JOSSAMS **Journal of Social Sciences and Media Studies**	**Voices from the Margins: A Study of Runaway Girls in Karachi's Shelter Homes**

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the current study was to investigate the experiences and causes of run-away girls living in shelter houses in Karachi. The primary focus of the research was on the causes they left their homes and the challenges they faced after runaway, by using qualitative research method and an exploratory type to explore the reasons and experiences of fugitive girls. The purposive sampling technique was used, and the target population was girls aged 17 to 35. Ten cases were recorded by applying a semi-structured interview method and thematic analyses. Results showed that domestic violence, forced marriages, and lack of family support were the primary causes that forced those girls to flee from their homes. Several of them grieved from mental-health and emotional stress and struggled to regulate their lives in shelter houses. They mostly confronted challenges and worries in trusting others, feeling secured, and upgrading their lives. This research recommends a critical need for healthier social support, counselling services, and awareness movements to support these girls in order to manage with their experiments.

Keywords: Runaway Females, Mental Health, Family Factors, Educational Aspiration, Support System

INTRODUCTION

A complex socio-legal issue, the existence of "run-away girls" is partial by a range of social, mental, and cultural elements (Priyanka & Monika, 2023). Girls are normally ambitious into early marriage and likely to undertake the responsibilities of a wife and a mother in the traditional backgrounds, mainly in Pakistan, which puts their academic and professional goals on the hobbies (Hashmi et al., 2024). Many women experience several groups of familiar partner violence and challenges after marriage, which is a confusing factor that makes the personal relationship even inferior (Parveen et al., 2022). The primary reasons for this phenomenon of fugitive girls are forceful familial pressure, an ancient desire for personal freedom, and the real hazard of forced marriage. These factors often inspire the girls to flee from the family, not as an expression of mischief but rather as an effort to outflow from traumatic situations (Burke et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, the girls who flee from home put their lives at risk. According to Hussain and Afzal (2013), "run-away girls" usually have to deal with disagreeable truths, with forced prostitution. In certain situations, they are the targets of honor-based violence and honor killing. The long-term consequences for many women are still unknown, even though some of the girls return to their families and try to compromise on family matters.

Existing research repeatedly shows that one of the main reasons why girls leave their homes is the severe domestic exploitation. Their choices are frequently influenced by immediate factors like arranged marriages and other systemic problems like child abuse and unfulfilled educational goals (Wamoyi et al., 2019). Due to the institutional service gaps, the acceptance and denial of these issues in communities lead the girls at risk of exploitation, unwanted pregnancies, and transactional sex (Wamoyi et al., 2019). This dilemma cannot be resolved by merely offering an escape path. Strong post-runaway support networks are necessary. 20–25% of women globally are victims of domestic abuse, and

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most of them seek safety and shelter (Nawaz et al., 2024). However, these facilities are often disapproved of their rigid principles, lack of privacy, and overcrowding, all of which can hinder the recovery and well-being of survivors. Research on how support networks might help or hinder long-term healing is greatly needed.

Additionally, Iram et al. (2019) emphasizes the importance of examining the problem from the perspective of women's empowerment, supporting access to healthcare, education, and well-paying jobs, and rejecting single-factor explanations. Despite the substantial amount of research on runaway youths, few attempts have been made to define and explain the experiences of runaway girls precisely; no significant attention has been paid to the subjective consequences of running away for girls. Therefore, the goal of this study is to enhance understanding of what running away from home means to girls. Improving the body of knowledge on runaway youths and providing a forum for the experiences of runaway girls are rarely heard.

In Karachi, the increase in girls escaping from their families and parents is a serious social problem with a wide range of effects. The goal of this study is to examine the various elements that contribute to the occurrence of the serious issue of girls' escapism, such as personal experiences, gender norms, family dynamics, and economic difficulty, as well as the obstacles that prevent young girls from accessing competent networks of support for intervention and prevention.

There is currently insufficient thorough research on the complex interactions between the various factors influencing girls in Karachi running away from home, particularly regarding the effectiveness of the support systems. The purpose of this study is to develop guidance, propose interventions, and establish regulations to prevent runaway situations and provide girls with all the necessary support. Accepting the challenges faced by escaped girls and the complications they come across when seeking help can support in making receptive and available programs that will also recover their quality of life. Ultimately, the findings of the study can help to determine the causes of runaway girls and provide guidance regarding resources and awareness for these girls.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What kind of help or support could prevent girls from running away?
2. What role do schools, community centres, or government programs play in supporting girls?
3. What type of services do runaway girls need the most (e.g., shelter, counselling, education)?
4. How much awareness is there of any support systems available for runaway girls?
5. What challenges do runaway girls face in trying to get help or support?

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Ashiq et al. (2022), in recent years, several incidents of child abuse and neglected children have been documented in Pakistan. The backgrounds of abuse and neglect, which are common incidents, can be traced back to earlier approaches in which caregivers and other stakeholders observed children as objects of ownership and as substances of abuse for cultural reasons. Adolescent abuse and neglect occur in entire cultures, and their appearances change according to the customs and structures of a community. The present study set out to explore many forms of ethnically widespread teenage abuse and neglect. In order to summarize the adolescent's experiences and examine the types of abuse and neglect dominant in Pakistani society. Themes were understood and conceptualized using explanatory phenomenological analysis. Adolescents who experienced sexual abuse were observed in this study along with sexual mistreatment, blackmail, incest perpetration, and physical abuse, as well as strict punishment approaches, dominance, control, and harmful customs that are widespread in Pakistani society. Along with consolidating positive parenting practices, transfer systems, and child defense policies in Pakistan, there is an urgent need to prevent long-term mental health consequences and to increase the management of abused and neglected losses.

According to Härkönnen (2024), the importance of the Thai Buddhist temple for the protection of Thai women in Finland is noted. The media and intellectual literature have mostly ignored Thai women's religiosity in favour of negative observations, even though Buddhism's increasing popularity in the nation-state. The paper evaluates previous research's biased depictions of Thai women. It highlights the importance of Buddhism and the temple in the lives of Thai women who have been displaced to European nations. A combination of life story interviews with twelve Thai ladies and ethnographic research shown at Thai temples in Finland inspired the methodology. According to the article's outcomes, the temple is important in helping Thai women feel safe since it gives them a feeling of determination, home, and belonging. These results proved that it is important to consider their religion as a source of psychological and spiritual well-being while dealing with the problems faced by Thai women or other religious and ethical minorities.

Skilton et al. (2024) declares that women's protection concerns are extensive and hinder their tendency to work out outside. Some women exercise more freely outdoors, while others change their ways because of security

concerns. This research reports two studies with female runners to examine whether emphasizing their identity as women or as messengers affected their safety nervousness, awareness of safety, and self-reported likelihood of exercising outside. While there was no visible experimental effect in research 1 (n = 153), a trend was found: women whose competitor personality was highlighted were more likely than those in the gender identity condition to self-report their willingness to work outdoors. To further examine this form, Study 2 (n = 236) was conducted. A larger sample size and a more thorough adjustment of social identity salience were used in the second examination. The experimental situation was found to have a significant impact on women's perceptions of protection. Specifically, regarding men in the gender identity salience situation, women in the sprinter identity salience form felt significantly more protected. The self-reported chance of exercising outside presented a similar movement. These results support previous studies on the effect of identity salience on the intention to adopt healthy behaviours. They contribute to the quantity of research on the complex connections between women's targets for physical activity and security concerns. These consequences may also help develop behaviours to increase women's levels of physical movement. The Community and Social Effect Statement for this article may originate in the Additional Substantial unit.

Fatima et al. (2021) states that the recent study emphasizes the reasons for female failures in Karachi at the elementary, secondary, high school, and university levels. The investigative sequential mixed approach was employed in the present study. The phenomenological research approach was selected for the qualitative phase of the study following the literature assessment. In this context, the expediency sampling approach was used to interview numerous instructors in Karachi based on their age and level of expertise. At this point, every theory has been examined and accepted. The questionnaire was designed for quantitative research, the second phase of the study, and it falls under the general category of the first phase's results. The second stage's sample size is 200, and quota sampling was used to get data. Using descriptive analysis with SPSS, the frequency of each section included in the quantitative stage has been identified individually. Finally, conclusions based on data analysis have been drawn.

According to Xu (2024) children's mental illness growth needs a supportive and healthy family setting. The growth of good behaviours in children is enabled by an enjoyable family environment, which includes open communication, strong relational bonds between parents and children, agreement, and consistency. Children raised in dysfunctional households are more likely to experience mental health issues, which can lead to long-term mental illness issues like anxiety and depression if left untreated. Behavioural and expressive issues are likely to be noticeable in children who are exposed to continuing conflict, violence, abuse, neglect, domestic violence, and separation due to divorce or parents who work mostly hours away from home. Whether they are married, divorced, or single, parents have a protective responsibility for their children's mental illness.

A multifaceted confluence of social, psychological, and cultural variables is presented by the problem of best-selling girls, in which young girls abandon their parents for a variety of reasons. To provide readers with a thorough understanding of the causes, effects, and possible explanations related to girls fleeing their homes, this review article examines the complex nature of the problem. The article reviews previous studies and literature to shed light on the widespread range of issues that cause girls to run-away, such as peer pressure, forced marriages, family conflict, economic problems, and the need for self-determination. The communicative, psychological, and social challenges that these girls face are also practiced; these include safety issues, mental health difficulties, the loss of source of revenue systems, and lawful issues. Meaningfully, the study also places attention on how mental illness, anxious relationships, and the action of overwhelming societal stigma have an impact on families and societies. This review paper addresses several participation techniques to minimalize the opposing effects of girls escaping. These cover thorough support networks, investigation, facilities, relationship education, empowerment programs, and lawmaking changes to safeguard the rights of girls. To successfully address this problem, the assessment highlights the status of partnership among government agencies, non-governmental organizations, families, schools, and societies, with a diagram on best practices and global observation. To sum up, this review article explains the multi-layered issue of escaped girls and highlights the necessity for an inclusive approach to empathize the causes and effects. By addressing the demonstrative, mental health, and social values for girls, their families, and society, and on behalf of evidence-based involvement policies, this review expects to encourage positive change and stand in a more informed discussion on this challenging issue (Priyanka & Monika, 2023).

According to Hussain and Afzal (2013) Women are perceived as vulnerable members of essentially every civilization. The ailment is the same in Pakistan. One of the socio-legal issues that females come through is "run-away women." Women who think about fleeing their families regularly encounter challenging situations that could lead to their being forced into prostitution or, in some cases, being murdered by their own family. Most women who flee occurrences do finally reconcile and return to their families. It is unclear what will happen to these women after their get-together. The purpose of this essay is to draw attention to the reasons behind running away and its impact on society. Investigating the present legal framework and how it addresses this issue is an alternative goal. This study

also examines Pakistan's Islamic and customary laws to determine whether they sustain women's independence and decision-making power or hinder these rights. Finally, steps to reinforce the social and legal system are projected. Observes Pakistan's Islamic and regular laws to regulate whether they support women's freedom and decision-making capacity or if they hinder these rights. Finally, steps to reinforce the social and legal system are offered.

According to Hunowu (2021), preventing juvenile girls from absconding is a crime. This study employed an experiential or sociological research methodology. Purposive sampling, qualitative methodology, and descriptive analysis approaches are all used in this study. According to the study's results, the police have taken defensive action by educating the public about the risks to children's environments if parents are not supervising them. In addition, other defensive measures encourage community members to work together to monitor events that could expose children, who are juveniles, to take oppressive measures against those who kidnap teenagers, and cooperate with law enforcement in specific regions; this can facilitate the police's capability to advance the legal process, particularly in cases of offenders who attempt to flee. The third step is to leverage collaboration among the victims' families to help investigators collect suggestions. This will allow related parties to exploit the socialization of harmful impacts, both generally and specifically, in terms of legal significance. This will allow all societal levels to actively cooperate with the police in their efforts to combat the crime of avoiding juvenile girls.

As per Nawaz et al. (2024) 20–25% of women throughout the world experience domestic violence or abuse. It frequently happens under their own roofs, where they should be harmless. The women seek security and safety in facilities designed to protect and shelter them, allowing them to escape their circumstances. The number of women's overcrowded accommodations, which require everyday living, provide little to no privacy, and have limitations on living conditions, is unfortunately growing globally. Instead of the other way around, the architectural environment of shelter homes should advantage the survivors' health, restoration, and general well-being. Understanding the architectural strains of women's shelters in light of the needs of women who have experienced physical or psychological abuse is the aim of this study. This research examined new approaches and enhancements to create a universe that fosters safety, inclusivity, and well-being, requirements these women truly have to report "Goal 5: Gender Equality" of the UN Supportable Development Goals (SDG) 2030 Program. The goal of this research is to explore how architecture may support in saving these women and enabling their replacement early stages. The study also examined how these women may enter the labor force and how architecture might subsidize to the development of a self-sufficient society. The architecture of two women's housings in Karachi was practically examined to understand the current living conditions of these women. The inhabitants and on-site social workers at the Karachi shelters were investigated. A critical section of the research was studying related literature, which comprised case studies and mental health research publications.

Nawaz et al. (2023) proclaims that free enterprise has the size to make economic growth, job design, and social change in developing nations likewise in Pakistan. People who receive entrepreneurship education are better equipped to switch vital resources, generate advanced ideas, and assess risks in life. Additionally, it gives people the information they need to start and grow advanced new firms. Gender equality may be directly impacted by women's business empowerment, which also helps Pakistan's economy as a whole. The main goals and difficulties faced by Pakistani women entrepreneurs when initiating and operating businesses were explained by this study. Semi-structured interviews and a qualitative approach are used in this study to allow women entrepreneurs to share their diverse involvements openly. Cultural barriers are widespread and important complication; respondents expressed a wish to break free from social norms that often stand in the way of their goals, making it challenging to manage their responsibilities in life. Although these women are satisfied with what they have achieved, they are unhappy with the lack of support.

According to Yaseen et al. (2021) the causes of women fleeing and the phenomenon of family structures where such occurrences are reported remain unknown. They have achieved this by using a broader concept of women's empowerment to understand the reasons behind runaway, providing the targeted population with living expenses, wage jobs, education, and medical and health services. This study looks into the causes of runaway women and the understudied phenomena of family systems where these kinds of incidents are documented. By providing the targeted population with housing, waged employment, education, healthcare, and medical facilities, we explored the indefinable causes through the broader concept of women's empowerment. The respondents are selected from the shelter houses in Pakistan's Punjab province, where evidence is gathered by conducting in-depth interviews with the management of numerous shelter homes and runaway women. Thematic analysis method was used to convert the data. Our results suggest that forced marriages, physical and sexual abuse, domestic violence, and threats of death cause women to escape. The managers of the shelter homes also specified that apparent media damage and illiteracy are additional factors contributing to runaway incidents. The present study findings shed critical light on the context of female fugitives in underdeveloped states. Accordingly, there is a direct need for the government and social policy

activities to take consistent measures to support socially affected women at their doorstep in order to minimize such social violence.

A review of the literature led to the conclusion that attractive child safety laws and good parenting techniques can diminish the effects of abuse and neglect on females (Ashiq et al., 2022). While personal freedom and family support are insignificant, cultural hurdles naturally limit girls from making their own decisions (Nawaz et al., 2024). To ensure secure surroundings for females, it is important to increase awareness among parents and communities (Hunowu, 2021). To inspire females to seek assistance rather than flee, the government and non-governmental organizations should strengthen the support system (Priyanka & Monika, 2023). The importance of educational institutions in keeping females from dropping out of school and becoming defenseless is shown by a study on female failure rates in Karachi (Fatima et al., 2021). To keep young girls, secured and prevent them from avoiding law enforcement, the family and law enforcement must work together (Hunowu, 2021). To improve the lives of escapee girls, shelters, counselling, education, and job potentials are essential (Priyanka & Monika, 2023). These girls can live in a secure and cozy environment thanks to advancements in safe housing and shelter architecture (Nawaz et al., 2023). Targeted involvements are required to address women's physical and mental illness (Skilton et al., 2024).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Exploratory Research

Researchers used qualitative methodology to conduct this research. Whereas, in qualitative research, an exploratory type was utilized in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the reasons, experiences, and effects of runaway girls in Karachi. For this purpose, researchers used semi-structured interview techniques for data collection, asking all respondents the same pre-designed questions to ensure consistency in the data collection procedure. The aim of the researchers in conducting these interviews was to explore the push factors that forced these girls to leave their homes, as domestic violence, social pressures, and physical effects. Though, the research focused on individual stories and discovered the emotional characteristics to better understand the ways of struggles of these escaped girls.

Data Collection Method

In the present study data collection method was a semi-structured interview. The semi-structured questionnaire was pre-designed by the researchers to confirm reliability in the data collection technique. The aim of exploiting this method was to collect data reliably, making it easier to associate and examine. Researchers achieved consent from each individual before collecting data, and participants were assured of confidentiality and privacy. It was also inveterate that data collected exclusively for the present research. The interviews conducted in a protected and peaceful environment, where applicants could express their thoughts easily and without any force.

Interview Process

The current study interview method was aimed at certifying that respondents felt relaxed and safe while sharing their opinions and experiences. The interviews were conducted in a private and secure environment, allowing the girls to express themselves malleably and reasonably without fear of judgment. The methodology helped to build trust and allowed participants to discuss their personal observations in detail, contributing to the legality and depth of the data collected for the current study.

Universe and Population

The present research focused on the shelter homes located in Karachi. In this universe, the targeted population was young girls aged 17 to 35 who had run away from their homes and had been protected in those shelter houses. The population for the present research includes all escaped girls living in shelter homes within Karachi, aged 17 to 35, who faced significant challenges that directed them to seek protection in these institutions. The research focused on understanding their special involvements, the responsive and psychological pressure, and the influences that caused them to run away from their home. The aim is to provide an in-depth investigation of the capabilities of these girls inhabitants in shelter homes.

Sampling Strategy

In the present research, the purposive sampling technique was used for data collection by the researcher. In this method, researchers took those girls who had already fled from their homes and had settled in shelters. The researchers selected a sample size of 10 case studies, which intricate selecting 10 individual cases of escaped girls in Karachi. A separate case study provided detailed information about their experiences, conditions, and the factors that led them to

run away. This method allowed the researchers to focus on specific individuals who had direct experience with the issues being deliberate, confirming that the data collected was related and accurate. The aims of this strategy were to stand in a deep, nuanced sympathy for the individual practices, as these cases provided humorous, first-hand descriptions of the escaped girl's presence from the challenge. By using case studies, researchers were able to capture a widespread range of factors, including social, psychological, and approachable inspirations, which enable a more comprehensive image of the phenomenon. The present method was mainly helpful in sympathizing with the complication of escaped behavior and the requirement for more targeted association.

Data Analysis

The researchers used thematic analysis and applied several coding techniques to examine the informative data. Firstly, researchers used open coding to break down the key aspect mentioned in the interview into primary codes. Then, the researchers used axial coding to group these codes and method essential themes likewise domestic violence, social pressure, and psychological impact. Finally, the researchers used selective coding to investigate the main themes connected with the research objectives and questions, in order to provide final results. This method helped to make the analysis more systematic and provided a deeper understanding of the research findings.

RESULTS

In the present study, the researchers used thematic analysis and applied several coding techniques to analyze the data. Initially, the researchers used open coding to break down the key influences revealed in the interview into early codes. Then, the researchers used axial coding to group these codes and form significant design likewise domestic violence, social pressure, and mental illness. Finally, the researchers used selective coding to explore the main themes linked with the research objectives and questions, in order to deliver final results. This technique helped to make the analysis more intensive and provided a deeper appreciation of the research findings.

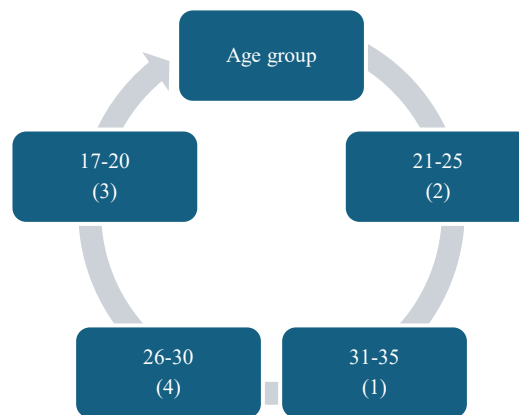The demographic data of respondents shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3.

Figure 1: Age of respondent

Three respondents were uneducated, 3 respondents were enrolled in matric, while 3 respondents had completed intermediate, and one of them had bachelor's degree. It is shown in Figure 2.
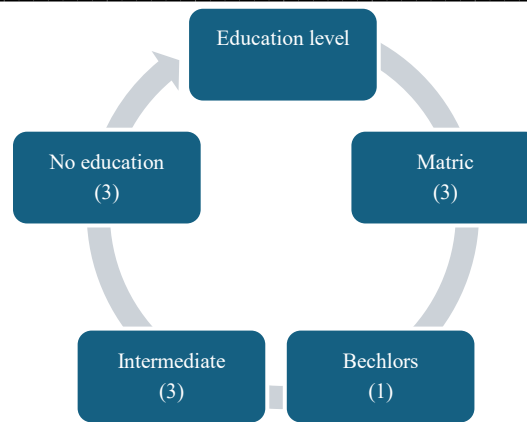
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Figure 2: Education of Respondent

Two respondents used Pashto language, 2 respondents' mother tongue was Punjabi, while 5 respondents used Sindhi language, and only one of them used Balochi. It is shown in Figure 3.
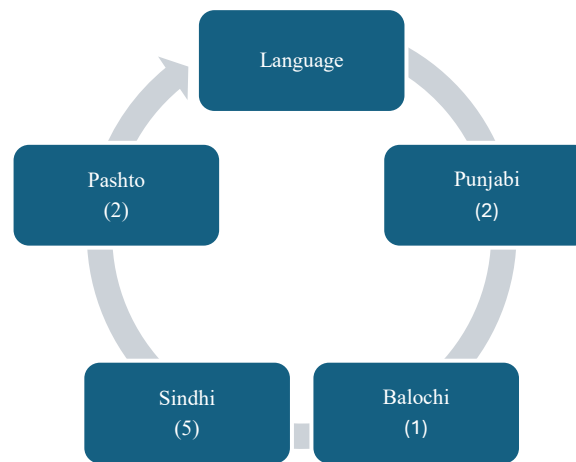

Figure 3: Language of the Respondent

The **Five Major Themes are organized in Findings:**

1. The Importance of Understanding, Support, and Respect in Preventing Girls from Leaving Home.
2. The Role of Shelter Homes, Government Support, and Education in Empowering Girls.
3. The Importance of Safe Shelters and Emotional Support.
4. Awareness and Knowledge of Support Systems.
5. Lack of Knowledge and Trust Issues in Seeking Support.

Theme 1: The Importance of Understanding, Support, and Respect in Preventing Girls from Leaving Home

In the present case studies, the common theme was the lack of understanding, support, and respect from their families, especially from their parents and in-laws. Girls often feel forced to leave when they feel a lack of freedom of expression, pursue their dreams, or make their own choices. Along with this patriarchal decision-making, joint family systems, and boundaries on specific self-determinations were the main reasons for running away from the home. If parents listen to their daughters, build trust with them, and provide a safe and respectful environment, they may be less likely to take essential steps like fleeing from their homes. Respect with emotional support, and always open communication are seen as key components that can lead girls to avoid running away from their homes.

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Furthermore, peer pressure, bad influences, and the lack of supervision also play significant roles in making such kind of decisions. If families offer a supportive and understanding environment, girls are more likely to make better choices and stay at home. Understanding the importance of personal happiness and decision-making freedom is crucial in creating a healthier family dynamic.

According to the respondents, feelings of alienation begin in females when they are restricted from expressing their ideas, choosing their life partners, or even selecting their degree program. As one of the participants stated;

"We are Pathans, and in our culture, girls' opinions are not given much importance.

Many respondents expressed their opinions, urging that it is part of cultural norms and social pressures for females to be understood in this way, as it puts pressure on their independence. This is like an established norm and emotional maltreatment for females. As one participant told;

"I would say that respect is the most important thing. Girls should have the freedom to speak up for their rights. Society should not tell them to tolerate, instead make them understand that it is their right and they are entitled to stand up for it".

It was also highlighted that families should avoid miscommunication and rumors; instead, they should foster better communication and understanding among themselves. To improve decision-making among girls, it was determined that guidance, empathy, and knowledge of external factors, such as peer pressure and social media, are essential. As one of the participants expressed;

"Even after having all kinds of support, when someone's destiny turns bad, they take such steps. At that moment, nothing else in life or anyone else seems important except that one person. If parents accept their children's decisions and happiness, such steps would not have to be taken".

Therefore, from the opinions of the respondents, it is clear that running away is hardly an act of impulsivity or insurgence but rather a response to severe familial control, lack of self-sufficiency, and ongoing emotional mistreatment. Relatives can effectively avoid such catastrophes by establishing open communication, mutual respect, and emotional constancy.

Theme 2: The Role of Shelter Homes, Government Support, and Education in Empowering Girls

The second theme was recognised as the role of shelter homes, government support, and education in empowering girls. At the similar time, the importance of shelter homes and government support is highlighted. Shelter homes provide a safe atmosphere where girls are stay without force from their families, giving them independence and self-confidence to make decisions for themselves. Numerous girls discovered that these organizations not only offer safety but also teach us about our rights and empower us to speak up. Greater awareness and information about these resources are serious, as some girls are uninformed that such support exists, especially in rural areas.

Moreover, education plays an active role for confidence building, but legal and emotional support from the government is alike significant. Government programs and severe legal rules could provide girls with both financial and emotional protection, making it easier for them to deal with the pressures always face at home. If proper guidance and mental health support are given, girls can grow into capable individuals who can stand up for their rights.

Many of the respondents expressed that shelter homes were the first places where they experienced respect and autonomy. As one of the highlights;

"Shelter homes provide much support. They do not hand over a girl to her family without her consent. I learned here that even the court cannot do anything. We can stay here as long as we want, and there is no pressure on us".

Whereas the rest of the respondents expressed that such a safe environment helps them understand their self-worth and even provides opportunities for self-growth, it is important to consider these perspectives. A respondent told.

"These organizations are playing a big role by providing safe places for girls. They are giving girls independence and awareness of their rights".

It was noticed that rural and underprivileged girls lack proper awareness, which prevents them from seeking timely help. As said by a participant,

"This organization is perfect for girls. If I had known there was so much to learn here and that it was safe, I would have decided to stay much earlier. However, unfortunately, many girls like me did not know about this, and there are no places like this in our village area".

In addition to the short-term security provided by shelter homes, government initiatives and education were crucial components of long-term empowerment. According to the respondents, community centers and schools foster resilience and self-assurance, and government policies ought to prioritize providing both emotional and legal support. One person noticed:

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"Schools and community centers only help build girls' confidence. The government should be strong and make strict rules that are properly followed. Here, the laws are such that even if you go to the police, they tell you to compromise. This is what our society does. In our Country, nothing special might be done for girls, so on so".

Another respondent argued that,

"These things support us frequently for our future. They support us in pleasant capable characters. If government programs be responsible for economic and emotional support, it becomes informal for girls to deal with the force at their home".

This theme highlights the need for an all-inclusive support system that contains protected housing, education, legal safety, and psychological counseling to achieve effective empowerment. Runaway girls converted from victims of household persecution into self-assured and independent members of society with the support of shelter homes and government organizations that are well-resourced and protected.

Theme 3: The Importance of Safe Shelters and Emotional Support

The present case studies highlight the need for protected shelters, where girls can feel valued and sheltered. After running away from their home, the most dangerous factor for girls is to find a place where they can feel secured, free from distress and judgment. This protected environment allows them to begin emotional and mental curative work. Most of them give emphasis to that safety is the most essential aspect, as they have faced unsafe circumstances without a secure place to stay. Along with shelter, the facility of emotional support, such as counselling and guidance, is important to help girls re-erect their self-assurance and mental constancy. Furthermore, skill training and job opportunities are seen as essential for long-term empowerment and freedom. Therefore, shelter homes that deal with both security and emotional guidance are life-threatening for helping these girls improve their dignity and start again. As one of the respondents specified;

"I think after fleeing from the home, the most significant thing is to have a place where you are respected and feel secured. That is what sustains the most. This is the most important thing."

Several respondents expressed that emotional and mental health recovery is crucial for rehabilitation within society. Various respondents further explained that they had reached the shelter homes in a State of severe mental exhaustion, fear, or guilt. They noted that counselling and emotional support were contributory factors in helping them regain confidence. As one of them told;

"Such girls need shelter homes the most. Because when you realize that your decision to leave home was wrong, and after everything I went through to protect my dignity, I blamed myself and felt mentally terrified. At that time, I needed someone to understand me and comfort me. That is why I believe counselling is essential".

Additionally, participants underlined that safe shelters ought to promote empowerment, skill development, and healing in addition to offering basic protection. It was believed that restoring self-esteem and facilitating self-reliance required vocational training, education, and guidance programs. One respondent clarified:

"Girls like us need shelter, education, and job opportunities. Emotional support and resources to rebuild their confidence are very important".

The stories also showed that before seeking safety, many girls had been subjected to long-term violence and social rejection. They were able to begin their psychological recovery and social reintegration due to the safety and respect provided in the shelter homes. At the ending, a participant explained that:

"In her point of view, a secure place is significant to stay because she has to live without a ridge for months. Living with continuous fear every day is very problematic. Anything might happen at any time".

To figure out, for fugitive girls to improve their life as become empowered, secure, women-centered environments are significant, as is emotional and psychological support. These young women can knowingly benefit from shelter homes that afford both secure and restoration facilities, helping them reinstate their identities, recover their dignity, and reintegrate into society as self-assured personally.

Theme 4: Awareness and Knowledge of Support Systems

The mentioned theme through the present case studies are the lack of awareness about available support systems before searching for help. Numerous individuals did not know about the presence of shelter homes or helplines up until they were in serious circumstances. In some case studies, the knowledge about mentioned facilities created too late, often after the person had earlier faced emotional or physical grief. While some girls were aware of these support systems, they did not have whole information about how they role or what security they offer. The cases highlight that awareness and education about existing resources could have provided better choices and possibly changed their judgements previous on. Social media and NGOs are playing a major role in increasing this information, but many

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still feel unfamiliar until they need support. Support systems offer protection and respect for a girl's decision, but a lack of knowledge often delays the seeking of such help.

A significant number of respondents disclosed that they learned about shelter homes when referred by the Police or social workers. A respondent stated that,

"I did not have any knowledge about such a support system. Even here, I came through police".

Others reported that there was minimal information regarding these institutions, which had created mistrust and hesitation among the females. Some of them believed that they would be handed over to their families. As one of them told,

"I knew about this, but I did not have proper details. I used to think that under family pressure, any shelter home would hand me over to them. However, I reached there with the help of the police, and then I learned that they follow our decision here".

Some respondents credited the NGOs for sharing information about women's protection and legal rights through social media and awareness campaigns. As one of them stated;

"I knew that in our society, a support system has been arranged. Currently, even NGOs spread a lot of awareness about it on social media".

Consequently, the result shows a clear gap between the reality of a support system and the public's awareness, mainly among sidelined individuals in rural areas. The lack of information about these resources not only interruptions involvement but also increases the risk of abuse and psychological impact among runaway girls.

This theme highlights the need for widespread outreach and public awareness activities led by the government and non-government organizations. Awareness campaigns in schools, community centres, and media stands can guarantee that vulnerable girls and their families are well-versed about available self-justifying mechanisms. Increasing the perceptibility and expediency of these services is crucial for avoiding misfortunes and hopeful early help-seeking behaviour.

Theme 5: Lack of Knowledge and Trust Issues in Seeking Support

In the mentioned theme the current study is the lack of knowledge and complications faced when seeking shelter and support. Several individuals were unaware of the shelter homes or the support systems available to area, leading to misunderstanding and fear during profound moments. The lack of awareness about where to go or how to contact with these places frequently causes feelings of helplessness and fear. In some of the case studies, respondents felt forced to meander the streets or depend on strangers, such as a rickshaw driver, to find help. Fear, especially the panic of not being understood or not knowing whom to trust, added another layer of difficulty in seeking support. Numerous also struggled with trust-building issues, either due to previous experiences or the fear of being judged. The lack of information about the rights and refuge offered by shelter homes formed doubt, leading some people to feel vulnerable or trapped in their situations. Social media and the police played an active role in connecting individuals to shelters, but without preceding knowledge, many faced emotional and logistical challenges before finding support. Awareness of the available resources and trust building in these systems are important factors in facilitating the necessities of the participants mentioned.

"She faced many difficulties because she did not know where the shelter homes situated in Karachi or how to communicate with them. I had only heard of shelter homes and knew they were support systems, but I did not know the details. I kept wandering the streets, thinking about how to get there, since I could not go back home. After wandering on the roads, I reached here with the help of a rickshaw driver".

However, other respondents expressed that fear of judgment and disbelief prevented them from seeking timely support and assistance. Many of them were not sure whether their rights would be protected or if they would be forced to return to their homes. As one of them told,

"When I took the matter to the police, I decided to stay there. I was told many things, such as that if you stay there, you will realize the value of home, the same home where it was hard even to breathe. It was not easy for me to reach here, but after coming to the shelter home, I found relief".

Some of the respondents' previous experiences of influence and abuse contributed to their mistrust. It was threatening for them to believe in any institute that could honestly ensure their protection. One of them explored that,

"The biggest challenge for her was that she could not trust anybody. While her mental state was such that she was scared of everyone, she was continually reassured that she was secure here".

Furthermore, participants stated that their anxiety levels rose when they were not given correct information about how shelter homes operate. Reservations about privacy, and potential family sentences improved this anxiety. Most of the participants only started to retrieve their sense of security and trust after speaking directly with shelter workers.

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This subject highlights the importance of trust building and interactive clearly to ensure effective social support systems. Organizations must implement trauma-informed and morally sensitive measures that reassure survivors of their rights and defend, in addition to offering housing. Programs for raising awareness should also contest distortion and inspire trust-building in official support networks. Governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations can growth the willingness of escaped girls to seek safety and recovery support by encouragement honesty, compassion, and consistency.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study show light on numerous important topics related to the linked experiences of fugitive girls, highlighting the significance of awareness, trust building, family support, and the strength of character of government organizations and shelter houses. These tags further highlight the broader significances and allegations of the problems because they align with and are supported by prior research in similar circumstances.

The lack of family support that most of the girls faced before seeking shelter is one of the most substantial concerns. According to Xu (2024) research, which highlights the raised risk of psychological impact for children from dysfunctional households characterized by conflict, violence, and neglect, this is in line with. Additionally, Brooks Holliday et al. (2017) presented that a low-rated effective family is a proximal analysis of runaway behaviour, linking the decision to escape with a more universal pattern of problematic behaviour. By shifting the focus from straightforward recombination to create a secure, developmental environment, these studies emphasize the importance of addressing fundamental familial dysfunction to implement defensive treatments and establish a framework for adequate recovery.

Another important subject in the current study was the function of government support and homeless shelters. According to the stories shared, shelters infrequently provide normative living preparations that might not totally satisfy the unique needs of the fugitive females, even though they provide the essential safe refuge. According to Nawaz et al. (2024) architectural examination of shelters, operational limitations, overloading, and a lack of privacy in many facilities worldwide risk the health and rehabilitation of survivors. The current study highlights the need for project and law-making changes to guarantee that these protected places truly provide girls with a sense of security and wellness while also successfully addressing their exclusive expressive and social needs. Governmental organizations and shelter houses must liaise reasonably in order for these sheltered spaces to not only for the defense of girls but also satisfy their exact emotional and social needs.

One of the essential benefits of the girls' flexibility revealed to be emotional support, which is usually given through unlawful networks like friends and peer groups. Teenagers typically turn to unlawful support systems, such as peer groups and community clubs, to deal with gender and age-based violence presented by Jones et al. (2021) Rural women also preferred familiar support networks over formal ones, as noted by Chadambuka and Warria (2020) who stress the importance of responsible and voluntarily available social networks for underserved inhabitants. These consequences highlight the need for NGOs and shelter houses to support girls in safeguarding social contexts in addition to providing official benefits.

Lack of knowledge about imaginable support networks before demanding support is a mutual issue identified by the present study. According to Ikuteyijo et al. (2022) research, teenage females frequently face stigma and lack knowledge about financial programs, which prevents them from utilizing these resources. This problem is made worse by the service suppliers' lack of coordination. To ensure that girls receive the support they need before reaching a catastrophe point, it is important to raise awareness through social media campaign, community outreach, and educational activities.

In conclusion, the girls' confidence in requesting support is always harshly vulnerable to trust building. The challenging patterns recognized by Hirani et al. (2018) disclose that disobedient behaviors, linked to a lack of trust in support networks, are often shown by fugitive children. These behaviors are imitated in the mistrust of official institutions and the fear of being judged or distrusted. Furthermore, youths' trust and engagement with official treatment may be compact when familiar social support and formal facilities are not in sync (Thompson et al., 2001). Therefore, ornamental girls' help-seeking behavior's involves government agencies and shelters to trust building through open, sympathetic, and ethnically sensitive styles.

In turning point, the results of the present study are in line with previous polls, highlighting the need for extensive involvement to support female fugitives successfully. Strengthening family ties, improving the honesty of shelter homes, raising awareness of support networks, creating both formal and informal support classifications, and re-establishing trust in service wage-earners should be the key objectives of these efforts. By addressing these reliable challenges, more effective strategies and initiatives in this area can be progressive, improving the outcomes for vulnerable girls.

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CONCLUSION

This exploratory qualitative research attentions on the sympathetic contribution of girls aged 17-35 who have run-away from home and are living in Karachi, Pakistan. The primary factor of fugitively is an agitated family environment. Girls regularly run-away to outflow suffering at the hands of the hurting practice of domestic abuse. They do not have independence to make choices about their education, career, and marriage. Their family atmosphere is based on a patriarchal culture. These subtleties act as a commanding instigator to run-away.

The fugitive girls face many mental and physical hazards. It makes this social phenomenon a critical social issue. Runaway girls are realized that they have low self-confidence, low self-possession. Moreover, they are made to feel sadness, helplessness, and hopelessness. They are at risk of experiencing abuse, violence, and homelessness. The accessibility and efficiency of the support system are serious. A dangerous barrier is the lack of knowledge about support systems, as many girls were ignorant of the strong, legal, and emotional support obtainable before seeking support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study recommends strengthening family links to enhance shelter home receptiveness, providing legal and emotional support from the government, and encouraging education. Additionally, the media should spread awareness about the rights of women and the reasons for running away from incidents of violence etc. Reporters should center the survivor's voice while satisfying dignity, focusing on the reasonable issue and the path towards recovery. However, future research should focus on reasonable influences, long-term consequences, and avoidance know-how.

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