CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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This chapter deals with the review of international and national literature on missing children. Material was collected from published articles, scholarly works, books, journals and websites, which the researcher accessed through the Vikram Sarabhai Library at The Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. This chapter provides information on important international studies undertaken on missing children and looks at the scenario concerning missing children as it exists across the world. The second half of the chapter looks at research undertaken in India to understand the phenomenon of missing children as it occurs in India.

A. Global Scenario

In most developed countries such as USA, UK, Canada and Australia, much effort has been made to focus on the missing children issue and recognize it as a social problem. Many research studies have been undertaken on the issue of missing children, but far more research is available in respect of children and young people who run away. There is extensive literature on young runaways, which will be briefly reviewed here. Earlier studies, undertaken between the 1950s and the 1960s in both the UK and the US, tended to focus on the individual characteristics of runaways and attempted to identify an individual pathology associated with running away (Tsunts, 1966; Shellow et al, 1967). During the 1970s, attention shifted to the effects of the environment on runaway behaviour. Attention turned to the family backgrounds of runaways from home and to the institutional environments of absconders from residential institutions (Clarke and Martin, 1971; Sinclair and Clarke, 1973; Brennan et al, 1978; Millham et al, 1978;

Simons and Whitbeck, 1991). The most relevant studies undertaken in other countries have been covered in this review of literature.

In the US, the earliest missing child case which gained unprecedented media attention was in 1932, when the 20-month old baby of celebrity aviator Charles Lindberg was stolen from his cradle. The battered body of the baby was recovered two months later, and investigation into the case lasted for nearly three years before the identity of the killer could be established. As a result of this case, new laws were passed in America making kidnapping a federal offence.

United States of America

The US Department of Justice sponsored a massive research project in an effort to define the missing child problem in 1988. It was the first study of its kind and the National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway and Throwaway Children, known as NISMART, began in 1988. It was followed by an updated survey in 1999, known as NISMART 2. NISMART 2 is the most up to date reliable database on missing children available in the USA.

The two studies provide the best estimates for the number of missing children in USA. The first National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMART-1) was released in 1990, and the second, known as NISMART-2, was released in October 2002. According to NISMART-2 research, which studied the year 1999, an estimated 797,500 children were reported missing; 203,900 children were abducted by nonfamily members; 115 children were the victims of the most serious, long-term nonfamily abductions

called "stereotypical kidnappings"; and 58,200 children were the victims of family abductions. By the end of 2005, there were 109,531 active missing person records according to the US Department of Justice. Children under the age of 18 account for 58,081 (53.03%) of the records and 11,868 (10.84%) were for young adults between the ages of 18 and 20.

- A child went missing every 40 seconds in the U.S, over 2,100 per day.
- In excess of 800,000 children were reported missing each year.
- Another 500,000 went missing without ever being reported.

(Source: National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children, U.S. Department of Justice Report, 2009)

Another research study "Investigating Potential Child Abduction Cases: A Developmental Perspective" by Lord, W. D.; Boudreaux, M. C.; and Lanning, K. V. was undertaken in 2001 which classified the child abduction typologies by age. The findings are given as below:

Newborn (birth to one month) abductions take two forms. The first, maternal desire abduction, generally involved a female stranger abducting a young victim to rear as her own. These abductions usually occured at a hospital that the perpetrator had repeatedly walked through. She usually faked a pregnancy to prepare others for the baby's sudden appearance. Therefore, the race of the victim matched that of the abductor. The second type of infant abduction, emotion-based abduction, usually resulted from anger, frustration, revenge, or retribution. The biological mother, the most frequent offender, sought revenge on the other parent by abducting the child. The abduction often hid the death of the child, and usually disposed of the body close to the child's home.

Infants (1–12 months) comprised the second category of child abduction. Maternal desire abductions became less frequent, as a two-month-old infant was more likely to draw the attention of outsiders to the actual age of the baby. Most of these abductions were emotion based. Males faced a higher risk of victimization, and males, usually the biological father, were the perpetrators in these cases. These abductions usually resulted in the death of the child, usually on impulse, and the body of the child was disposed of close to home in a familiar, yet private, area of the family's property.

Preschool children (3–5 years) comprised the third category. Preschoolers were not always in parental view because of their increased mobility. Sexual crimes were one of the causes of abductions usually by strangers or acquaintances, not by parents. The victims were usually female, and the race of the child and abductor usually matched the local demographics. The preschool child was usually abducted from their yard by a male who was an acquaintance of the victim, commonly a neighbor with a history of sexual misconduct. Profit based offenses—drug related or ransom—involving preschool children were rare. Some were emotion based, usually involving the father or boyfriend. When the offender killed the child, the body was usually found within a hundred yards of the home.

Elementary and middle-school children (6–14 years) constituted the fourth category. Victimization rates were triple for this age, and school-age females were at least three times more likely than males to be abducted and murdered. Sex was the major reason for abduction, usually by a male perpetrator with a history of sexual misconduct, violence, and substance abuse. The abductor was usually an acquaintance or a stranger but rarely a family member. With

middle-school children, the abductors were mostly likely to be strangers. Schoolyard access, physical maturity, and vulnerability helped facilitate these abductions by strangers. Unlike familial abductions, the bodies of these children were usually found unconcealed or only slightly covered.

High school children and older teens (15–17 years) comprised the final category. Profit- and emotion-based offenses were more prevalent in this group, perhaps due to the possession of money or other valuables, as well as an increase in the availability of drugs. Profit-based abduction usually victimized males and involved the sale and distribution of drugs. Emotion-based crimes were similar to domestic violence and typically involved teenage females abused by boyfriends, ex-boyfriends, or stalkers. Sexually motivated crimes involved a female victim and a male offender—usually either a stranger or an acquaintance of the victim—who abducted the victim in a public area away from the victim's home. When murdered, the victim's remains were usually found within five miles of the home, slightly covered or not covered at all.
(Source: "Investigating Potential Child Abduction Cases: A Developmental Perspective" by Lord, W. D.; Boudreaux, M. C.; and Lanning, K. V., 2001)

A research undertaken by Stepp in 2001 studied the causes for increased missing children's cases in the US. Increased rate of abductions in the United States were attributed to the following causes:

- The increase in two-career parents and single heads of households that left more children home alone

- Urbanization, suburbanization, and the geographic mobility of the modern workforce leading families to move into communities with no family or friends to provide a safety net for children
- Inadequate criminal data banks that made running background checks on would-be abusers difficult for schools, day-care, and youth organizations
- The lack of cooperation between governmental agencies that impeded tracing abductors across state lines (Source: Missing children: the ultimate nightmare, Stepp I. S., 1994).

United Kingdom

Every Five Minutes: A review of the available data on missing children in the UK (Parents and Children Together, 2005) examined available sources to establish how many children go missing in the UK every year. The report stated that it was impossible to obtain an accurate and comprehensive picture of the nature or scale of the problem (estimated range was between 100,000 and 180,000). Data collection on missing children being neither coordinated nor centralized, statistics came from disparate sources, using different methods of data collection over different timescales. The problem was compounded by inconsistent definitions of different types of missing children.

The report concluded that the response to missing children was very fragmented and disorganised. Parents and Children Together (PACT) believed that the only solution for remedying this situation was through the creation of a National Resource Center, based on the American model. Such a center would bring together under one roof representatives of the relevant government and NGOs to work as a united front. This would eliminate layers of

bureaucracy and help coordinate effective policies to support missing and abducted children and their families as well as provide a single national help-line for children and parents.

(Source: Every Five Minutes: A review of the available data on missing children in the UK (Parents and Children Together, 2005)

Research Studies on Runaways

A nationwide survey in the UK of young people running away found that, although the majority reported that they had run away, almost one fifth said that they had been forced to leave home. The study found that one in nine young people (11%) in the UK run away from home, or are forced to leave, and stay away overnight before the age of 16. This suggests that around 77,000 young people under the age of 16 are likely to run away for the first time each year. However, since one in eight of the young people surveyed had run away more than three times, the study estimated that there were approximately 129,000 incidents of young people running away overnight each year. This study found that the prevalence rate was similar across different types of areas, irrespective of population density and economic prosperity. In other words, young people are likely to run away in all parts of the UK (urban, suburban and rural) and from more as well as less affluent families. (Source: Still running: children on the streets in the UK, Safe on the Streets Research Team, 1999).

Going Missing (Wade & Biehal, 1998) was the first major study in the United Kingdom of young people who run away from residential and foster homes. Conducted over a three-year period and sponsored by the United Kingdom's Department of Health, it sought to understand

why young people run away from substitute care and what happens when they do. In the first of the two stages of the research, the authors conducted two surveys of patterns of absences from substitute care in four English local authorities. The absences took place from July 1995 through July 1996. In the second stage, they convened 14 focus groups with young people social workers, and residential land foster caregivers, and they conducted in-depth interviews with 36 young people, their social workers, and their caregivers. The researchers mapped patterns, motivations, and responses and examined the effect of going missing on young people.

The findings from the study are summarized as below:

• One in nine young people ran away at least once before the age of 16.

• Young people who were looked after were more likely to run away than those living at home, and those in residential care were the most likely to go missing.

• The proportion of young people going missing from residential care varied between different local authorities, ranging from 25% to 71% of all those looked after in children's homes during a year.

• There were wide variations in running away rates between different children's homes, even where their intake was similar.

• The average age of first going missing was 13 but many began before the age of 11.

• Few left their local area while they were missing.

• Many stayed with friends, acquaintances or relatives, but between a quarter and a third of runaways slept on the streets.

• There was a strong association between running away and non-attendance at school, due to truancy or exclusion.

• The most common reasons for running away from home were conflicts with parents or stepparents, physical or sexual abuse, rejection and neglect.

(Source: Going Missing ,Wade & Biehal, 1998)

Recent studies in the UK have been concerned with identifying the prevalence of going missing, understanding more about what motivates young people to be away from home, their experiences while they are away (including the risks they face) and in highlighting service needs. Runaways: Exploding the Myths, Abrahams C and Mungall R, 1992, Children Who Go Missing; Research, Policy and Practice, Biehal, N., and J. Wade, 2002, Working With Young Runaways: Learning From Practice, Rees, G, 2001 are examples of relevant studies the findings of which have been summarized as below.

The findings include:

• Young people were as much at risk on the first occasion they go missing as after multiple absences.

• Equally, repeat runaways were just as vulnerable as others, although they were often viewed more as 'problems' in themselves rather than as 'at risk' - and sufficient consideration should be given as to why they were persistently absenting themselves.

• Young people who go missing were at risk of violence and victimisation, including sexual assault, especially if they slept on the streets.

• Young people who go missing were vulnerable to sexual exploitation, including involvement in prostitution.

• Runaways were at risk of involvement in offending, and this was especially true for those who went missing often from placements in residential care.

• Most young people run away only once or twice, but a substantial minority went missing repeatedly and this group was at greatest risk of depression, offending, detachment from school and drug or alcohol abuse.

• Young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties were more likely than others to go missing repeatedly from care.

• Young people who run away repeatedly from home had often experienced severe family problems and disruption or abuse.

• Persistent running away may be a precursor to adult homelessness.

The studies conclude that children at greatest risk were those who had run away once or twice due to abuse or depression, had run away three or more times, especially if they began before the age of 11 and those who had become detached from their families for lengthy periods (6 months or more).

(Source: Runaways: Exploding the Myths, Abrahams C and Mungall R, 1992, Children Who Go Missing; Research, Policy and Practice, Biehal, N., and J. Wade, 2002, Working With Young Runaways: Learning From Practice, Rees, G, 2001)

Research Studies on Affected Families: Psychosocial Aspects

Research suggests that the loss of a child to homicide or abduction was the most arduous type of loss a parent can endure. Parents are expected to protect their children from harm. Clearly, parents are unprepared psychologically to cope with a tragedy of this magnitude. The unexpected, sudden loss of a child may be more difficult to grieve than anticipated death (Maxwell, Parental bereavement and coping in two types of loss: Sudden infant death syndrome and non-familial abduction, 1994). The trauma is so significant that it leads to a "structural collapse," resulting in a sense of helplessness and loss of identity (Benyakar, Kutz, Dasberg, & Stern, The collapse of a structure: A structural approach to trauma, 1989). Three fundamental beliefs are compromised: benevolence, meaning, and self worth (Janoff-Bulman, Shattering assumptions: Toward a new psychology of trauma, 1992).

Parental survivors may ultimately be required to confront the gruesome details of the murder or abduction if, and when, a criminal trial ensues. Upon discovery of the murdered or long-term missing child's body, parents are immediately faced with an onslaught of bereavement symptoms. Understanding the multitude of likely symptoms that follow and developing coping strategies can help the grieving process (Bucholz, Homicide survivors: The misunderstood grievers, 1999).

The most common responses to abduction and homicide include a deep sense of shock; preoccupation with the loss of the abducted or deceased; concern with the cruelty and violence associated with the act; intense anger toward the perpetrator or criminal justice system; intense inquiry into the details of the investigation; disruption of appetite and sleep patterns; depression

and hopelessness; and an inability to move forward through identifiable stages of bereavement (Rinear, Parental response to child murder: An exploratory study, 1988).

The grieving process, as it applies to homicide and abduction, is unique in that the grieving process is the strong, emotional response to the sudden loss. The response is unavoidable and normal. These emotional responses are both psychological and physiological. Typical examples include, shock, denial, depression, helplessness, guilt, anger, and alienation. Bereavement is characterized by a synergism of loss, trauma, and victimization. Bereavement, as it relates to homicide or abduction, is unlike other forms of bereavement on a personal, as well as, a social level. On a personal level, the survivor experiences loss, trauma, and victimization. Victimization results from the stigma attached to the murder. Personal and social changes result in threats of deterioration and opportunities for growth for the surviving parent (Bucholz, 1999).

Survivors of abducted or murdered children are suddenly faced with an intense feeling of loss of control and unpredictability in a world which is presumed to be safe, secure, fair, and just (Janoff-Bulman, Shattering assumptions: Toward a new psychology of trauma, 1992).

Corr, Nabe, and Corr (Death and dying, life and living, 1997) identified four stages in the bereavement process. Initially, a survivor needs to acknowledge the reality of the loss. Second, a survivor must work through the anguish of the grief. Third, a survivor needs to adjust to the reality that the loss may be final. Finally, the survivor must emotionally displace the deceased and move forward with one's life (Mille, Death education and grief counseling, 1997).

The grief response to the long-term abduction or murder of a child varies with the age of the child. This was believed to be due to the ever-changing relationship that exists between the parent and the child at various stages of development and maturity. A sense of mortality and a loss of continuity can consume the parental survivor. It was reported that the loss of an adolescent child tends to produce severe responses of anger and guilt, often making it difficult to establish resolution. In contrast, the loss of adult children, although grieved no less, provides an environment more amenable to resolution for the parental survivor (Raphael, The Anatomy of Bereavement,1983)

Two components are identified as critical to dealing with the loss of a child: the relationship that exists between the parents and societal gender role expectations. Anger can be targeted from one parent to another, leading to a breakdown in the relationship. Personal intimacy and social interaction can impede the effort to move through the stages of bereavement. This can be the result of gender role expectations placed on parental survivors by society. The roles are clear under normal circumstances: The mother is expected to externalize the emotional response, actively seeking support. The father, in contrast, is strong and supportive, internalizing emotional responses. Yet in the world of child abduction and murder, normal circumstances are different. Society will question the lack of emotional response on the part of the father or the over-exaggerated response of the mother. These conflicting expectations can lead to miscommunication, in which one parent fails to recognize that the other parent is mourning (Donnelly, Recovering From the Loss of a Child, 1982).

In 2008, The Missing People Research Programme, UK, conducted a study to provide an exploratory examination of the range of experiences of, and impacts on, family members left

behind when someone goes missing. The study was a small scale, in-depth study of a number of family members' experiences, aiming to provide a rich and deep account of the ways in which the disappearance had affected them. The research identified three key domains of experience faced by the families of missing people: emotional and social experiences; financial, legal and other practical impacts; and experiences with service providers and the media. The findings are enumerated as below.

Emotional and social experiences

- Families may experience a range of emotions such as sadness, worry, guilt, anger and hope. They can experience 'highs' of hopefulness as well as 'lows' of despair.
- Emotional impacts may result in physical symptoms, such as sleeplessness, stress and deteriorating health.
- Emotional impacts do not diminish over time; families live 'in limbo' as long as their family member remains missing.
- Families' emotional experiences are affected by their perception of the disappearance; whether they believe the person left deliberately, and whether they believe their family member is still alive. What family members believe can affect not only their individual emotions, but also their relationships with other family members.
- Participants described a number of coping strategies they used to try to live with the disappearance. Examples of coping strategies include counseling, medication, religious faith, consulting psychics and mediums, and turning to friends and family.
- While some families actively seek to tell as many people as possible about the disappearance, others fear negative reactions and are wary about whom they tell.

Experiences varied among participants, indicating that no one approach to coping works for all families.

Financial, legal and other practical impacts

- The cost of conducting their own search affects some families, particularly the search efforts that take place before relevant support services are accessed. Such efforts include producing posters and leaflets and travelling in the UK and abroad.
- Disruption to family members' work, caused by emotional or practical pressures, can have financial consequences for families.
- The loss of the missing person's income can have a significant effect for families in which the missing person had financial responsibilities, such as paying bills or supporting other family members.
- Dealing with financial and legal affairs can be costly to the families of missing people, particularly where expert advice is required, as well as being a cause of stress and worry.
- Some family members find themselves in a position of paying the missing person's bills, or covering their debts, for reasons such as wishing to maintain the missing person's lifestyle for when they return or fearing the consequences of defaulting on payments.
- A particular area of confusion is that around the length of time for which a person must remain missing before their estate may be administered, their marriage dissolved, or for an official presumption of death to be declared.

Recommendations of the study included improving access to support services to families eg. access to enhanced range of advice literature about the emotional and practical support available to them and about other potential sources (in the voluntary and statutory sector) of assistance.

It also called for working with relevant government departments and non-departmental public bodies (etc.) to maximise the opportunities for 'mainstreaming' a range of support services tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of families of missing people.

The study also recommended that the ACPO and the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) should encourage police forces routinely to inform the family members of missing people of the range of support services available to them. Finally, it advocated the consultation with families of missing people to be at the heart of service development and planning.

Clarifying the legal and financial position was the second key recommendation area. It recommended the availability of legal and financial advice and support to the families of missing people and provision of instructions to appropriate resources to direct families.

It further recommended that any opportunity to provide a robust legal framework for dealing with the estate and other affairs of missing people who are presumed dead, and for improving clarity for family members, should be pursued.

Recommendations for the police service included the importance of the initial and continuing police response on the emotional impact on families, particularly with regard to families' concerns that everything possible is done to find the missing person. The family members of a missing person should have a clearly identified single point of contact with the police force dealing with their case. Investigating officers should consider families' need to know, as far as possible, what actions have been taken to find their missing family member.

(Source: Living In Limbo: The experiences of, and impacts on, the families of missing people, UK 2008)

Australia

A substantial proportion of the research conducted into missing persons has been conducted in Australia. The data collected in the recent study discussed above (James, Anderson, & Putt, 2008), suggested that approximately 35,000 people (approximately 1.7 per 1,000 Australians) were reported missing in Australia between 2005 and 2006.

However, the authors cautioned that this was likely an underestimation given that it was difficult to count certain sub-groups of the missing, such as homeless individuals, members of the indigenous population, or members of a sexual minority orientation (James et al., 2008).

In terms of the profile of missing Australians, the results indicated that males and females were nearly equally likely to be reported missing. However, with respect to young adults between the ages of 13 and 17 years old, which was the majority of cases, females were more likely to be reported missing than males. In fact, youth between the ages of 13 and 15 years old were the most likely age group to be reported missing (James et al., 2008).

Despite the higher frequency of young people going missing, adults were more likely to be missing for greater periods of time (James et al., 2008). In fact, only 2% of missing persons in Australia remained missing for more than six months; of those who were missing for these longer periods, they were more likely to be adult males (James et al., 2008; Newiss, 2005).

An earlier study in Australia identified that most of the 505 people who were reported missing in a one-week period in Australia were subsequently located alive within one week (86 per cent) (Henderson, Henderson, & Kiernan, 2000). In this study, only three individuals were found

deceased, and only two remained missing one year after the study.

These findings were similar to previous results reported by Henderson and Henderson (1998) in which only 2% of missing persons remain missing after six months. Data collected in Australia suggested that adults who went missing experienced a number of specific risk factors, such as desiring to escape a negative life situation, family conflict, substance abuse, or mental health issues. As mentioned above, in 2005 and 2006, police in two jurisdictions (New South Wales and South Australia) identified that over one-quarter of persons who had gone missing appeared to have a mental health issue. Furthermore, many adults over the age of 65 years old who had gone missing were classified as having gotten lost or wandered off suggesting the possible influence of age-related mental health problems (Source: James M, Anderson J & Putt J Missing persons in Australia. Research and public policy series no. 86. Australian Institute of Criminology, 2008.)

Considering the profiles of missing persons from the research conducted in Australia, the vast majority of those who were missing could be said to be young persons who ran away from their families and/or schools, or adults experiencing mental health issues who had left negative life situations, such as family or relationship conflict or additional pressures, such as those related to finances. Still, most of these missing persons were subsequently located by their families or the police within a short period of time.

Canada

Research into missing persons in Canada has not been as prevalent as that in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The research that has been conducted often involved

cases of missing children. For instance, in 2006, the National Missing Children Service assisted in 129 missing Canadian children, 230 missing American children, and 146 international missing children cases (Dalley, 2006). Overall, in 2006, there were 60,461missing children reports filed with the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC). Nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of these cases were removed within 24 hours of being listed on CPIC. The vast majority (82 per cent) of these cases involved youth between the ages of 14 to 17 years old. Nearly one-fifth (19 per cent) of children and youth missing in 2006 were identified as having substance use issues. Approximately one-third (32 per cent) went missing from their family's residence, while 14% went missing from child care and 20% from foster care. Nearly one-fifth (18 per cent) went missing from an institution, including their school or a youth detention centre. Less than 1% went missing while on vacation, while shopping in a mall, or from work (Dalley, Missing Children Reference Reports, Ottawa, 2006).

In terms of the reason for children to be missing, all categories (run away, stranger abduction, parental abduction, accident, wandered off, unknown, or other) decreased in 2006, apart from "stranger abduction", which increased from 30 to 46 between 2005 and 2006. Female children were more likely (65 per cent) than male children to be abducted by a stranger. Over one-quarter (28 per cent) of these abductions occurred with youth between the ages of 14 and 15 years old, while another one-quarter (26 per cent) involved children under the age of 12 months old. Interestingly, over one-quarter (28 per cent) of missing children had a previous history of going missing. Finally, half of these children went missing from their family home (Dalley, Missing Children Reference Reports, Ottawa, 2006).

Parental abduction was the classification for 326 cases in 2006; this was a decrease from 349 in 2005. Parental abduction occurred slightly more often for female children (54 per cent), most of whom were five years old or younger (48 per cent). A minority (16 per cent) of cases were repeat abductions. The vast majority (73 per cent) of children who were abducted by a parent were taken from their home; only 5% were taken from school and 4% from their foster home. Over half (56 per cent) of the cases did not have a custody order in place at the time of the abduction (Dalley, 2006).

Over three-quarters (77 per cent) of the youth who were missing in 2006 were identified as having run away; more frequently involving young females (53 per cent) than young males, and most frequently occurred among 14 and 15 year olds (53 per cent of females and 45 per cent of males). Most of these youth (82 per cent) had also run away in the past. Youth were commonly reported as missing from their family's house (29 per cent) or from a foster home (20 per cent) (Dalley, 2006).

Only 24 youth in 2006 were missing due to an accident; a slight decrease from 21 in 2005. The accidental category of missing is used to refer to cases where an individual goes missing as the result of some form of a natural disaster or other displacement, such as an airplane crash, a boating accident, an avalanche, or a fire. In effect, an accidental cause is given until a body is recovered, at which point the victim is removed from the list of missing persons.

The number of children and youth who "wandered off" also decreased between 2005 (704) and 2006 (567). The wandering off category is often used to refer to youth who have left a facility or

home and not returned. Dalley (2006) also noted that Canadian law enforcement used this category to refer to children and youth missing from social services care. While the missing categories of unknown (10,761) and other (2,009) both decreased from 2005 (12,079 and 2,061 respectively), they continued to be very common in 2006.

"Unknown" is used when there is a lack of information regarding how the child went missing. In contrast, "other" is often used to refer to a youth who has failed to return to a youth detention centre (Dalley, Missing Children Reference Reports, Ottawa, 2006). Dalley (2006) also reported on an additional study conducted with 19 parents who experienced the abduction and subsequent return of their child by the other parent. At the time of the abduction, the mean age of the victim was 8 years old. Many of the children were living with their mother at the time of their abduction. All the children were said to have experienced verbal and emotional abuse as a result of the abduction incident. With respect to the recovery of the child, slightly more than half (53 per cent) were found within the first year. Slightly more than one-third (37 per cent) were found in Canada, another 37% were found in the United States, and approximately one-quarter (26 per cent) were found in another country.

In terms of the relationship between the parents, over half were either separated or divorced, and most described their relationship as "poor". Over three-quarters of the parents had a court order in effect at the time of the abduction. Many of the "left-behind" parents described that they perceived the abduction to be caused by the abductor's need to control or have revenge against them. The left-behind parents tended to have a better education and higher income than the abducting parent.

With respect to missing persons in British Columbia, Patterson (2005) reviewed 2,290 missing person cases recorded on CPIC over a period of 54 years (1950 to 2004). In addition to providing a profile of those reported missing, she reviewed the probable cause of the disappearance. Interestingly, the profile of persons missing in British Columbia over this 54 year period did not drastically change. Overall, the profile of a missing person in British Columbia commonly referred to an adult white male. While those reported missing closer to the 1950's had most commonly disappeared as the result of a fishing accident and were presumed drowned, the nature of this profile changed over the years; by the 1990's, missing persons were more likely to be missing from their home as the result of unknown circumstances that likely involved suicide or foul play. This change in profile was likely the result of an increasing number of prostitutes going missing from the streets of Vancouver, British Columbia. The overall trends identified by Patterson suggested a general shift from missing persons coming from coastal fishing communities to major urban centres. In effect, the trends indicated a decrease in drowning accidents as the primary cause of missing persons and an increased number of runaways, prostitutes, and youth going missing.

The Royal Canadian Police Force released the first Canadian statistics on missing children in 1987. There were 57,233 children reported missing that year. In 2008, there were 56,102 children reported missing in Canada. An analysis of the 2009 reports showed that the total number of missing children reports decreased from 56,102 in 2008 to 50,492 in 2009. The number of reports in all categories of missing children decreased, whereas in 2008 only the runaway, and wandered off reports decreased.

The runaway category composed almost three-quarters of the missing children reports. More females than males ran away and more often (28%) from their family residence, while 23 per cent ran away from foster homes. Eighty-three per cent of runaway children had a history of repeat or chronic running episodes. Seventeen per cent had no history of missing.

The parental abductions reports, both custody and non custody, totaled 237 incidents, the lowest number since the service opened in 1987. In 2008 and 2009, more male children than females were abducted, a change from 2006 when more females were reported missing. In 2008, the majority of the parental abduction missing cases had a custody order in place, but in 2009 more reports were made without a custody order. Forty-one per cent of the children were under the age of 5, 31 per cent between ages of 6 and 11, and 28 per cent between the ages of 12 and 17. Sixty-eight per cent were last seen at their family residence and 5% at foster care.

Stranger abduction reported incidents decreased from 56 to 50 incidents. More females than males were reported missing. Fifty-eight per cent of the children disappeared from their family residence and 16% from foster care. Twenty-eight per cent were under the age of one, 30 per cent were age 14 and 15, and 20 per cent were age 16 and 17, showing a trend toward missing adolescents. (Source: The Royal Canadian Police Force Report, 2009).

South East Asia

The United Nations states that the children of South-East Asia are the most vulnerable in the world. It estimates that 1 million Asian children are traded every single day. Burma is a destination country for child sex tourism. Urban poor and street children in Rangoon and

Mandalay are at risk of involuntary conscription as child soldiers by the Burmese junta. Thousands of children are forced to serve in Burma's national army as desertions of men in the army rise. Some children are threatened with jail if they did not agree to join the army. Ethnic insurgent groups also use compulsory labor of adults and engaged in the unlawful recruitment of child soldiers. (Source: United Nations, 2008).

South-East Asia is also characterized by high incidences of child migration, domestically and across borders. Women and children are not only trafficked for sexual exploitation, but also for other types of work. South-East Asia has been highlighted in existing literature as having great significance with regard to extensive intra-regional trafficking taking place around Thailand, one of the major source, transit, and destination countries for trafficking in women and children for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Another country that has emerged as a sending, receiving, and transit area for both domestic and international trafficking is Indonesia. In Malaysia, figures obtained from the police on missing persons in 2003 show that the majority were female between the ages of ten and 17, with 1,405 cases reported, effectively establishing the link between missing children and trafficking.

(Source: Archavanitkul, K., Combating the Trafficking in Children and their Exploitation in Prostitution and Other Intolerable Forms of Child Labor in Mekong Basin Countries, 1998)

Bangladesh

The International Organisation for migration (IOM) initiated a mapping exercise of Mapping of missing, kidnapped and trafficked children and women in Bangladesh. The aim of the project was to gather information about missing and trafficked women and children including causes, origin, routes and rescue efforts in order to better understand the trends of missing, kidnapped

and trafficked children. This mapping exercise was undertaken by compiling media reports of missing, kidnapped and trafficked children from January 1990- December 1999. In addition, abduction and trafficking of women were also documented from January 1997-December 1999.

The study revealed that about 3,391 children were missing during the ten year period as of media reporting. Of these, majority were boys in the age group between 10-16 years while for girls it was below the age of 10 years. The highest number of missing children were in the year 1997, numbering 417. Majority of the missing children were from Dhaka where there is massive urbanization with vast number of migrants, street children, beggar children and destitute children. The rescue rate was found be negligible, with 1.2% for boys and 3.4% for girls, and this was mainly from Dhaka.

Compared to missing children, the number of kidnapped children was 987, of which the overwhelming majority were girls and only 346 were boys. Majority of the kidnapped girls were in the age group of 11-16 years, while the boys were below 10 years of age, so that they could be used as camel jockeys. About 3,397 children were found to be trafficked, of whom 1,683 were boys and 1,714 were girls. Of the 3397 children who were trafficked, only 9% of the children were rescued within Bangladesh.

The study found that three factors explain the existence of the heaviest trafficking routes. First, traffickers seek routes that allow easy movement of people. Therefore, trafficked children are sent through well- recognized legal migration routes such as India. The second factor is profitability of the route, namely, centres of sex tourism such as Kolkata or Mumbai. Thirdly, traffickers send trafficked women and children to the Gulf countries, which is another lucrative destination.

The study suggested a number of recommendations to effectively combat the kidnapping and trafficking of women and children. The recommendations included:

- Promoting political will to address the issue
- Strengthening government machinery especially the law enforcement agencies in border management
- Raising awareness at the grassroots level
- Developing alternative skills and micro-enterprise programmes for girls
- Promoting dialogue on the issue
- Creating a media watch dog group
- Buiding NGO capacity to combat trafficking (Source: Mapping of missing, kidnapped and trafficked children and women: Bangladesh Perspective, International Organisation for migration, 2000)

China

The 2007 U.S. State Department Trafficking in Persons report says that domestic trafficking "remains the most significant problem in China." It estimates that there are up to 20,000 victims each year, but because this is an underground practice, it is virtually impossible to track. Some estimates put the number of children kidnapped or sold on the black market closer to 70,000. The Chinese government says the number is more like 10,000.

Based on conservative estimates, an average of 192 children goes missing per day. The majority of those missing are boys, a direct consequence of The One Child Policy. The One Child Policy has resulted in prohibitive family-planning laws in China: prospective parents must have a birth

permit before conceiving, and while rural families are allowed a second child if their first is a girl, urban families must pay a fine for flouting the one-child rule. The easiest solution is to buy a stolen child, gender already determined.

Many parents have complained of a lack of support and effort on the part of the police in tracing their lost children. The current police system requires parents to provide evidence to prove their child has been abducted before the case can be officially filed. Moreover, the police will not accept a report until a child has been missing at least 24 hours – which means precious time is lost in rescuing the victim and catching the criminals.

According to the police, many crimes involve the kidnapping of children who are then sold in other provinces. Tracking the criminals would require cross-border cooperation, but currently such cooperation between independent provincial police systems is not common. (Source: U.S. State Department Trafficking in Persons report, 2007)

Child Abduction

One of the reasons for a child going missing is abduction. Child abduction is defined as the offense of abducting or kidnapping a child by an older person. The US research by Finkelhor, D., G., Hotaling and A. Sedlak, 1990 titled "Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children in America First Report: Numbers and Characteristics National Incidence Studies" have studied child abduction in detail, and identified two types of child abduction namely, stereotypical abduction and legal abduction.

Types of Abductions

According to Finkelhor (1990) there are two different types of child abduction: a. stereotypical abduction b. Legal abduction

Stereotypical abduction: Stereotypical abduction is the type of abduction in which a child is taken from the home, yard or bed, kept for ransom and/or sexual exploitation, and sometimes murdered. This type of abduction is usually committed by a stranger and is rare occurrence. This abduction is often referred to as a stereotypical abduction.

Legal Abduction: The situation in which the child is taken for a short period of time or transported a short distance from the point of abduction is referred to as the legal abduction.. This type of abduction is a more general form of abduction, and one which occurs most frequently.

In an attempt to distinguish between these two types of abductions, the following explanation is provided. The **stereotypical** definition includes "the removal of a child from his or her home for an extended period of time primarily for purposes of ransom, sadistic or sexual assault, or even murder" (Finkelhor et al, 1992, Asdigian et al, 1995). The stereotypical abduction term applies to those severe circumstances "where strangers are perpetrators and a) the child was gone overnight, or b) the child was transported more than 50 miles or more from the point of abduction, or c) the child was killed, or d) the child was ransomed, or e) the perpetrator evidenced an intent to keep the child permanently" (Finkelhor et al, 1992).

The **legal** definition includes the following: the coerced and unauthorized taking of a child into a building, vehicle, or distance of more than 20 feet; the detention of a child for a period of more than an hour; the luring of a child for the purposes of committing another crime by someone other than a family member; the perpetrator is known to both the parent or the child; the child may be held for only a short period of time, and then released even before the parent or guardian realizes that the child has been missing; the abduction or coerced movement may be masked under another more serious crime, such as sexual assault, homicide, and the like (Steidel, 1994; Collins, 1993). Furthermore, this definition varies between countries and police departments. Considering the subtle differences in the two definitions, police often find it difficult to distinguish between the two. Also, a number of legal definition abductions may not be reported to the police if the victim feels ashamed of the assault or intimidated by the offender (Finkelhor et al, 1990). It is common for controversy to appear when non-family or stranger abductions are counted using the legal definition, but, the results are interpreted using the stereotypical definition, as is commonly the case. (Source: Finkelhor, D., G., Hotaling and A. Sedlak, Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children in America First Report: Numbers and Characteristics National Incidence Studies, 1990).

Abductor

Four categories of abductors have been classified by the United States' Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). These are as follows:

a. **Paedophiles** – The people in this category constitute the single largest number of child abductors. Paedophiles seem to identify with children better than with adults which is the reason

why they are able to seduce/lure children easily. They appear to understand the likes and dislikes of children and show a genuine concern for their well-being.

b. **Profiteers** – This is an individual who is a criminal exploiter who sells children to pornographers or adoption rings, mostly in the black-market industry.

c. **Serial Killers** – The actions of these individuals are methodical and ritualized, with power, dominance, and control as the most frequent motivator.

d. **Childless Psychotics** – These individuals tend to abduct children when there are unable to have children of their own or have lost a child and seek another to fill its place (Source: Tedisco, J. N., & Paludi, M. A. Missing children: A psychological approach to understanding the causes and consequences of stranger and non-stranger abduction of children, 1996).

Abductors are generally male and they tend to target victims within their own ethnic group. Their behavioural patterns seem to be dependent upon gender, motivation, and relationship to the victim. To explain further, female offenders rarely abduct for sexual gratification, or profit, but more for emotional satisfaction.

The majority of child abductors who murder their victims have a history of violence. The United States missing children homicide investigative study by Hanfland et al, (1997) revealed that 60% had prior arrests for violent crimes. Almost two-thirds of the killers who were strangers to the

victims had committed prior crimes against children, whereas 41% of the child abduction killers who were friends and acquaintances of the victim had committed crimes against other children. Hanfland et al, (1997) stated that when the child is abducted and murdered, "contrary to the popular belief, child killers are not aged perverts or dirty old men." The abductor's average age is around 27 years and much younger than the average killer. They are predominately unmarried (85%), half of them live alone or with their parents, half are unemployed, they have a history of sexual, alcohol, drug and mental problems, two thirds have been arrested for violent crimes with slightly half of these prior crimes against children, and many move or change residence often. Younger offenders, which include adolescent offenders, attract their victims using different approaches, such as taking away privileges, giving gifts, making threats, and using weapons. In essence, they may need to do more to control their victims. In general though, child abductors are usually skilled in choosing their victims.

Tedisco and Paludi (1996) stated:"Abductors use the advantage of their physical strength over their victims or wield a gun or a knife. Abductors also use age, social position, economic power, authority, and/or manipulative lures as their weapons.
They rely on their victims' fear, vulnerability, and obedience to adults' authority. Child abductors are characteristically habitual offenders and carry out their assaults in a highly stereotypical modus operandi".

It is also important to consider the fact that most abductors are usually highly skilled in the art of manipulation. "They use seduction techniques, competition, peer pressure, motivation techniques, and threats to get children to comply with their requests to engage in sex, steal, abuse

drugs, or participate in prostitution or pornography" (Tedisco & Paludi, 1996). More simply expressed, in order to be successful, they must lower the children's inhibitions or make them afraid of the consequences if they do not comply.

To help explain an abductors approach, researchers identified two types of offender modus operandi; the "blitz attack" and the "confidence" or "con" assault (Tedisco & Paludi, 1996).

The Blitz Attack – "A stranger appears suddenly. Children's responses resemble reactions to any other sudden, unexpected, dangerous event in their lives: (a) they are in so much shock that it interferes with any defensive action they might take; (b) the shock of the stranger's behavior precludes seeing or remembering much of the incident, so that they may have considerable difficulty recognizing and identifying the individual at a later time; and (c) they label the experience as an assault and themselves as survivors". This type of attack may or may not involve an assault with a weapon.

The Confidence "Con" Assault – An elaborate scheme is set up by the abductor. It is more of a psychological assault than it is a physical assault. Initially, the abductor has to gain "the confidence of the targeted child/youth. The target's trust is used to manipulate her or him into physical and psychological vulnerability. The victim begins to notice a change in the behaviour of the abductor from a nice person to an aggressor. However, by the time this realization takes place, the abductor has already assessed his or her potential for escape; many of the child's options are thus eliminated. Trust is devastated after such a con assault. The key to continuing

the con assault is to have the abuser convince the victim that he or she is a participant in the crime; the he or she shares the responsibility for the abuse or has no other alternatives".

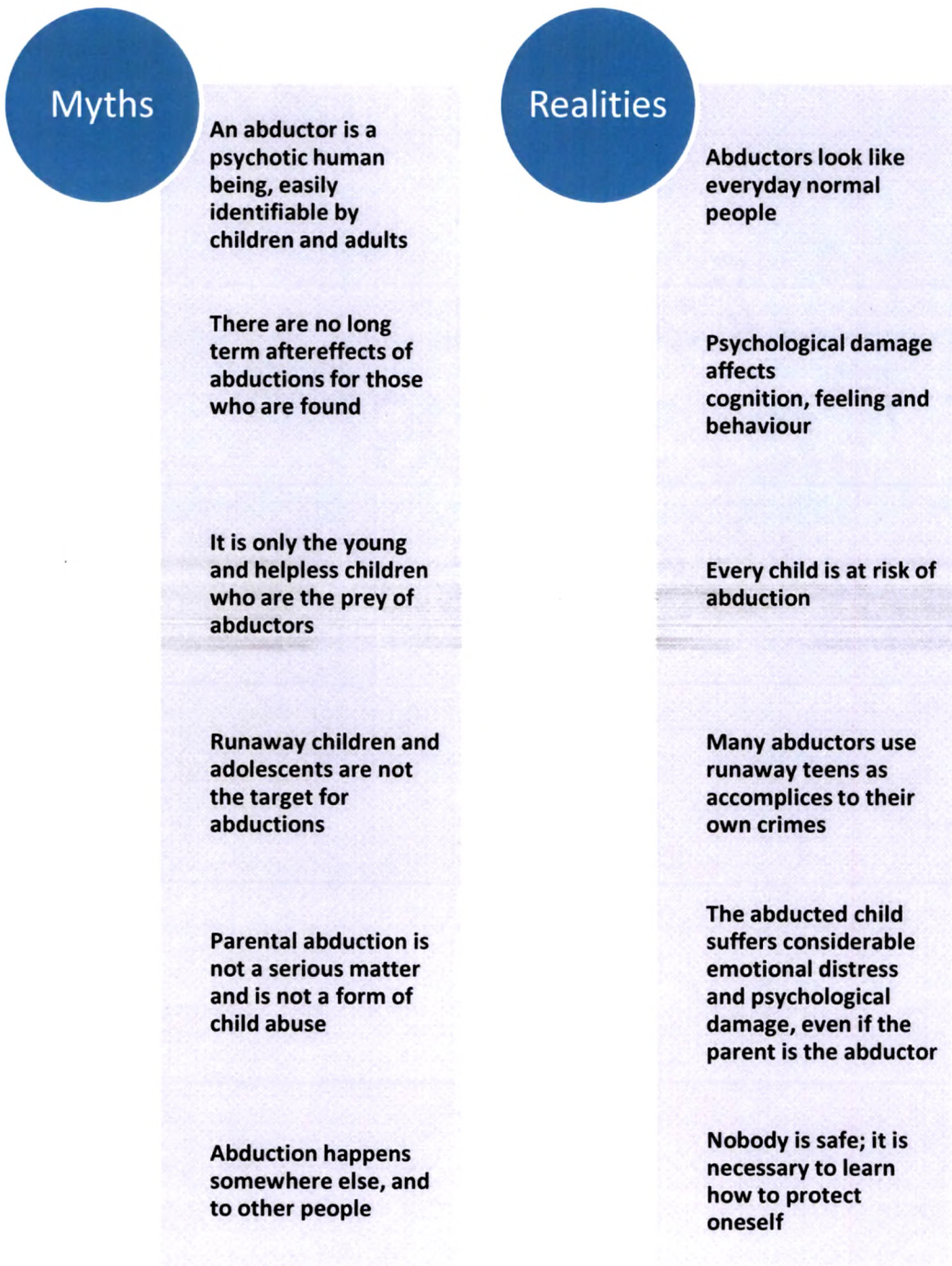
Relationship between the Offender and Victim

The relationship between the offender and victim appears to change with the age of the child. Family members and acquaintances often abduct younger children, up to seven years of age, while strangers tend to abduct school age victims (Boudreaux et al, 1999). Further, younger females, one to five years of age, tend to be killed by friends or acquaintances, while older females, 16 to 17 years of age, tend to be killed by strangers. Contrarily, the findings are different for male victims. The younger male victims, one to five years of age are more likely to be killed by strangers, as are teenage males, 13 to 17 years of age (Hanfland et al, 1997).

Family Characteristics

Researchers have suggested that in many cases, children "from a dysfunctional family and who may already be the victim of sexual and/or physical abuse" are prime abduction targets (Tedisco & Paludi, 1996). Contradictory, Hanfland et al, (1997) reported that most, 66%, of victims of non-family abduction and murder where described by those who knew them as normal kids with a good relationship with the family and typically of low risk. It may be noted here that those predators who murder children may do so when the opportunity arises. Therefore, any child could be at risk. On the other hand, children with low self confidence may be more likely to become prey for the potential kidnapper.

Figure 4: Abduction- Myths and Realities



(Source: James N. Tedisco, Michele A. Paludi, 1991)

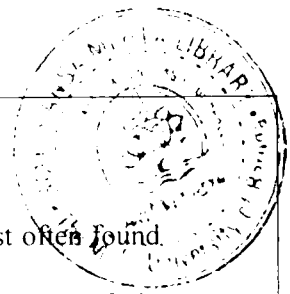
Homicide

Finkelhor (1997) stated that "homicide is one of the five leading causes of death among children in the United States". In general, child homicide rates tend to vary with age (Boudreaux et al, 2001; Dalley, 2000). Child homicide appears to have a bimodal pattern; children younger than the age of four and those adolescents between the ages of 13 and 17 tend to be at the highest risk. When examined closely, children under two years of age are at the highest risk for murder. A study conducted by Crittenden and Craig (1990) suggested that "the rate for homicide for children was highest in the first month of life, decreasing as the child aged". The young child is usually killed by parents or family members using personal weapons, such as the hands or feet. Older children and youth are usually victimized by peers and acquaintances and killed by the use of firearms (Finkelhor & Dziuba-Leatherman, 1994; Dalley, 2000).

Considering the factors of gender and age, males between the ages of thirteen and seventeen outnumber the risk to female victims of the same age group (Boudreaux et al, 2001). It is speculated that males may be more violent and aggressive toward any rival peers during the period of adolescence.

Abduction Homicide

It has been reported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention that "one in four children abducted by parents or relatives was later found to have been murdered by his or her abductors" (Boudreaux et al., 2001). When an abductor murders a child, abductors are more



likely to conceal the body than murderers in general. Furthermore, the body is most often found in a rural area, usually at a site greater than one and a half miles from the victim's home. Only five percent were found in the killers residence (Hanfland et al, 1997).

However, for the most part, children are usually considered at low risk for kidnapping and murder. With regard to younger children, gender is usually not a factor in the murder of a child. Very young children are commonly victims of maternal desire or emotion-based crimes. However, Boudreaux et al, (2001) stated that "female children from preschool through high school age were at least three times more likely to be abducted and murdered than male children". Females are also more at risk for abduction-homicide in adolescence.

Physical Setting Related to Abduction Opportunities

In a book "My child is not missing: a parents' guidebook for the prevention and recovery of missing children", Beverly Huttinger described some physical situations that caused children to be more vulnerable to victimization. Huttinger listed these as follows:

- walking alone to or from school (especially before and after normal school hours);
- waiting for a school bus alone;
- playing in a public park or playground after hours or late in the evening or playing unsupervised at any time;
- exploring remote areas;
- using enclosed, poorly lit stairways, corridors, and public rooms (e.g., apartment laundries);
- riding a bicycle alone or at night;

- waiting in public parking lots (e.g., at malls) after dark or in normal working hours;
- walking unattended in a crowded mall or other public places; and
- wearing articles of clothing that have their name prominently displayed allowing abductors to portray familiarity.

(Source: My child is not missing: a parents' guidebook for the prevention and recovery of missing children, Huttinger B, 1984).

Investigative Considerations

The greatest majority of missing children are runaway youth. Each year, most runaway children have multiple episodes of running away, some as many as forty times a year. In 2002, this group of children created over 52,000 reports and 74% were repeat occurrences. Children who are abducted by a parent created 429 reports and those abducted by a stranger, including relatives, neighbours and close friends, created 35 reports.

Consequently, on occasion, missing children approaching the age of adolescence tend not to draw the immediate attention of investigators. Many think that older kids and youth are just being irresponsible by missing a curfew and so forth. The police response to an incident is considered routine if the youth has a history of missing. For children under the age of 16 years, police agencies have a protocol in place for investigators to follow but after this age there appears to exist a "grey area". On occasion, a missing episode is considered routine, and unfortunately the youth is abducted by a stranger. (Source: Dalley, M.L. The Killing of Children by Parent (s) or Guardians (s): Characteristics and Trends 1990 to 1993, 2002).

B. Indian Studies

There is a dearth of studies on the missing children phenomena in India. Literature on missing children per se is sparse, though there are many studies on child labour, child prostitution and trafficking wherein the link between missing children and most forms of child exploitation has been established. The first comprehensive information in India on missing children was the collection of information by National Crime Record Bureau which commenced in 1953. One of the earliest efforts was spearheaded by UNICEF in 1996 (A report on child prostitution B. Bhamati, UNICEF 1996) which established the link between child trafficking and missing children. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) conducted a research study on trafficking of women and children in India in 2004, again providing evidence of the link between missing children and human trafficking. In 2007, an enquiry was initiated by NHRC following the recovery of the mutilated bodies of 19 children who were originally reported missing in Nithari. The report concentrated on the issue of policy gaps that existed in the system. Therefore it can be clearly seen that initiatives at the national level on studying the problem of missing children has been few and far between.

This section provides the chronological presentation of major Indian studies on the issue of missing children and their findings.

Kidnapping of Children in India (1968) was one of the earliest studies undertaken by the Central Bureau of Correctional Services. A committee under the Central Bureau of Correctional Services was set up by the Government of India to study the kidnapping and maiming of children. According to the census of 1961, there were 100,000 child beggars in India under the

age of 14, representing 10% of all beggars and vagrants. Surveys done in four cities indicated that they formed 25%. A proportion of them are believed to have been kidnapped and maimed to provide a source of income. A police drive in 1965 succeeded in rescuing 22 children and to arrest a kidnapping gang operating across India. . A four year review (1963-67) showed that 25 children were kidnapped annually for the purposes of begging, though none were maimed. The study recommended that the Missing Persons Bureau needed to be strengthened at the State, district and city levels. (Source: Kidnapping of Children in India, Jyotsna Shah, 1976)

The National Human Rights Committee (2000) took the initiative to undertake the first major study in India on trafficking which was published in 2004. It established the link between missing children and Human Trafficking when it was published in 2004. The study reported that children who went missing were trafficked for specific purposes, such as performing in circus, camel jockeying, begging, domestic labour, marriage, organ donation, adoption and debt bondage. (Source: Trafficking in Women and Children India, National Human Rights Committee Action research, Nair P.C. and Sen S., 2004)

Childline (2007) undertook a study titled "Missing Children Of India: Issues and Approaches". It observed that the average number of children declared "missing" annually in the country was calculated at 44,476. The National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), the nation's central crime research organization, tabulates only cases of kidnapped children which it puts at 3196 for the year 2005 figures show a gradual upswing in the number of missing children in several states, led by Maharashtra (yearly average: 13,881), followed by Delhi (6,227) and Madhya Pradesh (4,915).

- Mumbai is number one when it comes to missing children. In 2006 alone, Mumbai's

missing minor registers recorded 948 children as untraced

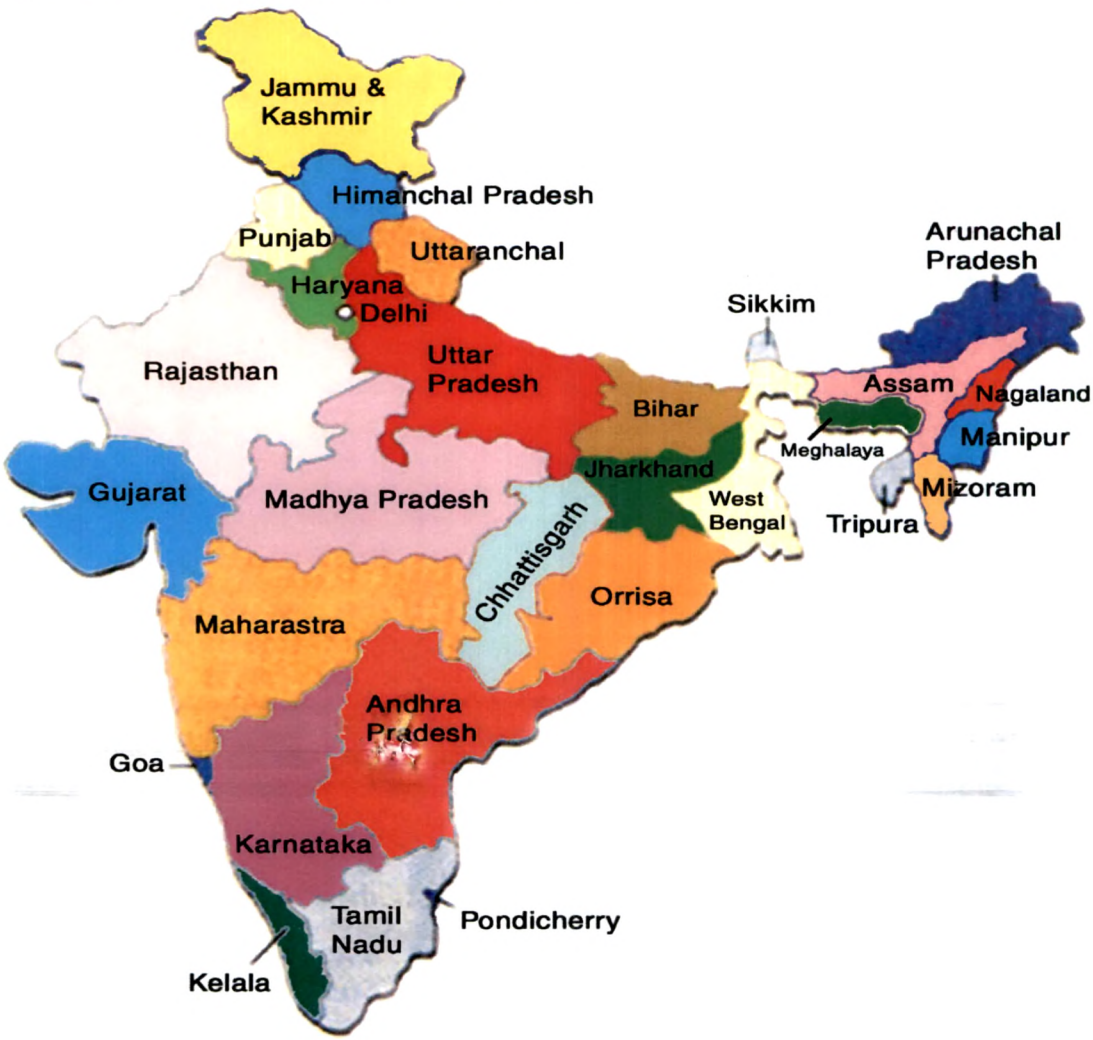
- The Patna High Court, while hearing a PIL on kidnappings, sought figures from district judges. Statistics showed that over 1,800 kidnapping cases were lodged in 2006 and 1,697 in 2005
- An estimated 3,497 children, a majority of them girls, went missing last year and only 1,585 were recovered.
- On an average, 170 kids go missing in Rajasthan every year
- Over a thousand children went missing in Kerela in 2005.
- As of December 31 2005, the number of untraced children in MP was 1913.
- Of the 15,000 who went missing from the Capital last year, 7,000 were minors. From 2003 to 2006, of the 8,681 children who went missing, 8,014 were "traced" and 667 were recorded as 'untraced'
- In Assam from 2001 to 2005, for which complete figures are available, 3,673 children were reported missing.
- In UP, as many as 3,649 children went missing in the State in 2005 (Source: Childline, 2007).

The Ministry of Women and Child Development (2007) ordered an enquiry into the rape and murder of 19 children in Nithari in 2007. The report stated that the police were insensitive to the woes of poor families, rude in their approach, and their behaviour was generally gender and child insensitive when it came to handling of missing children cases. Almost all the victim families came from poor sections of society, and there was a general perception among these families that police did not care to listen to their problems. Thus it was felt that reporting and investigating

cases of children missing were not given the necessary priority, especially children from poor families. This was a general situation that prevailed across the country.

There was also apathy and a general lack of sensitivity about gender and child issues in the police system. Citing the police's criminal indifference, the report stated that FIRs were not lodged even in missing cases which involved minors. The report strongly stated that after the recovery of human skeletons from D-5, Sector 31, in Noida it became clear that the police had no information whatsoever about five victims whose skeletal remains were found. The final report further said, "There is a strong possibility that the reports (about the missing victims) were not lodged even after their kin had informed the police that they were missing. This is a grave error and indicates how this police station functioned." (Source: Report of the Committee investigating into allegations of large scale sexual abuse, rape and murder of children in Nithari village of Noida, UP, Krishnan, Manjula., 2007)

Figure 5: Missing Children in India



States	No. of missing Children (2008-2010)
1. Maharashtra	26,211
2. West Bengal	25,413
3. Delhi	13,570
4. Madhya Pradesh	12,777
5. Karnataka	9,956
6. Uttar Pradesh	9,482

(Source: Bachpan Bachao Andolan, 2010)

Save the Children, Kolkata (2008) undertook a study to understand the dynamics of trafficking and migration of children (missing) in selected endemic blocks of West Bengal, to collect reliable information on the number of children trafficked, and among them the number of missing children. The report stated that the National Crime Records Bureau website displays about 149 children missing from Sandeshkhali (142) and Patharpratima (7), while data reveals that in Patharpratima since 2005, 71 children were reported missing for which General Diary/FIR has been filed, while 28 missing children were recovered during this period for most of which General Diary/FIR may have been filed earlier. Similarly, data received from Sandeshkhali police station reveals that from 2004 to 2006 a total of 302 children were reported missing, while 30 children have been traced during this period.

Other findings pertaining to missing children in the study include:

a) 66.67% are girls, while the remaining 33.33% are boys

b) 49.06% children were between the age of 15 to 18, while 29.96% were between (13 - 14) yrs and 20.97% below 12 years of age

c) 15.04% children never attended school, while 76.69% children studied only till 5th standard. Amongst girls 64.61% attended school only till 3rd standard and 14.61% of the girls never attended

d) 82.92% children left their homes for work and 11.67% of children were taken out of their homes for marriage

e) Only 16.18% cases were reported to the police or the Panchayat. In 83.82% cases, the parents either tried to get information on the child either themselves or through other contacts.

The study further included the recommendations that as mandated under Section 63 of the Juvenile Justice Act 2000, all police stations should have an officer designated as Child Welfare Officer. At the state level, an officer of the rank of DIG should be designed as the Nodal Officer in charge of missing children. All stakeholders, including police administration and community representatives, should be sensitized on the issue of missing children.(Source: Save the Children, Kolkata, 2008).

SATHI (Society for Assistance to Children in Difficult Situation) 2008 undertook a study titled "Study of databases on Missing Children in India". The study attempted to understand how governmental and non-governmental agencies dealt with the data of missing children and to what degree they could have consistent data that was shared among all who were involved in the area of missing children. The list included six non-government organizations across the country, and two governmental mechanisms namely, the Kolkata Police and The National Crime Records
The research findings are as follows:

- Forms did not have standardized Fields (Data fields are not same in all forms):

For instance the National Centre for Missing Children (NCMC) form asked whether the child wore glasses or not whereas the HomeLink Network (Don Bosco) as well as Kolkata CID data fields did not ask for that specific information.

- There was no standardization of the form containing these data fields:

In most forms, data items were free formatted. This made it very difficult to ensure uniformity of descriptions. An important lapse that was found was that there was no standardization as to what should be put in the field for Place of Missing or Place where last found. This was left blank in

many examples that were seen on the Kolkata CID data base. Usually the data field was found to be empty or the standard phrase "From the house" was used. The research observed that the place of missing if filled appropriately could be one of the good search criteria.

- There was no basic check on data entered:

The research found that in many records of children who were found a) there was no image of the child found, b) body weight was entered as zero kg and c) the place where the child was found was not mentioned.

- There was lack of standard and easy field for searching:

The search item found being used the most was the name of the child, the study found. It noted that while the State District and Police Station (PS) in the district played a very important role in reporting missing and found children, there was no mechanism to search the records using these as search parameters. Similarly, there was no way to search by age of the missing child.

- There was difficulty in comparing databases across the organisations:

Given the fact that there are atleast four to five major sources of data on missing and found children – the State Crime Record Bureaus (SCRBs), the NCRB, NCMC, HomeLink and ChildLine, lack of a proper mechanism for synchronization of databases was found. For the NCRB and SCRB there was a mechanism for uploading but that process is manual. Additionally, there was no mechanism to ensure regular updating of the records.

- Language Medium used:

In all the websites, it was found that the medium of information is English. The West Bengal website has indicated the intention of using Hindi and Bangla but is yet to be implemented.

- No use of biometrics :

The final observation of the study was the complete lack of collecting and matching bio markers in the process of recovering missing children. The argument was that if the DNA sample of the parents is kept it might provide an opportunity of quick matching against children who are eventually traced. However, biomarkers have not found a place in the system yet, probably due to financial, legal and societal reasons. (Source: SATHI, 2008)

Bachpan Bachao Andolan (2008) undertook a research project to understand the nature and extent of the missing children problem across the country. The data was collected and classified from 20 states and 4 union territories of India for the period of 2 years from January 2008 to January 2010. The missing children data was classified under three major headings - Reported Missing, Traced and Untraced.

The findings were as follows: 1,17,480 children were reported missing, 74,209 were traced and 41,546 remained untraced in two years between 2008 and 2010. Among 20 states and 4 UTs, Maharashtra (26,211) had highest number of children reported missing followed by West Bengal (25,413), Delhi (13,570) and Madhya Pradesh (12,777). Karnataka (9956) and Uttar Pradesh (U.P) (9,482) were the last two among the top six states. Maharashtra (18,706) had the highest number of children being traced followed by Delhi (11,870), Madhya Pradesh (9,537), Uttar Pradesh (7,586), West Bengal (6,653) and Karnataka (3,522). 41,546 untraced children

constituted more than 1/3rd of the total children reported missing nationally. West Bengal had maximum number of untraced children. Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh came next in the line.

According to the study, as much as 45% of the total reported missing children have still not been found. The border districts of West Bengal, such as 24 Paragna, Midenapur, Malda, Dinajpur, Murshidabad, Nadia etc, had large number of untraced children. Data from 392 districts show that 1,17,480 children were reported missing within a span of 2 years. The report further elaborated that if the average number of 150 reported missing children per district (from available data) is extrapolated to all 640 districts in the country, the total number of missing children in India every year would be in the figure of 96,000. (Source: Bachpan Bacchao Andolan, 2008)

Priyanka Dubey, Tehelka (2012) in an investigative report stated that poor children are picked up from the remotest slums of Delhi and sold to the sugarcane farmers of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. The Ministry of Home Affairs had put the figure of Delhi kids going missing at an average of 14 per day. The investigation showed that besides the regular and predictable endpoints of being forced into prostitution, used for organ trade and injected into the beggary cycle, there was a completely new trafficking racket in place. This sent children to the sugarcane fields of the neighbouring states. This trend of abducting, trafficking and selling children was more rampant in districts like Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Baghpat and Meerut of western Uttar Pradesh along with adjacent districts of Haryana. With a scattered but efficient network, middlemen abduct children from poor settlements of Delhi and then sell them off to sugarcane farmers working in numerous fields surrounding Delhi. (Source: Tehelka, Priyanka Dubey 2012)

Research at the Local Level:

Mao S, Mehta L, (2007) from The Faculty of Social Work, Baroda, conducted a local level research on missing children in Baroda in 2006. According to the Prevention of Crime Branch police records, 58 children were reported missing in the city of Baroda. The majority of the missing children were between 15-18 years of age. There were 52 children missing between the ages 15-18 as compared with 2 missing children in the ages between 5-9 and 3 missing children between the ages 11-14. Majority of the missing children were runaways, and returned home on their own. There were two cases in which the female had eloped to get married. Females were more likely to go missing than males and accounted for 33 of the total missing children cases in 2006 as compared with 25 males. Of the 58 missing children, 44 have been found and there are 14 still missing. Most of the runaways had gone to their relatives place or taken a trip outside the city and eventually returned back to their homes. One child was found from the Goa Remand home by the police and was returned to his parents. There were two cases in which the child suffered from a mental disorder. Of the 13 children still missing, 6 are males and 8 are females. All the females still missing are between 15-18 years of age. (Source: Missing Children in Baroda, Mao S, Mehta L, 2007)

This was a first attempt of the researcher and her guide to explore unchartered territory, the findings of which increased the quest for further research, resulting in the current study.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be seen that while researchers in other countries have covered several dimensions relating to missing children, and have undertaken in depth studies on various aspects including the causes for children going missing, focusing on victims as well as perpetrators and

the modus operandi of the perpetrators. Furthermore, studies have also been undertaken on police response, the families affected, and children who were reported missing and eventually found murdered.

So far in India the issue of missing children is yet to be recognized as a serious social problem. Indian researchers have not concentrated on generating information related to this issue except for a few studies given here which provides information on the prevalence of the issue as a whole. No studies were found specifically examining the impact of missing people as a whole, on families, society and the community at large. There is a need for research into the various aspects concerning missing children to understand the missing children problem in accordance with India's unique multi-cultural context. Research studies need to be undertaken to study causal factors related to the various types of missing children episodes. Studies examining the impact on families of missing children would provide essential information to aid in policy and planning decisions in India.

Figure 6: Missing Children in Gujarat (2000-2009)

	City	Missing Children
1.	Surat	3,458
2.	Ahmedabad	2,764
3.	Rajkot	1,437
4.	Baroda	1,241