

Spending time with their kids: Distribution of school going and non-school going migrant children and their family interaction

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ARTICLE INFO :

Received : 19.02.2018
Revised : 17.04.2018
Accepted : 03.05.2018

KEY WORDS :

Migrant, Schedule, Siblings, Interaction

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE :

Sharma, P.S., Prajapati, V.S., Parmar, A.R. and Undhad, S.V. (2018). Spending time with their kids: Distribution of school going and non-school going migrant children and their family interaction. *Adv. Res. J. Soc. Sci.*, 9 (1) : 20-25, DOI: 10.15740/HAS/ARJSS/9.1/20-25.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of present study as to explore the time use pattern of children of migrant labour families with their parents and other family members. A self-structured interview schedule was interviewed on mothers of the selected 120 children of age range of 6-8 years. In the total sample, children were composed of two groups on the basis of their school attendance. One group of children who were attending school (n=60) and another group was composed of those children who were not attending school (n=60). Each of these two groups further subdivided with equal number of boys and girls (30 boys and 30 girls). Data were statistically analyzed by using t-test and z-test. The study showed that female children were spending significantly longer time with the mother whereas boys were significantly spending more time with the father. Mothers of the school going children spent significantly more time in different activities of the child than those of non-school going children. Mothers spent more time by watching TV or talking to their daughters as compare to their sons. Significantly more percentage of school going females performed their care activities with the help of their elder siblings as compared to very few percentage of school going males.

INTRODUCTION

Time is an important resource with an individual. The richness of human's development is determined by the way an individual spends his time and the variety and structural complexity of the activities in which he takes part. Psychologists and economists agree that one of the most valuable inputs for child development is the time the child spends with the mother (Cunha *et al.*,

2006). The increase in the maternal employment rate and the associated rise in the use of non-parental forms of child care have raised concerns about the impact they might have on child development, in particular through the decline in maternal child-care time. However, recent data from the American Time Use Survey show that, while employed mothers work on average five hours per day, the time spent with their child is only half an hour

lower than that of non-employed mothers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Meal time, when parents and children gather as a family to share their daily experiences, has been likely to be associated with a more stable organized family life and therefore with children having fewer behaviour and social problems (Hofferth and Sandberg, 2001). Recent evidence by Bryant and Zick (1992) suggests that the activities parents do with children change with a mother's employment. Maternal employment may increase leisure time and house work time that is shared with children on the other hand, it also decreases time spent in direct family care and supervision of children. Children's time use is likely to be affected first and foremost by their socio-economic status, and age, whereas, gender differences in activities begin to appear in elementary school. Work responsibilities increase as the child matures. Additionally, the types of work activities children perform differ by gender, with boys performing more market oriented work and girls are performing more domestic labour. Family activities including household work, household conversations and mealtime provide important opportunities for children to participate in household routines. Girls, specifically, appear to assume more of the extra work than boys in dual-earner families (Benin and Edwards, 1990).

Migration is a complex process that can produce profound changes for individuals, families and societies. It is a physical movement by humans from one area to another, sometimes over long distances or in large groups. Migration occurs because individuals search for food, sex and security outside their usual habitation. Migration from one place to another place involves lot of adjustment on the part of the migrant families.

The most extensive previous research related to how children spend their time comes indirectly from educational differences in parental time with children. Past research on family composition, children's and parents' use of time and children's cognitive achievement suggests that children of college educated parents can be expected to spend more time reading and studying and less time watching T.V. than children of less well educated parents. Education played a significant role in determining the desirability of punitive measures used by mothers to discipline their children. Early studies of parents of preschoolers suggested that college educated mothers did devote more time to child care than less

educated mothers. Research has found that children in large families spend more time in household work than do children in smaller families (Bianchi and Robinson, 1997). The impact of parent child interaction and socio-economic status on cognitive development was studied by a number of researchers. The mother child interaction has strong impact on the attitudes and behaviour of children. Most of those who are successful and well-adjusted come from homes where parental interactions towards them are favorable and where a wholesome relationship existed between them and their parents (Hurlock, 1974). Parents, who spend more time with their children, talk about their problems, provide encouragement and show affection, their children tend to do academically well (Amato and Fowler, 2002).

It is assumed that time spent by parents of school going and non-school going migrant children had tremendously affect their all-round development at all levels. So keeping in view the present study was formulated to know how and in which activities parents and all other family members of selected respondents are involved.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study was carried out in six slum localities of Ludhiana city. The sample for the present study was comprised of 120 children and their mothers' migrant labour class families. The children were selected in the age group between 6 to 8 years and sample was purposively drawn from urban localities of Ludhiana city. Ludhiana Municipal Corporation has divided the city into four zones. One zone was randomly selected from these zones.

Six slum localities were selected from the selected zone and 120 children with age range of 6 to 8 years and mothers working as domestic servants, were purposively selected from each chosen locality through snowball technique. In the total sample, children were composed of two groups on the basis of their school attendance. One group of children, who were attending school (n=60) and another group was composed of those children who were not attending school (n=60). Each of these two groups further included equal number of boys and girls that is 30 boys and 30 girls. Hence the total sample consists of 60 number of boys and 60 number of girls.

Research instruments :

Self-structured interview schedule:

Time use patterns of children of migrant families were examined by using a self-structured interview schedule. The mothers of the selected 120 children were interviewed to record information about the target child’s daily time use pattern. Spot observation was also made by the investigator to record the children’s time use pattern. The interview schedule also included items designed to assess children’s daily activities with their father as well as mother *i.e.* all activities in which mother and father of children are involved, how they spend their time and all other activities in details which were performed by their parents and their other family members. The reliability of the instrument was judged through test-retest method and was calculated to be 0.79.

Pretesting of interview schedule:

The research instrument was pretested on 20 non-sampled children selected from Type 14 quarters of Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana and suitable modifications were made in the research instruments before their final use.

Statistical analysis of the data:

The scores were tabulated to conduct frequency, percentage, Z-value, t-value, Mean and SD.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Table 1 reflects gender wise distribution of the children of migrant families as per time spent with the mother per day. It showed that majority of the males as well as females in all three categories of the sample spent 2-4 hours with their mother per day, whereas very few percentage of school going males (33.33%), half of non school going males (50.00%) and nearly (41.67%) in

overall male sample, spent 1-2 hours with their mother per day. About one fourth of school going (26.67%), non school going (23.33%) and overall sample (25.00%) girls spent 4-6 hours with their mother per day whereas not even a single male spent this much amount of time with their mothers per day. Similar results were procured in case of non school going as well as overall sample. The data on mean scores in number of hours spent with the mother depicts that girls in all the three categories of the sample spend significantly more time with their mothers as compared to boys ($p < 0.01$). The results were supported the findings of Jetley and Sheel (1993) who have reported that girls spend more of their time with mothers and their activities are either a prototype or extension of their mother’s life.

Table 2 depicts gender wise distribution of the children as per time spent with the father per day. It reveals that majority of males as well as females in all the three categories spent 1-2 hours per day with their fathers. Significantly very low percentage of school going, non school going and total boys spent 2-3 hours, whereas none of the school going females spent this much time with their father per day. Similar results were obtained for other two categories of the sample. Though, the gender differences were non-significant in case of nonschool going children but more number of males spent 1-2 hours as compared to females, also 10.00% of males spent 2-3 hours as compared to 6.67% of non school going females who spent 2-3 hours with their father per day. Male children spent more number of hours with their father in school going, non school going and total sample but results were significant in case of school going children ($t=4.02, p < 0.01$) and overall sample ($t=2.32, p < 0.05$).

It may be concluded that the female children were spending significantly longer time with the mother

Time spent (hours)	School going		Non-school going		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
1-2	10 (33.33)	2 (6.67)	15 (50.00)	4 (13.33)	25 (41.67)	6 (10.00)
2-4	20 (66.67)	20 (66.67)	15 (50.00)	19 (63.33)	35 (58.33)	39 (65.00)
4-6	0 (0.00)	8 (26.67)	0 (0.00)	7 (23.33)	0 (0.00)	15 (25.00)
Mean	2.78	3.87	2.63	3.60	2.71	3.73
SD	0.93	0.94	0.94	1.06	0.93	1.00
t-value	4.51***		3.75***		5.79***	

*** indicates significance of value at P=0.10

whereas boys were significantly spending more time with the fathers.

Table 3 shows gender wise distribution of the sample as per time spent by the mother in different activities of child in migrant families. It show that none of child's mother spent time in play activities with the child, whereas, major proportion of school going mothers of male children spent time talking to the child (73.33%), eating together (46.67%) and child care (46.67%). Whereas with major proportion of the school going females, mothers were involved while watching TV (76.67%) and eating together (56.67%). All the mothers spent time with school going female children while talking to them followed by their care activities (60%) and followed by eating together (56.67%). It is clear that mother spent more time with females as discussed in earlier, concludes that girls spend more time at home whereas boys spend more time near or far away from home.

Among non school going children, major proportion of mothers of females were participating at a higher degree in child care (M=83.33%, F=86.67%) followed by watching TV (M=46.67%, F=66.67%). Gender differences were significant (Z=1.69, p<0.01). Distribution of the sample revealed that the mothers spent

more time with girls than boys in cooking activities. In rest of the activities though the gender differences were non-significant but mothers spent more time with female as compared to males.

Similar results were available for overall males as well as females. In overall sample, majority of the mothers were involved in taking care of their child (Males=65.00%, Females=73.33%) followed by watching TV (Males=40.00%, Females=71.67%) with them. The differences were significant as far as child care activities were concerned (Z=3.84, p<0.01).

It may be concluded that mothers of the school going children spent significantly more time in different activities of the child. Mothers spent more time while watching TV and talking with their daughters as compared to their sons.

Table 4 shows the distribution of the sample as per activities of the child performed by different members in migrant families. It reveals that majority of the males in all the three categories of the sample performed their care related activities by themselves as compared to nearly half or more than half of the girls in all the three categories who performed their care activities by themselves and thus significant gender difference was observed in school going children (Z= 2.09, p<0.05) and

Table 2 : Gender wise distribution of the children of migrant families as per time spent with the father per day

Time spent (hours)	School going		Non-school going		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
Nil	0 (0.00)	6 (20.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	6 (10.00)
<1	1 (3.33)	3 (10.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (10.00)	1 (1.67)	6 (10.00)
1-2	26 (86.67)	21 (70.00)	27 (90.00)	25 (83.33)	53 (88.33)	46 (76.67)
2-3	3 (10.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (10.00)	2 (6.67)	6 (10.00)	2 (3.33)
Mean	1.67	0.98	1.60	1.45	1.63	1.22
SD	0.67	0.66	0.67	0.65	0.67	0.70
t-value	4.02***		0.88		2.32***	

*** indicates significance of value at P=0.10

Table 3 : Gender wise distribution of the sample as per time spent by the mother in different activities of the child in migrant labour families

Activities	School going			Non school going			Total		
	Male	Female	Z-value	Male	Female	Z-value	Male	Female	Z-value
	f (%)	f (%)		f (%)	f (%)		f (%)	f (%)	
Playing	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	NA	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	NA	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	NA
Watching TV	10 (33.33)	23 (76.67)	3.37***	14 (46.67)	20 (66.67)	1.56	24 (40.00)	43 (71.67)	0.88
Cooking	7 (23.33)	10 (33.33)	0.86	6 (20.00)	12 (40.00)	1.69*	13 (21.67)	22 (36.67)	0.24
Eating together	14 (46.67)	17 (56.67)	0.78	9 (30.00)	11 (36.67)	0.55	23 (38.33)	28 (46.67)	1.17
Child's care	14 (46.67)	18 (60.00)	1.05	25 (83.33)	26 (86.67)	0.36	39 (65.00)	44 (73.33)	3.84***
Talking to the child	22 (73.33)	30 (100.00)	3.04***	2 (6.67)	0 (0.00)	1.44	24 (40.00)	30 (50.00)	1.10

*** indicates significance of value at P=0.10

Table 4 : Distribution of the sample as per activities of child performed by different members in migrant labour families

Activities/ Person	School going			Non school going			Total, n=120		
	Male	Female	Z-value	Male	Female	Z-value	Male	Female	Z-value
	f (%)	f (%)		f (%)	f (%)		f (%)	f (%)	
Care activities									
Mother	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	NA	2 (6.67)	3 (10.00)	0.47	2 (3.33)	3 (5.00)	0.46
Self	26 (86.67)	19 (63.33)	2.09**	24 (80.00)	23 (76.67)	0.32	50 (83.33)	42 (70.00)	1.73*
Elder Siblings	4 (13.33)	11 (36.67)	2.09**	4 (13.33)	4 (13.33)	NA	8 (13.33)	15 (25.00)	1.62
School work									
Mother	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	NA	0 (0.00)	0 (90.00)	0	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	NA
Self	30 (100.00)	30 (100.00)	NA	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0	30 (100.00)	30 (100.00)	NA
Elder Siblings	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	NA	0 (0.00)	0 (90.00)	0	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	NA
Play activities									
Mother	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	NA	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	NA	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	NA
Self	22 (73.33)	13 (43.33)	2.36**	11 (36.67)	13 (43.33)	0.53	33 (55.00)	26 (43.33)	1.28
Elder Siblings	24 (80.00)	30 (100.00)	2.58***	30 (100.00)	30 (100.00)	NA	54 (90.00)	60 (100.00)	2.51**
Entertainment									
Mother	9 (30.00)	12 (40.00)	0.81	2 (6.67)	12 (40.00)	3.05***	11 (18.33)	24 (40.00)	2.61***
Self	10 (33.33)	15 (50.00)	1.31	8 (26.67)	9 (30.00)	0.29	18 (30.00)	24 (40.00)	1.48
Elder Siblings	20 (66.67)	22 (73.33)	0.56	26 (86.67)	23 (76.67)	1	46 (76.67)	45 (75.00)	0.21
Gossiping									
Mother	9 (30.00)	29 (96.67)	5.36***	5 (16.67)	28 (93.33)	5.97***	14 (23.33)	57 (95.00)	7.99***
Self	16 (53.33)	13 (43.33)	0.78	6 (20.00)	16 (53.33)	2.68***	22 (36.67)	29 (48.33)	1.29
Elder Siblings	12 (40.00)	6 (20.00)	1.69*	19 (63.33)	7 (23.33)	3.13***	31 (51.67)	13 (21.67)	3.41***

*, ** and *** indicate significance of values at P=0.05, 0.01 and 0.10, respectively

in overall sample ($Z=1.73$, $p<0.10$). Significantly more ($Z= 2.09$, $p<0.05$) percentage of school going females (36.67%) performed their care activities with the help of their elder siblings as compared to very few (13.33%) percentage of school going males and hence significant gender differences were obtained ($Z=2.09$, $p<0.05$). Though the differences were non-significant but similar results were obtained as far as overall sample was concerned. Table further depicts that all the school going males as well as females possessed their academic related activities by themselves, whereas not even a single male or female child's mother in all the three categories were participating in play related activities. Significantly more number of school going boys (73.33%) played by themselves as compared to 43.33% of school going girls who played by themselves ($Z=2.36$, $p<0.05$). All the school going females were involved in playing with their elder siblings as compared to school going males (80%) and thus significant gender differences were observed ($Z=2.58$, $p<0.01$). All the non schools going males as well as females were involved in playing with their elder siblings.

As far as overall sample is concerned, all the females were playing with their elder siblings as compared to 90 % of males and thus significant gender differences was observed ($Z=2.51$, $p<0.05$).

It may be concluded that significantly more percentage of school going females performed their care activities with the help of their elder siblings as compared to very few percentage of school going males. All the non school going males as well as females was playing with their elder siblings.

Conclusion :

It has been concluded that girls in both the categories *i.e.* school going and non school going spend more of their time with mothers as compare to their fathers. Male children spent more number of hours with their fathers in school going, non school going and total sample but results were significant in case of school going children and overall sample. Mothers of the school going children spent significantly more time in different activities of the child. Mothers spent more time while watching TV and talking with their daughters as compared to their

sons. Significantly more number of school going boys played by themselves as compared to school going girls who played by themselves. All the school going females were involved in playing with their elder siblings as compared to school going males and thus significant gender differences were observed. All the non schools going males as well as females were involved in playing with their elder siblings.

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