

Study of the Effects of Working Mothers on the Development of Children in Pakistan

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Abstract

The selection between staying looking after children and going for work is very difficult for Pakistani mothers. There are the arguments in favour and against the job of mothers. The supporters of mothers work are of the opinion that working mothers create self confidence, social awareness and sense of commitment, struggle and lot of monetary benefits. The opponents argue that by working, mothers deprive their children from early development and training. Hence, it is not immoral for a mother to have a job but it is probably not the encouraging activity for her children. The study attempts to find out the effects of mothers' work on the early growth, training and performance of children. There were two main themes of literature review and twelve categorical variables. For this a sample of 1600 students, 1200 mothers and 800 teachers was purposely selected from different areas of Pakistan. It was found that the trend of mothers' employment is increasing day by day. The children of mothers staying at home and working do not have any significant difference. Children's view about mothers' employment is found positive. There is no significant difference between children of employed and non-employed mothers. The attachment between employed mothers and children is decreasing. The research based suggestions are given at the end of paper.

Key words: Working mothers, children, effect, job of mothers

Introduction

Pakistan is a developing country where male and female have to work together. They are the two most important pillars of growth and development. Without their mutual contribution, it is impossible for the state to progress. Pakistani women actively take part in productive and non productive activities all over the country. The most of the women play a double role in Pakistan. At home, they play the role of mother and at workplace they play the part of labour force. There are some women who stay at home found busy looking after their children round the clock. The role of woman being a mother is very important.

A mother is particularly important not because she has special skills but because she is with her children for a much greater time than any other person and her instructions reflects a very strong influence on attitudes, abilities and behaviour of children. Most of those children who are successful and well-adjusted come from homes where parental attitudes are favorable and a wholesome relationship existed between children and parents (priyanka aeri and devina jain 2010). Mothers give her children love, affection and care since birth. Child-care has become a major issue in most of the countries of the world. It is a universal truth that children require the love of mother the most (http://www.essortment.com/all/childrenofwor_mbs.htm).

It is absolutely a very hard decision for a mother to select between working out of the home and staying home with the children. A mother should ask herself about main purpose of her working. She should compare her earning and the needs of children and home. She should know the financial position of her family. She has to decide whether she works for the support of family or she is just fond of working and she wants her name and fame. She might have acquired specialized certificated in particular field and she does not want to waste her talent. If such is the case, she should find a suitable job that saves time and energy and provides required financial assistance, name and fame (<http://www.livestrong.com/article/269947-staying-at-home-vs-a-working-mom/#ixzz1achglzk6>). Shalala expressed that the situation of women in the current era is very difficult. They have to face many challenges. They are diverted in more directions. Some women put all their efforts to build their careers but others wait until their children become school ages. Some women have their own choice of employment while others are forced to work (http://www.essortment.com/all/childrenofwor_mbs.htm). Whether she is working or staying home does not matter if she pays more attention to children, spends quality time with children, shows genuine love for children and builds true relationship with each other (<http://www.livestrong.com/article/269947-staying-at-home-vs-a-working-mom/#ixzz1achglzk6>).

It has been proved through experiments and researches that a major part of children's' cognitive, affective and psychomotor growth takes place at an early age below three years. There are many researches which have proved that absence of parents' attention at an early age is very harmful. The child of working mothers scores comparatively lower than the child of house hold mother (<http://www.livestrong.com/article/269947-staying-at-home-vs-a-working-mom/#ixzz1achglzk6>).

It is necessary for a mother to nurture and take care of her children more at early age. She must create a good relationship with her child. The mother who stays home is twenty four hours with her children. How can she be equal to a woman who is paid for loving her children? The question is totally strange but is factual (http://www.essortment.com/all/childrenofwor_mbs.htm). It has been observed that children all over the world especially in Pakistan look out for due care, love and affection. Is there career of mothers more important? Definitely the answer ill be no. Then why mothers are looked working. The mothers who prefer to remain at home are more fruitful to their children. They can help their children round the clock (http://www.essortment.com/all/childrenofwor_mbs.htm).

Research questions

1. What is the trend of mother's employment in Pakistan?
2. What is attachment of employed mothers with children?
3. What is effect of monitoring and supervision of mothers on child development?
4. What is the difference between mothers stay home and working mother in Pakistan?
5. What are the children's' views about mothers' employment?
6. What is the difference between working mothers' children and house hold mothers' children?
7. What is the impact of mothers' job over the growth and development of infants?
8. What is the impact mothers' job over the cognitive development of children?
9. What is the impact of mothers' job over the social development of children?
10. What is the impact of mothers' job over the emotional development of children?
11. What is the impact of mothers' job over the language development of children?
12. What is the impact of mothers' job over the self confidence of children?

Hypotheses

1. The trend of mother's employment is not increasing in Pakistan.
2. The attachment of employed mothers with children is increasing.
3. There is no significant effect of monitoring and supervision of mothers on child development.
4. There is no significant difference between mothers stay home and working mother.
5. The children do not want about mothers' employment.
6. There is no significant difference between working mothers' children and household mothers' children?
7. There is no significant impact of mothers' job over the growth and development of infants?
8. There is no significant impact of mothers' job over the cognitive development of children?
9. There is no significant impact of mothers' job over the social development of children?
10. There is no significant impact of mothers' job over the emotional development of children?

11. There is no significant impact of mothers' job over the language development of children?
12. There is no significant impact of mothers' job over the self confidence of children?

Working mothers in Pakistan

Working mothers in Pakistan usually put the needs of their family first, neglecting their own needs in the process. This puts a good deal of pressure on a woman. For many working women, the issue is more than one of economic concern. They want to know that they have placed their children in a safe, protected and nurturing environment while they work. Like their children, mothers also need a safe, supportive and encouraging environment in order to succeed at balancing their own personal needs with seeing to the needs of their child (<http://www.livestrong.com/article/79456-role-motherhood/>).

As a working mother, it is important to feel comfortable with her decision. Too many times, however, working mothers feel that they need to defend their choice (<http://www.suite101.com/content/working-moms-need-not-feel-guilty-a42841>).

It is usually believed that employment of a mother has certain effect on the over all growth and development of children. The first five years are very crucial for the cognitive, affective and psychomotor development of children. The teenage period of children is better of those who get an early and proper attention of their mothers. They are free and feel easy to share every thing with their parents.

Working mothers mostly have threatened the early years of their children in the different countries. The care and affection necessary for children at an early age is not replaceable. It influences the later life of children. The house hold mothers can perform a good job to train and educate their children (http://www.essortment.com/all/childrenofwor_mbs.htm).

Employment of mothers and child development in Pakistan

In Pakistan, there is almost found a debate on child development and mother's employment. Different people have different views about the impact of mothers' job on child development. Some suppose mothers' employment favorable for children while others oppose it. The supporters are of the opinion that at present time, the trend of mothers' employment is increasing day by day. The mothers of infants and school age children are almost found searching and getting jobs. It is very difficult to understand the root cause of this change. The increasing trend of mothers' employment makes the sense that mothers' employment has no negative effect on child development. More over they call it a part of social change and pressure which can not be stopped (<http://parenthood.library.wisc.edu/Hoffman/Hoffman.htm>).

The opponents argue that attachment between mother and child takes place in the beginning years of children. The most important period of child development is fist few years of children and at this stage children need the mothers most. Their cognitive, affective and psychomotor development is based on this earliest attachment of mothers. If this attachment between moth and child during early period is interrupted, there is a great risk that the children will become detached, emotionally disrupted and there will be mistrust in the later relationship between mothers and children. The early separation of mothers due to job has negative effect on child's social, psychological and emotional development (http://www.essortment.com/all/daycareinform_rwyy.htm).

Some studied have proved that role of working mother is ideal for children. The children of mothers realize the importance of work in the early part of life. They understand the value of time they spent with mothers more than children of house hold mothers. This creates the sense of responsibility and work ethic (http://www.essortment.com/family/workingmothers_sbob.htm). The other studied have shown those children of working mothers are less socialized, less psychological and emotionally mature and more aggressive (http://www.essortment.com/all/daycareinform_rwyy.htm).

Research methodology

Strategy

The research strategy is a mix approach. It is the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Method and instruments

The survey method is used for the collection of data. The questionnaires for mothers, students and teachers were designed for the data collection. A test was also conducted to check the cognitive, social and emotional development differences.

Population and sampling

The population is all the mothers, students and teachers of Pakistan. Purposive sampling is the method adopted in this study. A sample of 1200 mothers, 1600 students and 800 teachers from the four provinces of Pakistan is brought under study.

Table: 1
Sample of mothers n=1200

Working mothers		Non-working mothers	
600		600	
Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
300	300	300	300

Table: 2
Sample of students n=1600

Children (Working mothers)		Children (House hold mothers)	
800		800	
Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
400	400	400	400

Table: 3
Sample of teachers n=800

Rural		Urban	
400		400	
Male	Female	Male	Female
200	200	200	200

Categorical variables

Twelve categorical variables are developed for this study. The instruments are designed according to these variables:

1. Trend of mothers' employment
2. Mothers stay home versus working mothers
3. Children's views about mothers' employment
4. Children of employed and unemployed mothers
5. Attachment of employed mothers with children
6. Employment of mothers and infant development
7. Working mothers and cognitive development of children
8. Working mother and children's social development
9. Mothers' employment and the emotional Development of children
10. Mothers' employment and the language development of children
11. Mothers' employment and the self confidence
12. Supervision and monitoring of children

Findings and discussion**1. Trend of mothers' employment**

The trend of mothers' employment is increasing day by day. The idea was supported by 90% of women 85% of students and 95% of teachers. They all agreed that general poverty is the main motive of mothers' employment.

In this regard mothers said that increasing inflation had made it compulsory for the mothers to get a suitable employment. The expenses of daily routine can not be met easily without the job of mothers. More over, mothers do job for the sake of better education and training of their children. Students and teachers mutually expressed that working of mother and father jointly has become very essential for the family expenses.

2. Mothers stay home versus working mothers

There is a significant difference between the employed and unemployed mothers. The statement was supported by 95% of mothers, 88% of students and 56% of teachers. In this regard mothers told a myth that mothers who choose to work are selfish because they are not putting the needs of their children first. The fact is different here. The working mothers are comparatively healthier and endure less from depression than non-working mothers. They further expressed that if mothers are sad and depressed, the children will know this sooner or later and it will put a strain on the children and parent affiliation, even though mother may stay at home. Similarly if a mother finds suitable job and pursues it, there will only be more of herself to give to her children. Besides, working mothers are setting the examples for their children with reference to learning how to fulfill responsibilities, having pride in one's work and the value of being a productive and self-relying individual. The teachers stated that if mothers have to do work due to financial necessity or for career fulfillment, she should not feel sorry for her preference. They quoted the myth that unless the family is rich, mother need to go to work. The students emphasized that a succeeding earning by mothers is essential in order to meet the family expenses and provide basic necessities. So the mothers working out of home contribute the family more than the mothers stay at home.

3. Children's views about mothers' employment

The children's view about mothers' employment was found positive. The idea was supported by 90% of women, 51% of teachers and 56% of students. There is a myth that a child's home life must be very bad if mother prefers to go out for work. The arguments found in this study are against this myth. In this regard mothers expressed that their children have no objection on their work. More over mothers provide a good day care to her children. It is fresh, joyful, hoarded with toys, packed with a caring staff and some other children to play with them and a lot of pleasing activities are made available. Students expressed that both children and mothers are satisfied with the working situation of mothers. They get more love and affection from the mothers coming from office. Besides, they have a great fun on holidays. Their mothers mostly take them for outing regularly. Teachers expressed that the myth, if mothers go back to work too early, their babies will not bond with them adequately, is not applicable here. The mother and child relation is made stronger by quality time together, not quantity. Though child feels some hesitation in the absence of mother but as soon as children get love and attention from mother when she returns, they forget the absence of mother and their relation becomes stronger.

4. Children of employed and unemployed mothers

No significant difference is found between children of employed and unemployed mothers. The idea was supported by 56% of mothers, 80% of students and 95% of teachers. The test conducted showed that the score of employed and unemployed mothers' children remained consistent and nearly same. The score of girl children of working mothers was comparatively more than boy children. Same was true for children of non working mothers. More over teachers expressed that they have observed no difference between these two categories of children. They argued that if all the children are brought on the stage and asked to perform some special task, none will be able to recognize the basic difference between children of jobless and job doing mothers. Mothers called all mothers as working mothers. The education, training and growth of children depend on the healthy interaction of home and school. They further explained that the description of working mothers is different in the eyes of society. Mother has to play the role of superwoman with extraordinary powers and capacities. Because of such powers she is able to maintain a balance within her family life and professional responsibilities. She struggles to do extremely well in both the fields. The rising number of working mothers is a clear proof of it. Students added that the present conservative society has created so many boundaries in her way to achieve the goals of life. The traditions, myths and superstitions are the main causes of such hindrance.

5. Attachment of employed mothers with children

The attachment between employed mothers and children is decreasing. The statement was supported by 95% of teachers, 80% of students and 98% of mothers. While defining attachment mothers stated that attachment is strong affectional bond between mother and children. It always increases between infant and mother under normal conditions but the case of employed mother is totally different.

The strong attachment mostly takes place at an early period of child development but employed mothers who stay most of the time of the day out of home, the attachment suffers badly. Teachers quoting a myth told that when mothers go to work early in the morning, their babies will not bond with them adequately. They argued that if the early attachment phase gets interrupted, there will be a risk for children. They will become detached from mothers and emotionally disrupted and unable to build true relationships. Students expressed that children's home life must be very bad if they are kept under the care of any person other than mother. They further told that disorder and inferiority complex can take place during early eight to ten years of child's age. There they need the love, affection, time and guidance of mothers the most. In that case separation affects the attachment the most, especially during prolonged, repeated separation from the mother.

6. *Employment of mothers and infant development*

The job of mothers affects the infant development of children. The statement was supported by 89% of mothers, 99% of teachers and 78% of students. In this regard teachers gave psychological reference and told that early separation due to mothers' employment affects both mothers and children. The mother child relationship is interrupted. Primary care taker should be mother. None can play the role of mother. Teachers further argued that when no company allows an employee to hire someone else to do the job in place of that employee, so how a mother can expect to hire someone else to raise her own child. The infant children need the love of mother the most at this stage. More over working mothers often forget the basic needs of their children i.e. Proper sleeping duration, regular physical exercise, hygienic diets, constant discipline and help in school home work etc. That is because they are not in position to see those basic needs due employment work load and tension. The students stated that in infant period children need due care of mothers. None can take the place of mothers because the love of mothers is unconditional and rest all love is conditional. Mother has the capacity to know what a child wants at this stage of development. Mothers explained that children start trusting others when mothers are with them during early period. In case the mother goes to job, children feel loneliness and loose their confidence and security. This makes children feel inferiority anxiety, insecurities and mistrust in the world around children. It is only mother who can build the foundation of a child strong.

7. *Working mothers and cognitive development of children*

Job of the mothers has no effect on children's cognitive development. The argument was supported by 98% teachers, 88% mothers and 78% students. The teachers explained that cognitive development consists on knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation and the children of working and house hold mothers have same cognitive development. They gave the reference of class room tests and performance and emphasized that some students have more grip on knowledge and comprehension while others are expert in evaluation and application. Mothers urged that cognitive development depends upon heredity and environmental factors. Heredity is natural and environment is artificial and can be changed. Every mother whether employed or non-employed tries her best to provide the best environment necessary for child development. This can be observed from the fact that children of employed mothers get education in the best schools of the locality. Students argued that employed mothers make the children more independent. The children of working mothers start dreaming and planning their career, building relationships and families independently. They discover possibilities, chances and laid the foundation of their own identity under the supervision of their mothers. Working mothers guide their children comparatively better.

8. *Working mother and children's social development*

The job of mothers has not effect on children's social development. The statement was supported by 90% of mothers, 80% of students and 56% of teachers. Mothers argued that in the absence of mothers children look for the company from others. This trend of children is increasing day by day resulting in more stability in social development. Teachers argued that children, in the absence of mothers, develop social interactions with other people. They become socially strong, mentally alert and physically strong. This creates a sense of commitment. Students explained that the children of employed mothers seek the company from others. They make friends and this process of making friends is the sign of social development.

9. *Mothers' employment and the emotional Development of children*

Mothers' employment affects the emotional development of children. The statement was supported by 55% of women, 59% of students and 80% of teachers. Teachers stated that a mother who leaves her child in the care of others whole the day causes psychological and mental disturbance because none can equalize the love and affection of a mother.

The prolonged separation of a mother creates emotional distress for both children and mothers. The sense of detachment from her child makes mothers feel guilty and child deprived. Mothers explained that attachment between child and his mother becomes strong under normal conditions but due to prolonged daily separation of mothers in the early years the attachment between children and mothers is badly affected. Students supporting the idea expressed that child care is essential for mothers. Working mothers are unable to pay due attention on their children. If the mother goes out for the work round the day, she returns tiredly and becomes unresponsive, neglectful and abusive. The mothers' such behaviour creates negative impression over children's mental and emotional development

10. Mothers' employment and the language development of children

Mothers' employment does not have any effect on language development. The argument was supported by 55% of students, 80% of mothers and 95% of teachers. Mothers emphasized that there is no differences in language development of children whether mothers stayed at home or worked. Teachers argued that in some tests of language, comprising reading, writing, speaking and listening skills, even the daughters of employed mothers obtained higher scores. Students stated that working mothers are out of the home round the day but it does not affect on language development of children because child learns the language from the person who looks after child and from environmental people. The language learning will be affected if the person looking after child does not speak the mother language of child.

11. Mothers' employment and the self confidence

Mothers' employment promotes self confidence. The idea was supported by 52% of women, 67% of students and 90% of children. Mothers argued that working mothers positively encourage their children comparatively more. The employed mothers' daughter looks women a more competent in the traditionally male dominant society. She tries to follow her mother in the cut through competition. Teachers argued that they have seen more self confidence in the children of employed mothers. They explained that girls take their mother a role model to follow. They feel themselves more competent. Students argued that mothers' personality, social attitude, kind nature, struggle, hardworking, greater sense of control, mental health, life satisfaction and morale sets an example for their children to follow. More over working mothers do not differentiate between sons and daughters. They keep their children equal. Thus the behaviour of employed mothers towards children builds the self confidence of children.

12. Supervision and monitoring of children

Supervision and monitoring of children of employed mothers suffer badly. The idea was supported by 99% of women, 89% of students and 95% of teachers. Mothers expressed that the responsibility of supervision and monitoring of children is associated with mothers. They argued that when children are unmonitored and unsupervised they most likely show the negative effects in conduct and behaviour. Students argued that in the absence of proper check and balance the deficiency comes in the habits children. In that case children mostly fail to develop the desired habits. Such children become naughty and mischievous. Teachers argued that check and balance is a compulsory part of child development. In the absence of supervision the character building of children will be inadequate.

Suggestions

- It has been observed that child's infant period suffers badly due to mother's employment. In that case mothers should be more careful. They should realize the fact that quality of time they spend with their children is much more important than the quantity of time. They should treat the children as they treat their customers. They should schedule time with them and do everything for them. While returning from office their first priority should be to sit with children either playing with them or listening to them interestingly what ever they say be it interesting or boring. Mothers should give then individual attention. They should turn off the phone while sitting I the company of children. They should enjoy the company of each other.
- It has also been observed that emotional development and attachment of infants suffers badly due to employment of mothers. When the work is over working mothers should spend remaining whole time with their children. They should prioritize the company of their children. They should windup all their extra activities. They should spend less time with others. Children like games very much and mothers should spend the most of the time playing with children. This will lessen the isolation of children and enhance the emotional development and attachment.

- Lack of monitoring and supervision is observed in most of the families where mothers are employed. In that case mothers should monitor and supervise the children through phone. They should phone the children after every hour to make children understand that their mothers are with them. Such step of mothers will infuse in children the sense of monitoring. While talking on phone mothers should appreciate and encourage the children.

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