

Educational Compulsion: its repercussions on children in Balochistan

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Abstract

The research study conducted in the province of Balochistan shows that the punishment to child both at home and school, inadequate guidance proving as educational compulsion, mainly came out to be the major reasons of the children to runaway from homes. The paper presents the responses and comments of the parents/ guardian of the runaway children who play a key role in their brought up and education. By comparing the concerns of the parents with the narrations of the children we would be in a position to analyze the situation and trace the missing links for improvement of the issue concerned. The result displays that highest number of runaway cases took place due to the punishment both at home and school and the next highest due to educational compulsion. Educational compulsion expressed by 24% children was responded to be an important reason causing the runaway. While punishment at school mentioned by 19 % children was another important reason for runaway cases. Both the punishment at school and educational compulsion when combined account for 44 %, emerging as the main reason for the runaway of the children. The majority of the parents pinpointed that their constant punishment and harsh attitude towards the child substantiated as a key mistake proving to be the immediate cause for the incident. The lessons learnt are; Good and effective supervision is needed, child must not be punished persistently, the genuine demands of the child be met, better education to the child must be provided, serious guidance be provided to child in education and other off school activities.

INTRODUCTION

PERCEPTION OF THE PROBLEM

The paper is a sequel to the previous paper appearing in Pakistan Economic and Social Review (PE&SR)¹, where the paper has been based mainly on the point of view and responses of the children who were affected and were reported to runaway from their homes due to the reason of education compulsion. In the present paper the parents/ guardian of the children who play a key role in the brought up and education of the children involved or concerned to the issues of runaway children have also been included for responses and comments. The parents of the children are the key persons in bringing up and supervision of the child. However, some issues picked, are only those, which though have been asked from children, a second opinion/response was necessary to be sought from parents/guardians giving us a chance of comparison of the two views.

The view of the parents have been accommodated due to two reasons; (a) to compare the point of view of children with those of parents to have a cross check about the basic parameters and (b) to have information related to parents about the parameters/factors affecting the child's life and related performance.

¹Causes and effects of runaway children crisis: evidence from Balochistan

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- 1) To understand and assess the reasons/factors responsible for causing the incident of runaway.
- 2) To assess and understand the role and response of the surroundings particularly the class fellows, friends and relatives of the child where the child is in interaction with during the whole span of his childhood and boyhood.
- 3) To understand and assess the responsibilities up-kept or ignored by the parents/ guardian encircling the brought up of the child to a greater extent.
- 4) To collect suggestions from the involved/ related persons and institutions enabling the concerned to check it happen again.
- 5) To give suggestions helpful for improving the situation.

Sources of Information:

The police department was identified as the main source of information where the cases of runaway children are registered generally. 28 runaway children cases were selected for this study. Furthering the first hand information gathered from police stations regarding the addresses of the children were supposed to be supplemented and refined in a shape of required information to be utilized for the purpose. Thus further required information were collected by using questionnaires from the children affected and parents/guardians.

Discussion & Results***Educational status of the child:***

The parents/ guardians have discussed the performance of the child and the responses have been recorded as was done for children's responses.

Table: 1 Educational status of the child (Responses of the Parents)

Academic Record	No. of Parents	Percentage
Excellent	6	21.4
Good	8	28.6
Average	5	17.9
Poor	9	32.14

The parents' assessment regarding the child academic record shows that 32% of the children fall under poor category and 18% with average academic record of the runaway children. The rest 50% children were ranked in upper categories of academic record by the parents accounting for 29% as good and 21% in excellent category.

Comparing it with the children's response, there is as light difference in the situation of runaway children where below average percentage was 28 and under the categories average good and excellent has been 7%, 8% and 4.6% respectively.

Treatment/ reaction at poor performance in education:

This important aspect has been picked to be discussed with parents as well as children. The parents have described the situation in the following way;

Table: 2 Treatment at poor performance at home

Nature of Treatment	No. of Parents	Percentage
Guided	5	55.6
Ignored	2	22.2
Threatened		
Punished	2	22.2
Beaten Up		
Other		

At home, 56% of the parents guide the children upon poor educational performance, 22% ignore the children though they are aware of the fact, while, 22% punish off and on their children. Under kidnapped situation, no child of poor performance was reported. In case of lost situation only two were reported to be of poor performance who have punished and even beaten up.

Comparing the above mentioned parents view with that of children's response, it is very close to that of parents. 56% are being guided at poor performance while 22% parents compared to 50% children responding punishment as a strategy is different.

Areas of child's interest:

This aspect of child's life has been included in the parents views because of the reason to know whether the parents are aware of the child's areas of special interest or not.

Table 3. Special area of interest of the child

Interest Areas	No. of Parents	Percentage
Playing Games	5	21.7
Video Games	4	17.4
T.V, Dish, Movie watching		
Wandering, Visiting, Outing	9	39.1
Spending time with friends	5	21.7

Regarding the cases of the runaway children, the parents understanding was that 39% of them pointed at visiting new places/wandering/outing to be the main interest of their children, 22% parents each mentioned playing games and spending time with friends and 17% told about video games.

Comparing it with children's own point of view, responses are quite different indicating the awareness or ignorance about their child's main area of interest which is very important in case of runaway incident. For example 22% parents identify the main area of interest of their children to be playing games/sports where 52% of the children mark it to be their area of special interest. The second highest area of interest preferred by children (24%) is visiting/wandering/outing where the 39% parents marked it the area of interest of their children. The least number of parents (13%) each are for spending time with friends and watch TV/Dish/Movies where the children with minimum percentage (4.8%) each, for spending time and watch/Dish/Moves. The percentage of parents is almost three times high.

Rating of the child (Character):

The parents have expressed their point of view about the children regarding their rating in terms of character and attitude.

Table 4 Assessment of Child's Character by the Parents

Rating	No. of Parents	Percentage
Polished	6	22.2
Average	11	40.7
Spoiled	7	25.9
Stubborn	3	11.2

The highest number (41%) parents have placed their children in the category of average of the runaway children. The percentage for polished children is 22 of runaway children. The spoiled & stubborn children are 26% and 11% respectively.

Supervision of the child:

The supervision of the child is the main tool through which the incident of runaway can be checked. The cases of these types of children were discussed with parents in the light of their supervision over the child. In cases of runaway children, as per their parents view 88.5% claimed proper supervision and 11.5 % confessed that no supervision was practiced.

Supervision of the family:

The degree of supervision over the family is an aspect to be understood because the pattern affects the child's bringing up and the degree of control over the child.

The assessment by the parents and guardians gives a hint about their choice and style of supervision they are satisfied with or if not, then there are limitations checking from better supervision which need to be understood. The parents (96.2 %) of runaway children showed their satisfaction over their supervision.

Ranking factors of good supervision:

The supervision in the context of Balochistan is mainly affected by factors such as, better education, sound economic status, religion, systematic guidance of family members, manageable family size, good surroundings, and cooperation among family members etc.

Table 5 Ranking important supervision factors of the Runaway Children by Parents

Factors	Priority 1		Priority 2		Priority 3	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Better Education	8	38.0	9	42.9	1	4.8
Sound Educational status	2	9.5	1	4.8	5	23.6
Religion	9	42.9	0	0	6	28.6
Systematic Guidance	0	0	3	14.3	1	4.8
Manageable Family Size	1	4.8	2	9.5	0	0
Good Surroundings	0	0	5	23.8	7	33.3
Cooperation in family	1	4.8	1	4.8	0	0
Useless love with child					1	4.8

The parents describe these factors as; Better education was placed under first priority by 43% and under second by 38% of the rest as third priority. Among all the parents the highest number (43%) placed religion, 38% placed better education and 10% placed sound economic status as first most important factor for better supervision. Some 43% parents placed better education and 24% placed good surroundings 14% placed systematic guidance and 10% manageable family size as the second most important factor responsible for effective supervision.

Rating the family discipline:

The parents were asked to assess their family discipline having lasting impact on child's life.

Table 6 Rating the Family Discipline by Parents

Discipline		
	No	%
Very poor	1	3.6
Poor	2	7.1
Very Good	5	17.9
Good	18	64.3
N.A	2	7.1

The highest number (64%) of parents assessed the discipline of their families as Good, 17.9 % as Very Good, while, 11% marked it as either Poor or Very Poor.

Reasons for Runaway:

The children in general faced with the adverse situation both at home and school narrated that they were left with no option other than running from home to avoid the punishment of both parents and teachers. They

pinpointed the following reasons to justify their act of running away from home.

Table 7 Reasons for Runaway

Reasons	No	Percentage
1 Punishment at Home	8	38.0
2 Punishment at School	4	19.0
3 Punishment at Home and School	1	4.8
4 Education compulsion	5	23.8
5 Friends Temptation	2	9.5
6 Got Bored at home	1	4.8

More than one third of the children (38 %) blamed their parents' punishment for the incident of runaway. The second reason for the mishap reported by 24% of the respondents came out to be the Educational compulsion. Out of the total 19% children who ran away from their homes held responsible the teacher's punishment at school. Both the punishment at school and educational compulsion when combined account for 44 %, appearing to be the major reason compelling the children to runaway from home. The next two factors which mainly contributed for the children to leave their homes and runaway were friend's temptation, feeling boredom at home accounting for 10% and 5% respectively.

Education & Supervision:

Education being the most important factor and tool for effective supervision was discussed in a very frank way to arrive at a decision about the perception of parents/ guardians. The number of parents and guardians ranging between 62% and 76% of all the three types admitted rather pointed at education to be the main factor for effective supervision and discipline among the family. On the other hand, those negating the idea of education to be the most important were in between 24% - 38%. This indicates that almost 70% of the parents are of the opinion that education is the base of good discipline and effective supervision.

Economic Status & Supervision:

Besides education, financial status of the family breeds effective discipline among the family members. The parents/ guardians of the runaway children made comments and 54% of them on the average mentioned sound financial and economic position as the main factor responsible for better and effective discipline and supervision within the family. The 48% opined in the opposite and claimed that it is a factor but not the main factor for discipline and supervision.

Responsibility Fixing for Indiscipline:

In this sub-section responsibility fixing is being discussed in context of the taking place of the incident and to know who is responsible for the incident (runaway, kidnapped and being lost) from the parents/ guardians point of view.

Table 8 Person Responsible for incident (Parent's View)

Responsible Person	No	%
Child	15	48.4
Parents/ Family members	6	19.4
Teacher	4	12.9
Friends	6	19.4
No body	3	18.8

The higher number of parents (48%) of runaway children blamed the child followed by 19% blaming themselves (parents) for the incident of runaway and 19% blamed the friends of the child responsible for incident. Only 13% blamed the teachers.

Comparing the responses of the parents with that of the children's regarding responsibility issue the children's response recorded for runaway children shows that the highest number of children (43%) blamed themselves and the remaining equally divided for parents, teachers and friends (19% each).

Basic mistake causing incident:

The major mistake committed, was considered to be a major factor in establishing the immediate reason of assurance of incident.

Table 9 Major mistakes undertaken by Parents

Major Mistake	No	%
Loose Supervision	5	18.5
Nothing	7	25.9
Didn't Supervise	1	3.7
Punishment a lot	5	18.5
Strict behaviour at home & school	6	22.2

The major three mistakes pointed out by parents of the runaway children were; strict behaviour (22%), loose supervision (19%), and continuous punishment (19%) but the highest number of parents did not identify the major mistake. The perception of the children is also not much different from that of parents.

Lessons learnt by the parents/guardians:

The lessons drawn by the parents/guardians from the incident of runaway are summarized and listed below in order of importance,

- i) Good Supervision is needed
- ii) Child must not be punished.
- iii) The genuine demands of the child must be taken serious.
- iv) Better education to the child must be provided.
- v) Check on child's friends is must.
- vi) Serious guidance be provided.

Improvements Suggested by the parents:

Improvements suggested by the parents are elaborated below in order of importance as per their realization;

- i) Law enforcement agencies must be honest, helpful, effective & efficient.
- ii) Circle of friends be checked and the child be allowed to be in the company of polished and education loving ones.
- iii) Brought up of the child be through providing good education, meeting the genuine demands and good guidance.
- iv) Home supervision be strict but with no strict punishment and good atmosphere be provided.

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