

A Study on the Drudgery of Rural Girl Child of Northern Karnataka

RAJESHWARI SHIVALLI AND SUHASINI RAO

Department of Family Resource Management
College of Rural Home Science, UAS, Dharwad - 580 005

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Abstract: The girl child who has been neglected for centuries in our country is our focus today. The present study aimed to know the drudgery of rural girls. Rural areas of Northern Karnataka were the study areas. The total sample comprised of randomly selected 180 girls of 6-12 years and their either of parents. Pre tested schedule was used to elicit information by personal interview and memory recall method. All the girls irrespective of their age were involved in the one or the other household and farm activities. The drudgery of the rural girls increased with their age. School going girls were also involved in different activities before and after coming from the school as they had to share the work burden of their mothers.

Introduction

Children are the most precious resources of any nation and more so the girls. Nearly half of the Indian population is female. A girl is a substitute mother in general and more so as care taker of young siblings. Even today as in past, the household activities of Indian girls absorb a very large part of their time and energy.

Hence, the study is an attempt to know the drudgery of rural girls by analysing the time expenditure pattern of the girls of 6-12 years, comparing the time spent on different activities by school going and school dropouts and by knowing the reasons for girls not attending school.

Material and Methods

The present study was carried out in rural areas viz., Hebballi, Somapur, Maradagi and Nigadi villages of Northern Karnataka. The total sample consisted of 180 girls of 6-12 years. Pre-tested schedule was used to elicit the required information by personal interview method.

The duration (in minutes) of all the activities preformed by each girl, from the time of rising to

the time of going to bed at night for three consecutive days and also the time spent on occasionally preformed activities was recorded by observation coupled with memory recall method.

Mean was computed to know the time spent by the girls on different activities per day. To find out the difference in the time spent on different activities by school going and school dropouts 'Z' test was carried out. Based on the time spent by the girls on different activities the drudgery of rural girls was assessed.

Results and discussion

The time expenditure pattern of the girls of 6-12 years (Table 1) reveals that on the whole all the girls were involved in one or the other domestic activities such as cooking, fetching water etc. Similar result was found in the studies of Muthu and Thomas (1972) and Jain and Chand (1979). The girls of 6-8 years got up between 7-8 a.m. in the morning. They started their day by dusting and sweeping their house and surroundings for about 15 minutes. The girls spent maximum time on cleaning utensils (45 min) followed by fetching water. They did not spend any time on cooking

activity. On an average they spent about 190.76 min. on domestic activities.

Where as the girls of 9-10 years spent maximum time on cooking activity (63 min) followed by fetching water (45 min). On an average they spent about 270.48 min. on domestic activities.

The girls of 11-12 years got up early in the morning and started their day by preparing tea for the whole family. They also spent maximum time on cooking (70 min) followed by cleaning utensils (37 min). On an average they spent about 255.06 min. on domestic activities. As these girls spent more time on paid activities, they spent lesser time on domestic activities compared to girls of 9-10 years.

Taking care of the children is the activity on which girls of 6-8 years spent maximum time (271.10 min) followed by the girls of 9-10 years (189.92 min) and 11- 12 years girls (112.07min). In the category of animal care activities the girls of 6-8 years spent maximum time on grazing cattle (45 min.) followed by feeding cattle (19 min.). The same trend was observed in the age group of 9- 10 years also. Only the girls of 11- 12 years performed the milking activity (15 min./ day).

The average time spent on unpaid agricultural activities increased with the increase in the age of girls i.e the girls of 11-12 years spent 92.77 min followed by the girls of 9-10 years (87.47 min.) and the girls of 6-8 years (20.85 min.). The younger age group girls spent maximum time on scaring birds, where as the girls of other age groups spent maximum time on harvest and post harvest activities.

The girls of 11-12 years spent maximum time on paid activities (275.69 min.) followed by the girls of 9 -10 years (53.37 min.). But the girls of 6-8 years did not spend any time on paid

activities. Where as the time spent on leisure time activities decreased (168.93, 123.86, and 96.89 min.) with increase in the of the girls i.e. 6-8 years, 9-10 years and 11-12 years, respectively.

The girls from all age groups spent around two hours on the personal care activities.

Table 2 shows the comparison between the time spent by the school going and school drop out on different activities. It was the known feature that both school going (198, 201, 68, 35 and 22 min.) and non school going girls (283, 202, 120, 102, and 367 min.) were actively involved in domestic, child care, unpaid agricultural activities and paid activities respectively. This result is similar to the results of Manjeshwar and Rayappa (1986). But there was significant difference in their mean time spent per day on different activities except child care activities. School going girls combined both school and work. They spent meager time on studies at home. They were rather fully occupied with the work before and after coming from the school or during holidays.

A glance at table 3 also reveals that the main reason for the majority of the school drop out (53%) was that they had to share the mother's burden of work. 'Financial problems' was the second major reason for parents not sending their daughter to school. About 22 per cent and 17 per cent of the girls did not attend the school as they had to graze the cattle and work in the field during school hours, respectively. Only twenty-five percentage of the girls were not attending the school for reasons such as 'child is too young' and child is not intelligent'. About 13 percentage of girls utilized the time to be spent on school for earning money as they were from low income families. Same percentage of the girls were attending the school, as they had to look after their siblings. This result is on par with the results of Nair (1983) and Karlekar (1985).

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Table 1. Time expenditure pattern of the girls of 6-12 years

Sl. No	Activities	Time spent (min.)		
		6-8 years n=41	9-10 years n=87	11-12 years n=52
1.	Domestic activities			
	Pre cooking activities	18.00	20.03	21.00
	Cooking	Nil	63.00	70.00
	Serving	15.00	15.45	15.00
	Cleaning utensils	45.00	38.00	37.00
	Washing clothes	20.00	32.00	31.06
	Dusting and sweeping	15.00	10.00	10.00
	Fetching water	30.00	45.00	33.00
	Collecting fuel	17.65	16.00	12.00
	Marketing	15.11	19.00	14.00
	Making cow dung cakes	15.00	12.45	12.00
	Total	190.76	270.48	255.06
2.	Child care activities			
	Preparation of supplementary diets and feeding children	Nil	20.32	23.00
	Bathing children	Nil	15.00	12.00
	Dressing and combing children	35.10	20.00	20.00
	Playing with children	236.00	134.50	57.07
	Total	271.00	189.82	112.07
3.	Animal care activities			
	Cleaning the cattle shed	15.24	17.00	14.98
	Feeding cattle	19.00	20.50	10.00
	Milking	Nil	Nil	15.00
	Grazing cattle	45.00	60.00	60.00
	Total	79.24	97.50	99.98
4.	Unpaid agricultural activities			
	Scaring birds	15.00	15.00	Nil
	Plucking vegetables	5.85	15.47	22.00
	Harvest and post harvest activities	Nil	57.00	70.77
	Total	20.85	87.47	92.77
5.	Paid activities	Nil	53.37	66.89
6.	Leisure time activities	168.93	123.86	96.89
7.	Personal care activities	150	120	120.00

Thus in a rural family the girls spends substantial proportion of their time in doing household and farm activities. The girls are not confined to only domestic chores, but they contribute substantially to the economic activities

that bring cash to the family. To share the work burden of their parents, majority of the girls dropped the school. Whether they are in or out of school, the drudgery of rural girls increased with their age.

Table 2. Mean time spent per day of different activities by school going and non-school going girls

Activities	School going girls				Non-school going girls		
	N	Mean	S.D	N.	Mean	S.D	Z- Value
Domestic activities	80	198.14	66.79	100.00	283.25	125.33	6.3109**
Child care activities	21	201.33	75.59	25.00	202.12	117.28	0.0300NS
Animal care activities	21	68.01	27.05	89.00	120.61	104.46	3.2300**
Unpaid Agricultural activities	49	34.70	20.89	68.00	102.16	141.65	3.8600**
Paid activities	80	22.50	29.05	100.00	367.50	238.95	14.310**

** Significant at 1% level. NS- Non significant

Note: Mean value indicates mean time spent in minutes per day on different activities by the girls.

Table 3. Reasons for the girls not attending the school

Sl.No.	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Financial problem	41	41
2.	Work at home	53	53
3.	Has to look after the siblings	13	13
4.	Lack of children's interest	06	06
5.	Lack of parent's interest	08	-
6.	Distance of school from house	-	-
7.	Child is young	02	02
8.	For cattle grazing	22	22
9.	To earn money	13	13
10.	Child is not intelligent	02	2
11.	Agricultural work	17	17

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