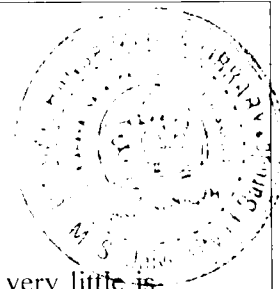


## Abstract



The issue of missing children is a complex, multi-dimensional problem of which very little is known or understood. Moreover, there is no clear definition of missing children and accurate data is not available. Children who go missing are at risk, and there is little being done to prevent it or to bring about systematic changes to tackle the problem. The aim of this research is to find some answers to questions such as who are the children going missing, how do they go missing, what is being done to trace them.

This study establishes the link between poverty and the missing children phenomenon. With empirical data that runaways constitute a large part of the missing children problem, and majority of them in this group being girls, a clear need for preventive measures is needed to be a part of policy solution. Prevention of family breakdown and destitution of children and strengthening of families at risk through supportive services is therefore the first priority and form of intervention.

This study establishes the importance of raising awareness among relevant agencies, government decision makers, the wider community, and missing children themselves about the impacts of going missing and the types of action that each can take to mitigate social and economic impacts. It provides insights on the extensive and pervasive impacts on families and the widely acknowledged need for support for those affected. The recommendations include coordinated efforts, both across agencies and in collaboration with the missing child's families and friends and community, effective prevention strategies, suggested police response to a missing child report and a holistic approach towards addressing this issue.