

FACTORS AFFECTING THE LIFE OF YOUNG FEMALE MEMBERS OF FAMILY IN GUJRAT : A CRITICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to compare the family and cultural factors among run away and normal girls. To conduct this research 25 runaway girls from girls living in Darul Aman in Gujrat and 25 normal girls from different colleges and university areas were selected and studied. The result indicates that bettering of the family, affairs before marriages, gender discrimination within family and educational problem is more frequent in the runaway girls than the normal girls.

Keywords: Normal Girls, Affairs before marriages, Gender discrimination within family, Educational Problem

INTRODUCTION

Adulthood and teenage is a particularly important period for individuals. The individual destiny is tied up with his/her appropriate and rational decisions at this important period of life. The most important issue is to develop the mental and emotional relation with the teenage which depends on knowing the secrets that parents and teachers need for entering the adolescents world and have a spiritual, physical and mental relationship. It's unforgettable that the greatest supporter and refuge of the adolescents in this critical time is only family. A family failing to perform this critical and important duty, cannot attract their spouses and it's the time to the environmental and cultural factors to attract them and they may lead to deviation so easily. Amongst the negative consequences of the social and familial pressures on the adults we can point out the adults' runaways especially by the girls of age cohorts between 12 to 18 years so common within recent decades. So, the policy makers, authorities, experts and different NGOs are looking for its solutions in every conference to prevent or halt its development in the society, Because the consequences of runaway girl on the families and society is very much critical. The runaway girl issue is especially significant and important because most of the runaway girls are sexually abused and raped within just a few hours of leaving the family and this issue turns the last remaining hopes to come back to family to disappointment. In Pakistan especially in Punjab girls' home-runaway has become one of today's most controversial and critical issues, the girls' home-runaway is considered and posed as a social issue and pathology regarding the religious, familial and social norms and values therefore many runaway girls never turn back home and are arrested the time when it's too late for the girl, family and the society. The girls chose steers as a path to escape from their problems and turn to the excommunicated tramps looking for various ways to survive (Crespi, 1993) [1]. Most of runaway girls have weak and low self esteem and are truly coward however they pretend and show their self to be brave. They consider themselves inefficient not only occupationally and socially but also educationally and in communications as well. For runaway girls family and home is not supportive and they feel as being aliens

there. The codependency researches conducted on the adolescents' runaways demonstrate a warning state. Around 30 to 40 percent of the runaway adolescents who live in the streets are reported as being depressed the amount which is 2.8 times more than the normal adolescents (Whitbeck et al., 2004) [2].

Forced marriages, sexual relationships before marriage, affairs before marriage, poverty and economic factors, Male child preference, family problems such as divorce between parents, parents addiction, parents disputes, disordered behaviors of the parents, all cause anxiety, frustration and mental disorders in the minds of the children and the family members and result in abnormal behaviors such as runaway from home. This phenomenon is posed as one of the family and social problems all over the world. Within the last years, the experts and media have warned that the issue is becoming critical day by day. Running away from home is not only the beginning of being homeless but also provides the grounds for committing many crimes. To afford the life expenses, these runaway girls may do robbery, beggary, illegal prostitutes and become members of deception and prostitution bands. Some time runaway girls face some diseases such as aids, hepatitis. A general definition of runaway girls is referred to girls who spend at least one night outside from her home without the consent of her parents or the legal custodian of the family, with respect to the researchers conducted in this field, various definitions have been offered. Zhag Borsa defines the runaway as a mechanism for finding the circumstances to prove the person's existence who has not found such an opportunity at home (Jacob et al., 2004)[3].

Sociologists over the decades believe that all the social phenomena's are interconnected with each other so that the higher the rates of pathologies such as divorce, parent's addiction, sexual harassment, male child preference, increase the other pathologies such as girls' runaways.

The more remarkable and important issue is that the runaway girls increase the social corruptions such as, the more activities of the girl trading, prostitution bands and addiction bands. Sexual diseases.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review is an integral part of the entire research process and makes a valuable contribution to almost every operational step. Although there has been a long debate on the all-inclusive concept, but little empirical studies have been conducted on the factors which affect run away girls.

Roya Arjomand Kermani and Armin Rajabzadeh (2011)[4] study the Facts That Affect Home Runway of Female Students in Tehran City. The researchers conducted on the runaway adolescents' families demonstrate that those families usually punish their children and are so rude. Investigated and identified the phenomena and status of the adolescent and young girls in Tehran regarding the social and family reasons of home runaways and concluded that amongst the girls' home runaway factors are the family factors including the disordered families, parents' divorce and addiction, sexual disturb by the family members, economical problems and poverty. Another factor of girls' home runaway is school problems. Escaping from school, home and natural life, are all correlated to each other like a chain rings. Escaping from school is due to the hard methods of education and harsh treatment by authorities.

Z.M. Lukman, R. Nasir, I. Fauziah, and their companion (School of Psychology and Human Development, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities UKM)[5] study The Relationship Between Dysfunctional Family And The Involvement Of Children In Prostitution. They

conclude that family dysfunction can affect the children's mental health. The psychological damage can change the orientation of children about the world, their self-concept and emotional capacities. Family dysfunction, childhood abuse mental health problems are therefore three interlinking predisposing factors identified in the study that significantly increased the vulnerability of the young women to become involved in prostitution.

A glance on cases of running away from house in Afghanistan by women and children legal research foundation (November 2006)[6]. They conclude that reasons for running away from house are early and forced marriages, domestic violence, illiteracy and the women's and girls' unawareness of their rights (legal and sharia) and others. These factors cause women and girls to run away from their homes. Reason and motive for running away of girls from their houses is violence and violation of their rights resulting from sex-related discriminatory attitude towards boys and girls for choosing their spouse, education and other rights and needs.

Nelson O. Jagero , John Agak, T. M. Ayodo Maseno University, Kisumu, Kenya (2010)[7] study An Evaluation of Home Environmental Factors Affecting Performance of Boarding Secondary School Students in Kenya". They conclude from factor analysis, those girls who were day scholars were mainly affected by lack of parental and family support. The girls require good environment, which is conducive to learning. They should be supported by their families by providing good lighting systems, enough reading space, and minimal interference from family members or friends when doing their home work.

A study by Scharff (2007)[8] in Malawi found out that girls were more vulnerable than boys to abuse, both while in transit and when in school. To avoid lengthy walk to school some girls make their own lodging arrangement near community day schools that do not offer boarding facilities (Scharff and Brady, 2006). Those self boarders are unsupervised by the school and are therefore at risk of theft and self abuse.

Mostafa Eghlima and Asghar Dadkhah(2009)[9] study Returning Runaway Girls to Rehabilitation Centers.Run-away girls and their tendency to damage and social deviation, is one of the social pathologies that take place in each society. This research looks at the main effective factors of returning women and girls with social problems to rehabilitation centers. They conclude that demographic status, family situation cause for running away, first run-away age, types of deviation are the main factors of returning runaway girls to rehabilitation centers.

Irada Gautam[10](May 1999) study The Difficulties Girls Face in Families in Ramghat and Ghusra Villages of Surkhet District, Mid-western Nepal.He concluded that the girls in the rural area of Surkhet are routinely exposed to discrimination, exploitation, and threats of sexual violence and injustice irrespective of caste/ethnicity. The girls' opportunities are hindered compared to sons' in each and every sector.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The objective of the study are:

- a. To unearth the family and cultural factors affecting the life of girls running away from home.
- b. To determine the demographic profile of the runaway girls.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the present study 25 female respondents from each category running away and normal girls were selected through purposive sampling. Because sampling frame of the present study was not available. This was a very sensitive issue to investigate. The respondents were selected after the informed consent. The sample of girls running away from homes was selected from Daral Aman of Gujrat city and for normal girls sample was selected from different colleges and university areas. A well-structured questionnaire was administered by the researcher which contains different parts. Further, the data was analyzed by using SPSS version 16.0.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table No. 5.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Predictors	Normal Girls		Run away girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
5.1.1 Age of the respondents				
18-20	11	44	15	60
21-23	13	52	8	32
24 and above	1	4	2	8
Total	25	100%	25	100
5.1.2 Family size of the respondents				
1-3	2	8	3	12
4-6	15	60	16	64
7-9	7	28	1	4
10 and above	1	4	5	20
Total	25	100%	25	100%
5.1.3 Family structure of the respondent				
Nuclear	19	76	5	20
Joint	5	20	18	72
Extended	1	4	2	8
Total	25	100%	25	100%
5.1.4 Educational attainment of the respondents				
0-5	0	0	19	76
6-12	2	8	6	24
13 and above	23	92	0	0
Total	25	100%	25	100%
5.1.5 Marital status of the respondents				
Unmarried	25	100	11	44
Married	0	0	4	16
Divorce	0	0	6	24
Separated	0	0	4	16
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 5.1 describes the different demographic profile of the respondents. Table 5.1.1 demonstrates the age of the respondents. It shows that 44% of the normal girls and 60% of the runaway girls belongs to age group 18-20, and 52% of the normal and 32% of the runaway girls belongs to the age group 21-23, and only 4% of the normal and 8% of the runaway girls belongs to age group 23 and above. So it is concluded that most of the respondents are young, and are the age of between 18 and 23. The above data also depicts that most of the runaway girls are very young. Table 5.1.2 illustrates the family size of respondents. It shows only that

8% of the normal and 12% of the runaway girls belongs to the family size 1-3, and 60% of the normal and 64% of the runaway girls are from the family size of 4-6, and 28% of the normal and only 4% of the runaway girls belongs to the family size of 7-9, and 4% of the normal and 20% of the runaway girls are from the family size 10 and above. So it is concluded that most of the normal and runaway girls belongs to the family size of 4-6. It is also concluded that most of girls who run away from home are from the family size of 4-6. Table 5.1.3 shows the family structure of the respondents. It shows that 76% of the normal and 20% of the runaway girls are belongs to the nuclear family system, and 20% of the normal and 72% of the runaway girls belongs to joint family system, and only 4% of the normal and 8% of the runaway girls belongs to the extended family system. So it is concluded that most of the normal girls belongs to nuclear family system, and most of the girls who run away from home belongs to the joint family system. Table 5.1.4 depicts the educational attainment of the respondents. It shows that 76% of the runaway girls are illiterate and have educational attainment between 1-5, and 8% of the normal and 24% of the runaway girls have educational attainment between 6-12, and 92% of the normal girls have educational attainment 13 and above. So it is concluded that most of the normal girls are educated, while most of the runaway girls are uneducated. Table 5.1.5 shows the marital status of the respondents. It shows that all normal girls are unmarried, while on the other hand 44% of the runaway girls are unmarried, 16% are married, 24% are divorced, and 16% of the runaway girls are separated. So it is concluded that most of the respondents are unmarried.

Factors Affecting the Life of Young Female Running Away from Home

Table No. 5.2.1 Divorce of parents

Divorce of parents Categories	Normal girls		Run away girls (Girls Left Home)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	15	60	13	52
To some extent	10	40	10	40
To great extent	0	0	2	8
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table No. 5.2.1 shows the involvement of divorce of parents to urge the girls running away from home. It shows that 60% of normal respondents experience that divorce of parents did not urge girls to run away from home while 52% of the runaway girls said that divorce of parents is not a reason for their escape from home, and 40% of normal and runaway girls experience that divorce of parents urge girls only to some extent, and only 8% of the runaway girls said that divorce of parents is a major reason for running away from home. So it is conclude that divorce of parents is not a main reason for running away from home. It only supports girls for escape from home to some extent. It is also concluded that most of the girls of Gujrat live with father or mother after their divorce.

Table No. 5.2.2 Addiction of parents

Addiction of parents Categories	Normal girls		Run away girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	17	68	20	80
To some extent	8	32	5	20
To great extent	0	0	0	0
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table No.5.2.2 illustrates the role of addiction of parents for running away from home. Most of the respondents, 68 % of normal and 80% of runaway respondents experience that addiction of parents did not push them to running away from home. And only 32% of normal and 20% runaway girls experience that addiction of parents only to some extent push them for running away from home. None of the normal and runaway respondents experience that addiction of parents play a very important role for running away from home. So it is concluded that most of the runaway and normal girls experience that addiction of parents is not a major cause for running away from home.

Table No. 5.2.3 Harsh Treatment of the family

Harsh treatment of the family	Normal girls		Run away girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Categories				
Not at all	16	64	24	96
To some extent	9	36	1	4
To great extent	0	0	0	0
Total	25	100%	25	100%

In table no. 5.2.3 the function of harsh treatment of family for running away from home is presented. It shows that most of the respondents, 64% of normal and 96% of runaway girls, experience that harsh treatment of family drive them to run away from home not at all. And only 36% of the normal and 4 % of the runaway girls experience that harsh treatment of family drive them to run away from home only to some extent. So it is accomplished that harsh treatment of the family is not a major factor for running away from home.

Table No. 5.2.4 Bettering of the family

Bettering of the family	Normal girls		Run away girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Categories				
Not at all	19	76	1	4
To some extent	4	16	3	12
To great extent	2	8	21	84
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table no. 5.2.4 illustrates the role of bettering of family for running away from home. Table shows that some of the respondents, only 24% of normal girls and 16% of runaway girls, said that bettering of the family urge them only to some extent or not at all for running away from home. While 8% of the normal and 84% of runaway respondents, said that bettering of the family urge them to great extent for running away from home. So it is concluded that bettering of the family is a major factor that insist girls for running away from home.

Table No. 5.2.5 Harsh treatment of the authorities

Harsh treatment of the authorities	Normal girls		Run away girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Categories				
Not at all	19	76	21	84
To some extent	6	24	4	16
To great extent	0	0	0	0
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table no. 5.2.5 gives an idea about the role harsh treatment of the authorities (school etc) to the girls run away from home. It demonstrate that most of the respondents, 76% of normal and 84% of the runaway girls, believe that harsh treatment of authorities push them for running away from home not at all. Some of the respondents experience that it may be a cause for running away to some extent. None of the respondents experiences that harsh treatment of the authorities is a cause for running away to great extent. So it is concluded that the girls who run away for home are not due to the harsh treatment of the authorities and it play a micro role to push the girls run away from home. Most of the runaway girls are illiterate, so they could not run away from home due to the harsh treatment of authorities.

Table No. 5.2.6 Bettering of the authorities

Bettering of authorities Categories	Normal girls		Run away girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	16	64	17	68
To some extent	9	36	4	16
To great extent	0	0	4	16
Total	25	100%		100%

Table no. 5.2.6 gives an idea about the role of bettering of the authorities (school etc) to the girls run away from home. It demonstrate that most of the respondents, 64% of normal and 68% of the runaway girls, believe that bettering of authorities push them for running away from home not at all. Some of the respondents experience that to some extent it may be a cause for running away of girls from their home. Only 16% of the runaway respondents experience that bettering of the authorities is a cause for running away to great extent. So it is concluded that the most of the girls who run away for home are not due to the bettering of the authorities and it play a micro role to push the girls run away from home. Most of the runaway girls are illiterate, so they could not run away from home due to the bettering of authorities.

Table No. 5.2.7 Bad behavior of step father

Bad behavior of step father Categories	Normal girls		Run away girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	13	52	17	68
To some extent	12	48	8	32
To great extent	0	0	0	0
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table no. 5.2.7 reveals the job of bad behavior of step father for running away from home. It shows that half of the normal girls experience that bad behavior of step father is not a reason at all for girls run away from home while 68% of the runaway girls also said that it is not a reason for their running away from home. Table also shows that half of the normal respondents experience that it is reason only to some extent for girls run away from home while 32% of the runaway girls said that bad behavior of the step father is a reason to some extent for their running away from home. So it is concluded that bad behavior of step father is not or only to some extent play the role to push the girls to run away from home.

Table No. 5.2.8 Bad behavior of step mother

Bad behavior of step mother Categories	Normal girls		Run away girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	11	44	19	76
To some extent	14	56	4	16
To great extent	0	0	2	8
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table no. 5.2.8 demonstrates the job of bad behavior of step mother for running away from home. It shows that 44% of the normal girls experience that bad behavior of step mother is not a reason at all for girls run away from home while 76% of the runaway girls also said that it is not a reason for their running away from home. Table also shows that 56% of the normal respondents experience that it is reason only to some extent for girls run away from home while 32% of the runaway girls said that bad behavior of the step mother is a reason to some extent for their running away from home. So it is concluded that bad behavior of step mother is not or only to some extent play the role to push the girls to run away from home.

Table No. 5.2.9 Poverty

Poverty Categories	Normal girls		Run away girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	18	72	14	66
To some extent	7	28	11	44
To great extent	0	0	0	0
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Although there is a lot of poverty in Pakistan as well as in Gujrat. But this study illustrates that poverty is not a major reason for running away from home, as table no. 5.2.9 demonstrates that 72% of the normal girls experiences that poverty is not major reason for girls run away from homes. And 66% of the runaway girls also said that poverty is not a reason due to which they run away from their homes. And 28% of the normal 44% of the runaway girls experience that poverty push them to some extent for running away from home. It is also shown in table that none of the respondents experience that poverty is a major cause for girls running away from home.

Table No. 5.2.10 Affair before marriage

Affair before marriage Categories	Normal girls		Run away girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	20	80	0	0
To some extent	3	12	5	20
To great extent	2	8	20	80
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table no. 5.2.10 gives an idea about the function of affair before marriage that insists girls to run away from home. It shows that 80% of the normal girls thinks that affair before marriage is not a reason for running away from home. While 80% of the runaway respondents said that they run away from home due to the affair before marriage. So it is concluded that affair before marriage is one of the major causes due to which girls run away from home.

Table No. 5.2.11 Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment Categories	Normal girls		Run away girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	15	60	23	92
To some extent	10	40	2	8
To great extent	0	0	0	0
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table no. 5.2.11 represents the involvement of sexual harassment for girls running away from home. Table shows that 60% of the normal and 92% of the runaway girls undergo that sexual harassment is not a reason at all for girls runaway. And 40% of the normal and only 8% of the runaway respondents experience that sexual harassment urge them to some extent for running away from home. So it is concluded that sexual harassment is not or to some extent cause for girls run away from home.

Table No. 5.2.12 Undesired marriages

Undesired marriages Categories	Normal girls		Run away girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	2	8	5	20
To some extent	21	84	16	64
To great extent	2	8	4	16
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Undesired marriages play a role to push the girls running away from home. As table no. 5.2.12 shows that most of the respondents, 84% of the normal and 64% of the runaway girls experience that to some extent undesired marriages urge girls to run away from home. While some of the respondents experience that undesired marriages affect to great extent for running away from home.

Table No. 5.2.13 Sexual relationship before marriage

Sexual relationship Categories	Normal girls		Run away girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	16	64	15	60
To some extent	9	36	5	20
To great extent	0	0	5	20
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table no. 5.2.13 represents the involvement of sexual relationship for girls running away from home. Table shows that 64% of the normal and 60% of the runaway girls undergo that sexual relationship is not a reason at all for girls runaway. And 36% of the normal and only 20% of the runaway respondents experience that sexual relationship urge them to some extent for running away from home. So it is concluded that sexual relationship is not or to some extent cause for girls run away from home.

Table No. 5.2.14 Gender discrimination

Gender discrimination Categories	Normal girls		Run away girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	20	80	2	8
To some extent	4	16	5	20
To great extent	1	4	18	72
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table no. 5.2.14 describes the factor gender discrimination that affects girls run away from home. It demonstrates that 80% of the normal girls experience that gender discrimination is not a reason at all for running away from home. And 72% of the runaway girls said that they run away from home due to the gender discrimination. While some of the respondent's experience that it plays a minor or no role to push the girls run away from home. So it is concluded that gender discrimination is also a major factor that affect the girls running away from home.

CONCLUSION

The situation of runaway girls has yet not changed. They are still oppressed as they were in centuries. 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 girls are not allowed to take active part in family decision-making. The situation of the family in which they are living is worsened by the intrusions made by cultural and societal norms. Almost all runaway girls have singled out the role of their low educational attainment, bettering of the family, affair before marriage and gender discrimination within a family in this heinous brutality. As a result of this brutality, runaway girls have an urge to live in healthy and safe environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Runaway girls need love, respect and proper care in family.

All Family members should obey and care them specially parents.

NGOs should focus on running away girl's issues and start work for their wellbeing.

NGOs should organize some cultural activities for runaway girls to make them active and productive member of society.

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