

ABSTRACT

The present study has focused on two facets of the status of primary school children (aged 7-10 years) who were being temporarily deserted by their mothers to work abroad. These two facets are the social status and the psychological status.

This study has attempted to compare the social and psychological status of the above mentioned children with that of the children living with working mothers and children living with non working mothers. Furthermore, the study has reviewed the childcare arrangements provided for children of migrant mothers.

Based on the findings of the study, suggestions that could ensure a complementary environment which promotes the social and psychological status of primary school children of the Sri Lankan mothers employed overseas have been made.

The sample of the study consists of 54 children of migrant mothers employed overseas, 54 children of employed mothers in Sri Lanka and 54 children of unemployed mothers in Sri Lanka. These children were selected from Grade 3, 4 and 5 classes in six Sinhala medium type 1C Schools in the Borella Education Division. In addition a sample of 44 caregivers of children of migrant mothers included in the sample was also studied with the view to review the childcare arrangements provided for the children of migrant mothers.

To achieve the objectives of the study qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were used. Thus, classroom child observations, interviews and socio metric tests were employed.

The data revealed that social and psychological status of the majority of children of migrant mothers was considerably lower than that of their counterparts. The interviews with the care givers revealed that care provided in relation to food and nutrition was satisfactory for the majority of children. However, educational support, provisions for play, leisure and safety were found to be relatively not satisfactory.

This study has confirmed the findings of the previous studies (Athauda; 1994, Fernando, 1989) that the migration of the mother had affected the total development of the child. The study has statistically established that the overall development of children of migrant employed mothers was at the lowest level in comparison with that of the other two groups.

The study has suggested that children should be consulted when providing care in the absence of their mothers. In addition schools as nodes of support were also high lighted in the study. Moreover, the study emphasizes the need for intervention of the government at the level of policy making to ensure the right to survival of children of migrant mothers which is a basic right according to Child Rights Convention.