

Review Article

Child Abduction

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Author's Contribution

¹ Conception of study¹ Experimentation/Study conduction^{1,2} Analysis/Interpretation/Discussion^{1,2} Manuscript Writing³ Critical Review⁴ Facilitation and Material analysis

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Introduction

Child theft or abduction is the **crime of unlawfully eliminating or unlawfully preserving, or hiding a youngster or infant from custody of natural parents or guardians nominated for the child**. Kidnapping or in other words abduction can be called snatching away individual coercion, by deceit, deception or harassment, or cruelty and taking him away from his residence.

While talking about the type which is being practiced widely is familial kidnapping. It normally takes place when the parents of a child part their ways. In this type, one of the parents with which the child lives forbid the child not to meet or talk with the other parent. It is because he or she has a fear that if the child meets with the other parent or talks to them, resultantly, he will get attached with them and hence his position in the child's life will deteriorate. In some situations, children are taken by relatives for some time and later returned to either of their parents. In poor socioeconomic status and father's unemployment state may lead to detainment of children with mother, who cannot meet the basic living needs and children are abducted for slavery especially young girls. Familial kidnapping has been signalized as inhuman treatment of the child. Frustrated and separated parents show their emotional reactions in the form of lack of affection and love, child abuse, and child neglect which also precipitate child abduction and sexual exploitation later on.

In familial kidnapping or abduction, the youngster is bound to stay in a similar town, district, or area, in a similar nation. It can also be kept in mind that often

one of the parents sends the youngster to an entirely different country.

Global child kidnapping usually takes place when a parent goes with the youngster to a foreign state or even a condition that may imply that the youngster is forced to leave the country and not given a chance to come back to his native country. The incidence of global child abduction pursues to grow due to the facility of travelling abroad, growth of people being married based on two cultures, and excessive separation cases.

Abduction by a stranger

No one can predict child abduction by strangers or non-family members but there are ways by which parents and guardians can reduce the risk of a child being abducted.

Females and male strangers slowly develop friendly relations by giving money and persuasive things to children outside schools and homes, threatening children to harm their families, persuading them to leave home, and assisting them in abduction from homes. Later these children are supplied/ sold for sexual exploitation in exchange for their basic needs as food, a place to live, clothes, and money.

Different reasons are highlighted for child abduction by strangers;

- **For a sexual purpose:** Most abductions committed by non-family members are motivated by the offender's sexual interest in the child. The victim is either killed, deeply injured, or sold in other cities.¹

- **To exert control, aggression, or violence:** These types of abductions are motivated by an offender's desire to control, dominate, and cause harm to a child and/or a child's family.¹
- **Due to emotional/mental health issues:** the offenders have a psychiatric disorder that persuades them to commit child kidnapping or abduction. They have "the desire" to make the abducted infant her own child or think that the abducted child is "her own child." These females are sometimes not able to bear their own babies and for their internal satisfaction characterized by their mental trauma by kidnapping a youngster or an infant more readily than by having an adopted child. The illegal act is frequently planned and intentional, with the female frequently impregnation to lessen the intuition when a child comes across in the family.
- **Financial gains:** These types of abductions occur because an individual intends to get money from the abduction. The main aim is to draw money from the parents in the form of ransom.
- **Child slavery.** Young girls are abducted from parents for home slavery and later exploited as sex workers.
- **Child soldiers or sex slaves:** Especially in areas of warfare to satisfy the sexual needs of soldiers.

Effects of Child Abduction

All children who undergo abduction are adversely affected irrespective of their age and stage of development. Even parental child abduction fills them with anger, confusion, and insecurity about their living arrangements as they lose one of their beloved parents. They lose trust in their parents and they have feelings of shame and self-hate and experience of being torn up.²

Physical symptoms of stress, non-physical symptoms like lack of faith in the legal system and adults, the acceptance of conflict as normal, a general lack of trust, difficulties with schooling due to time missed, depression, bad behavior and regression, tensions in familial relationships when living with non-abducted siblings and family members on the return are the most observed effects documented in different studies. Friendships problems are seen among children

abducted for weeks to months. All these effects are long-lasting hurting them in their whole lives.³

Data Analysis

According to the report, 'Cruel numbers 2020' compiled by NGO SAHIL, in Pakistan 834 child abduction cases were reported from newspapers. It also included the crime cases of sexual abuse committed after an abduction. These reported cases are 4% less than the year 2019.

Gender:

Unfortunately, 74% of the abducted children were girls and 26% were boys.

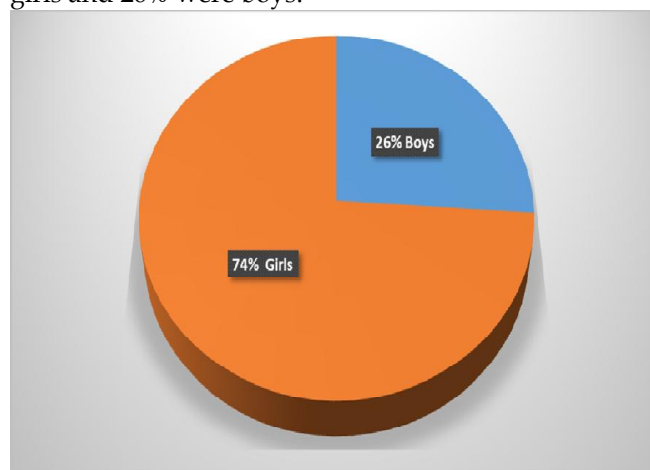
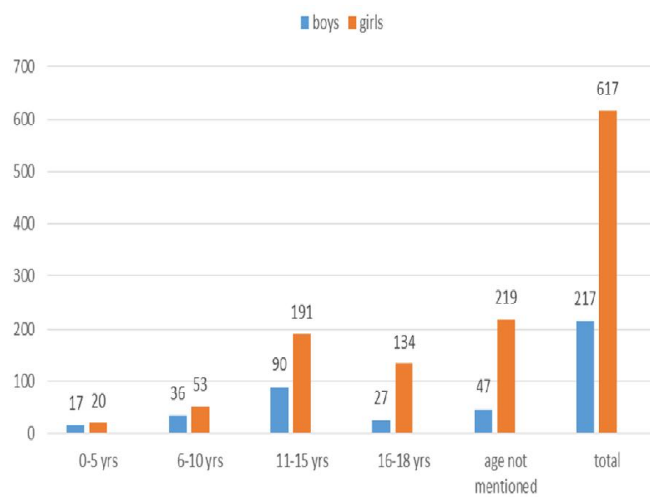


Chart to show female gender predominance among abducted children year 2020.

Ages of Abducted Children:

Most of the abduction cases were girls of 11 to 15 years.

Ages of Victims of Abduction Cases



Most children after abduction undergo sodomy, pornography, rape, gang rape, and murder. Forced marriages and child marriages were also reported.

Abuser Category of Abduction Cases:

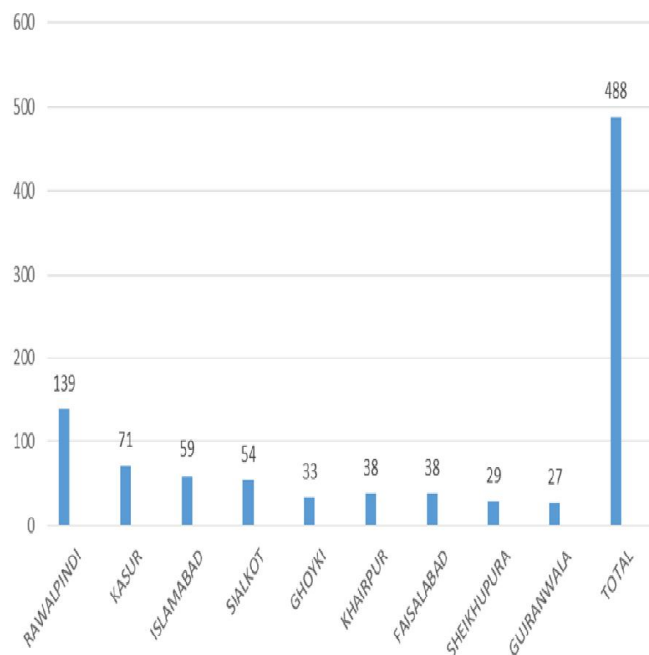
43% of abductions were performed by acquaintances and 57% of abductions by strangers. Unfortunately, people whom parents trust the most were also involved in child abduction and sexual abuse. Molvi, teachers, relatives, and neighbors were abusers of 5, 6, 10, and 12 cases respectively. Acquaintance with female abettor and acquaintance with a stranger was found in 24 and 117 cases while 14% were strangers responsible for child abduction. In 10% of cases, no abuser details were reported.

Places of Abduction Cases:

Most abduction cases were done at the workplace about 24% (workplace 5 cases), mosques/ madrissa (6 cases), fields (14 cases), and some cases are reported at school, jungle, graveyard, shop, hospital, and bus stops. Acquaintance's place constitutes 11% (92 cases), victim's place accounts 16% (133 cases), and streets (167 cases). In 49% of cases, places of abduction were not mentioned in the newspapers. No doubt, this is an alarming situation, depicting that no place is safe for kids except homes.

Geographical Distribution of Abduction Cases in Pakistan:

Out of 834 reported cases of child abduction, 60% were reported from 10 districts. As in the year 2019, Rawalpindi remained on the top of the list with 139 cases of child abduction, Kasur 71 cases, and Islamabad 59 cases. Child abduction cases were reported from 30 districts of the country and all provinces.



Punjab had 67% of child abduction cases, Sindh 22%, ICT 8%, KPK 14 cases, 4 cases from Baluchistan, and 2 cases from Azad Jammu Kashmir were reported.

41% of abduction cases occurred in urban areas while 59% occurred in rural areas of the country.

Almost 87% of abductions were registered with police depicting that our community wants to fight against this serious crime.

Recommendations for reduction of abduction of a child

There was a web known as Universal disappearance of youngsters was initiated in 1998 as a mutual journey for disappeared and used children and NCMEC, the Global Missing Children's Network (GMCN) is a web of nations that associate, allocate finest executions, and circulate knowledge and pictures of disappeared youngsters to ameliorate the efficacy of disappeared youngsters inspection and systematic search.

Similarly, We need a strong, vigilant, and co-operative system for the prevention of child abduction and child sexual exploitation through skilled professionals focusing on online and real-world safety of children. Awareness through Social Media, awareness programs at schools and institutions, and parental guidance together can assist in keeping children safe in our community. Parents must establish a friendly and cordial relationship with their children so they can share any threat/ favours from strangers. Physical and

mental torture culture at home and institutions must be abolished to reduce child abduction. Law enforcement agencies must take part in the implementation of laws to prevent child slavery and sexual exploitation of children.

References

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