

## **A Study on the Impact of Maternal Employment on Developmental Domains of Communication**

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### **Introduction**

“Catch them young” is no longer a mere phrase. It has been scientifically proven that early childhood is the crucial developmental period in a child’s life. Many distinctive developmental features take place during the early childhood. It is during this period where children begin to vastly acquire communication skills. Development in children is tracked by their progress in each domain of childhood development. The interaction between the process of maturation and learning brings about the changes of childhood development. When looking at child development, several domains or developmental areas are considered. Cognition, Language, emotional and social developmental areas are considered to be the most important domains of communication. Since people and environment are the sources for language and communication development, at least three environmental aspects are crucial in promoting these developmental domains. Which includes an emotionally caring relationship with a caregiver/parent, at least one speech model (An effective model will present the child with simple but well formed language patterns), and providing opportunities to communicate (Subba Rao, 1992).

Family patterns are undergoing rapid change in our society, in part a consequence of maternal employment. Nowadays family with working parents gives a high proportion of time to employment, means less time for family interaction, child care and home maintenance (Mathew & Rosenthal 1993).

### **Maternal Role in the Development of Communication**

Parents play an influential role in shaping the lives of their children. Their participation in the child’s growth and development acts as a catalyst in improving the child’s health and his/her overall social and mental development (Gregg, Washbrook, Propper, & Burgess, 2003). The mother is more accountable for the amalgamated development of a child (Datta P, 2009). In most societies, mothers are assigned, by custom, to be the primary caregivers of infants and children (Ruhm, 2005). Women also play an essential role as generators of family income. Since the past

several decades, there has been an increase in the number of women with young children in the workforce, which is one of the biggest social changes that have taken place in the latter half of the twentieth century (Waldfogel, 2002).

Increase in mothers' employment has also brought a remarkable shift in child-rearing styles. This change in rearing approach has prompted concerns over whether maternal employment poses any risks to healthy child development (Ruhm, 2005). Since a mother is expected to be her child's primary caregiver and to be physically present at all times until the child's early school years (Bianchi, 2000; Sayer, Bianchi, & Robinson, 2004), there are many myths and assumptions related to maternal employment being disadvantageous to children, because it takes the mother away from her child. Preschoolers experience a significant decline in time spent with their mothers when their mothers go to work and total time spent with the child has shown to decrease by as much as 2 hours per day.

Female labor force participation in India is lower than many other emerging market economies, and has been declining since the mid-2000s and there is a large range of female labor force participation rates across South and East of India (such as Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Sikkim, Kerala) generally displaying higher participation rates than those in North India (such as Bihar, Punjab and Haryana) (Sonali Das, Sonali Jain-Chandra, Kalpana Kochhar & Naresh Kumar, 2015). Few researches in developing countries found that working women spent less time on child care as compared to non-working women (Basu & Basu, 1991; Shivakami, 1997 for India; Paolisso et. al, 1991 for Kenya). Mother's time investment in child care is presumed to be strongly influenced by whether she is economically active or not. Women when participate in the labor market are believed to spend less in maternal activities.

However, there is an argument that maternal employment during infancy has both negative (Belsky & Eggebeen, 1991) and positive effect on children's social and intellectual (Clarke-Stewart, 1991) development. The most noteworthy researchers studying the effects of maternal employment, Belsky and Eggebeen (1991) argue that maternal employment during infancy has a negative effect on the children's social and behavioral development. Contrastingly, Clarke-Stewart (1991) concluded that there are great benefits socially and intellectually when a mother works and has to place their child in a childcare.

Since, early childhood is a critical developmental period, available literature suggests that mother- child interaction have an impact on child's early development especially in communication domain. There is a paucity of research related to the impact of mother's employment on developmental domains of communication in children. Such studies are scarce particularly in Indian context. The study is relevant in the present social scenario, as the numbers of nuclear family and working parents are increasing day by day.

## Objective of the Study

- To understand the influence of maternal employment on developmental domains of communication.
- To understand the influence of caregivers on developmental domains of communication.

## Method

### Participants

The study included 82 Malayalam speaking participants in the age range of 3 to 4 years. On the basis of maternal employment, the subjects were divided into - Group A and Group B. Group A consisted 37 children of non-working mothers and Group-B consisted 45 children of working mothers. Group B was further divided into subgroups B1, B2 and B3 on the basis of caregivers of the children. Subgroup B1 consisted of children who were taken care in day cares. Subgroup B2 consisted of children under the care of servants and Subgroup B3 consisted of children under the care of grandparents.

Children with cognitive deficits, sensory loss, motor deficits, maturational delays, speech-language delays/disorders and behavioral issues were excluded from the study. Children from exceptional circumstances such as orphanages, juvenile home, neglect, abuse etc were not considered for the study.

### Materials

A developmental checklist was used as the material of the proposed study. The check list development was done in the first phase of the study. The checklist included a total number of 40 questions under 4 domains of communication, namely, Language, Social, Cognitive and Emotional & Behavioral domains with a 5-point rating scale.

The developmental checklist consists of 2 parts :- Part A and Part B. Part A included questions regarding the parental care and the demographic data .Part B questions addressed the developmental domains of communication namely, Language , Social , Cognitive and Emotional & Behavioral domain.

Each of the domains included 10 questions giving a total of 40 . The questions were made in the form of a five point rating scale, with 0-Never, 1-Rarely, 2-Sometimes, 3-Usually, 4-Consistently. The checklist was framed such that higher scores indicated better skills.

Questions in the checklist were adapted from the following sources:

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- Parent questionnaire for evaluation of development and behaviour in 5 – 15 - YEAR OLD (Childrenbjörn Kadesjö, Gothenburg, Lars-Olof Janols, Uppsala, Marit Korkman, Helsinki, Katarina Mickelsson, Helsinki, Gerd Strand, Oslo, Anegen Trillingsgaard, Aarhus, Christopher Gillberg, Gothenburg,2017)
- Questionnaire For Parents With Academic And/or Behavioral Concerns About Their Child (Harlan Gephart, MD)
- Children's Behavior Questionnaire (Abbreviated Rothbart CBQ) PART11Supplemental Scales Parent Version C:\Network\Instr\Cbq-Psup.Qst(06113/97)
- Receptive Expressive Emergent Language Scales (Kenneth R Bzoch and Richard League, 1973)
- Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder- Test (James E Gilliam,2014)

The questions were short, simple and clear. The checklists were given to 10 Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) for the purpose of validation. SLP's rated the questionnaire by choosing an "APT" or "NOT APT" option based on the content, familiarity and relevance of the questions. The suggestions provided by the SLPs were also incorporated prior to the administration of the checklist.

### **Administration and scoring of the checklist**

In the second phase of the study, the checklists were given randomly to 120 parents/caregivers of children in the age range of 3-4 years of age. They were interviewed and were explained about the purpose and methods of the study. Orientation was given to fill the checklist. Queries in the rating were cleared promptly.

Based on the response of the parents/caregivers to the Part-A questions, which addressed the information regarding the parental employment, the whole population was divided in to two main groups Group-A → children of Non-working mothers and Group-B → children of Working Mothers, which was further divided in to B1 (children taken care in Day care), B2 (children taken care by Servants) and B3 (children taken care by Grandparents).

### **Data Collection**

Data for the study was collected in two ways:

1. From 3-day cares of urban area (Prior appointments were taken from each of the day cares to provide orientation class for the parents/caregivers regarding the checklist).
2. By visiting urban area residences and interrogating with parents/caregivers.

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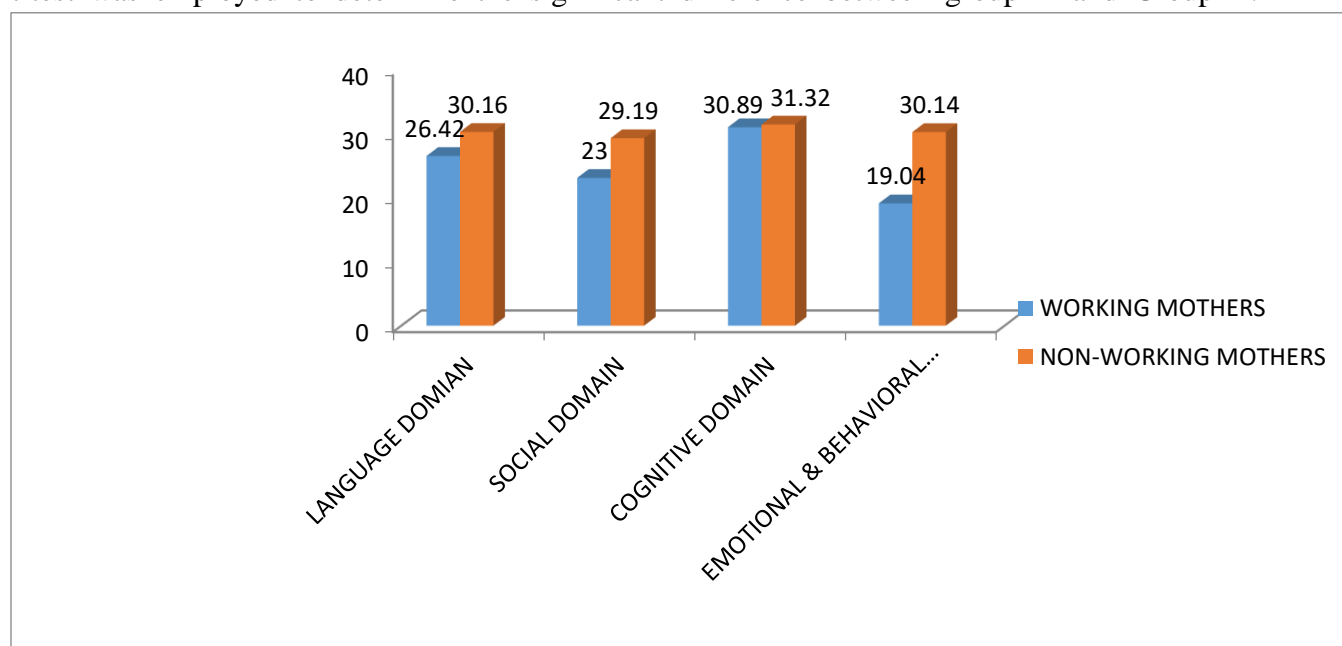
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Third phase of the study was Statistical Analysis. The data collected from the caregivers were subjected to qualitative analysis using SPSS (13.0) version. Independent t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to determine the significant difference between the groups and the different domains. Bonferroni Post Hoc Analysis was also done to determine the level of significance between each group and the different domains.

## Results and Discussion

### 1) The Influence of Maternal Employment on Developmental Domains of Communication

Mean and standard deviation of each domain was calculated for both groups. Independent t-test was employed to determine the significant difference between group A and Group B.



**Figure 1: Mean values of group A and group B across each domain of communication**

As the scoring of the checklist is directly proportional to performance, high mean value indicates better performance. From the above figure1 we can observe that the mean score of Group A for Language domain is 31.32, Cognitive domain is 30.16, Social domain is 29.19 and Emotional & Behavioral domain is 30.16. The (combined) mean score of Group-B in Language domain is 30.89, Cognitive domain is 26.42, Social domain is 23.00 and Emotional and Behavioral domain is 19.04. Mean scores of Group A is higher when compared to Group B in all the 4 developmental domains. However the Mean scores of B is above the cut-off score in Language, Social and Cognitive domains. In the Emotional & Behavioral domain the mean score of Group B is slightly below the cut-off score.

**TABLE 2: Mean (M), Standard deviation (SD) and ANOVA test results of Groups A, B1, B2 and B3 across Language domain.**

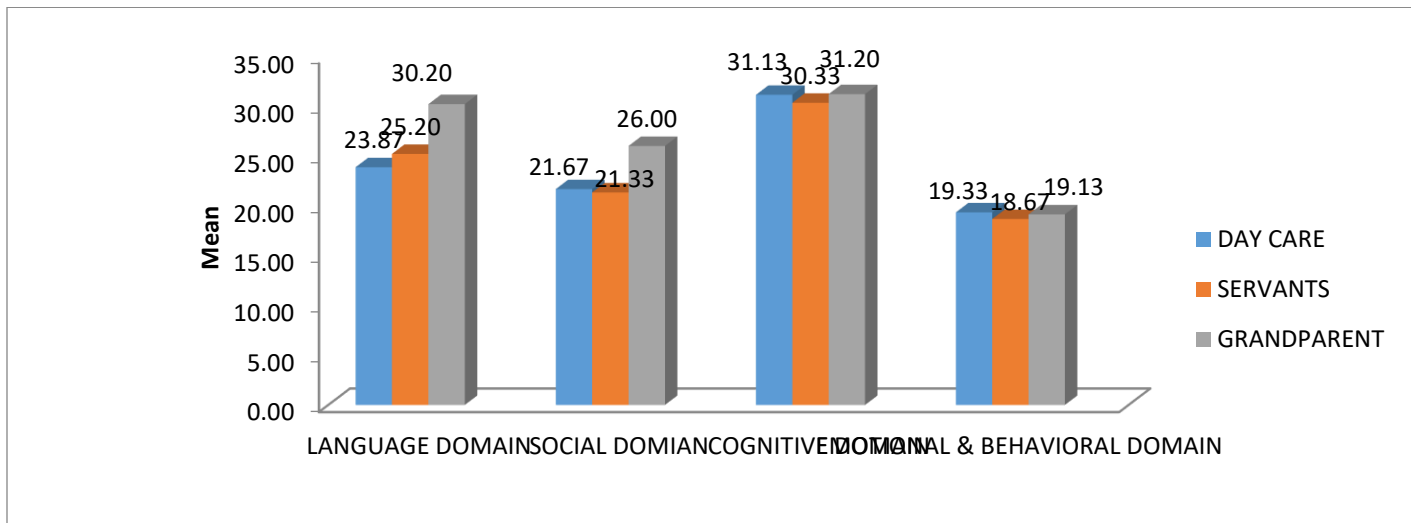
DOMAINS	GROUPS	N	MEAN	SD	t-VALUE	P
LANGUAGE	WORKING MOTHERS	45	26.42	5.590	.674	.506
	NON-WORKING MOTHERS	37	30.16	3.346		NS
SOCIAL	WORKING MOTHERS	45	23.00	5.776	.150	.882
	NON-WORKING MOTHERS	37	29.19	3.922		NS
COGNITIVE	WORKING MOTHERS	45	30.89	3.669	.612	.546
	NON-WORKING MOTHERS	37	31.32	3.266		NS
EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIORAL	WORKING MOTHERS	45	19.04	8.082	.184	.855
	NON-WORKING MOTHERS	37	30.14	4.650		NS

Independent t-test was employed to determine the significant difference between the groups. Even though Group B had low Mean values than Group A, t- test result reveals that there is no statistically significant difference between Group A and Group B.

## 2) Influence of Care-givers on Developmental Domains of Communication

On the basis of care-givers the Group B was further divided in to B1 (children taken care in Day care), B2 (children taken care by Servants) and B3 (children taken care by Grandparents).

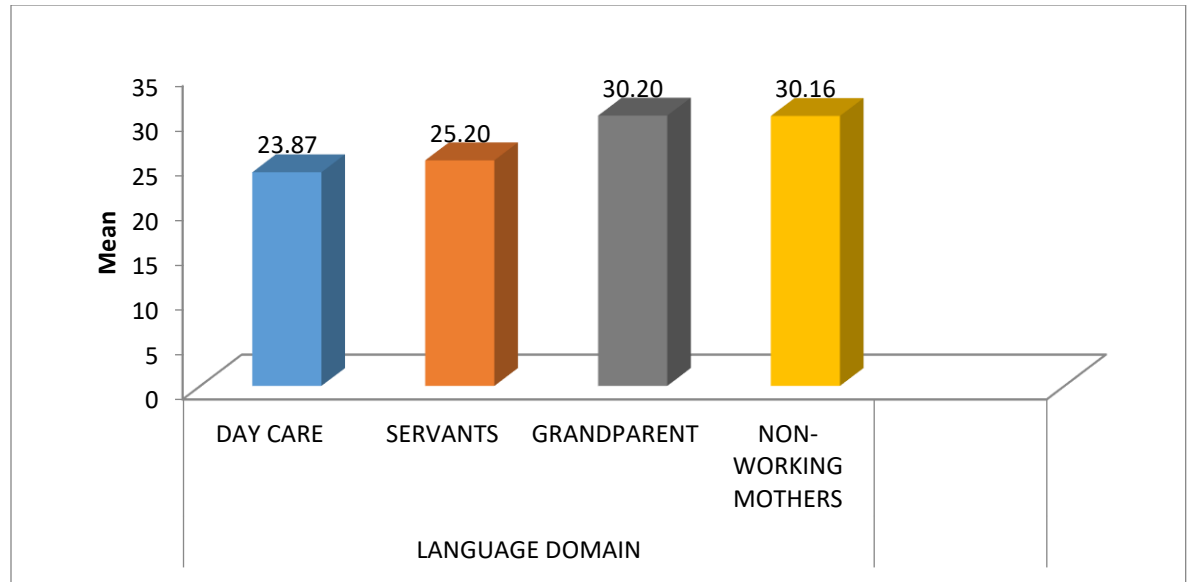
Mean and standard deviation of each domain was calculated for the respective groups. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to determine the significant differences between the groups in each domains of communication. Bonferroni Post Hoc Analysis was carried out to find out the level of significance.



**Figure 2: Mean values of group B (non-working mothers) across each domain of communication**

Descriptive statistical analysis was carried out. The mean score of Group B1 for Language domain is 23.87, Cognitive Domain is 31.13, Social domain is 21.67 and Emotional & Behavioral domain is 19.33. The mean score of Group B2 for Language domain is 25.20, Cognitive domain is 30.33, Social domain is 21.33 and Emotional & Behavioral domain is 18.67. The mean score of Group B3 for Language domain is 30.20, Cognitive domain is 31.20, Social domain is 26.00 and Emotional & Behavioral domain is 19.13. It indicates that Group B3 (children taken care by Grandparents) showed high mean value than group B1 and group B2.

**A) Comparison between Each Group on Language Domain of Communication**



**Figure 3: Mean values of group A, B1, B2 and B3 across Language domain.**

Results shows that Group A and Group B3 scored high on the checklist. ANOVA was used for the comparison between the groups. As there is a statistically significant difference, Post Hoc Analysis was carried out to find out the level of significance between the groups. The results indicates highly significant (HS) difference between Group B3 (grandparents) and other groups B1 (day care) and B2 (servants). But no significance (NS) difference was found between Group A (non-working mothers) and Group B3 (grandparents).

### **Impact of Care takers on the Language Domain of Communication**

The results of *results of post-hoc analysis of groups A, B1, B2 and B3 across language domain* reveals that there is no significant difference between Group A and B3 in the performance of Language domain. Group A and B3 shows better performance in the language skills and these groups had highly significant difference with the Groups B1 and B2.

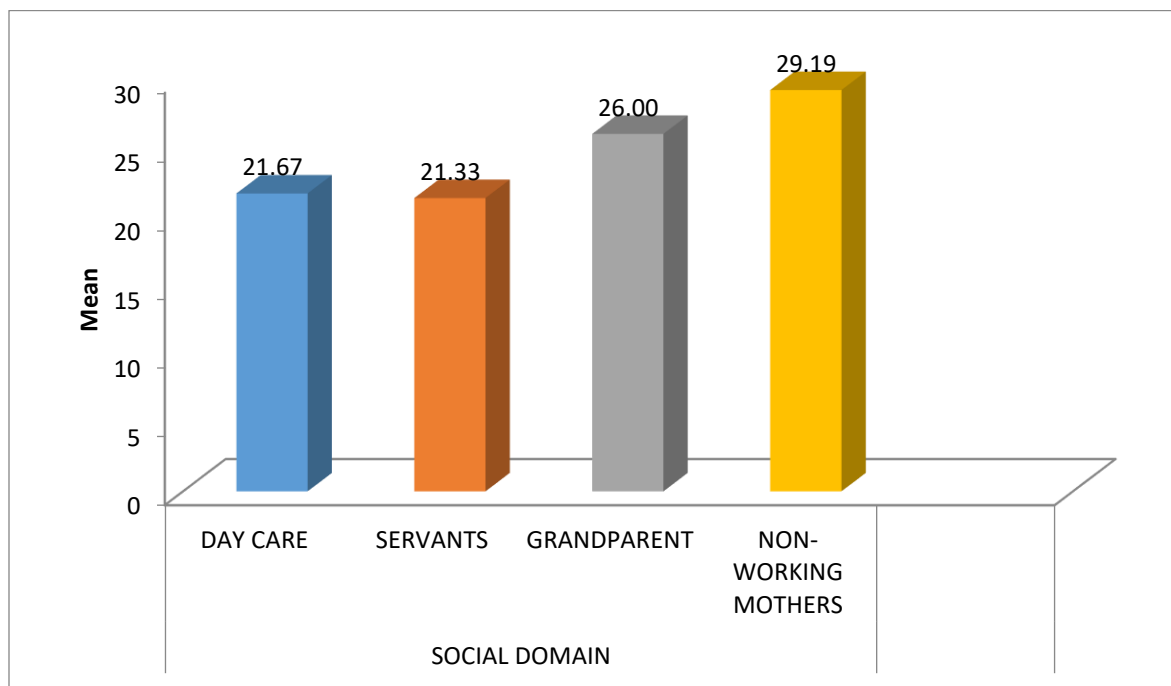
Effects of early child care on children's functioning from 4½ years through the end of 6th grade were examined in the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development. The results indicated that higher quality child care predicted higher vocabulary scores. Wen- Jui Han (2005) examined associations between mothers' work schedules and children's language skills and suggested that there is a negative impact on child's language skills and it can be due to the type of child care used.

A survey conducted by Dr. Abdul Sattar, Almani Allahdino Abro & Roshan Ali Mugheri (2012) ;Effects of Working Mothers on the Development of Children, concluded that mother's



employment does not have any effects on language development. Opposing to this finding, Ruhm (2000), conducted a study using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth and various cognitive tests in order to assess the effects of maternal employment on child development. It was found that maternal employment during the first year of the child's life had a detrimental effect on language development in three and four year olds.

**B) Comparison between Each Group on Social Domain of Communication**



**Figure 4: Mean value of group A, B1, B2 and B3 across Social domain.**

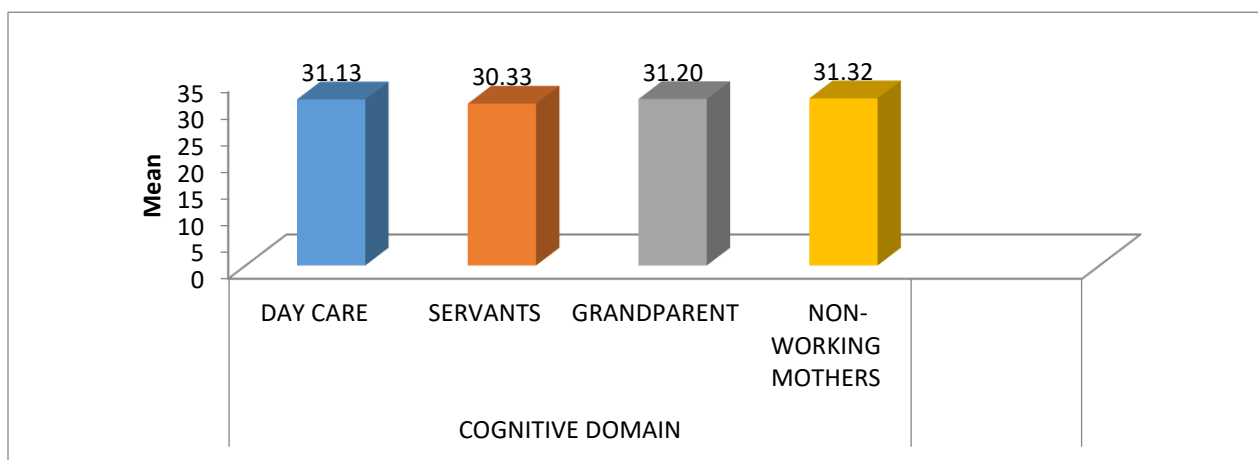
Descriptive statistical analysis of groups A, B1, B2 and B3 indicate that Group A scored high on Social domain. From the above figure 5 we can observe that the mean score of the Social domain for Group B1 is 21.67, group B2 is 21.33, Group B3 is 26.00 and Group A is 29.19.

ANOVA was used for the comparison of groups A, B1, B2 and B3. Post Hoc Analysis was carried out to find out the significant difference between the 3 groups and the results reveals that there is no significant difference between Group B1, B2 and B3. Also Group B1 and B2 show highly significant difference with Group A. But there is no significant difference between Groups A and B3.

**Impact of Care Takers on the Social Domain of Communication:**

Results of post-hoc analysis of groups A, B1, B2 and B3 across social domain reveals that children of non-working mothers (Group A) and children taken care by grandparents (Group B3) obtained better scores on social domain whereas group B1 and B2 scored less. Researchers have concluded the effects of maternal employment in Social domain of communication both negatively and positively. According to Baydar, Nazli; Brooks-Gunn and Jeanne (1991), employment in the 1st yr. had detrimental effects on the social development of all children regardless of gender or poverty status. On the other hand, Kelly L McIntosh & William Bauer (2006) stated that children of working mothers had good social skills compared to the children of non-working mothers.

**C) Comparison between Each Group on Cognitive Domain of Communication**



**Figure 4: Mean values of groups A, B1, B2 and B3 across Cognitive domain.**

Descriptive statistical analysis of groups B1, B2 and B3 was carried out. From the above figure 5 we can observe that the mean score of the Cognitive domain for Group B1 is 31.13, Group B2 is 30.33, and Group B3 is 31.20. Among the other three domains Cognitive Domain obtained higher and almost similar Mean value across all the groups.

Mean (M), Standard deviation (SD) and ANOVA test results of groups A, B1, B2 and B3 across cognitive domain was analyzed using ANOVA test. Results indicate there is no significant difference present between each group in Cognitive domain.

**Impact of Care Takers on the Cognitive Domain of Communication**

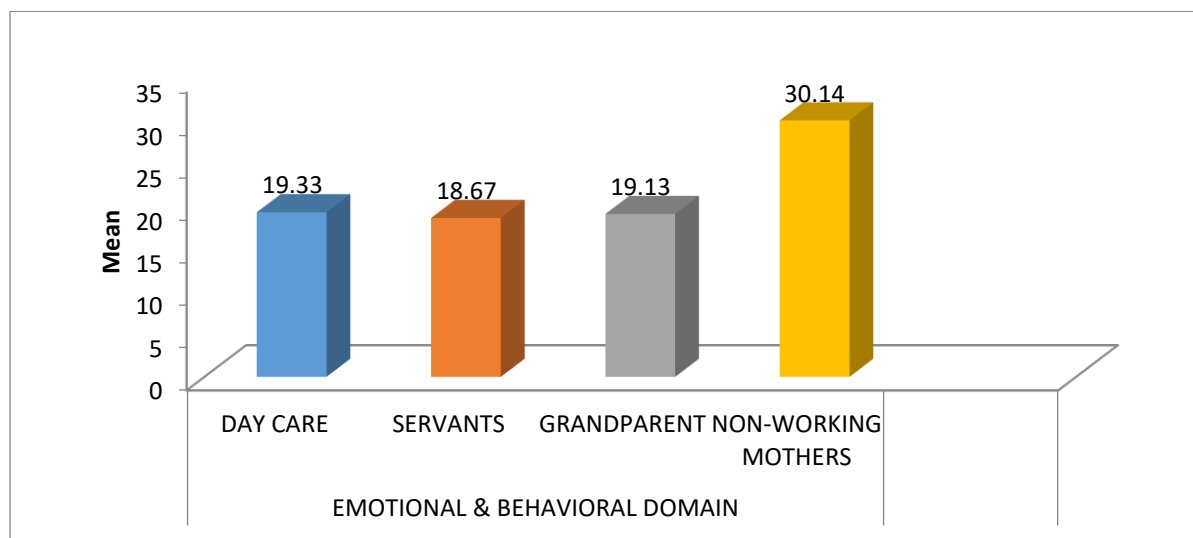
The present study concluded that maternal employment does not have a significant impact on cognitive domain. There is no significant difference between Groups A and B. Also there is no

significant difference between Groups B1, B2 and B3. All the groups performed in a similar pattern.

Researchers also have concluded the effect of maternal employment in the Cognitive domain of communication in either ways, Chase-Lansdale et al., (2003) concluded that for preschoolers, neither mother's employment transitions nor their welfare transitions appear to be problematic or beneficial for cognitive achievement.

Lefebvre and Merrigan (1998), used the data of the Canadian NLSCY (National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth). Their results suggest that parental work and maternal employment does not have direct effects on cognitive outcomes of 4- to 5-year-old children. Blau and Grossberg (1992), concluded that maternal employment during the child's first year of life has a negative effect on cognitive skills, but employment in second and later years has positive effects.

**D) Comparison of Each Group on Emotional & Behavioral Domains of Communication**



**Figure 6: Mean values of group A, B1, B2 and B3 across Emotional and Behavioral domains.**

Descriptive statistical analysis of groups A, B1, B2 and B3 indicate that Group A scored high on behavioural domain. From the above figure 6 we can observe that the mean score of the Emotional and Behavioral domain for Group B1 is 19.33, Group B2 is 18.67, Group B3 is 19.13,

and Group A is 30.14. Among other 3 domains, all subgroups of B scored less on behavioural domain.

Mean (M), Standard deviation (SD) was calculated using ANOVA test and the results of A, B1, B2 and B3 across Emotional and Behavioral domain indicate there is a significant difference present between group B1, B2 and B3 in Emotional and Behavioral domain. Post Hoc Analysis was carried out to find out the level of significant difference between each of the groups. Results reveal that high level of significance was present between group A and all the sub groups of B.

### **Impact of Care Takers on the Emotional and Behavioural Domains of Communication**

Results of post-hoc analysis of groups A, B1, B2 and B3 across Emotional and Behavioral domain reveal that, when compare with group A, Group B obtained fewer scores on behavioural domain. This indicates that children of working mothers show poorer performance on behavioural domain when compared to non-working mothers.

David Pelcovitz, (2013) argues that full-time maternal employment begun before the child was three months old was associated with significantly more behavior problems reported by caregivers at age 4½ years and by teachers at first grade. Research studies since 1960 provides evidence suggesting that there are no behavioral problems for children of working mothers even if they don't have quality time to spend with them and is reported to be even better than children of non-working mother.

In Soumita Ranjan's study (2013) 'Effect of mother's working status on behavioural problems of primary school children,' a sample of 1500 primary school children was included. The results indicate that children of working mothers show more behavioral problems as compared to those of nonworking mothers.

Also, there is an argument that more time in day care predicted at-risk (though not clinical) levels of problem behaviour, as well as assertiveness, disobedience, and aggression (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Early Child Care Research Network, 2003). Experience in high-quality center-based day care increases the degree to which the child interacts, both positively and negatively, with peers.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The comparative study on the impact of maternal employment on developmental domains of communication was carried out to understand the influence of maternal employment on communication development of children in the age range of 3-4 years. The objectives were to

analyze the impact of maternal employment and influence of caregivers on developmental domains of communication.

When analyzing the results obtained in the current study, Group A showed higher mean value compared to the Group B in all the developmental domains of communication. To analyze the performance of group B, ANOVA and Post Hoc Analysis was done. Except behavioural domain, Group B3 showed better performance and had highly significant variation with other subgroups B1 and B2. The groups A and B3 scored similarly across Language, Social and Cognitive domains of communication.

The present study indicates that more than maternal employment, the influence of caretaker plays an important role in child's early development. It also indicate that among the other developmental domains, maternal employment causes more impacts on child's Social and behavioral domains.

### **Implications of the Study**

- The present study gives an insight regarding the importance of the mother-child interaction on child's overall development.
- It emphasizes the importance of quality caretaking of children while mothers are at work place.

### **Future Directions**

- A comparison of developmental domains of communication between working and non-working mothers can be done by keeping the age of the child at which they started working, as one of the criteria.
- Children between 1-3 years of age are more preferable for the study, as we can control certain variables.
- Similar studies can be carried out using a larger population size and with a younger age range.
- The study can be carried out using standardized test materials for assessing the developmental domains of communication.

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