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Working Mothers and Problem of Social Development of their Children- A Case Study

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Abstract

Mother plays an important role in the social development of pre-school children. During pre-school years, mother is considered as the most influential socializing agent along with other members of the family who contribute a lot in the process of socialization of her child. A child starts reacting with others emotionally from the early stages of his/her life. Attitudes of rejection or acceptance, approval or disapproval and tension or relaxation are coloured by the type of physical and emotional care that he/she receives at the early stage. Under the guidance of mother the child gradually learns what is encouraged and what is discouraged, what is valued and what is ignored in the family environment.

Nowadays, with the changes of time and requirement most of the mothers are working in different sectors with different working conditions. Diversity of their work place and working culture, educational level, living style, financial position are the factors which ultimately influences children's social development in the early childhood period. To find out the problem of working mothers in the process of socialization of their children, the investigator selected a total of 400 working mothers having pre-school going children from the greater Guwahati area of Kamrup district of Assam by using simple random method. The investigator collected data and information by applying naturalistic observation and interview technique. Statistical analysis of the collected data shows that the social development of the children who were cared by their grandparents in the day time in the absence of mother are better than the children cared by the domestic workers.

Key words: Social development, pre-school, early childhood.

Introduction: In this fast moving high-tech globalised world, Psychologist, educators and sociologist all agree that mother plays an important role in the social development of the child in their early childhood period. Mother along with the other members of the family sets the stage for the development of many important personality characteristics, providing experience both within and

outside the home environment. The customs, traditions, faith & beliefs of our society are first learnt within the family, mainly under the guidance of mother. Social development is said to be a continuous process covering the total life span of an individual which don't happen automatically or all of a sudden. Like all aspects of development, social development also has a pattern. This



manifests itself in the emergence of an orderly sequence of social behavior. Proper and adequate love & affection from the mother encourages the child the feeling of security, cooperativeness and ability to play within a group, adjustment outside the home, success in school as well as in their adult life.

The importance of early childhood period for social development of a child is not a new concept. Long before scientific studies were published on child development, Milton stated, "The childhood shows the man as morning shows the day". The idea that an experience gained in the childhood period is quite important in the determination of adult behavior has a long history. More than two thousand years ago Socrates and Plato gave much importance to the early childhood period and considered this period as the beginning period for a person's proper social development. Comenius, recognized the importance of early childhood period under the guidance of mother and used the term "School of the Mother's knee". Great educators like Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Montessori, Annie Besant, Robindra Nath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi also gave much importance on the role of the mother in the early years for the social development of our children.

Proper time management for social development of early childhood period is a new challenge for the working mothers. Today working mothers have to face multidimensional problems and their conflicting roles as mother, housewife and also as an employee. In the present time where nuclear families are most prevalent, children of working mothers who have their grandparents to look after their

children in their absence are considered fortunate. Most of the children spend their time with domestic workers after coming from school.

Objectives of the study: To study and compare between the social development of the pre-school children of working mothers cared by their grandparents and domestic workers.

Methodology: Descriptive survey method has been used to collect data and information on the social development of pre-school children.

Area of the study: Greater Guwahati of the Kamrup district, Assam.

No. of sample children: 400 pre-school going children of working mothers.

Tools: For collection of data, the following tools were adopted:-

- Naturalistic observation.
- Interview (parents and teachers, when necessary)

Sample selection procedure: By using simple random method the investigator selected 400 pre-school going children between the age group of 3-6 Years from greater Guwahati area. Out of these 400 children the investigator selected 200 children who were looked after by their grandparents and 200 children cared by the domestic workers.

Aspects of observation: Cooperation, competition, social manners and aggression.

Limitations of the study: The first limitations relates to the area under study. Only the Greater Guwahati area has been taken as the field of the study.

The second limitation relates to the age group of the sample children, only pre-school going children were selected for this study.

Distribution of sample
Table No. 1

Area	Age(3-6yrs)	children looked after by Grandparents(200)			Children looked after by Domestic workers(200)	
		Sex verification	G	B	G	B
Greater Guwahati	Pre-school children	Number of sample children	100	100	100	100

Analysis of the objective of the study: To study the social development of working mother's children, the investigator herself observed the social activities of pre-school sample children at home and at school for

two month by using naturalistic observation method. Data collected in this study has been analyzed and presented in the following tables.

Table No-2
Comparison between the social development of children cared by Grandparents and Domestic workers.

Sl. No.	Aspects of Observation	Items of observation	Having Grandparents				Having domestic worker			
			Yes	No	Not sure	P.C. of Yes	Yes	No	Not sure	P.C. of yes
1	Cooperation	a. Sharing	187	10	3	93.5%	88	91	21	44%
		b. Helping others	158	31	11	79%	67	122	11	33.5%
2	Competition	a. Healthy	131	49	20	65.5%	59	103	38	29.5%
		b. Jealousy	59	130	11	29.5%	147	40	13	73.5%
3.	Social manners	a. Showing appropriate table manners	177	13	10	88.5%	72	101	27	36%
		b. Thanking others	186	9	5	93%	89	90	21	44.5%
		c. saying sorry	160	32	8	80%	51	131	18	25.5%



4.	Aggression	a. Quarreling	22	178	17	11%	167	27	06	83.5%
		b. Dominance	31	147	22	15.5%	121	68	11	60.5%
		c. Withdrawal Behavior	59	39	82	29.5%	158	38	04	79%

Interpretation: On the basis of the collected data and information, it has been found that there are vast differences of social development of children who spend their leisure time with grandparents and those who have spend their time with domestic workers. Grandparents use to teach many moral and social lessons whereby an emotional attachment of the child develops, the lessons taught by the grandparents in the long run influences very effectively for developing a strong personality and good character in the future. With constant supervision and encouragement, they motivate them to inculcate values for life. Through morally enriched storytelling, playing and having lunch with them, grandparents do a great noble job of socializing the child in the right time, in the right way and in the right track. Grandparents positively fill up the vacuum created by the working mothers especially in the day time when children use to come from their pre-school till their mom's arrival at home from her work place. Though most of the mothers keep telephonic contact with their children but it is not enough to utilize the huge time in creative, constructive and positive way. Children who have spent their day time with domestic workers shows a different picture of social development. Most of the domestic workers are not emotionally attached with the children and thereby they fail to utilize the time qualitatively for

their social development. Most of the domestic workers are illiterate and they have no knowledge of child psychology and therefore child nourishment and their proper social development at this critical period of life suffers. Most of the time, due to the pressure of household activities, they cannot spend much time to play with them. Most of the children of the working mothers spend their valuable daytime by watching T.V. programmes and playing computer games which has little contribution to their social development. On the basis of the observation of 200 pre-school going children having domestic workers (HDW), it is found that domestic workers many a times rather encourage them to watch adult programmes which is likely to have a negative impact on their immature mindset. In this study the investigator has found that a very few children prefer to study books, practice music, art, puzzles etc. to spend their leisure time constructively.

On the basis of data collected from table no. 2, it is found that children having grandparents(HG) shows better performance on co-operation, competition and social manners as compared with the children having domestic workers(HDW) to look after them in the daytime. In the aspect of cooperation the following table clearly indicates that children those are nourished by grandparents are more co-operative in nature.



Table: 3 showing aspect of Cooperation among the sample children

Cooperation	HG	HDW
Sharing	93.5%	44%
Helping others	79%	33.5%

In this study (93.5%) children cared by their grandparents have better sharing habits and share their tiffin, food, play materials to others where only 44% children cared by the domestic workers have the same manner. A majority of the children having grandparents (79%) have good social manners like helping friends,

teachers & other family members whereas only (33.5%) children cared by the domestic workers have the same good social manners.

In the aspect of the competition also, the following table clearly indicates that the children cared by grandparents are having healthy competitive mind.

Table no.4 showing nature of competition among the sample children

Competition	HG	HDW
Healthy	65.5%	29.5%
jealousy	29.5%	73.5%

Children nourished by their grandparents are having healthy competitive attitude (65.5%) as compared with the children cared by the domestic workers (29.5%). Children cared by the domestic workers have been found in this study to be more jealous (73.5%) as compared with the children cared by their grandparents (29.5%). Such type of negative nature is

most likely to develop due to the constant deprivation of love and affection, freedom and security from their beloved mother and grandparents.

In the aspect of social manner also, the following table clearly indicates that the children cared by grandparents are having good social manners.

Table no.5 showing aspect of social manners among the sample children

Social Manners	HG	HDW
Showing appropriate table manners	88.5%	36%
Thanking others	93%	44.5%
Saying sorry	80%	25.5%

For effective social adjustment in life, acquisitions of good social manners are very important for each child. The family may be regarded as the first social training centre and mother is the first teacher who teaches the lesson of social manners for social adjustment in life. It is a continuous process. It does not happen automatically or all of a sudden. It needs constant supervisions and encouragement. But due

to the work pressure most of the working mothers left their child in the hands of domestic workers and as a result they learned poor social manners as compared with the children who spend their day time with their grandparents. Children cared by their grandparents have better table manners (88.5%) and can speak thanks (93%) and sorry (80%) as per the situation. But the children cared by the domestic



workers are lagging behind in such social manners also. Only 36% children are found to have appropriate table manner where as only (44.5%) can speak thanks and sorry (25.5%) as per the situation.

In the aspect of aggression also, the following table clearly indicates that the children cared by grandparents are less aggressive in nature than the children cared by the domestic workers.

Table no.6 showing aggressive nature among the sample children

Aggression	HG	HDW
Quarrelling	11%	83.5%
Dominance	15.5%	60.5%
Withdrawal behavior	29.5%	79%

In this study children cared by the grandparents (11%) are less quarreling in nature where as majority (83.5%) of the children cared by the domestic workers are found to be quarreling in nature. In the aspect of dominance, only (15.5%) children cared by their grandparents are found to be dominant in nature where as large number (60.5%) of the children cared by the domestic workers are dominant in nature in their day to day activities. A large number of (79%) children cared by their domestic workers frequently exercise withdrawal behavior in school and at home where as (29.5%) children cared by their grandparents rarely exercise withdrawal behavior in their activities.

CONCLUSION: A child may be termed social if he behaves in a socially approved manner, plays the role which society prescribes for him and has favorable attitudes towards people and social activities. Role of the mother in the early childhood period is tremendous for systematic growth and development in each field of a child's life. Her love and care, constant encouragement for positive approach in life mould their character and personality. But with the changes of time and demand, working mothers are bound to live in their work place in the daytime. They have

to depend upon others to look after their children in the daytime after completion of school hour. The present study has been designed to find out the problems of social development of the children of working mothers in the present day context of nuclear family. The findings of the present study revealed that care and supervision of grandparents play an important role in cultivating positive social values and the overall social development of the children is better than the children who are deprived of care from their grandparents and who are looked after only by the domestic workers. Although most of the working mothers tries to compensate their absence in the daytime but in reality it is very difficult to compensate their absence. Most of their domestic workers are illiterate or semiliterate and fail to train their children in a desired way and these children do not get the opportunity of proper social development. These children are deprived of unconditional love and care of their mother which helps the child to increase his/her self- confidence, self-respect and integrity in their thought and practice. But it is truly said that only one drop of lemon is enough to spoil the big bowl of pure milk. Like that, illiterate and untrained domestic



workers mould the immature mindset of the children in an undesirable way and it is really difficult to completely rectify the deficits of their mother's absence.

The findings of the present study are:

1. Mother plays a significant role in the social development of their children.
2. Grandparents to a large extent can compensate the working mother's absence in the day time.
3. Grandparents do play an important role in the social development of their grandchildren.
4. Social development of those children who are under care of only the domestic workers, are comparatively less than the children who are cared by their grandparents.

5. Creative and constructive plays and activities at home helps proper social development in the pre-school stage.

Children are considered as the citizens of tomorrow. Therefore every effort should be made for proper social development of our children. Working mothers must give qualitative time to their children to compensate their absence. They must train their domestic workers so that these workers can deliver the minimum for overall social development of their children. For better future of our nation, we have to consider the social development of our children from true perspective. Every effort made in this direction will definitely help to achieve a prosperous society which in the long run will contribute to the growth of our nation.

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