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The impact of mothers' migration for work abroad on children's education

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Departure of females for foreign employment has increased over time. Regardless of the economic benefit migration seems to provide, the absence of a mother could be expected to have a critical impact on the child's education and future as she plays a vital role in child care. This research aimed to determine whether a mother's migration for work abroad impacts the education level of the child.

The research was conducted among Sri Lankan school children from grades 6 to 11 in the Gampaha District, Kelaniya District secretariats division. Based on a questionnaire, 216 children were interviewed. Out of them 108 of the children had mothers who have migrated overseas for employment. The other 108 of children were of mothers who were in the country and was used as a control group. The questionnaire focused on the socio demographic features, information of parents, information regarding mother's migration, attendance and examination marks of five main subjects. Stepwise Ordinal Logistic Regression was performed to evaluate the factors that were related to the average examination marks. Two models were fitted. First for both 'mother migrated children' and 'not migrated children' to identify whether the migration affects the education and the second, for 'mother migrated children' to identify the factors affecting their education. Odds ratios were calculated to identify the relationship between the levels of examination results and the levels of explanatory variables.

The first model reveals that 'mother migrated children' has a positive relationship with the lower levels of examination results. From the second model, attendance, mother's reason for migration and gender were identified as the factors associated with the education level of the 'mother migrated children'. Females and children with higher levels of attendance have a positive relationship with the higher levels of examination results. Children with lower levels of attendance and having other reasons for migration (other than to provide better education) have a positive relationship with the lower levels of the examination results. The presence and the involvement of the mother is important for better educational performances. Therefore, special attention should be given by schools, caregivers and the government on 'mother migrated children'.