

Impact of Parental Migration on Education and Behavioural Outcomes of Children Left Behind in Southern Wollo

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ABSTRACT

The migration of parents is believed to be for the sake of children and families left behind. However, its impact on children left behind has been overlooked in Southern Wollo, Ethiopia. The impact of parental migration on the education and behavioral outcomes of children left behind has to be investigated in the migration-prone area. The objective of this study was to examine the impact of the migration of parent(s) on the education and behavioral outcomes of children left behind. A total of 622 children of migrating parents and children living with both parents were selected for this study. Data were gathered by using a strength and difficulty questionnaire (SDQ) from children of non-migrating parents and children whose either one or both parents migrated abroad in two weredas of southern Wollo, Ethiopia through the use of a stratified sampling method. Moreover 18 teachers were selected for an interview and focus group discussion to explore their perception of the influence of migration on the education and literacy of children. The results found that the mean score of LBC with parental migration was 15.86 (SD= 3.18) as compared to children living with intact families with a mean score of 12.06 (SD=3.20). The results of the study demonstrated that a significant mean difference was found between children of migrating parents and children living with both parents ($F(1,620)=219.25, p<.01$). Interview and FGD results also demonstrated that children experienced isolation, longing, sadness, and lack of motivation in schooling following their parents' migration. To mitigate the problem families, government, and non-government organizations that have a stake in children well-being and education that can be affected by migration should discharge their responsibilities accordingly. It is necessary to look at the hidden costs of parental migration on children left behind.

Key words: Left-behind children, Behavioral outcome, Parental migration, Education

BACKGROUND

Migration is an increasingly familiar experience in today's society. Disparities in economic development have resulted in the emergence of uneven and rapid urbanization and industrialization across the world, making migration a diverse and complex phenomenon. (Bariagaber, 2014). As a result, a substantial number of workers have opted to move in pursuit of better work opportunities from underdeveloped to developed countries (Cortes, 2008; Yeoh & Lam, 2007).

It's believed that children's psychosocial development is highly influenced by parents. According to psychological, sociological, and family system theory, the importance of parents and family for child development has been frequently explained (Wells, 2018; Spyrou, 2019; Bowlby, 1977; Bowen, 2004). However, due to a number of factors children may be separated from their parents and forced to be reared

by themselves or by other caregivers. The migration of parents is one of such factors that exposed children to being left behind in the migration sending countries.

The most widely held perception about migration is that poverty is the driving force behind vast numbers of people crossing national borders in looking for a better life since developing countries are among the top labor-sending and remittance-receiving countries demonstrate this argument (Orozco, 2003). Family members are forced to emigrate to ensure the family's financial security and migration are often used as a domestic way of coping (Cortes, 2008).

The reduction of poverty is one of the most important benefits of migration and, as a result, returns, and migrants primarily pay money to support the people they have left behind (Binford, 2003). These remittances are an example of a domestic strategy to supplement the family's income and provide additional funds for continuing needs

(Selamawit, 2013; Cortina & de la Garza, 2006; Binford, 2003; Sparreboom et al., 2020). In many migrant-sending countries, different research has been conducted. For example, research on 253 children whose mothers migrated also indicated the presence of significantly higher emotional and behavioral problems among those left behind compared to the other groups (Senaratna et al., 2011). Regarding caregiving, research findings mainly on grandmothers, relatives, and non-relatives, showed that grandparent's care for LBC is found to be better to provide the appropriate care as compared to the other caregiver types (Moran-Taylor 2008; Yarris, 2012; Dankyi, 2014; Dreby, 2006). In relation to this, a situation on Mexican LBC revealed that due to parental migration children who were taking care of themselves were found to be facing different problems compared to other left-behind children (LBC) (Lahaie et al., 2009). While some findings that help to intervene in youth migrants in Ethiopia have been identified to reduce the problems (Habtamu et al., 2021), support and frameworks on the challenges of left-behind children have not yet been addressed in Southern Wollo.

In the case of Ethiopia, where labor migration is a common practice, studies focusing on left-behind children and families are scant. The setting, South Wollo, is generally one of the areas where labor migration to the Gulf States is high. Due to several reasons such as poverty, social networking, and accessibility to illegal routes, the area is likely to have high numbers of migrants to the Gulf States, particularly to Saudi Arabia. According to Dessie Town Labor and Social Affairs Bureau, about 4,183 migrants migrated to the Middle East from 2010 up to 2014, and from these 3,235 migrants migrated to Saudi Arabia and the remaining 948 migrants went to Kuwait (Dessie Town Labor and Social Affairs Bureau [DTLSAB], 2014).

Personal observations also confirmed that there are many children left behind in South Wollo due to parental migration. It has been also observed that teachers and community people describe these children as truants who rely on remittances and do not pay attention to schooling. On the other hand, migrating parents do send remittances to improve the living conditions of left-behind families and the schooling of children. In the study area of Southern Wollo where there is high parental migration, there is a dearth of information on the behavioral outcome and schooling of children who are left behind.

The motivation for this research, therefore, rested on the potentially significant number of children affected by parental migration. Therefore, this research study aims to answer the following research questions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Do left-behind children's behavioral outcomes as measured by the Strength and Difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ) differ from children of non-migrating families?
2. How does parental migration affect the education of children left behind?

Influence of Parental Migration on Behavioral Outcomes and Education of Left-behind Children: A Review of Literature

Explaining the relationship between the migration of parents and the behavioral outcomes of LBC requires discussing the underlying presumption that a child's development and activities are influenced by the separation of a parent(s) concerning migration.

Childhood is a critical period in which children acquire physical, psychological, and social assistance from their parents to develop accordingly. Psychosocial theories and research confirmed that the help of parents is a strong predictor of the child's ability to manage anxiety, stress, and different social and psychological problems in life. Children also can gain trust and confidence in communities through relationships with parents and emotional interaction with elders (Parrenas, 2005; Ainsworth, 1969; Bowlby, 1977).

It seems that parents who migrate transnationally and leave children behind provide reasons for their actions for the sake of families and children left behind. The household and family systems change when responsibilities are transferred and rearranged and the current duties of families at home are altered to solve problems that as a result of the migrated parent(s) (Hugo, 2002; Parrenas, 2005). Most parents try to maintain their parental status regardless of their physical isolation by redefining traditional notions of parenting in new and different ways of inventing new notions about what it implies to parent or parents a child from afar. Children might not react favorably to their families' endeavors to re-establish and strengthen family relationships from afar, and substituting caregivers either supports or hinder the parents' attempts (Save the children, 2006; Samarasinghe, 1989; Mazzucato et al., 2014). As a contribution, sending parents abroad for work might be a valuable source of remittance and may serve as an employment opportunity in migrant-sending communities. It is argued that parents can have job opportunities overseas that would support their children in their schooling and related needs and promote social and educational accomplishment, which necessitated migration. However, the psychosocial well-being of LBCs might be threatened if their primary parent is absent (Pottinger, 2005; Pissin, 2013).

For example, a study by Kandel and Massey (2002) in Mexico with areas of high parental migrations migrating abroad indicated that maintaining emotional bonds between migrant parents and their left-behind children could be a challenging issue. The migration of parents has also a long-lasting impact on the well-being of LBC (Artico, 2003; Amato & Cheadle, 2005). In addition, research in Mexico found out that LBC from migrant households experienced poor academic achievements as compared to children living with both parents, and that the males of the migrant parents tend to choose emigration as a career path, whereas the burdens of girls at home increased (McKenzie & Rapoport, 2006). Other research found that 80 percent of children in Jamaica who were in trouble with the law had their mothers away, compared to just 30 percent of children with non-migrating parents (D'Emilio et al., 2007). Furthermore,

interviews with children in migrant households conducted by Parrenas (2005) in the Philippines using interviewees revealed psycho-social problems. In another study, Bryant (2005) looked at the literature on the Philippines and found mixed results when it came to the effects of parents' migration on their children. However, another series of his findings came to the opposite conclusion, suggesting that LBC were disadvantaged in their schooling due to the migration of parents (Bryant, 2005). Additional complexities were also reported by Mazzucato et al. (2014) while studying the social and emotional well-being of LBC in Angola, Ghana, and Nigeria. Mazzucato et al. (2014) compared children who lived with both parents in the country of residence and children who lived in various types of families abroad and found that the migration of parents was linked to poorer children's health in several circumstances. Research in the Caribbean region also indicated that LBC who did not move with their parents were more likely to experience sadness, loneliness, and behavior problems (Elliot-Hart, Avery, & Rehner, 2006; Jones et al., 2004; Pottinger, 2005).

In addition, a study by Jia and Tian (2010) in migrant-sending communities of China found that LBC had a higher likelihood of feelings of separation and loneliness compared with other children with non-migrating parents. Children whose parents migrate more often suffer from mental or physical sickness, confirming research evidence (Giannelli & Mangiavacchi, 2010; McKenzie & Rapoport, 2006). Most of the research in countries with high parental migration showed that children left behind are exposed to substance abuse, unwanted pregnancies among teenagers, aggressiveness, and risky lifestyles that harm their health and well-being (Save the Children, 2006; D'Emilio et al., 2007; O'Connell Davidson & Farrow, 2007; Edillon, 2008; Bakker et al., 2009; Gao et al., 2010). It was argued that because of the remittances sent from abroad, for children left behind access to drugs becomes easier which consequently led them to delinquency, abusive behavior, and other socially unacceptable behavior that could be viewed as signs of psychological and emotional consequences following parental migration (O'Connell Davidson & Farrow, 2007; De la Garza, 2010).

Even if the above research results demonstrated the impact of parental migration internationally, little or no attempts have not yet been made to explore the issue of children left behind in Ethiopia.

METHOD

Research Design

In this study, a descriptive quantitative design is used to check whether there exists a relationship between the caregiver types and behavioral outcomes of children left behind. Using quantitative design comparisons of mean behavioral outcomes of children cared for by different caregivers have been made. The goal of employing the variables quantitatively is either to associate variables, as in a survey, or to compare samples or groups in terms of a result (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative interviews and focus group discussions

were also used to explore how the migration of parents influenced the education of children.

The Population of the Study

The population of the study was children aged 11 to 17 years old. The population of this study is delimited to two weredas in South Wollo, Ethiopia due to the accessibility and familiarity of the area. The setting, South Wollo, is generally one of the areas where labor migration to the Gulf States is high.

From South Wollo, Tehuledere, and Kutaber weredas were selected as a sample for this study. Kutaber wereda is 20 km from Dessie, and 420 km from Addis Ababa. Moreover, Tehuledere woreda is 30 km from Dessie and 430 km from Addis Ababa. The total population of children aged between 11-17 for this research purpose to fit Goodman's standardized instrument in the two weredas is not known. Thus, the sampling of children was drawn using sampling techniques formula from the unknown population.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The selections of participants were guided by the aim of the research and access to informants. The inclusion criteria used to LBC separated from migrant parents for more than six months during the interview time. As inclusion criteria, left-behind children whose either one or both parents migrated abroad for more than six months have been chosen as participants.

In collaboration with teachers, the units that were sampled for this study were left-behind children due to parental migration and cared for by different caregivers and children who live with intact families in the study area.

In Ethiopia in general and in the study area in particular, the proportion of parental migration as well as children left behind is not known. The Ethiopia census could be considered as the source but it has not yet considered the issue of parental migration and children left behind as an important variable. Thus, to select samples for this study, Cochran's (1977) formula for calculating sample size for an unknown target population has been used in this study. Based on Cochran's (1977) formula, as the calculations indicated below, the number of children who live with intact families for this study was planned to be 384. It was planned to have 384 children left behind due to parental migration in the selected weredas as sample participants.

Cochran's (1977) formula is $n = z^2 pq / e^2$

where n is the sample size,

z is the selected critical value of desired confidence level,

p is the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population, $q = 1 - p$, and e is the desired level of precision.

A total of 622 children of which 311 were children of migrant parents and 311 children living with both families were selected as participants of the study. Regarding the methods, a stratified sampling method of data collection has been employed since the aim of the research was to examine as well as compare children left behind due to parental migration and children living with both families.

Regarding interview and FGD data, participants were selected purposely by considering their experiences in understanding literacy and educating children in the area.

Instrument

In this study, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was administered to two groups of children. (SDQ) is preferred for ease of administration and scoring. Left behind children having parents migrated and children living with intact families’ behavioral outcomes were assessed and compared with this SDQ.

Robert N. Goodman, a U.K. child psychiatrist, devised the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ in 1997, which has been translated into several languages, including Amharic. This brief behavioral screening questionnaire is intended for getting data from children aged 11 to 17 years old.

The questionnaire is comprised of 25 statements/questions that can be put on one paper. Each of the questions can be answered as true, partially true, or false. Each question has a score ranging from 0 to 2 points. The questions are grouped into five subscale scores (behavioral difficulties, emotional problems, hyperactivity, problematic peer interactions, and prosocial behavior), each of which focuses on a different skill or challenge. The SDQ questions about 25 characteristics, 10 of which have been considered strengths, 14 of which are considered problems, and one of which is considered neutrality. In both Western and non-Western contexts, the SDQ does indeed have a track record of reliability and validity scores (Goodman, 1997; Palmieri & Smith, 2007; Woerner et al., 2004). A scoring review of 54 research outcomes in 12 African nations also showed that the SDQ can be a very valuable tool in an African setting if the instrument guidelines, internal consistency, and culturally equivalent are all taken into account (Hoosen et al., 2018).

Behavioral outcomes in this study are operationalized to include conduct problems, emotional symptoms, hyperactivity/inattention problems, peer relationship problems, and prosocial behavior that is assessed by the Strength and difficulty questionnaire (SDQ), which are reflections of children’s psycho-social experience and become a major concern in children’s development and functioning. A higher mean score is associated with higher problems in behavioral outcomes.

This study not only intends to compare the behavioral outcomes of children left behind (LBC) and children living with intact families/non-left-behind children (NLBC) but also intends to differentiate to what extent parental migration affected boys and girls.

For the qualitative part, interview and FGD guides were prepared to explore how parental migration impacted the behavior, education, and literacy of children left behind.

Methods of Data Analysis

To achieve its goals, the study used quantitative data analysis techniques. SPSS (version 23) was used to run quantitative data analysis. Mean comparisons were made across children who were left behind owing to parental migration

and children who grew up in intact families. To evaluate the distribution of the variables throughout the sample, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were performed.

In the study, data management and cleaning procedures and assumptions were made to determine the use of the parametric tests (ANOVA). As a data management procedure appropriately dealing with missing has been carefully examined to identify the type and pattern of missingness. In this study, missing values have been found and cleaned. Moreover, outliers that are related to checking extreme cases biasing the model have been tested by looking at Cook’s Distance values output in employing SPSS in the data cleaning process and fit assumptions to run the parametric test proposed in this study. Collinearity diagnosis has been also done in this study which fortunately multicollinearity was not to be a problem as the highest correlation found between the type of caregiver and total SDQ was $r=.623$.

The data in qualitative data was sorted into topics and examined as a result. The sayings of participants were emphasized using various approaches whenever they were relevant to the study’s theme.

FINDINGS

For this study, the data collected from two woredas from South Wollo was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Analyses were also made to explore how parental migration affected the education and literacy of children left behind. The quantitative analyses were conducted to provide descriptive information about the characteristics of major study variables. As part of these descriptive analyses, the first demographic characteristics of the participants of the study are presented. The behavioral outcomes of children left behind are indicated as being disaggregated by gender are presented.

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

As indicated in Table 1, 163 females and 148 males participated from migrating parents. For the comparison purpose, 160 females and 151 males from a non-migrating parents were included in the study. Regarding the length of separation from migrant parents, the majority of children left behind (65%) have been separated for more than five years. The age of left-behind children in the study ranges from 11-17 with a

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of children’s gender

Gender	n	percent
Gender, LBC		
Female	163	52.41
Male	148	47.59
Total	311	100
Gender, Non-LBC		
Female	160	51.44
Male	151	48.56
Total	311	100

mean of 14.66 (SD=1.81). The age of the comparison group also ranged from 11-17 with a mean of 14.81(SD=1.72).

Moreover, the mean and standard deviations of behavioral outcomes of left-behind children (LBC) and non-left-behind children (NLBC) were also analyzed as indicated in Table 2 below.

BEHAVIORAL OUTCOMES OF PARTICIPANTS

As indicated in Table 3 an attempt has been made to compare the mean score of behavioral outcomes as measured by the strength and difficulties questionnaire for children left behind and children living with intact families. The results found that the mean score of LBC with parental migration was 15.8682 (SD= 3.18) as compared to children living with intact families (NONLBC) with a mean score of 12.06 (SD=3.20). The mean difference was significant $F(1,620)= 219.25, P<.01$. This implies that children of migrating parents are experiencing more challenges and exposed to emotional, behavioral, peer relation, and conduct problems compared to children living with both parents. This result was also supported by data obtained from teachers. Teachers during the interview and FGD emphasized that due to the absence of parents due to migration, children are exposed to sadness, lack of protection and loneliness, and, lack of interest in education and related social psychological problems.

Table 2. Gender and behavioral outcomes of children

	Behavioral outcome (SDQ)		
	n	M	SD
Gender, LBC			
Male	148	16.76	2.96
Female	163	17.57	2.68
Total	311	17.11	2.84
Gender, NLBC			
Male	160	11.29	3.08
Female	151	12.58	3.25
Total	311	12.03	3.22

Table 3. Mean and standard deviations of behavioral outcomes of LBC and NLBC (N=622)

child status	Behavioral outcome (SDQ)
LBC	
Mean	17.11
N	311
Std. Deviation	3.18
NLBC	
Mean	12.07
N	311
Std. Deviation	3.21
Total	
Mean	13.96
N	622
Std. Deviation	3.72

Gender and Behavioral Outcomes of Children as Measured by SDQ

As indicated in Table 3, the total mean score of left-behind children disaggregated by gender was analyzed. It was found that the mean score of female left-behind children was 17.57 (SD=2.96) as compared to the mean of male LBC which was reported as 16.76 (SD=2.68). The comparison group NLBC mean score for females and males was 12.58 (SD=3.25) and 11.29(SD=3.08) respectively. The mean difference was statistically significant between males and females of LBC as one-way ANOVA indicated in Table 4 below.

As demonstrated in Table, 4 the behavioral outcomes of children left behind were statistically significant between male and female $F(1,308)=8.14, p<.01$. This indicated that parental migration affected males and females left behind children differently. However, a significant mean difference was not observed when the behavioral outcomes of males and females of children living with intact families were analyzed using one-way ANOVA.

The above results also implied that it is female who suffers from parental migration as compared to males. These results were also confirmed by FGD and interview data. The qualitative data demonstrated that girls are assumed to take roles at earlier ages. Girls are expected to care for their siblings and the left behind family in place of mothers' absence. Such burdens thus influenced their educational achievements and motivations.

In addition to the above quantitative results, the interview and FGD with teachers were made to identify how the migration of parents to children's behavioral outcomes and education. Even if teachers argued that the movement of parents overseas is associated with the needs of children and families left behind, the qualitative data revealed its social and psychological consequences to be tremendous.

Some of the major problems captured during the focus group discussion and interview regarding the consequences of the migration of parents on LBC include "a feeling of rejection" "sadness," "hopelessness," "loss of trust," "poor self-esteem," "difficulty concentrating," and, "lack of interest in education," "and 'lack of respect for others'". Moreover "lack of security "and "supervision ", "aggressive actions," "being spoiled in behavior," "risky," "and "inappropriate behavior", were the most commonly cited consequences of the absence of parents due to migration on LBC, all of which are described below. A teacher in *Tehuledere, Haik*, Southern *Wollo*, described his observation as

I noticed the vulnerability of LBC to psychosocial problems since they have no parents around them who care and provide the necessary parental love. These children lack motivation in their academics and show depressive

Table 4. One-way analyses of variance of behavioral outcomes of LBC by gender

Sources	df	SS	MS	F	P
Between groups	1	64.35	64.35	8.14	005
Within groups	308	2454.32	7.90		
Total	309	249.58			

behaviors due to parental absence. Some LBC also frequently indulge in socially inappropriate behavior.

The quotation above implied that the problems of children left behind are mainly associated with parental absence. Teachers in the focus group discussion argued that parents play a significant role to supervise, helping, and disciplining children, and their absence consequently impacted children's wellbeing.

During the interview and focus group discussion with teachers, it was emphasized that children must be raised by their parents and that LBC's problems are related to the loss of proper parental care and control. It was explained by teachers that they observed emotional changes in children, emphasizing that all children of migrants are vulnerable due to parents' migration and lack of proper supervision. LBC is assumed to have a loss of meaningful social relations with their peers and exposed to psychological difficulties.

As an illustrative quotation in FGD participants, one of the teachers articulated the influence of the migration of parents on LBC as follows

Perhaps you have just observed. the psychological problems of LBC due to parental migration have become increasing and easily observable. They react very strongly and sensitively to anything in the school and surrounding areas. They frequently rush into socially undesirable behavior like an addiction that is harming the youth. One can easily get the left-behind children in Khat houses. The problems will be increasing unless love and care from relatives and others are provided (FGTK).

In the FGD, teachers mentioned that the migrant parents are trying to compensate for their absence by sending excess materials such as clothing, and mobile apparatus in the form of remittances to their children, which inadvertently bring changes to an unhealthy parent-child relationship. It was explained that such provision of materials could have led to the dependence of children on the parents' remittance and discouraged them from attending their academics and literacy or having a better aspirations in their life in the future. However, arguments were also raised by teachers in which some children are well aware of their parents' migration to relieve livelihood problems and help improve the living conditions of the family left behind. Thus, they noticed some children are more mature in their daily lives, despite the unpleasant emotions or psychological consequences of their migrant parents' prolonged absence.

In the FGD and interview, it was reported that girls experienced more problems than boys. Following parental migration particularly, the mother, girls became overburdened with household chores and the responsibility of caring for their younger siblings who are left behind. In the area, the value of education and literacy is deteriorating since migrants as well as left behind families and children are giving more emphasis to remittances.

In terms of the schooling of children, most teachers explained that children who are left behind and receive remittance from distant parents showed a lack of interest to be literate by going to school. Teachers mentioned that most of

the LBC lack the motivation to learn and be literate as compared to children living with their non-migrating parents. They also said that children at school are not motivated in schooling and refuse to attend classes as a result of being dependent and obsessed with remittances sent abroad. It was suggested that some of the children spent remittances on things that are inappropriate for them which reduces their interest in learning, and they no longer see schooling as a path to a better future. In this regard, a teacher during the interview described the situation as follows

Parental migration is a normal phenomenon in our area, and parents are sending remittances to help their children cared for by different caregivers usually by grandparents. Children are obsessed with the materials sent by parents and consequently lack a desire for schooling.

In this regard, the main influence areas of parent migration on children's behavioral outcomes were despair, loss of parental care, violence, intimidation, teasing, and indulging in risky behavior (alcohol abuse, drugs, and sexual behavior). Therefore being exposed to such behaviors is assumed to have higher impacts that affect the educational motivations of children left behind.

To sum up the interview and FGD results of teachers, it is possible to explain that the migration of parents in the study area is impacting children's behavior as well as their educational motivations and achievement. Even though migrating parents are trying their best by sending remittances to children's education and wellbeing, its outcome is not as such to the level of expectations. Focusing on remittances has educational and behavioral costs to children when it is used inappropriately. It is better to understand that remittances sent by parents can positively contribute to the schooling and well-being of children, but their separation for such purposes may have a negative effect accordingly. In the qualitative research, it was also indicated that children who have been cared for by grandparents and children with either of their parents are more advantaged than children of both migrating parents. But teachers emphasized that most of the children cared for by grandparents are getting spoiled and lack the motivation for education since they lack proper supervision. It has been also demonstrated that the father and mother's absence due to migration has different implications for the well-being and education of children. In the focus group discussion, it has been mentioned that the mother's presence in the home plays an important role in the well-being and education of children than the father's presence as far as the migration of either of the parents is concerned.

DISCUSSION

In this study behavioral outcomes and education of children left behind due to parental migration were investigated. The behavioral outcomes of children left behind due to parental migration as measured by the strength and difficulty questionnaire (SDQ) and children living with intact families were compared. A significant mean difference was found between children left behind and children living with intact families ($F(1,620) = 219.25, P < .01$). The findings of this study are

comparable to those of Graham and Jordan (2011), who used the CHAMPSEA study in Indonesia to demonstrate that a higher proportion of sample children from migrant families had behavioral difficulties than children from non-migrant families. Prior studies on children left behind revealed social-psychological difficulties such as loneliness, stress, and severe dread as compared to their peers with non-migrating parents, (Reyes, 2007; Battistella & Conaco, 1996; Save the children Sri Lanka, 2006; Asis, 2006; Pissin, 2013). Furthermore, Moldovan studies found the psychological issues of youngsters whose parents had gone (Vanore et al., 2014; Bryant, 2005).

Previous reports also mentioned that LBC was found to be more exposed to psychological problems, and violent attitudes compared to other children (Pissin, 2013; Fan et al., 2009). Mazzucato et al. (2014) also reported that children of migrant parents showed a higher psychological problems when compared to children living with both parents. A similar finding was also reported in the Philippines with children of migrant parents that showed a prevalence of social and psychological problems among LBC (Parrenas, 2005; Bryant, 2005). Thus care should be taken to the psychosocial well-being of children following the migration of parents.

The interview and FGD results of this study showed that left-behind children faced behavioral problems following the absence of their parents due to migration. Consistent with these findings, previous research reported that left-behind children showed low self-confidence, a looser relationship with parents, being silent, or less communicative to neighbors (Ye & Murray, 2005). In this regard, though parental migration benefits families' to enhance per capita spending, it does not benefit children's health or cognitive ability, according to comparison research from four countries, including Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Vietnam (Nguyen 2016). Other studies also confirmed that children feel abandoned following the migration of parents (Dreby, 2007), and are psychologically affected since they are obliged to adjust to other caretakers (Smith et al., 2004). Moreover, depth interviews with children in migrant households in the Philippines and Mexico found problems in maintaining appropriate social relationships among children left behind (Parrenas, 2005; Kandel & Massay, 2002). Furthermore, as Bowlby (1977) pointed out, children who have less engaged, unresponsive, or insensitive parents are more prone to suffer social and psychological issues for a variety of reasons.

Concerning the educational impact of parental migration, it was identified that left-behind children are decreasing their motivation and interest in learning due to the problems they encountered in the absence of parents. Due to the migration of parents, children lack parental care and support which determines their motivation to perform in their academics. Supporting this result, longitudinal research in China revealed that Children from migrant families frequently have lower academic achievement than the comparison groups (Liang, 2016; Zhang et al., 2014). However, Ren and Treiman (2015) research results found no effect of the migration of parents on children's education or health (Ren & Treiman 2015). Research outputs showed that parental migration is

strongly linked to children's academic and health consequences, and the effects can continue for years, depending on the years of separation and the situation of children left behind (Liang, 2016; Lu 2012). Family separation and lack of parental guidance, on the other hand, potentially affected left-behind children's school engagement and motivation (Robles & Oropesa 2011), health (De Brauw & Mu 2011; Wen & Lin 2012), and psychological issues such as stress and anxiety.

Thus, by understanding the social and emotional as well as education costs of the migration of parents, it is possible to effectively help children left behind. By providing guidance and care to these children left behind, one can intervene in the problems accordingly.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

It is assumed that parents are migrating for labor purposes for the well-being of children and left-behind families. Even if parental labor migration positively contributed to the material well-being of children and families left behind the social and emotional costs are omitted and overlooked. In this study, the behavioral outcomes as measured by SDQ of children left behind due to parental migration have been investigated. The findings of this study generally showed a significant mean difference between children left behind and children living with intact families in Southern Wollo, Ethiopia. In this study, a significant mean difference was also observed between children of migrating parents and children living with both parents. The results implied that left-behind children were found to be more exposed to emotional, social, and behavioral problems due to the absence of parents. The results also demonstrated that girls are more prone to the problem as compared to boys. The qualitative part of the study also confirmed that children left behind showed a lack of motivation in their education due to the various social-psychological problems they have experienced as a result of the migration of parents.

The implications of this study, therefore, rest on working on children affected by parental migration. Practically various forms of support from friends, families, caregivers and teachers have to be implemented because children naturally seek social support from others. Teachers can also provide the necessary advice and support for the LBC who faced educational challenges following the migration of parents. Tutorials and other support mechanisms designed at school for LBC may motivate them to learn and achieve their academics. Schools shall also allow the LBC to participate in extracurricular activities that would help them reduce stress and related problems.

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