

Patterns of participation in primary education of father, mother and daughter: A longitudinal study

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1021 children from 43 classrooms belonging to different social economic strata were selected for the purpose of studying how Sri Lankan children participate in primary school education and develop their competencies at primary stage, using longitudinal methodology. Out of them 43 children (- ie. a child from each of the 43 classroom -) were selected for case studies for in-depth investigation. For the longitudinal case-study on Darshani (pseudonym) who studied in grades 1, 2 and 3 in a type 2 school situated 6 km away from Kandy town data were collected and analyzed qualitatively from structured instruments used by teachers for collecting data, researchers monthly observations, once a term observations of home environment, interviews with teacher, teacher's perceptions, assessment records and exercise books of the child. The Grade one class comprises of 15 Sinhalese and Tamil students. It does not comply totally with the new educational reforms. Darshani is the youngest of a family of 5 children. Home, an unauthorized shanty built on a government land, does not have the basic needs. Father did not have permanent employment. Her mother took her to school every day and used to even clean the classroom after

school before taking Darshani home. In 2003 father started producing and selling illegal liquor and the police arrested him thrice. Mother's time was spent in attempting to get the father released and unlike in 2002 Darshani started to go to school with her sisters in 2003. In 2004 mother opened a flower stall near a temple. After that mother came to school rarely. From 2002 to 2004 the parent's participation in school activities has deteriorated rapidly. In 2002 Darshani was absent from school for 18 days. This has increased to 43 days in 2003 and by end of June 2004 the number was 31. Darshani's participation in school activities by then has been very unsatisfactory. On 2003 she got absent mostly because of family problems. In 2004 she used to accompany her mother to the flower stall. Without any outstanding changes in the school, classroom or teacher an obvious change has taken place in Darshani's participation in school education. Stressful and painful events like change of her house, setting fire to the house, change of employment of parents have directly influenced the home atmosphere effecting her educational participation and was slowing down her competency development. Therefore we could come to the conclusion that the home environment has a greater effect than classroom, in a child's education. Time has come to introduce a system, which will identify problems in the home environment of child and provide counseling not only to child but to parents as well.

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