

The effect of caregiver types on behavioral outcomes of children left behind due to parental migration in Southern Wollo, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Though parents are migrating for the betterment of left-behind families and children, a significant part of the story is overlooked. A quantitative, survey design was employed to investigate the effect of caregiver types and behavioral outcomes of children left behind. Data were gathered by using a strength and difficulty questionnaire (SDQ) from 311 left-behind children whose parents migrated abroad and who were selected from two weredas using stratified sampling method. The results of the study showed that a significant mean difference was observed among the children left behind and cared for by different caregivers (grandparents, mother only, father only, relatives, non-relatives). A significant mean difference was also shown on both internalizing and externalizing problems as measured by the Strength and Difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ) among children cared for by caregiver types. To conclude effects of caregiver types on behavioral outcomes of children left behind due to parental migration were observed in the study. Implications of the study focus, therefore, on ensuring the best interest of the child by families, government, and non-government organizations that have a stake in children affected by migration.

Keywords; *left-behind children, behavioral outcome, caregiver types, migration*

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Introduction

In today's societies, migration is becoming increasingly common. As a result, a significant number of workers have opted to move from developing to developed regions in search of better job prospects (Cortes, 2008; Yeoh & Lam, 2007). Parents may be forced to leave their children in their home country due to labor migration.

For a number of purposes, people migrate from one place to another within a country or from one country to another (IOM, 2008). According to research, about 7% of Mexican children in 2002 had fathers who had migrated (Cortes, 2006). According to Bryant (2005), half a million children were left behind in Thailand. Furthermore, there are almost nine million Filipino children who have been left behind (Reyes 2007).

In communities where there is more economic disparity, the desire to move would be higher due to relative deprivation. Stark (1991), a proponent of the new economics of labor migration, claims that the decision to become a labor migrant cannot be clarified solely at the level of individual workers; larger social entities must also be considered. As a consequence, the families may be considered a group. Parental migration involves parental absence at home, which has a negative impact on children's health and wellbeing because children will be expected to care for left-behind families at a young age (McKenzie and Rapoport, 2006; Cappelloni, 2011; Antman, 2012). As parental migration has become a more common phenomenon, concerns about how it affects those who are left behind have remained unanswered. The word "left behind" in literature is problematic because it is viewed and interpreted as those who lost out on the opportunity to move, or as those who were unable to be taken along and were therefore "abandoned" (Yeoh & Lam, 2007).

Ethiopia is receiving a significant amount of remittances as a result of labor migration, according to empirical studies and observations. These remittances are part of family income diversification strategies and provide supplementary funds for ongoing expenditures (Cortina and de la Garza, 2006; Selmawit, 2013).

The effects of parental migration on children are usually dependent on the quality of care the child receives from his surrogate caregiver (Hoang & Yeoh, 2015). Most studies reported grandparents as the primary caregivers in the left-behind families, when both parents are migrating. However, children's experiences and attitudes toward grandparental care varied considerably. Concerning care giving arrangements, mostly grandmothers (Moran-Taylor 2008; Yarris 2012) and other relatives and non-relatives (Dankyi 2014; Dreby 2010) indicated that that kinship care for left-behind children is key to family survival in the context of transnational migration.

Research on the impact of parental migration reported that children suffer from mental or physical sickness (Gianelli & Mangiavacchi, 2010; McKenzie & Rapoport 2011). Battistella and Conaco (1998) also found that Filipino children with absent mothers demonstrated that they faced social and psychological adjustment problems. Studies conducted by Save the Children (2006) using interviews with caregivers in Sri Lanka revealed that on average 20 percent of children of all ages showed certain negative behaviors following their mothers' migration.

Few children may move with their families due to economic pressures and policy obstacles, leaving vast numbers of children in their home countries (Asis, 2006; Bryant, 2005; Kandel & Kao, 2001; Yeoh & Lam, 2007). Researchers in some countries have been encouraged to strengthen their perception of this unique community of children in order to provide a more solid framework for the production and application of appropriate policies (Bryant, 2005; Cortes, 2006; de la Garza, 2010). In Ethiopia, where parental migration has been observed, there have been few/no attempts to put the problem of children left behind to the forefront of migration studies. In Ethiopia researches mainly focused on migration and its impact mainly on migrants themselves or on the receiving communities, its contribution to the development, and the social networks associated with it (Abebaw, 2013; Adamnesh, 2006; Getachew, 2016; Fework, 2007; Fernandez, 2010).

A negative impact of parental migration identified so far reported that both parents and children become confused as a result of disrupted family roles and responsibilities and impact a menace to the family relationship (Buck & Castaneda, 2011). When parents migrate, their children's care is often turned over to the extended family. Grandparents, aunts and uncles, and other caregivers may try to keep their activities and sometimes enlist the children left behind to help out in the family chores. In this regard studies by Buck and Castaneda (2011) and Heymann (2006) showed that the scope of poverty that pushes parents to migrate is so great that the caregivers left at home still must work hard when the remittances sent to them are not sufficient to care for the left-behind children properly. Since guardians and extended families, themselves work and lead their life, children might be forced to raise each other, and infants and toddlers sometimes may become at risk of failing to receive an adequate social and emotional environment in which to develop (Heymann, 2006). Children may feel abandoned when their parents migrate (Dreby, 2007), and psychologically affected in adjusting to caregiving arrangements (Smith, Lalonde, & Johnson, (2004)). When arranging caregivers for their left-behind children in home countries, migrant women want to assign the burden

to their relatives, particularly female relatives (Parreas, 2000, 2010; Zimmerman, Litt, & Bose, 2006). Good caregivers are important for the well-being and growth of left-behind children, as well as for sustaining transnational migration (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011; Moran-Taylor, 2008). In caregiving arrangements, grandmothers, are preferred helpful caregivers for left-behind children (Lutz & Palenga-Möllnbeck, 2012; Mazzucato & Schans, 2011; Pantea, 2012). Lutz and Palenga-Möllnbeck (2012) found that grandmothers are the most dependable and dedicated caregivers for grandchildren in their study of migrant families in Poland and Ukraine. Pantea (2012) also noted that grandmothers in Romanian migrant families carry out their duties and provide care and help for the children who are left behind.

In the case of Ethiopia, where there is labor migration, studies focusing on left-behind children and families are scant. In Wollo, Ethiopia, it is possible to observe labor migrants migrating mainly to the Gulf States. A qualitative study in North Wollo also showed situations whereby parents abroad are forced to send back their children to their country through returnees. These children have been sent through a ‘plastic bag’ that people use for their shopping and this group of children is labeled as ‘children of the plastic bag’ (Getachew, 2016). Personal observations also confirmed that there are many children left behind in South Wollo due to parental migration. These children are labeled by teachers and community members as truants who are dependent on remittances and do not give attention to schooling. Apart from such labeling, there is no or little research conducted on caregiver types and the behavioral outcomes of children left behind in such areas. Moreover, the extent to which caregiver characteristics and behavioral outcomes of children left behind related have not been investigated in our context, Ethiopia. This shows the need to investigate the relationship between caregiver types and behavioral outcomes of children left behind.

To this end this study investigated how caregiver types affected the behavioral outcomes of children left behind in the case of Southern Wollo, Ethiopia, the place where migration is becoming a norm rather than an exception. The motivation for this research, therefore, rested on the potentially significant number of children left behind due to parental migration and cared for by different caregivers. This study aimed to answer the following research questions

- Do left-behind children’s behavioral outcomes as measured by the Strength and Difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ) significantly differ from caregiver types?
- Do children left behind cared for by caregiver types differ significantly in internalizing and externalizing problems as measured by the Strength and Difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ)?

Method

Research design

Population and settings of the study

The population of the study was children aged 11 to 17 years old. The population of this study was delimited to two weredas in South Wollo, Ethiopia due to the accessibility and familiarity of the area.

South Wollo is generally one of the areas where labor migration to the Gulf States is common. 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. One can observe long queues of people who seek passports for their departure in the Dessie emigration office. 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 (DTLSAB, 2014).

From South Wollo, Tehuledere, and Kutaber weredas were selected as a sample for this study. According to the Ethiopian Population projection of 2017 at zonal and wereda levels, the number of the total population expected in Tehuledereis was 144,860 (71,608 males and 70,730 females). In Kutaber the total population is 113,132 (55,191 males and 56,448 females) (Ethiopian CSA projection Database, 2013). Kutaberwerdeda is 20 km from Dessie, and 420 km from Addis Ababa. Moreover, Tehuledere worda 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 done using sampling techniques formula from the unknown population.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The selections of the participants were guided by the aim of the research and access to informants. As inclusion criteria, left-behind children whose either one or both parents migrated abroad for more than six months and cared for by different caregivers was chosen as participants. By using stratified sampling methods, children left behind due to parental migration and cared for by different caregivers were used. Caregivers types (grandparents, mother only, a father only, relatives, non-relatives, and children living alone were used as strata to select samples).

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 the ample 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 minimum sample size required for this study was 384.

Cochran's (1977) formula is $n = \frac{z^2 z^2 pq}{\partial^2 \partial^2}$ 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 311 left behind children cared for by caregivers were selected as participants of the study. Regarding the methods, a stratified sampling method of data collection has been employed since the objective of the study was to identify and compare children left behind due to parental migration and cared for by different caregivers. After stratifying, an attempt has been also made to classify left behind children based on the type of caregiver for comparison in line with the aforementioned objectives.

Instrument

In this study, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was administered for 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.

Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire for behavioral screening was developed by a U.K child psychiatrist Robert N. Goodman (1997) and is translated into different languages including Amharic. This short behavioral screening questionnaire is designed to be a self-report in children aged 11- 17-year old.

The questionnaire consisted of 25 questions/ statements which could be presented on a single sheet. Each can be answered as true, partially true, or not true. The score for each question ranged from 0 to 2 points. The questions were divided into five subscales (behavioral problems, emotional symptoms, hyperactivity, problematic relationships with peers, and prosocial behavior) each of which explores a different area of skill or difficulty. The questions/statements helped to identify partial scores diversified for

behavioral problems, emotional symptoms, hyperactivity, problematic relationships with peers, and prosocial behavior. The total score is obtained by summing the scores of all questions of subscales except those related to prosocial behavior and could vary from 0 to 40 points. The SDQ asked about 25 attributes, 10 of which would generally be thought of as strengths, 14 of which would generally be thought of as difficulties, and one of which is neutral. Since the lack of pro-social activities is conceptually distinct from the existence of relational problems, the pro-social score is not reversed into the overall difficulties score (Goodman 1997). The scales can be further classified as internalizing (emotional and peer relation) and externalizing (hyperactivity and conduct) problems for further comparison. The SDQ has a proven record of reliability and validity scores in both Western and non-Western contexts (Goodman, 1997; Palmieri & Smith, 2007; Woerner et al., 2004). A scoring review of fifty-four studies from 12 African countries also showed that the SDQ may be a very useful tool in an African setting by taking into consideration the instrument guidelines, internal consistency, and ensuring cultural equivalence of the instrument (Hoosen et al., 2018). For example, the overall alpha score is reported to be .73 in a study that examined the relationship between psychosocial well-being and cognitive development of orphaned and abandoned children (OAC) relative to non-OAC to understand factors associated with success in learning (Escueta et al., 2014). Moreover, in a study that assessed the internal reliability of the self-report scale of SDQ, it was reported to be 0.82 for the total difficulties, 0.75 for emotional symptoms, 0.72 for conduct problems, 0.69 for hyperactivity, 0.65 for prosocial behavior, and 0.61 for peer problems (Goodman, Meltzer, & Bailey, 1998).

Even if the Amharic version of the parent/teacher report scale was shown to be valid by a team of experts, (Daniel Fekadu Wolde-Giorgis, Souci Frissa, Atalay Alem, David Appleyard, Menelik Desta Argaw, Tigist Zerihun.) and made available online/in soft copy/ served as the basis for the self-report item, back and forth translations from the English language to Amharic language and vice versa were made by two PhD students in the department of Foreign language and literature at Addis Ababa University and Wollo University. 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.

Caregiver types (LBC cared for by a grandparent, father only, mother only, relatives, non-relatives, and those who lived alone) served as a categorical variable used to compare the behavioral outcomes as measured by SDQ of children left behind. Thus to what extent children cared for by different caregivers differ significantly in behavioral outcomes as measured by SDQ has been the objective of this study.

Data Analysis

The study employed quantitative methods of data analysis. Quantitative data analysis was done using SPSS (version 23) software. A mean comparison between caregiver types was done. Descriptive analyses were performed to provide descriptive characteristics of the study of children left behind due to parental migration and cared for by different caregiver types. Descriptive statistics (means, and standard deviations) were calculated to examine the distribution of the variables across the sample. Multiple comparisons of mean differences were also performed to identify the type of caregiving and children's behavioral outcomes. The type of caregiving represents those who providers care for children left behind following either one or both parent migration. Caregivers may include grandparents, mother only, a father only, relatives, non-relatives. Children left behind who live alone caring for themselves were also included in the study.

In the study, the following data management and cleaning procedures and assumptions were made to determine the use of the parametric tests (ANOVA). As a data management procedure 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 $r=.623$.

Ethical Issues

The importance of research ethics is grounded in the understanding that research is a social process that cannot be artificially separated from the structures of the society it attempts to understand. Ethical considerations in research with children occur at all stages of the research process. With all possible means; protecting the participants from psychological harm was given considerable attention. Both written and oral consent were given by each participant of the study. In addition, participants were informed that participation was made based on their willingness and they could withdraw from the data collection process any time. Data collection places were arranged for children so that they can comfortably fill the questionnaire.

Findings

As part of these descriptive analyses, the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants of the study are presented. The behavioral outcomes of children left behind are indicated disaggregated by gender and caregiving characteristics are presented. Moreover, the mean and standard deviation of the effects of caregiving types on behavioral outcomes of children left behind were analyzed.

Sociodemographic characteristic of LBC disaggregated by caregivers (N=311)

The sociodemographic characteristics of children left behind and cared for by different caregivers are presented in the following way.

Table 1: *Socio-demographic characteristics of children by caretakers and gender*

LBC's Caretakers	n	Percent
Grandparent	92	29.6
Mother only	58	18.6
Father only	85	27.3
Relatives	53	17.0
Nonrelative	14	4.5
Living alone	9	3.0
Total	311	100
Gender, LBC		
Female	163	52.41
Male	148	47.59
Total	311	100

As indicated in Table1 29.6% of the left-behind children due to parental migration, were cared for by grandparents. Besides, the proportion of left-behind children cared for by mother and father independently was 18.6 % and 27.3% respectively. It was also found that 17% of the participants were relative caregivers. Furthermore, 4.5% of respondents were cared for by non-relatives and 3% of children left behind were living alone without caregivers.

Regarding the length of separation from migrant parents, the majority of children left behind (65%) had been separated for more than five years. The age of left-behind children in the study ranged from 11-17 with a mean of 14.66 (SD=1.81). Moreover, the mean and standard deviations of behavioral outcomes of left-behind children (LBC) were also analyzed and presented as indicated in table 2 below.

Table 2: *Mean and Standard Deviations of Behavioral Outcomes of LBC and NLBC (N=622)*

Child status		Behavioral outcome (SDQ)	Internalizing Problems	Externalizing Problems
LBC	Mean	17.11	7.5466	8.3215
	N	311	311	311
	Std. Deviation	3.18342	2.30922	1.62822

As indicated in Table 2, an attempt was made to compute the mean score of behavioral outcomes as measured by strength and difficult questionnaire (SDQ) of children left behind and cared for by different caregivers. The results found a total of a mean score of 17.11 (SD=3.18) of children left behind due to parental migration and cared for by different caregivers. Moreover, the mean of the internalizing and externalizing problems of children left behind and cared for by different caregivers were 7.54 (SD=2.30) and 8.32 (SD=1.62) respectively.

The mean difference was significant $F(5,305)=19.28, P<.01$. This implies that children left behind and cared for by different caregivers showed different behavioral outcomes. Moreover, a significant mean difference was found in internalizing problems $F(5,305)=16.77, P<.01$ between LBC cared for by different caregivers. A significant mean difference was also found in externalizing problems $F(5,305)=13.55, P<.01$ between the LBC cared for by different caregivers. This indicated that caregiver types have its impact on the different behavioral outcomes of those children left behind manifested.

Gender and behavioral outcomes of children as measured by SDQ

The behavioral outcomes of children left behind due to parental migration and cared for by caregivers were also compared as disaggregated by gender.

Table 3: *Gender and Behavioral Outcomes of Children*

Behavioral outcome (SDQ)			
Gender, LBC	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Male	148	16.76	2.96
Female	163	17.57	2.68
Total	311	17.11	2.84

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 (=2.68). One-way ANOVA indicated a significant mean difference between males and females $F(1,309)=8.04, P<.01$. This showed that parental migration affected male and female children differently.

Caregiver and behavioral outcomes of children left behind

The behavioral outcomes of children left behind disaggregated by different caregivers were also analyzed and presented as follows.

Table 4: *Mean and Standard Deviations of Behavioral Outcomes of LBC Based on Caregiving in the Study (N=311)*

Variable		LBC cared for by Grand parent	LBC cared for by Mother only	LBC cared for by Father only	LBC cared for by Relative	LBC cared for by Non-relative	LBC Living alone
Behavioral outcomes	Mean	16.22	15.35	18.17	18.51	21.20	19.42
	N	92	58	85	53	14	9
	Std. Deviation	2.59	2.33	2.49	2.61	.78	1.51

As depicted in Table 4, the mean difference in behavioral outcome among LBC living with different types of caregivers was analyzed. As indicated in the table, the total mean score of children cared for by grandparent and mother caregiver (with a father migrant LBC) was lower than the total score of children cared for by other caregivers. The mean score of LBC cared for by a father (with a migrant mother) was 18.17 (SD=2.49) as compared to LBC cared for by a mother (with a father migrant) with a mean score of 15.35 (SD=2.33). The mean score of LBC cared for by relative and nonrelative was 18.51 (SD=2.61) and 21.20 (SD=.78) respectively. Moreover, one-way ANOVA was performed to see whether the mean difference among different caregiver types was significant.

Table 5: One-way analyses of variance of behavioral outcomes of LBC by caregiver types

Sources	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Between groups	5	600.42	120.08	19.28	.00
Within groups	305	1898.92	6.22		
Total	310	2499.35			

As indicated in Table 5, one-way ANOVA indicated a significant mean difference in LBC in behavioral outcomes due to types of caregivers; $F(5,305) = 19.28, P < .01$. As the post hoc test further showed a significant mean difference was found between LBC cared for by a grandparent and the other caregivers (father only, relatives, and non-relatives). Those children who are cared for by grandparents showed a significantly lower level of behavioral outcomes as measured by SDQ than the other groups of children which is an indication of fewer behavioral challenges.

Internalizing and externalizing problems of LBC disaggregated by Caregivers

The mean score of the internalizing and externalizing problems of left-behind children cared for by caregiver types were also compared and presented in the following table.

Table 6: Caregiver Type and Internalizing and Externalizing Problems LBC (N=311)

Variable		LBC cared for by Grand parent	LBC cared for by Mother only	LBC cared for by Father only	LBC cared for by Relative	LBC cared for by Non-relative	Living alone
Internalizing problems	Mean	8.40	8.09	9.38	9.70	11	10.85
	N	92	58	85	53	14	9
	Std. Deviation	1.54	1.44	1.37	1.53	0.81	0.89
Externalizing problems	Mean	7.81	7.79	8.79	8.80	10.20	8.57
	N	92	58	85	53	14	9
	Std. Deviation	1.51	1.14	1.41	1.27	0.63	1.61

In table 6 the mean of internalizing and externalizing problems of children by caregiver types was compared. Among all children in the sample population in this study, the mean score of internalizing and externalizing problems of LBC cared for by grandparents was 8.40 (SD=1.54) and 7.81 (SD=1.51) respectively. Moreover, the mean score of internalizing and externalizing problems of children with a mother caregiver (father migrant) was 8.09 (SD=1.44) and 7.79 (SD=1.14). The mean score of internalizing and externalizing problems of children cared for by a father (mother migrant) was also 9.38 (SD=1.37) and 8.79 (SD=1.49) respectively. One-way analyses of variance was run to see whether a significant mean difference existed in the internalizing and externalizing problems of LBC due to caregiver type in Table 7 below.

Table 7: *one-way analyses of variance of Internalizing and Externalizing problems of LBC by caregiver type (N=311)*

Sources	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
EPS	Between group	5	136.162	27.23	13.57 .00
	Within groups	305	612.667	2.00	
	Total	310	748.830		
IPS	Between group	5	177.02	35.405	16.47.00
	Within groups	305	655.631	2.15	
	Total	310	832.656		

Table 7 depicts that a significant mean difference was found in the internalizing problems and externalizing problems of children cared for by different caregivers $F(5,305) = 13.57, p < .01$. This implied that children cared for by different caregivers showed different behavioral outcomes as measured by the strength and difficulty questionnaire (SDQ). Caregiving arrangements and practices affect children left behind differently. The Post Hoc Tests by Scheffe further showed the mean score difference of both internalizing and externalizing problems of LBC cared for by grandparents, father, and relatives significant at .01. The Post Hoc Tests by Scheffe also showed the mean difference of internalizing problems of mother caregiver ($M=7.08, SD = 0.90$)

compared with the child cared for by father only and relatives. The mean score of internalizing problems for father caregiver-child was also high and significantly different as compared to children cared for by grandparent and mother only caregivers. Moreover, a significant mean difference was reported in the externalizing problems of LBC cared for by different caregivers $F(5,305) = 16.47, p < 0.01$. Post-hoc comparisons using the Scheffe test indicated that the mean score of externalizing problems of LBC cared for by grandparents was significantly different from LBC cared for by father only, relatives, and none-relatives. A significant mean difference was also found in externalizing problems $F(1, 309) = 14.04, p < 0.01$ between males and females.

Discussion

In this study caregiving types and the behavioral outcomes 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 cared for by different caregivers were studied. A total mean score of SDQ 17.11 (SD=2.88) of behavioral outcomes of children left behind due to parental migration was found. This score showed that children left-behind experienced behavioral problems due to their parental absence. Prior studies on children left behind due to parental migration identified greater anxiety and a more intense sense of loneliness than their peers in the control group (Reyes, 2007; Save the Children, 2006; D'emilio, et al., 2007; Bakker, et al., 2009; Gao, et al., 2010). Similar studies also showed that left-behind children as a result of parental migration are vulnerable to emotional and psychological problems, feelings of rejection, low self-esteem, and depression, as compared to children living with intact families (Bryant, 2005; Coronel & Unterreiner, 2005; Wang, Ma, & Wang, 2005; De la Garza, 2010). Mazzucato et al. (2015) also reported that children left behind with migrant parents had experienced worse psychological well-being, as compared to that of children living with both parents in studies conducted in Ghana, Nigeria, and Angola. Qualitative studies also showed various emotional experiences of LBC in response to parental migration in that many children, at all age levels, demonstrated negative feelings of loneliness, vulnerability, abandonment, and even symptoms of depression and anxiety (Dreby, 2007). However, a study by Battistella and Conaco (1998) revealed little or no evidence to show that children of migrants had greater psychological problems on average than children of non-migrants.

Due to parental migration, the caregiving arrangement and socialization of children by caregiving types and behavioral outcomes of children were also studied. The results showed a significant mean difference among the different caregivers of children left behind. ($F(5,305) = 19.28, P < .01$). In a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the experiences of left-behind children in the Philippines, Asis (2006) came to the same conclusion. In terms of caregiving arrangements, a few studies, mainly involving grandmothers (Moran-Taylor 2008; Yarris 2012) and other relatives and non-relatives (Dankyi 2014; Dreby 2010), found that grandparents' care for LBC is crucial to family survival in the sense of transnational migration.

In this study, compared to children cared for by father (with mother migrant), relatives, and non-relatives as well as children living alone, LBC cared for by mother (with father migrant) and grandparents were found to have been advantaged since they showed a smaller mean score of behavioral outcomes as measured by strength and difficulty questionnaire (SDQ) than the other groups. Supporting this finding, children in the care of grandparents in China and Southeast Asia found to be more psychologically benefited than those who were cared for by other relatives or friends (Zhao et al., 2009; Fan et al., 2010; Jiang, 2013; Graham, 2011; Senaratna et al., 2011). Furthermore, Mexican LBC who were taking care of themselves due to parental migration were found to be far more disadvantaged than other LBC (Lahaie et al. 2009). When opposed to children who were cared for by extended family, those who were cared for by a non-familial caregiver were more likely to have mental health issues (Umami 2019). This may explain why, according to the intensity and difficulty questionnaire, the mean score of LBC cared for by grandparents and mother caregiver (migrant father) showed lower and nearly identical behavioral outcomes (SDQ). The lower mean score of the strength and difficulty questionnaire (SDQ) is an indication of behavioral problems that children are facing as compared to a higher mean score of SDQ.

However contrary to this result, Graham and Jordan's study (2011) based on the strength and difficulty questionnaire (SDQ) found no evidence in any of the country samples (Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, and the Philippines) between the father-migrant/mother-caregiver group/ and mother-migrant/father-caregiver of LBC in psychological problems even if these groups of LBC are significantly different as compared to the non-LBC groups. It has been argued by researchers in the area, caregivers perform care tasks, provide emotional support, and help children understand their parents'

absence (Dankyi 2014; Dreby 2010; Moran-Taylor 2008; Yarris 2012). Other mothers (Schmalzbauer 2004), middle-women (Dreby 2010), and indirect mothering (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009) are words used to describe the caregivers' core and mediating positions in transnational communities. Previous studies in Sri Lanka on 820 children whose mother or father is a migrant found that two out of every five children who were left behind had socio-emotional maladjustment and behavioral issues (Wickramage, Siriwardhana, Vidanapathirana, Weerawarna, Jayasekara, and Sumathipala, 2015).

In this study, the behavioral outcomes of children left behind were also analyzed based on gender. The results found a significant difference between males and females. Supporting this finding, previous studies in China indicated that males had a higher level of difficulties as compared to females ((Hu et al. 2014; Jiang 2013). Moreover, there was a statistically significant difference between males and females in externalizing problems. Females scored higher than males on the scale of externalizing issues. In contrast, previous studies found that males had higher rates of externalizing problems than females (Rose et al., 1989; Sanson et al., 1991).

Conclusion and Implication

Even if parental labor migration positively contributed to the material well-being of children and families left behind the social and emotional costs were omitted and overlooked. In this study, the behavioral outcomes of children left behind due to parental migration and cared for by different caregivers were investigated. The findings of this study generally showed a significant mean difference between children who are cared for by different caregiver types. The mean score of behavioral outcomes as measured by strength and difficulty questionnaire (SDQ) of children left behind cared for by grandparents, mother only (father migrant), father caregiver (mother migrant), relative caregiver, non-relative caregiver, and children living alone were found significantly different. Moreover, children left behind were found to be significantly different due to caregiver types. Among the caregiver types, children cared for by mothers and grandparents appeared to have advantages over children living with other caregiver types.

The implications of this study, therefore, rests on working on children affected by parental migration and cared for by different caregivers. Parents, sending communities, government, and non-government organizations who have a stake in children shall understand the social and emotional costs of parents' migration on children left behind. The best interest of children shall also be taken into consideration in migration policies as well as in the decision of parental migration leaving children behind.

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