

Introduction

The issue of missing children is a grave concern that affects societies worldwide. These children may go through unhealthy experiences such as abuse, harassment, rejection, and the risk of involvement in crime. This study aims to explore the underlying reasons behind missing children cases, focusing on parental abduction, runaways, and lost children.

By understanding their experiences, we can raise awareness and develop effective strategies to address this issue. The objective is to create a safer environment, foster proactive communities, and protect the well-being of missing children.



Background

According to Indianmuslims News (Published on 21st November 2021), in the last three years, 9,000 children have gone missing from the national capital New Delhi. In 2006 alone, over 2,500 children were reported missing, based on information provided by the missing person squad of Delhi Police. As of November 15, 2022, there were 6,289 reported missing children in the city, of which 3,741 have been successfully traced.

Data

The data for this study has been obtained from Child Care Institutions through Child MISS and the Homelink Network. The data covers the period from 2017 to 2022. The sample size consists of 702 children from Don Bosco Ashalayam, Delhi, located in the province of Delhi, India.



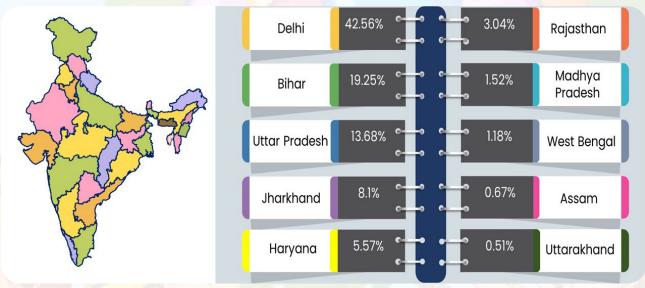
Limitation of the study

Limitations of the study include limited access to information, discrepancies in the data due to incomplete availability, and a potential lack of representation by missing children.

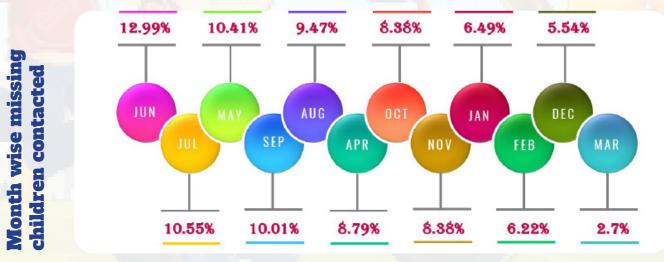


State of origin

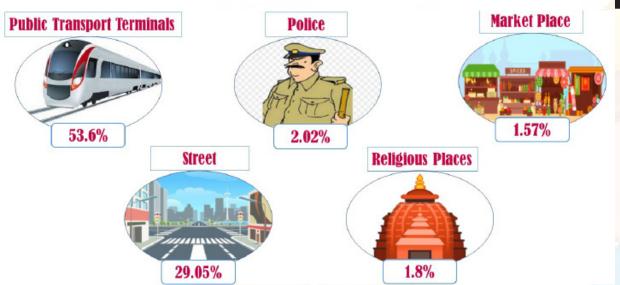
The graph illustrates that the majority of missing children fall within the age range of 6 to 15 years.



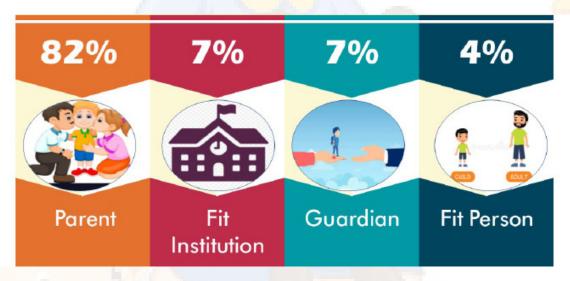
The graph illustrates that the highest number of children are from Delhi, which shows that the children come out of their homes to take a tour of different places in the city for an adventurous experience.



The graph highlights that the highest number of children went missing during May, June, and July. This time coincides with summer vacations when schools are closed, allowing children the opportunity to venture into the city and explore.



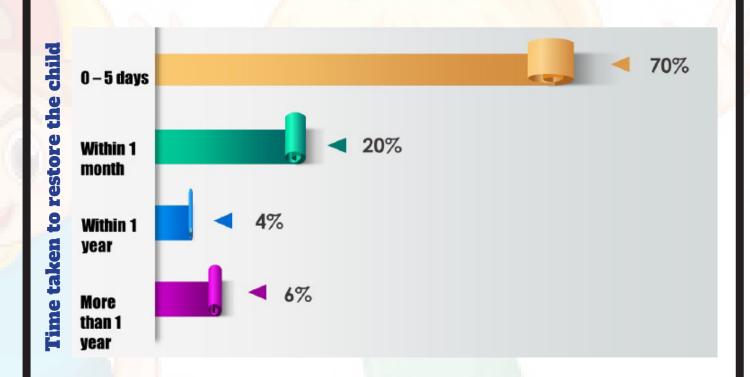
The graph illustrates that 53.6% of the children who went missing were eventually found on public transport, while 29.05% were discovered roaming on the street.



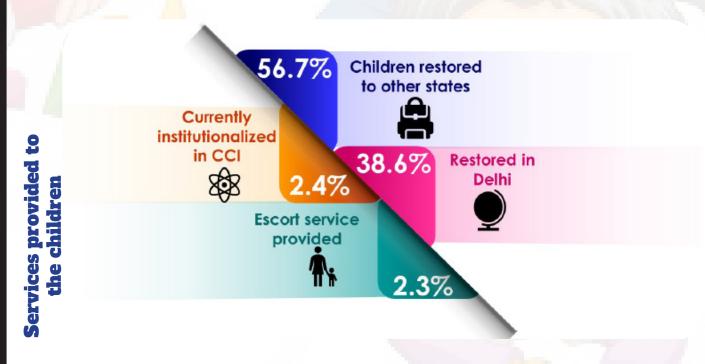
The graph indicates that 89% were successfully restored to their parents or guardians. Additionally, 7% were placed in Fit Institutions , while 4% were handed over to Fit Persons.



Around 85% of the children who went missing had both parents, while 11% had single parent, and 3% had no parents.



90% of the children were restored within a month of contact, while 4% of the children were restored within a year, and 6% of them remained in Child Care Institutions for more than a year.



56.7% children are restored in states other than Delhi, 38.6% are restored in Delhi, 2.4% children are still institutionalized in the Child Care linstitutional and 2.3% children were provided escort service.

Reasons for missing

According to the children, there are several reasons why they went missing. Although there was a lack of statistical data to support these reasons, they were expressed by children during counselling sessions.

- 1. Parental Conflict
- Peer Pressure and Influence
- 3. Abuse and Neglect
- 4. Online Exploitation and Grooming
- 5. Academic Issues
- 6. Desire for Independence
- 7. Poverty and Financial Problems
- 8. Family Dysfunction and Instability
- 9. Going with known/unknown individuals

Suggestions for Reducing the Incidence of Missing Children

- 1. Creating a peaceful and happy environment at home and spending quality time with children can help reduce missing children cases.
- 2. It's important to actively listen to children's concerns and offer supportive solutions rather than responding with anger or criticism.
- 3. Encouraging and motivating children to do their best and kindly guiding them when they make mistakes instead of yelling can be helpful.
- 4. Increase public awareness and education about the issue of missing children and how to prevent it.
- 5. Provide counselling and support services for at-risk children and their families.
- 6. Improve coordination and communication between law enforcement agencies and community organizations.
- 7. Strengthen laws and policies to protect children and hold those who harm them accountable.
- 8. Increase funding for programs that provide shelter and services for runaway and homeless youth.
- 9. Enhance technology and data-sharing systems to quickly locate missing children and reunite them with their families.
- 10. Develop community-based programs that promote positive youth development and provide opportunities for youth engagement and leadership.
- 11. Address the root causes of child abuse, neglect, poverty, and social inequality.

Conclusion

The study emphasizes findings regarding missing children, such as the higher prevalence of cases among 6 to 15-year-olds and the peak numbers are observed during the summer vacations. Public transport terminals serve as common locations for locating missing children. Surprisingly, the study reveals that children go missing or runaway even when both parents are present. Reunification efforts are typically successful within a month, but a substantial percentage of children require over a year to be reunited with their parents. Additionally, a small portion of children remain in Child Care Institutions for various reasons.

Thank You

We sincerely thank all our Networking organizations in Delhi Province for their encouraging support and various works for the Young-at-Risk (YaR) in various situations.

Don Bosco Ashalayam, New Delhi

Don Bosco Ashalayam, New Delhi is a Child Care Institute for poor, abandoned and underprivileged boys with a total capacity of 120 children. Other major projects are 3 Childlines, 6 NFE Centres, "PRAVASI" The Migrant Desk, Neighbourhood ministry and Past Pupils.

Don Bosco Navjeevan Society, Chandigarh

Don Bosco Navjeevan Society in Chandigarh serves underprivileged children and youth in slums and colonies. The centre operates 10 remedial centers, a special school, a skill training centre, and two HIV/ AIDS centers in Punjab.

Don Bosco Ashalayam, Lucknow

Don Bosco Ashalayam, Lucknow is a child care institute for underprivileged boys with a total capacity of 50 children.

Don Bosco Centre, Jhajjar

Don Bosco Centre, Jhajjar provides Education service through Non-Formal Education centers to the children of migrant labours who work in Brick Klin (Bhatta).

Snehalaya Holy Cross Sisters, Lucknow

Snehalaya Holy Cross Sisters, Lucknow is a child care institute for abandoned and underprivileged girls with a total capacity of 25 children.

Auxilium Snehalaya, New Delhi

Auxilium Snehalaya, New Delhi is a child care institute for the underprivileged girls with a total capacity of 32 children.



Homelink Network is an Ongoing initiative started by DB YaR Forum in 2002, to ensure appropriate, timely and real time response to the needs of the young at risk, based on accurate documentation and data analysis supported by the best of technologies available today.

WE WORK TOWARDS

- a. Developing data driven child care system through documentation, research and networking
- b. Systematically documenting the systems, processes and work flow of the organizations
- c. Data let intervention planning in organizations
- d. Data driven advocacy and engagement with stakeholders and government on children's issues
- e. Harnessing current advances in digital technologies in the service of the work with young at risk



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