



## Academic Involvement in Children's Education: An Investigation into the Lives of Domestic Worker Parents of Kolkata

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### ARTICLE INFORMATION

Received: January 04, 2021  
 Revised: January 27, 2021  
 Accepted: January 29, 2021  
 Published Online: March 31, 2021

#### Keywords:

Domestic workers, Academic involvement, Parent, Parent education, Work hours



DOI: [10.15415/iie.2021.91003](https://doi.org/10.15415/iie.2021.91003)

### ABSTRACT

Parenting holds tremendous significance in today's world as quality parenting facilitates the development of social and emotional competence in a child. The present study explores the dual role of domestic workers as workers and parents. Domestic Workers work from dawn to dusk to take care of their employees' families. The obvious question arises: who takes care of their children, back home? As a parent, Domestic workers with their odd working hours and low or no literacy rate are nowadays trying to overcome the socio-economic challenges as well as handicaps of the profession by getting involved in their children's academics. This paper investigates the effects of the length of working hours and education levels of domestic worker parents on their academic involvement with the children. The present study uses a descriptive survey research design to find out the relationship between academic involvement and work hours. The data was subjected to appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics. The results indicate a negative relationship between work hours and academic involvement. It is also revealed that higher education level to be associated with better academic involvement. The study thus calls for further intervention by schools and the government to motivate parents. Parent-teacher meetings may be of help in this respect along with workshops and government-sponsored programs to educate the parents to support them to climb up the socio-economic ladder through their children.

## 1. Introduction

Education has immense power as it is the key to survival and success in one's life. Together with developing social and intellectual development of a person, education enables to unleash one's innate potential, helps an individual to become economically productive and financially independent to enjoy a decent standard of living. The concomitant role of the parents thus in this respect is highly significant as they are the first educators of a child. Several studies have shown that involvement of parents in their children's education to be positively correlated with the wards' academic achievement (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Fan & Chen, 2001; Epstein, 1995). Parent academic involvement has been found to have beneficial effect on the children's motivation, social functioning, behavioural discipline and also academics. But like any involvement, academic involvement too requires parental investment of time and other resources (Guryan, Hirst & Kearney, 2008)

along with energy, skills, and knowledge (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker & Sandler, 2005). Separate studies on both fathers and mothers have further confirmed that both the parents have significant and unique parental roles in a child's life and thus absence of their physical presence, time and various other investments may hamper smooth upbringing. In case of fathers, while working conditions and economic stress have been found to affect parenting (Whitbeck, Simons, Wickrama & Ackley, 1997), educated mothers with higher standard work and less educated mothers with part time job showed better parenting quality than parents with no work (Augustine, 2013). With further research on parenting practices, quality time spent with children got more research focus over time as the amount of time spent by parents with children could be linked with better academic and behavioural outcomes. A deeper search in this matter showed that the education level of parents too has a role to play in determining the amount of time that parents spend

with children (Guryan et al., 2008). Thus, both work hours and education of parents may have some effect in influencing the parenting practices.

The present study, therefore, purports to analyse the nature of parent involvement when both the factors like ability to spend time with children and education in parents are absent. Thus, the chosen group of parents have minimum skill and education and are involved in such a work that is usually recognised as a low standard occupation involving long hours and strenuous involvement. The present study, therefore, chooses parents from the domestic workers group from Kolkata Municipality catchment area.

### *1.1. Rationale of Choosing Domestic Workers as Parents*

As per the International Labour Organization's 2004-05 estimate, 4.2 million domestic workers exist in India, and in this heterogeneous group, women outnumber men in employment having share 2.2 percent as compared to 0.5 percent for men (*Domestic workers across the world: Global and regional statistics...* ILO 2013) ... The women workers revealed that their economic condition to be so worse that many of them chose this profession at a young age and most of the workers were continuing this work even after marriage. Many of the women workers were also found to be separated from their husbands or having unemployed husbands and some were found to be absconding after marriage. Those whose husbands were working were found to unskilled and working as driving car, auto rikshaw, rikshaw poolers, shop employee, mechanic, factory machine runner, labour, etc. The total family income of these workers was found to be extremely low and they confessed to having chosen this profession right after having babies to run the family. Also, as observed by Eluri & Singh, (2013) that the families were often in financial crisis as many workers' husbands were alcoholics who sometimes spend their hard-earned money on alcohol and dump the family in extreme economic hardships. They confessed that even after working hard for long hours of work they are unable to fulfil the needs of the family. Thus, domestic workers have been facing various challenges while taking care of their own families. Not only do they spend long hours in their employer's house, but they spend unduly long time while commuting to workplaces, work under unpredictable schedules and neglect their family life

for economic security (ILO, 2013, Snapshot: ILO in Action, Domestic Workers). Such work engagements, therefore, are neither supposed to confer any sense of accomplishments to the parents to motivate them into their children's learning nor can enrich them gain any experience on parenting but are supposed to cause hindrances in drawing out time for their child care and to maintain their work-family balance. An attempt thus has been made in this study to explore the lives of domestic worker parents of Kolkata to understand the nature of academic involvement of these group of parents for their children's education in a choice restricted environment.

## **2. Research Questions**

Focusing on the lives of domestic workers in the Kolkata Municipality catchment area, the study intends to explore about

*2.1. what impact does the work hours have on the academic involvement of the worker parents?*

*2.2. whether there exist any effect of the educational level of the parent workers on the intensity of academic involvement of them towards their children?*

## **3. Objectives:**

The objectives of this research paper has been outlined as follows.

*3.1. To find out the effect on Academic Involvement of the Domestic Worker parents for the Education of their Children in relation to:*

***3.1.1. Working hours of Domestic Workers***

***3.1.2. Educational level of Domestic Worker***

## **4. Hypothesis of the Study**

The present study has the following hypothesis put to test through empirics.

- $H_0$ 1: There is no significant relationship between working hours and Academic Involvement among Domestic Workers for the Education of their Children.

- $H_02$ : There is no significant effect of the educational level of Domestic Worker on Academic Involvement for the Education of their Children.

## 5. Review of Related Literature

A yearlong case study of an elementary school in Texas showed that parent involvement in school academics to be a function of several factors like language, parent cliques, education, attitudes of school staff, cultural influences, and family issues. An open-ended interview was conducted with the parents to understand their communication skill and their concept of parental involvement. It revealed that parents with lesser education failed to speak out their concerns about their ward's education. Also, the parents accepted that they were incapable of helping their children due to a lack of knowledge. They expressed their fear of being misunderstood by the school and accepted their greatest obstacle to parental involvement to be their work schedule and family involvement (Pena, 2000). Review studies by Desforges & Abouchar (2003) explained that children need the full support of their parents along with the provision of a secure and stable environment if they want to maximize their potential from schooling. The authors concluded that parental involvement gets strongly influenced by family social class, maternal level of education, material deprivation, maternal psychosocial health, parent status, and family ethnicity. Literature survey on parental involvement by Avvisati, Besbas & Guyon (2010) revealed academic involvement of parents to be of various types like involvement at home in basic obligations and supervision, volunteering at school, school to home and home to school communication, collaboration and exchange with community organizations, etc. But research, however, showed that whatever parents do most of that can be traced back to their identity, attitudes, background, and environment (Avvisati et al., 2010). Hence, in this context, poor, illiterate parents need special mention as they are unskilled about guiding their children in poverty due to their low education and poor cognitive development.

To assess the influence of parent's work status on academic involvement Holladay (2013) used structural equation modeling on 725 fifth graders, their employed mothers, and teachers to explore associations between maternal work-to-family

conflict, maternal involvement in schooling, and academic outcomes in early adolescents. The study revealed that the part-time employed mothers' school involvement to be greater than full-time employed mothers and also that their children performed better in school than the full-time employed mothers. The study also found strong associations between maternal education and school involvement and academic outcomes. A similar result can be traced in a study by Buehler & O'Brien (2011) who made a comparative study analysis with a sample of 1,364 respondents on parenting between families in which mothers were employed as part-time as well as fulltime. Using multivariate analysis of covariance with extensive controls, results indicated that part-time employed mothers to exhibit more sensitive parenting as well as more learning opportunities than full time employed mothers. Mothers employed part-time also reported doing a higher proportion of child care and housework than mothers who were employed full time. Thus, research showed that mothers and families may benefit from part-time employment throughout the child-rearing years. A longitudinal follow-up investigation for a Comprehensive Child Development Program (CCDP) was carried out by Weiss, Mayer, Kreider, Vaughan, Dearing, Hencke & Pinto (2003) with the European-American population using data drawn from the School Transition Study (STS). The mixed-method analyses of 390 respondents showed that mothers who worked or attended school full time to be less involved in their children's schooling compared to mothers who worked or attended school part-time. A research report submitted by Peterson (2002) dealing with parent involvement discussed certain observations regarding the effect of parent work status on their academic involvement in children's education. The study dealt with the education of children in their early years and the results reflected differences in parental attitudes and behaviors based on the employment status of parents. The study proposed that parents employed full time were facing more problems in managing quality time to be spent with children compared to part-time and unemployed parents. Parents employed full time got engaged in parental involvement activities less frequently than unemployed parents or those working part-time. In another research study, Nehaul (1999) undertook a small project on British single parents

with Caribbean heritage, working part-time and full-time, and showed that parents' work and interest both to be considered for academic involvement. The study measured parental support and encouragement for children's schooling despite various pressures on parental time. The result revealed that parents' strategies and parental support varied and changed over time as per parental interest in academics. The study also found that single parents working part-time and full-time to be supportive in their children's academics but according to their capacity. A micro-level study on domestic workers revealed that young married women domestic workers of lower socioeconomic strata who live in far places with children, to prefer part-time domestic work for supporting and balancing their family and work life. The study showed that although full-time domestic workers are better than part-time workers, they are deprived of overtime dues, holidays, and timely payment of wages (Kundu, 2008).

Parent education level has also been found to be a significant factor determining parent academic involvement. It has drawn the researcher's attention time and time again as the variable continued to assume a significant role in academic achievement. A research study conducted by Considine & Zappala (2002) in their research analyzed data on the educational performance of children from poor social and financial backgrounds. The sample comprised of school students of primary, secondary, and upper level. The results indicated that even for financially disadvantaged families parental education proved to be a significant predictor of student academic achievement. Also, within the parents, the mother's role is even more significant. Lewis & Tudball (2001) conducted an in-depth interview about work and family on 69 parents and 71 children from 47 families in Melbourne. The parents in the study worked either full-time or part-time with their children aged eight years and older. The findings revealed that children were happy with their mothers as mothers spent enough time with them, whereas they showed concern about their fathers' work. The study also revealed that as children's needs varied with their temperament and developmental stage, parents also differed in their capacities to provide the different kinds of attention and interaction that children needed.

### 5.1. *The Indian Scenario*

Since the Indian education system is plagued by the problem of school dropouts, parental characteristics have been also found to be responsible for the phenomena along with socio-economic factors. A study was designed by Vellymalay (2011) to identify the relationship between Indian parents' education level and their involvement in children's education. The researcher used a stratified random sample of 150 Indian students studying in National Schools in the districts of Malaysia at levels three, four, and five. The study revealed a positive association between the parents' education level and parent academic involvement strategies. The results indicated that parents showed high involvement in discussing with their child their child's plans, identifying academic problems faced by their child at home and school, monitoring their children's activities at home, school, and other places, helping and monitoring children with homework, in providing additional reading materials to their child and in providing their children with tuition classes. Although a moderate relationship existed in strategies implemented by the parents and their education but well-educated mothers displayed higher knowledge of their children's schooling, more contact with their children's school, and more awareness of their children's achievement. Also, more educated parents communicated and interacted as well with their children for their betterment. The study also found that parents with more education had better skills for managing their children's education. In an Indian study on 100 school-going children aged 4 to 8 years from low-income families when divided into three groups based on the level of their parental education to measure the effect of parental education on the intelligence of the child, it was concluded that economic disadvantage may not necessarily constrain the cognitive development of children living in poverty, provided parents have some threshold level of education (Yap & Enoki, 1995).

A research study by Shipman (2013) as published in North Carolina State University news concluded that working odd hours may affect the parent-child relationship in a negative way. Involving both households with two parents as well as single mothers the study indicated engagement of the children in delinquent behaviors when the parents worked odd hours and also

the development of weaker bonds between parents and children. Another survey by Roeters, Lippe & Kluwer (2010) tested a path model with data collected from 1,008 Dutch fathers and 929 Dutch mothers with school-aged children to investigate working parent and child relationship quality. The study revealed that longer working hours led to lesser quality time between parent and child and the disruption of parent-child activities due to more parental work pressure. Another study involving 175 third-grade students was carried out by, Hara & Burke (1998) as a part of the parent involvement program strategy among parents of third-grade students. With a sample of 175 students, the program involved parent workshops and parent volunteer programs. The study found growing concerns among parents about their child's education. Time commitments were identified as impeding factors for parent involvement in a few. The program was successful in the sense that it yielded positive results as both parents and teachers learned ways of better involvement with the children for better academic outcomes.

A parent-child relationship study with a structured questionnaire by Shah & Nakhat (2018) on 200 Indian students revealed the existence of healthy communication between parent and child when parents were able to spend enough quality time with the children. Another survey report was made on a randomized sample of 521 children and 100 parents in Gurugram, Mumbai an area where migrants arrive from poorer states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand, and Madhya Pradesh. The report stated that the low-income illiterate parents, living in poor conditions, worked long hours in the informal sector and therefore were unable to support their children's education systematically. The parents after coming back home felt exhausted due to their regular struggle for survival. The children managed their homework and school activities themselves often in an environment of maltreatment and neglect due to their poverty-stricken situation. Even the mothers who were homemakers were found not to interact with their children much as they assumed that the children would bring up any serious issue to the parents on their own and would continue their studies with their motivation or take help from their elder siblings (Sanghera, 2018).

## 5.2. Research Gap

The present study intends to assess the academic involvement of domestic worker parents who form a

significant part of the global informal sector labour force and suffer from various types of exploitation. While these workers spend most of their time caring for other's household duties neglecting their own; their children in their absence are deprived of adequate parental care. Not only do many of these care worker's children become school dropouts or discontinue studies but also sometimes become child labourers themselves. Although several research studies have been done on domestic workers nationally and internationally, there exists a research gap in analyzing the academic involvement of domestic worker parents for their children's education. There also exists a dearth of studies depicting such analysis for the domestic workers of Kolkata as well. The present study thus finds relevance to assess and analyze the status of academic involvement of domestic workers towards their children's education.

## 6. Methodology

The present study uses a descriptive survey research design to investigate the interrelationships of various cited factors that affect *the Academic Involvement* of Domestic workers of Kolkata. Further details of the methodology are as follows.

### 6.1. Population

The population of the study consists of domestic workers having children studying in primary schools and working at various urban areas of Kolkata.

### 6.2. Sample

The sample has been collected using stratified random sampling. The sample size is 600 domestic workers having children studying in primary schools.

### 6.3. Statistics

For testing Null hypotheses and generalization of research outcomes, appropriate descriptive statistics (mean and SD) and inferential statistics such as t test, F-test, (ANOVA) and Pearson's Correlation Coefficient 'r' were employed.

The Dependent and independent variables of the study have been cited below.

#### 6.3.1. Independent Variables

Parent education and hours of work.

### 6.3.2. Dependent Variable

Academic Involvement of the Domestic Workers of Kolkata.

### 6.4. Level of Significance

The null hypothesis has been statistically tested to the levels of significance as 0.05.

### 6.5. Academic Involvement Tool

Academic involvement is operationally defined for the present research as “parental participation among Domestic workers in the educational processes and experiences of their children which may be general as well as specific.” To describe the nature of academic involvement of the predefined population in their setting concerning the chosen variables, quantification of the necessary characteristics of the population becomes imperative. The task of quantification further needs a structured tool. Due to the absence of such a tool concerning the domestic workers of Kolkata, an Academic Involvement Scale was initially prepared and standardized by the author and then executed on the sample. The final draft of the author made Academic Involvement Scale consisted of ten items. The final groupings of the items were separated into two respective dimensions as given below:

#### I. Academic Involvement in Teaching Activities (AI-TA) (D1):

This dimension comprised of four items involving all those activities from the part of the parent which may be directly related to learning and completing school academics at home.

#### II. Academic Involvement in Supervisory Activities (AI-SA) (D2):

Six activities under this dimension are to parental vigilance on the child for the pursuance of studies. These activities signify parental initiatives for understanding school communication and better school performance of the child.

#### 6.5.1. Standardization of Academic Involvement Scale

The tool is standardized through the measurement of Content Validity and Reliability. For checking the content and appropriateness of the items considered

in the tools, experts were consulted from various Universities and institutes and the reliability of the Academic Involvement Scale is done through an internal reliability test shown in Table 1 cited below.

**Table 1:** Reliability Statistics of the Academic Involvement Scale.

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N
0.916	0.916	10

The calculated value of Cronbach alpha for the Academic Involvement Scale has been found to be 0.916, which according to Cronbach (1951) may be regarded as ‘Good’ reliability attribute of a scale (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011)

The scoring of the test items is quantitative in nature. Each item of the scale has been responded across five-point Likert scale ranged from to ‘*Totally Disagree*’ to ‘*Totally Agree*’. The score for *Totally Disagree* = 1; *Disagree* = 2; *Neither Disagree nor Agree* = 3, *Agree* = 4 and *Totally Agree* = 5.

## 7. Results and Discussion

The following discussion relates to the analysis of data on academic involvement of parents collected from 600 (six hundred) Domestic Workers of Kolkata concerning the two variables, work hours and education of the parents, using author made academic involvement scale. The following pre-framed objectives got tested using the collected sample. Suitable descriptive statistics have been used to arrive at results.

### 7.1. Relationship between Working Hours and Academic Involvement among Domestic Workers for the Education of their Children

The objective corresponding to the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), states “there is no significant relationship between working hours and Academic Involvement among Domestic Workers for the Education of their Children”, the hypothesis was analyzed by computing coefficient correlations as shown in Table 2.

It could be concluded from Table 2 that:

- I. The correlation coefficient showed significant correlation between hours of work and AI-TA at 0.05 level of significance.

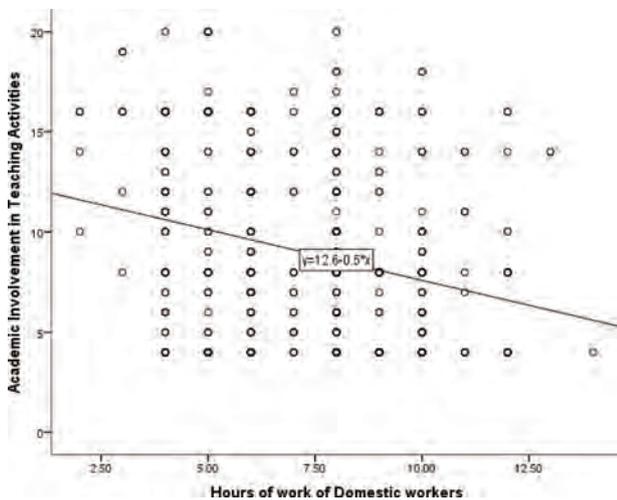
- II. The correlation coefficient showed significant correlation between hours of work and AI-SA at 0.05 level of significance.
- III. The null hypothesis thus stands NOT accepted for Hours of Work of Domestic Workers at 0.05 level of significance in relation to dimension (AI-TA) of Academic Involvement.
- IV. The null hypothesis thus stands NOT accepted for Hours of Work of Domestic Workers in relation to dimension (AI-SA) of Academic Involvement 0.05 level of significance.

**Table 2:** Inter-Correlation of Academic Involvement and Work Hours.

Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Hours of work Mean=7.26 SD=2.24	AI-TA Mean=8.97 SD=4.446	AI-SA Mean=16.50 SD=5.58
Hours of work Mean=7.26 SD=2.24	$r = 1$ Sig = 0.000	$r = -0.251^{**}$ Sig = 0.000	$r = -0.317^{**}$ Sig = 0.000

\*0.05 level of significance

The Scatter Diagram and the Best Line of Fit involving AI-TA and work hours of Domestic Workers using the collected data shows the following trend in Figure 1 (a) cited below:



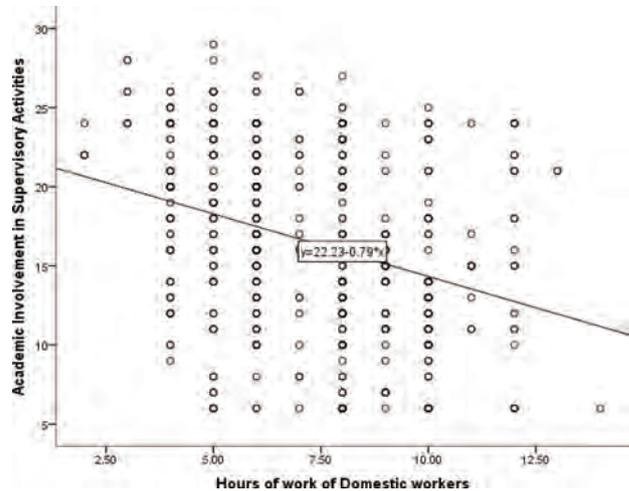
**Figure 1 (a):** Best Line of Fit with AI-TA and work hours of Domestic Workers.

Dimension 1: Academic Involvement in Teaching Activities (AI-TA)

Dependent variable: AI-TA; Independent variable: Hours of work

The best line of fit, in Figure 1 (a), has been found to be a negatively sloped line suggesting an inverse relation between Dimension 1 (AI-TA) and work hours of Domestic Workers.

Similarly, the scatter plot of AI-SA and work hours of Domestic Workers has been shown in Figure 1 (b); a negatively sloped best fit line indicating an inverse relation between (AI-SA) and work hours of domestic workers.



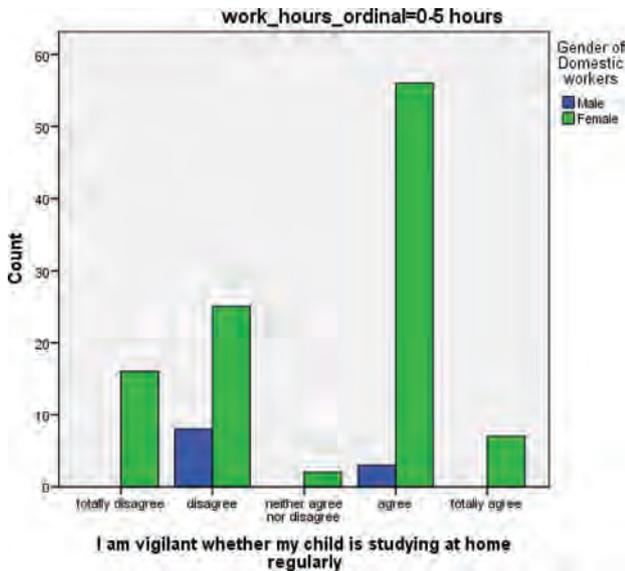
**Figure 1 (b):** Best Line of Fit with AI-SA and work hours of Domestic Workers.

Dimension 2: AI-SA = Academic Involvement in Supervisory Activities

Dependent variable: AI-SA; Independent variable: Hours of work

The present study may confirm that the effect of work hours on academic involvement of domestic workers to bear significant negative correlation ( $r = -0.251^{**}$ ) between hours of work and AI-TA (Academic Involvement in Teaching Activities). Further, significant negative correlation ( $r = -0.317^{**}$ ) is found with AI-SA (Academic Involvement in Supervisory Activities) and hours of work. In the present research the domestic worker parents, especially, parent mothers confessed that they work in multiple houses. These parent mothers, many a times, work in two shifts from morning till evening and thus may be unable to take part in academic involvement for their children’s education. Similarly, the domestic worker fathers also spend long hours to earn a decent income for their family. These workers have been found to be mostly semi-literate (74% of the fathers and 66% of the mothers had primary education and above) and

when they were asked to reply on the statement, *I am vigilant whether my child is studying at home regularly*, 55% of the fathers and 45% mothers working for more than 5 hours totally disagreed on this issue shown in Figure 1 (c).



**Figure 1 (c):** Response Category on Supervising Activity in relation to gender and work hours.

The Figure 1 (c) shows that long hours of work for parents may pose to be a factor affecting parent academic involvement. This result was found to be congruent with the study by Roeters et al., (2012) where parent participation in terms of parent–child activities were more when parents worked shorter hours. With low income, parents themselves showed concern that whenever they are working two jobs or working overnights their academic involvement with their children got disrupted (Gratz, 2006; Weiss et al., 2003; Phillips, 2002; Pena, 2000; Hara & Burke, 1998; Yap & Enoki, 1995).

### 7.2. Effect of Educational Level of Domestic Worker on Academic Involvement for the Education of their Children

The extent of education level of the domestic workers was found to vary from no schooling to education level with the attainment of primary and above primary level. The objective corresponding to the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), states, that there is no significant effect of educational level of Domestic workers on Academic Involvement for the Education of their Children. The result of the study is given in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Effect of educational level of Domestic Worker on Academic Involvement.

Dimensions of Academic Involvement	Levels of Education	N	Mean	SD	F	p
AI-TA	Below primary level	185	6.36	3.38	123.314*	0.000
	Primary level	220	8.26	3.44		
	Above primary level	195	12.25	4.36		
AI-SA	Below primary level	185	13.44	5.73	52.154*	0.000
	Primary level	220	17.09	4.67		
	Above primary level	195	18.73	5.11		

\*Level of significance 0.05

Table 3 shows that:

- I. There is significant difference in mean ratings of groups of domestic workers with below primary level education, primary level education and above primary level education on all dimensions of academic involvement at 0.05 level of significance.
- II. A Student–Newman Post-Hoc test had been conducted for Academic Involvement in Teaching Activities at Home (AI-TA) dimension of Academic Involvement to probe further into differences in mean ratings among groups of domestic workers as explained in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Student–Newman Post-Hoc test on effect of education on Academic Involvement in Teaching Activities (AI-TA).

Student –Newman Post-Hoc test for AI-TA				
Levels of Education of Domestic Workers	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Below primary level	185	6.36		
Primary level	220		8.26	
Above primary level	195			12.25
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000

The Post-Hoc test explained in the Table 4 shows that:

- I. The mean ratings of Domestic Workers having below primary level education, primary level education and above primary level education are significantly different from each other with respect to Academic Involvement in Teaching Activities (AI-TA).
- II. Student–Newman Post-Hoc test was also conducted to probe into Academic Involvement in Supervisory Activities (AI-SA) dimension of Academic Involvement of the Domestic Workers. The result is displayed in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Student –Newman Post-Hoc test on effect of education on Academic Involvement in Supervisory Activities (AI-SA).

Student –Newman Post-Hoc test for AI-SA				
Levels of Education of Domestic Worker	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Below primary level	185	13.44		
Primary level	220		17.09	
Above primary level	195			18.73
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000

The Post-Hoc test explained in the Table 5 shows that:

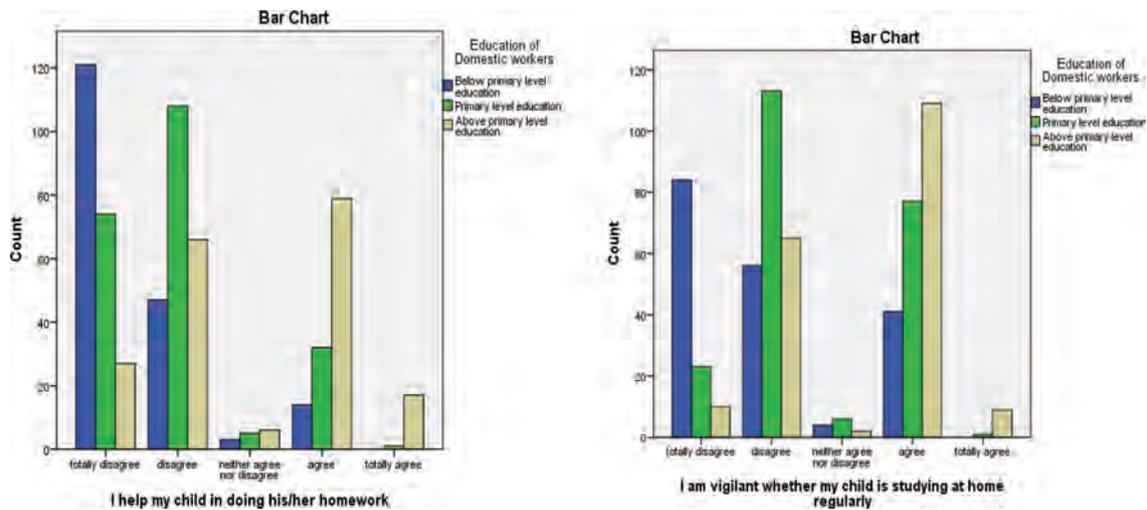
- I. The mean ratings of Domestic Workers having below primary level education, primary level education and above primary level education are significantly different from each other with respect to Academic Involvement in Supervisory Activities (AI-SA).
- II. The Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) that there is no significant effect of educational level of Domestic workers on Academic Involvement thus stands NOT accepted for Academic Involvement in Teaching Activities (AI-TA).
- III. The Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) that there is no significant effect of educational level of Domestic workers on Academic Involvement thus stands NOT accepted for Academic Involvement in Supervisory Activities (AI-SA) for Domestic Workers.

From Table 3, significant difference is observed with respect to parental academic involvement in teaching as well as supervisory activities among domestic worker parents with below primary education, with primary education and above primary education. The present study also shows from Table 3 that observed

mean for domestic workers above primary education (12.25) to be greater than workers with primary education (8.26) and below primary education (6.36) implying greater parental involvement is observed in parents with higher levels of education (Gratz, 2006; Deforges & Abouchaar, 2003). Student –Newman Post-hoc test for both teaching and supervisory activities in Table 4 and Table 5 shows that parents with different levels of ability get involved differently in their ward's academic involvement. This fact gets justified from a study by Lewis (2001) which stated that children not only have different levels of needs according to their developmental stage but parents also differs in their capacities to cater to their needs. Key findings of the study of Considine & Zappala, (2002) demonstrated that parental education to be the most important factor affecting students' academic achievement. Pena, (2000) while working with Mexican American parents expressed that parents with low education felt handicapped while helping the children with school work. Thus, in the reported research, 63.2% of domestic worker parents with above primary level education has been found to have agreed in getting *more academically involved in their ward's education* compared to 25.6% of primary educated parents and 11.2% of below primary level educated parents shown in Figure 2 (a).

In case of supervisory activities, the Figure 2 (b) shows that only 48% of the parents with above primary level education agreed that they *are able to keep vigil on their children on their studies at home* whereas 33.9% of primary level and only 18.1% of below primary level agreed on that issue.

The findings of the study thus concluded that the education level of parents had a significant effect on the academic involvement of domestic workers with respect to *Teaching Activities as well as Supervisory Activities of Academic Involvement*. Significant difference in mean ratings was found in the groups of domestic workers with below primary level education, primary level education and above primary level education on all dimensions of academic involvement. Student–Newman Post-Hoc test also confirmed the difference in mean ratings among groups of domestic workers in both Teaching as well as Supervisory dimensions.



**Figure 2 (a):** Response category on Teaching Activity in relation to education **(b):** Response category on Supervising Activity in relation to education.

### Conclusion: Which Way to Go?

Thus, a search will remain for finding the solution to the question of how to make the parents more academically involved with their ward's education. Since the domestic worker-parents are mostly illiterate or semi-literate, they have accepted irregular work hours of their job and also insufficient payments as a part of their profession to struggle with their day to day life. Many of these parents belonged to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups. Thus, in such circumstances, many times parents find it difficult to help their children in academics. If in this situation some suggestions are to be put forward then it can be mentioned that as per the notification published in the Gazette of India (2009), schools may be encouraged to take up the responsibility to constitute a School Management Committee comprising of parents or guardians along with elected representatives of local Authority and teachers to help such parents. Also, more academically involved parents may be given the scope of being chosen as a part of school management and administration. The notification further mentioned 3/4<sup>th</sup> representation of parents and proportionate representation from parents of disadvantaged groups and this would have definite relevance if followed for these groups of parents under study.

The RTE Act 2009 also re-stated that the responsibilities to the teachers in many ways. One of the responsibilities of the teachers in government schools is to *hold regular meetings with parents or*

*guardians* and explain to them about *the regularity of attendance, ability to learn, progress made in learning, or any other urgent matter regarding the child*. This initiative of the government may be made more effective if the worker parents of the present study are made to become more academically involved and motivated through parent-teacher interactions or other means undertaken by school authorities.

The present study may therefore help to prepare proper policy actions for the development of better involvement strategies to motivate such parents, to understand their drive for upward social mobility and to help them to practice such strategies to attain their desired goals. The co-operation and initiative from the part of the parents (if obtained) may also help to close the existing gap in school drop-outs, promote better educational attainment of the children and overall help a community to progress socio-economically.

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## Issues and Ideas in Education

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Volume 9, Issue 1

March 2021

ISSN 2320-7655

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