

Impact of female employment on child care in Sri Lanka

TMKS Thennakoon¹

Female participation in the development process in Sri Lanka has increased after 1948 as a result of the expansion of welfare programmes. Labor force participation rate has also dramatically increased due to the improvement in educational facilities and the creation of new job opportunities. Moreover, the open economy process and structural reforms which occurred in the economic process have influenced in increasing their labour force participation. Although most women are employed to achieve social recognition and economic benefits, their job satisfaction tend to decrease with marriage. In Sri Lankan context, women have to forgo individual advancement after getting married as they have to perform multiple household activities including caring for children and the elderly. The most crucial problem faced by employed women is caring their children. Therefore, the main purpose of this paper is to examine the effect of female employment on their children. To examine this effect, the sample was selected from Monaragala district which comprised of urban, rural and estate sectors by using a snow ball sampling technique. The sample comprised of 137 married employed women that have at least one child. The findings reveal that all the females in the estate sector have only primary or secondary education. About 60 percent of females in the urban sector are engaged in government sector employment, while 100 percent of females in estate sector are employed as laborers in the private sector. Approximately, 80 per cent of rural women are involved in self-employment. The findings also show that the children in urban sector receive higher level of care from their families. But children who are in the estate sector receive a lower level (4 per cent) of care from their families. Although all mothers have given school education for their children, mothers in the estate sector didn't send their children to extra classes due to their poor economic condition. However, the study shows that there is a relationship between child care and female employment. Therefore, policies should be aimed at establishing more day care centers in urban, rural and estate sectors for caring for children with special focus on estate children, aiming at enhancing the quality of children.

Keywords: *Female employment, child care, labour force, sector*

¹Department of Demography, University of Colombo