

## Maternal involvement with their children regarding pre-school education

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### ABSTRACT

A study on maternal involvement with their preschool children among rural and urban areas was conducted in Dharwad Taluk during 2010-11. Two hundred mothers of pre-school children were randomly selected from four anganwadies of two villages of Dharwad Taluka. The mother's involvement with their children was assessed by using Parent Child Interaction scale developed by Kale (1974) and Aggarwal *et al.* scale (2005) to assess the socio-economic status of the family. The results revealed that majority of the mothers from both rural and urban localities had medium level of involvement with their children. There was a significant difference between mothers of rural and urban localities and mothers of pre-school children of private and government schools on their involvement with their children. Mother's education, family income and socio-economic status were positively and significantly correlated with maternal involvement while family size was negatively and significantly correlated with maternal involvement with their preschool children.

### INTRODUCTION

Pre-school years of a child's life are the most important years.. The early years are very plastic, sensitive, impressionable and formative for the growth and development of the child. It is a crucial time period for the development of the mental functions of children. At this stage they need to be encouraged to develop positive attitude through interaction, involvement of parents as their children explore the world in new ways. What children experience from birth to age eight greatly influences the eventual development of language skills, reasoning and writing skills (Livingston, 2006). Hence, pre-primary education is very important for the child as it is the foundation for their education before the commencement of formal schooling.

During these years mothers will be the main influence in the child's learning experience and education. What mothers do and expose their children to have a vast impact on the development of the child. A mother has a very vital role in the education process since early childhood, because the mother figure who first interacts with the child, gives a sense of security,

and the one who is believed. Maternal involvement is linked to children's total learning. The mother's involvement in children's learning; positively affect the school performance including higher academic achievement (Yan and Lin, 2002). If children are to be successful in school, mothers must participate actively in their children's academic lives. Maternal involvement is a valuable component of any student's education. The level of mother-school involvement is a better predictor of grades than are standardized test scores ((Henderson and Berla, 1994). Bronfenbrenner model identified the home and the school as the two central aspects of parental involvement that influences child's development, emphasizes the importance of the parent - teacher communicating and working with the child cohesively.

Parental involvement in their children's learning activities in kindergartens and in home-schooling situations positively affect their children's achievement in kindergarten. It also boosts their academic self-confidence, increases their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and directs them towards mastery goal orientation, facilitates their literacy development and positively influences children's later school competence as their parents'

instruction is likely to remain deeply rooted in their memories even after they leave school (Reynolds *et al.*, 2000). Mothers' regular participation in their pre-school children's learning in kindergarten programmes contributes immensely to developing their children's learning abilities, boosting their academic self-confidence, and improving the relationship between the parents and the kindergarten teachers who teach their children (Lynch *et al.*, 2006).

## METHODS

For the present study, sample comprised of 200 mothers of pre-school children of age 3-6 years from both rural and urban areas of government and private schools of Dharwad Taluka. An equal sample of 100 mothers from four rural and four urban pre-schools were selected for the study.

Personal information schedule was used to collect the general information about the respondents. Aggarwal *et al.* (2005) scale was used to assess the socio-economic status of family. Based on total score, family was classified into Upper high, High, Upper middle, Lower middle, Poor, Very poor. Parent-child interaction scale developed by Kale (1974) was used to assess the extent of involvement of mother and child interactions. The scale has 25 statements with three alternative

responses. Based on the total score, respondents were classified into High, Medium and Low.

## OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Information regarding the demographic characteristics of the sample is presented in Table 1. Among both rural (77.0%) and urban (88.0%) locality, mothers of pre-school children were between age range of 25-34 years followed by 35-44 years (17.0%) and (10.0%) and 2 and 6 per cent of the mothers were between the age range of 45-54 years. With regard to education of the mothers, among rural locality, 36.0 per cent of mothers had education of SSLC pass but less than graduation level followed by primary <10<sup>th</sup> class (29.0%) and less than primary education (20.0%). None of the mothers had post graduation. Among urban area, 34.0 per cent of mothers had education upto SSLC followed by graduation (29.0%) and primary (17.0%). Only few of the mothers completed post graduation (7.0%). With respect to occupation, majority of mothers from rural and urban locality (79.0% and 85.0%) were housewives followed self-employed (7.0% and 2.0%) and service at shops (7.0% and 5.0%). With respect to socio-economic status, 60 per cent of mothers of urban locality fell under lower middle socio-economic status followed by upper middle (27 %) and poor (12

Sr. No.	Demographic variables	Classification	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Total f (%)
1.	Mother's age (years)	25-34	77.0	88.0	165(82.5)
		35-44	17.0	10.0	27(17.5)
		45-54	6.0	2.0	8(4.0)
2.	Mother's education	Illiterate	4.0	2.0	6(6.0)
		Just literate but no schooling	4.0	9.0	13(6.5)
		School but <primary	20.0	2.0	22(11.0)
		Primary<10 <sup>th</sup> class	29.0	17.0	46(23.0)
		10 <sup>th</sup> pass<graduation	36.0	34.0	70(35.0)
		Graduation	7.0	29.0	36(18.0)
		Post graduation	-	7.0	7(3.5)
3.	Mother's occupation	Professional qualification with technical degree or diploma e.g.	-	-	-
		Unemployment	-	-	-
		Housewives	79.0	85.0	164(82.0)
		Self-employed	7.0	2.0	9(4.5)
		Service at shops, home	7.0	5.0	12(6.0)
4.	Socio-economic status	Service in central/state/public undertaking	7.0	8.0	15(7.5)
		Upper high	-	-	-
		High	-	1.0	1(0.5)
		Upper middle	9.0	27.0	36(17.5)
		Lower middle	80.0	60.0	140(68.0)
		Poor	11.0	12.0	23(11.2)
	Very poor	-	-	-	

Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages.

%). None of the family belonged to very poor socio-economic status. In case of rural group, majority of them fell under the category of lower middle socio economic-status (80 %), poor (11 %) and upper middle (9 %).

Table 2 shows the mothers' involvement among rural and urban areas. It is clear from the Table that 75.0 per cent of mothers of pre-school children from rural area were found in medium involvement group and 25 per cent were in high involvement group. With regard to urban locality, more than half of mothers (56.0%) were found in medium involvement group and 44.0 per cent were found in high level of involvement. It is seen that none of the mothers were found in low level of involvement. The comparison mean scores of mother's involvement revealed that there was a significant difference between mothers of pre-school children of rural and urban localities on their involvement with their children. This may be due to the reason that urban mothers take interest in child's activities and encourage them to read and write, explain words and meanings and participate in child's functions.

The result presented in the Table 3 reveals the mothers' involvement with their children among private and government schools. Majority of the mothers (72.0%) of pre-school children of private schools from urban area were found in high involvement group and 28.0 per cent were in medium level of involvement with their children. Similarly it was seen that 60.0 per cent of mothers of pre-school children of rural private schools were found in medium level of involvement group and 40.0 per cent were in high level of involvement with their children. Among the mothers of children from government schools of both rural and urban area, (90.0 % and 84.0%) showed medium level of involvement and 10 per cent and 16.0 per cent of mothers showed high involvement with their children, respectively. However, none of the mothers was in

the category of low level of involvement. The comparison mean score of mother's involvement revealed that there was significant difference between mothers of pre-school children of private and government schools on maternal involvement. This may be due to mothers of private pre-schools must have taken more interest in the education to make them adjusted to the new school environment. Another reason observed was that relatively a larger proportion of mothers had completed primary and S.S.L.C. education must have given more attention to the overall development of children.

Table 4 depicts the relationship between demographic variables with maternal involvement. From the table it is observed that mother's occupation, child's age, gender were positively related with maternal involvement with their children. Mother's age and ordinal position of the child was negatively related with maternal involvement. However correlation was found to be non significant. Maternal involvement increased as the educational level of the mothers increased. This could be due to the reason that relatively larger portion of mothers from urban area had better education, better facilities like hiring services for domestic work so they could spare time. The educated mothers have higher knowledge of their children's schooling, more contact with the pre-school teacher, aware of their children's achievement and monitor their child's progress. It is quite natural that educated mothers provide a greater importance to their children's activities. Holloway *et al.* (2008) reported that mothers who were highly educated involved at a greater extent in their children's lessons. It was noticed that family size was negatively and significantly correlated with maternal involvement. It is expected that in a family where there are more number of children, the mother cannot give individual attention. However, Hunakunti (1994) reported that size of the family was negatively and significantly related with parent's

**Table 2 : Distribution of mothers involvement among rural and urban area**

Locality	Maternal involvement levels			Total	Mean	SD	't'	$\chi^2$
	High	Medium	Low					
Rural	25 (25.0)	75 (75.0)	-	100	54.46	5.46		
Urban	44 (44.0)	56 (56.0)	-	100	57.37	5.55	3.67**	1.94 <sup>NS</sup>
Total	69 (100)	131 (100)	-	200	55.89	5.67		

Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages. \*\*- indicates significance of value at P= 0.001

**Table 3 : Distribution of mothers according to their involvement among private and government preschools (n=200)**

Type of schools	Locality	Maternal involvement levels			Total	Mean	SD	't'	2
		High	Medium	Low					
Private	Rural	20 (40.0)	30 (60.0)	-	50	58.64	5.34	6.09**	1.86NS
	Urban	36 (72.0)	14 (28.0)	-	50				
Government	Rural	5 (10.0)	45 (90.0)	-	50	53.64	5.09		
	Urban	8 (16.0)	42 (84.0)	-	50				
Total		69	131	-	200	55.89	5.67		

Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages.  
\*\* indicates significance of value at P= 0.001 level

**Table 4 : Relationship of demographic variables with maternal involvement with their children**

Demographic variables	Maternal involvement
Mother's age	-0.008 NS
Mother's education	0.549**
Mother's occupation	0.054 NS
Child's age	0.132 NS
Child's gender	0.035 NS
Child's ordinal position	0.011 NS
Family size	-0.142*
Family income	0.393**
Socio economic status	0.412**

\* and \*\* indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively  
NS=Non-significant

involvement in education.

It is observed that family income and socio-economic status of the family positively and significantly related with mother's involvement in their children's activities. The mothers with upper middle socio-economic status showed high involvement in the development of children. It is a fact that economically sound parents are able to provide better educational facilities, material facilities and avail labour saving devices. These facilities might have enabled the mothers to utilize and spend more time in the development of pre-school children. The findings are in agreement with Holloway *et al.* (2008) who mentioned that wealthier parents invest greater extent in children's education.

### Conclusion:

On the whole, majority of mothers from both rural and urban areas showed medium involvement with their children. Mothers must pay enough attention more particularly pre-school years as these years are crucial formative and critical for laying good foundation to child's wholesome development. For optimizing wholesome development of pre-schoolers, both mother and father or any other care giver either in family or school must learn to maintain a good relationship. Mothers must invest quality time and energy for providing more qualitative educational experiences in life of pre-schoolers. Among government pre-schools, mothers from rural area were more involved than that of urban counterparts. There should be participation and involvement of parents in pre-school education to improve the performance and the best outcome of child. Parent-teacher meeting is one of the effective methods

through which mothers can involve and contact with the teachers. So, certain measures to be taken to organize the parent teacher meeting regularly in order to make pre-school education meaningful and successful.

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