



International Migration, the Left Behind Children, Educational Attainment and Occupational Preferences in Goa

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the issues arising due to the absence of parents. The paper mainly presents the children's perspective in relation to the educational and occupational preferences in the absence of parent/s (Diaspora) and also emphasis on education and gender differentiation. The study involved the use of in depth interviews and questionnaires to present the above two aspects on the impact of international migration on the children left behind in the villages of Assolna, Velim and Cuncolim in the state of Goa-India. It, further argues the role played by the family and village society in the socialization of the child in to the culture of migration, thereby, forming a pattern that contributes to the 'culture of migration'

KEYWORDS

Diaspora, Children, Economic, Educational attainment, International Migration, Left-Behind.

Introduction

As migration increases, there is also an increase in the number of children being left behind. Migrating parents often leave their children in the care of the parent staying back if it is in the case of one parent migrating or close relative and trustworthy person if it is in the case of both parent migrating. Further, to put it in simple words children usually undergo an up gradation of their material wellbeing, because children left behind get better clothes to wear, improved house to live, having all the devices of amusement and entertainment and talent and skill development opportunities as compared to children of non-migrating (UNICEF: 2008). The decision of parent(s) migration is based on choice or due to unsound circumstances, which in turn leads to a situation of children being left behind. However, at the heart of this decision lies in the selflessness on the part of the parent(s) of providing for the future needs of the children even if it meant toiling hard day and night. The parent(s) thus, try to cater to the future needs by sending remittances regularly which in turn contributes to a better quality of life (Funkhouser 1995; Stark, 1995; Becker, 1974). Consequently, the remittances send reduce the constraints on the access to educational and recreational facilities by fuelling the accessibility of the same and thereby contributes to the growth of human capital (Acousta, 2006).

'Youth' are defined as anyone in the age group of 16-24' (CRC, Article-1). In our case the study is limited to youth, but we will use children and youth interchangeably because the youth are the children of their parents. How many children are left behind by migrating parents is hard to guesstimate not only for Goa but elsewhere in the world. However, approximately there are at least a million (Yeoh and Lam, 2006). In certain parts/countries of the world, the left behind children consisted of a noteworthy percentage in comparison to the entire children population. For instance, in Moldova 31 percent and in Philippines 27 percent of children have one or both parent working abroad (UNICEF, 2007). When one compares the percentage of Moldova and Philippines with AVC in Goa, it is quite surprising to see that 47 percent of the Christian children in AVC had at least one of their parents working outside India. In our study we have taking in to consideration all the categories of children left behind. It was found that 79.55 percent of the parent(s) have been away from their children for more than fifteen years. The parent(s) migration includes migration to any part of the world for a period of six months and above. It was also discovered that majority of the parents 52.97 percent of which 95 percent are men have migrated on the ship. In what way this distance impacts the children are covered below.

Impact of International migration on educational attainment of children left behind

The consequence that international migration of the parent on the children's educational preference or educational attainment can be positive or negative because the decision to migrate is theoretically linked to children's education in a number of ways (Nobles, 2008:7). In our study the focus was on the future educational attainment of the youth. We found that there was a significant difference in the preference of educational attainment among the male and female youth and female youth.

It was evident that the youth (males) did not want to be highly qualified as compared to the youth (females). As it was seen that the majority of the youth (female) i.e.. 92.59 percent wanted to attain graduation and post graduation. With reference to why they wanted to do/or did graduation and post-graduation, there were four reasons that came up from the interviews and that were

1. They were certain that they would have to stay in Goa and look after the family, in such a case if they wanted to stay in Goan and work simultaneously, graduation and post-graduation was a must.
2. The family gained status, which would provide the family with some bargaining power at the time of marriage.
3. Even if they wanted to join their husbands abroad then being a graduate or a post-graduate would fetch you a job faster.
4. It also contributed to Delay the marriage of the Girl

On the other hand a look at the boys preference of educational level, presents that equal percentage of 29.41 percent boys wanted to complete twelve standard and graduation. There was less percentage of boys for Polytechnic and University as compared to twelve standard and Graduation. But, if one considers 12th Standard and Polytechnic together then a total of 49 percent boys wanted achieve or had achieved it, this percentage for 12th standard and Polytechnic was very high for boys as compared to only 7 percent female. The reasons for this difference that emerged from the interviews was that;

1. The boys felt it was useless spending years in college and university because to work abroad and to work on the ship one need not be highly educated but one needed practical skills.
2. The boys also felt it was pointless doing graduation and post-graduation and seeking a job in Goa, as there

was corruption and since opportunities were few it was a long wait for which one has to pay the ministers and politicians to get a job.

The difference in gender on the educational attainment has been supported by a study undertaken in Mexico by Hanson and Woodruff (2003) where it was found that female spent significantly larger number of years in high school compared to boys. This vast difference in educational attainment can be also linked to their occupational preferences and their place of work.

Impact of International migration on the Occupational preference of Children left behind

The study also found a significant difference among the male and female youth members on the dimension of occupational preference. This difference of occupational preference could be hypothetically linked to the preferred educational attainment among the youth and future study in this direction could unravel interesting facts.

We could find that there were vast differences in the preferred choice of occupation between male and female youth. The female youth strongly preferred jobs in the government offices and the next best occupation was teaching with 18.52 percent stating that they wanted to become teachers, and an equal percent choose any other, out of these majority choose occupation i.e. fashion designing, hospitality and nursing. Whereas among the boys the top three areas of work was engineering with 58.82 percent, followed by manager in any company, which was 11 percent and an equal percent chose any other, from this category 66.66 percent chose hospitality (Chef, Waiters, Captain, House-keeping, Front office manager etc) and one youth stated that he wanted to be a priest. A look at these preferred choice of occupation shows that majority of the female chose occupation that one would get a job in Goa, whereas majority of the boys chose occupations that one would get a job abroad. This shows that there is a gender stereo type in the job preference. Interviews with the youth presented that the youth looked up to different people for inspiration and motivation. The youth first looked up to their parents followed by their other family member like uncles and aunts and finally they looked at teachers and friends for guidance. The boys in particular were keen to follow their father's footsteps, where preference of job was concerned. One of the boys stated that 'my father has told me to complete my 12th Science and then go for mechanical engineering, after that he said that he will help me to get a job on the ship as a third engineer as he has his contacts'. Another boy stated that 'my father is after me not to do graduation, but rather to do a course in chef management at I.H.M, Porvorim, so that I can join the ship as *chef de partie* and salary is 80,000 Rupees. Whereas, another boy stated that 'my mother told me to do my graduation and then go to Dubai, as a graduate in Dubai I could get any job. However, the female stated that there was no pressure from their parents to go for a particular type of education. One of the Female stated that 'my parents have told me do what you like study as much as you want'. While another girl stated that 'I don't know what to do, I have done my graduation so now I am planning to do law or Master's'. Hence, these responses confirm that there are fixed expectation and acceptance of occupation for boys and female. These expectation are enforced by the family and society that the children belong to, the youth adapt the prevalent means of achieving the goal of success.

The success for a AVC boy means material riches and for a AVC girl it means education and being an ideal women. Thus, boys are socialized in to stereotype occupation, which they anticipate and pick up from their male elders i.e. father, uncle or friend from the village. Whereas the female are socialized in to occupations that help them to become ideal women just like their mothers, Mascarenhas-Keys (2011) refers to this ideal women as progressive women/mothers and autonomous women, however the ideal women in our study is much beyond the concept of progressive mothers.

In our study we could confirm that boys prefer to go abroad and female prefer to work in Goa or India. As more percentage of the youth (males) that is 82 percent stated that they would like to work abroad or on the ship rather than India, compared to only 14 percent of Female. The choice of occupation that boys wanted to take up was linked to the demand of such occupation abroad. The choice of such occupation was mainly due to the money factor. Such jobs abroad fetched one good pays as compared to Goa. The youth (males) have a fixed notion that in order to be successful one doesn't need to do a Ph.D, all that one needs is to earn money. The money can be earned quickly by going abroad and to go abroad one just need certain basic education and skills that are in demand in the foreign country and for which one gets paid three to four times more than what one would have got in Goa or India. Interviews with the youth also revealed that the youth especially males stated that they had watched their fathers earning enough money and have been successful with limited qualification. They had seen how the qualification of their father's was sufficient for them to find a high paying job abroad.

There was also a stark contrast of the reasons for a preferred place of work among boys and girls. As seen, a large percentage of female i.e. 74 percent preferred to work in Goa and another 11 percent stated that they wanted to work in India. The total percentage that wanted to work within India was 85 percent. The reason that 66 percent of female presented on staying back in India, was that they loved their family as compared to only 17 percent boys and 11 percent female felt that there were better opportunities in India as compared to 0 percent boys. Whereas, a vast majority of 82 percent boys who preferred to work abroad or on the ship, pointed out that their main reason for this choice of place of work was better opportunities abroad (52.94 percent), poor pay scales in Goa (17.6 percent) and that they would like to see the world (11.7 percent). This reason could be summed up as the push and pull factors.

Conclusion: Educational attainment and occupational preference being inter linked as seen in the above discussion, what can be observed through studies world over is that, when parents or any other family member migrated it contributed to the high possibility of the children also migrating. Further, the children would migrate as soon as they had an opportunity to migrate and this happened usually in their later teenage years. However, this decision to migrate would cost the child the inability to go for higher education (Nobles, 2008:6-7). In addition to the above some studies argue that adolescent in Mexican communities, who anticipated migrating to the first available opportunity were not interested in the Mexican educational credentials because higher education was insignificant to the acquisition of a job in the United States (Chiquair and Hansen, 2000). Consequently, Kandell and Kao (2001) in their analysis of children in Zacatecas (Mexico) found that children from migrant homes had a lesser inclination to go to college as compared to non-migrant children. Therefore, in our study we could clearly see that the boys in particular were more eager to migrate at the first available opportunity.

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