. Although child abuser conform to now simple stereo- type, they are more likely to be women (58 %) than men (42 %). But almost all abuser share one trait having been abused themselves as children. Research shows that violent behavior in close relationship is learned; in families, violence begets violence. (Browning & Laumann, 1997) [5]; (National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information, 2005) [6].

According to criminal record in Pakistan, the more incredible and imperative issue is that the runaway boys are involved in anti-social activities. When they run away from their homes, they commit crimes like gambling, smuggling, killing etc. Some children are caught by organized gangs. These gangs than usually forced them to commit crimes.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

- a. To determine the demographic profile of the runaway boys.
- b. To unearth the family and cultural factors which affect boys running away from home.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the present study 99 respondents were selected through Simple Random sampling technique by using the formula given by Yamane and Taro, 1967[7]. Because sample frame of the present study was available at child Protection Bureau Gujranwala. Further, the data was analyzed by using SPSS version 16.0. A well structured questionnaire was administrated by the researchers which contained different parts like a) the demographic profile of the respondents; b) factors affecting the runaway boys from their homes.

$$n = N / 1 + N (e)^2$$

Where:

$$n = \text{sample size}$$

$$N = \text{population size}$$

$$e = \text{the level of precision}$$

$$N = 132$$

$$e = 0.05$$

$$n = 132 / 1 + 132(0.05)^2$$

$$n = 132 / 1 + 0.33$$

$$n = 99$$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 4.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

4.1.1 Age of the respondents			4.1.3 Family structure of the respondents		
Categories	frequency	percentage	Categories	frequency	percentage
11-13	9	9.1	Nuclear	8	8.1
14-16	50	50.5	Joint	82	82.8
17-19	40	40.4	Extended	9	9.1
Total	99	100%	Total	99	100%
4.1.2 Family size of the respondents			4.1.4 Educational attainment of the respondents		
Categories	frequency	percentage	Categories	frequency	percentage
1-3	3	3.1	0-5	60	60.6
4-6	22	22.2	6-10	28	28.3
7-9	43	43.4	11-12	11	11.1
10 and above	31	31.3	Total	99	100%
Total	99	100%			

Table No. 4.1.1 shows that 50.5% and 40.4% runaway boys belong to the age group of 14-16 and 17-19 respectively. Only 9.1% runaway boys belongs to age group of 11-13. The most prevalent age group for runaway boys was 14-16.

Table No. 4.1.2 describe the family size of the respondents. The data shows that 43.4% and 31.3% runaway boys belong to the family size of 7-9 and 10 and above respectively. Only 22.2% and 3.1% respondents belong to the family size of 4-6 and 1-3. The results describes that most of the boys who run away from home belongs to the large family size of 7-9 and above. It is also concluded that family size play a vital role in the child growth and mental development.

Table 4.1.3 showed that 82.8% runaway boys were belong to the joint family system. Only 9.1% and 8.1% runaway boys were belong to Extended and nuclear family system. The joint family system is one of the key features of Pakistan. In many aspect of life it supports the members but in some aspects it is denigratory. Such is the case regarding boys running away from their homes, as joint family system is one of major abettors of this immoral practice.

Education is very important feature to confer here. Table 4.1.4 shows that most of the respondents (60.6%) are illiterate. 28.3% runaway boys have the education from Primary to Matric and only 11.1% runaway boys have education up to inter. So it is concluded that most of the runaway boys are illiterate.

Table No. 4.2 Factors running away from home

4.2.1 Divorce of the parents for running away from home			4.2.6 Poverty for running away from home		
Categories	frequency	percentage	Categories	Frequency	percentage
Not at all	86	86.8	Not at all	14	14.1
To some extent	13	13.2	To some extent	24	24.2
To great extent	0	0	To great extent	61	61.7
Total	99	100%	Total	99	100%
4.2.2 Addiction of parents for running away from home			4.2.7 Bettering of the family for running away from home		
Categories	frequency	percentage	Categories	frequency	percentage
Not at all	87	87.9	Not at all	71	71.7
To some extent	12	12.1	To some extent	19	19.2
To great extent	0	0	To great extent	9	9.1
Total	99	100%	Total	99	100%
4.2.3 Unnecessary check from parents for running away from home			4.2.8 Child neglect for running away from home		
Categories	frequency	percentage	Categories	frequency	percentage
Not at all	14	14.1	Not at all	8	8.1
To some extent	17	17.2	To some extent	30	30.3
To great extent	68	68.7	To great extent	61	61.6
Total	99	100%	Total	99	100%
4.2.4 Ideological differences between parents for running from home			4.2.9 Forced child labor for running away from home		
Categories	frequency	percentage	Categories	frequency	percentage
Not at all	8	8.1	Not at all	5	5.1
To some extent	28	28.3	To some extent	24	24.2
To great extent	63	63.6	To great extent	70	70.7
Total	99	100%	Total	99	100%
4.2.5 Being force to live with one parent after they get divorce for running away from home			4.2.10 Sexual abuse for running away from home		
Categories	frequency	percentage	Categories	frequency	percentage
Not at all	15	15.2	Not at all	11	11.2
To some extent	52	52.5	To some extent	39	39.3
To great extent	32	32.3	To great extent	49	49.5
Total	99	100%	Total	99	100%

Table No. 4.2.1 illustrate the divorce of parents for running away from home. The data shows that 86.8% runaway boys said that divorce of parents is not a reason for their running away from home. Only 13.2% of the respondents said that to some extent divorce of parents is a reason for their running away from home while none of them said that divorce of parents is a reason to great extent for their

running away from home. So it is concluded that divorce of the parents is not a reason for boys running away from home.

Table No. 4.2.2 shows the addiction of parents for running away from home. It describe that 87.9% runaway boys said that addiction of parents is not a reason at all for their running away from home. Only 12.1% runaway boys said that to some extent addiction of parents is a reason for their running away from home. So it is concluded that addiction of parents is not a reason for boys running away from home.

Sometimes parents restrict their child to great extent. And it has a bad affect to the child mental development. Table No. 4.2.3 describes the unnecessary checks from for running away from home. The table shows that 68.7% runaway boys said that unnecessary check from parents is a reason to great extent for their running away from home. Only 14.1% and 17.2% runaway boys said that unnecessary check from parents is not at all and to some extent reason for their running away from home respectively. So it is concluded that unnecessary check from parents is one of the major reason for boys running away from their homes.

Ideological difference between both parents and children is a very common phenomenon in every society. But sometimes it leads toward serious problems. Table no. 4.2.4 shows that 63.6% runaway boys said that ideological difference with parents is a reason to great extent for their running away from home. While only 8.1% and 28.3% runaway boys said that ideological difference with parents is not at all and to some extent respectively a reason for their running away from home. So it is concluded that ideological differences between parents and children is one of the major reason for boys running away from home.

Table No.5.2.5 describes that 64.6% runaway boys said that being forced to live with one parent after they get separated is a reason to some extent for their running away from home. While 20.2% and 15.2% runaway boys said that being forced to live one parent is a reason to great extent and not at all respectively for their running away from their homes. So it is concluded that being forced to live with one parent is a reason to some extent for boys running away from their homes.

Table No. 4.2.6 shows the poverty for running away from their homes. It shows that 61.7% runaway boys said that poverty is a reason to great extent for their running away from home. And 24.2% respondents said that poverty is a reason to some extent for their running away from home. While only 14.1% runaway boys said that poverty is not a reason at all for their running away home. So it is concluded that poverty is the one of the major factors which urges the boys to run away from their homes.

Table no. 4.2.7 shows that 71.7% runaway boys said that bettering of the family is not a reason at all for their running away from homes. While 19.2% and 9.1% runaway boys said that bettering of the family is a reason to some extent and to great extent respectively for their running away from home. So it concluded that bettering of the family is not a reason for their running away from their homes.

Table No. 4.2.8 describe the child neglection for running away from home. It shows that 61.6% runaway boys said that child neglection is a reason to great extent for their running away from home. While only 30.3% and 8.1% runaway boys said that child neglection is a reason to some extent and not at all respectively for their running away from their homes. So it concluded that child neglection is one of the major reasons for boys running away from their homes.

Table No. 4.2.9 illustrate the forced child labor for running away from home. It shows that 70.7% runaway boys said that forced child labor is a reason to great extent for their running away from home. And 24.2% respondents said that forced child labor is a reason to some extent for their running away from home. While only 5.1% runaway boys said that forced child labor is not a reason for their running away from home.

Table No. 4.2.10 demonstrate the child sexual abuse for their running away from homes. It shows that half of the runaway boys (49.4%) said that child sexual abuse is reason to great extent for their

running away from homes. And 39.3% runaway boys said that sexual child abuse is a reason to some extent for their running away from home. While only 11.2% runaway boys said that child sexual abuse is not a reason for their running away from home. So it is concluded that child sexual abuse is also a key reason for boys running away from their homes.

CONCLUSION

The situation of runaway boys has yet not changed. They are still browbeaten as they were in centuries ago. The family and societal values, norms and mores have not yet been challenged by these subjugated. They still dependent on different NGOs, Social organizations and confiding in the family traditions and cultural norms. The runaway boys are not allowed to take active part in family decision-making. The situation of the family in which they are living is deteriorated by the intrusions made by cultural and societal norms. Almost all runaway boys have singled out the role of their low educational attainment, Ideological differences between parents and Children, Child neglect, forced child labor, sexual abuse, family problems such as being force to live with one parent after they get separated , dispute amongst the parents in this heinous brutality. As a result of this brutality, runaway boys have an urge to live in healthy and safe environment.

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