# THE EFFECTS OF PARENTS' MIGRATION ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND IN RURAL CHINA

## Abstract

China’s quick expansion and urbanization have encouraged significant numbers of rural residents to migrate from their village residents to urban areas in search of better employment opportunities. Parents characteristically leave their children behind with a caregiver, creating a new, potentially susceptible subpopulation of left-behind children in rural locations. A rising number of policies and nongovernmental institution efforts target these groups of children. The main objective of this research is to examine whether left-behind children are the most exposed and affected.

Many children all over the world are left-behind by parents migrating to seek employment in urban areas. Approximately 61 million children in rural China are left-behind by both parents. In this case, several impacts shall be exclusively unraveled, but the most important effect on children’s learning results and differentiates impacts of the absence of one versus both parents.

## **Introduction**

In rural China, one in three children under age 17 is living with one or both parents who have moved or migrated to towns in search of employment. Approximately, half of these children have been left behind by all the parents. Regardless of its extent and scale, the “left-behind children” experience in China remains understudied due to the possible ambiguities and practical challenges. The current literature has long highlighted the numerous ways through which parental migration can affect the human capital growth of children left-behind (Altaye, 2015). On the other hand, parents enhance their income through migration and transmittals of these revenues can ease the household financial plan constraint and thus increase household expenditure on education and trim down child labor. This is a general forecast that has been empirically supported by various studies on the impact of revenues from migrants on children left-behind in Philippine and Guatemala (Ahsan, 2015). On the other hand, parental migration intrinsically results to parental absence from home, which can have adverse impacts on children left-behind through ways such as the loss of local incomes and work, the lack of parenting participations, and the psychological cost connected with the family division. Moreover, parental migration can also amplify migration projections of children and can encourage more or less learning or educational investment in children depending on the variation in the rates of return to human capital between migration and target or destination and place of foundation. Therefore, an indication of the general impact of parental immigration on the education of children left-behind is a priori imprecise and remains an empirical question.

Another area of concern is health and nutrition of the children left behind. The status of children left-behind or well-being regarding physical health, nutrition, and also education has drawn consideration and attention from various scholars in different fields. In many studies that have been conducted show that children left-behind between ages 2-17 have poorer health and nutrition than their colleagues who live with their parents, while other studies show a lower rate health services use among children left-behind children ages 6-11. In response the growing challenges being faced by the children left-behind, Chinese policymakers are moving with speed to partner with global agencies to come up with several programs that target these children.

Parental migration with children left-behind is a world-side observable fact, although with the largest complete numbers of children affected in rural China; approximated 60 million and above children. The implications of this phenomenon for children have been limited and have focused on impacts on time use into learning such as school attendance and time learning. In other previous literature, they have not considered the effects of parental migration on education may be positive or negative, depending on whether, for instance, the earning impact due to increased parental income outweighs the effects of reduced parental time inputs into child education and reduced parental direct supervision connected to learning. Therefore, it is not surprising that some earlier research has found that positive and others have found negative or no significant impacts on children’s time use related learning. Also, of course, even if children’s time use related learning increases, learning may decrease or not be affected if parental presence has large impacts on child learning.

## Effects on Children Left-behind

In the United States, it is well established that the quality of parenting is among the most influential predictors of children’s emotional health. However, the quality of parenting seems to be degraded in single-parent families relative to intact families. On the other hand, poorer parenting by single parents has been linked to various adverse results among children, including emotional issues, conduct issues, low self-esteem, and problems forming and maintaining social relationships (Usakli, 2013).

The migration of the parents influenced the children negatively regarding emotions and psychologically. The presence of parents brings about emotional and moral support to kids because the parents can provide direction and counseling to the kids. A report by the UNICEF shows that children who grow up without moral guidance tend to stray in life as compared to children who have both the two parental figures (UNICEF humanitarian action report, 2006). Moreover, the absence of parents makes the children to lack role models whom they can look up to in the future. The parents may also offer emotional support in case the children hold a problem in life that calls for parental guidance. Furthermore, the children of rural China experienced psychological torture because they were left alone and were exposed to all kinds of insecurity.

The migration led to the interchanging of roles since the parental roles were transferred to the children. The children were left to take care of each other due to the fact that the parents were not present; thus the children had to adopt alternative means of survival. Toddlers would toil in order for them to get means of endurance in the society. Therefore, they were entrusted with numerous challenges which involved both their physical and mental health (He, 2008). The drift of the parents led to the decrement of the children enrolled in the shoals. The absence of parents led to a situation which is described as anarchy since the children could go to school whenever they wanted since there was not any force that was exerted on them (UNICEF humanitarian action report, 2006). Furthermore, they lacked basic needs such as food and clothing to sustain them.

The level of discipline deteriorated as a result of the migration. The migration made the children; especially the boys indulge in behaviors that are morally unacceptable. The boys did not have a father-figure thus they could commit acts that were of their own liking without consequences of being punished. The fathers always act as the figurehead of the family; therefore, most of them have the command that would enable the boys to grow into respectable gentlemen

The separation of families led to material insecurity. The parents were always the backbone of the family in terms of provision of material needs for the sustainability of the children’s well being; thus their absence created a void that exposed the students to the challenges in the world such as inadequate food, shelter, and clothing (UNICEF humanitarian action report, 2006). The migration of the parents led to the breakdown of the parent-children relationship. The development in the urban cities of China led to the increased rural-urban population since the people were searching for greener pastures. The children were therefore left behind in the hands of other relatives hence they were supposed to follow new rules. The prolonged absence of the parents made them have weak ties since the communication was poor and they could not develop the close bond. Moreover, the weak ties made the children to experience situations where they could not share their dreams and aspirations in life. The absence of the parents, therefore, killed a lot of dreams that would have resulted in great achievements. Consequently, the migration was for a good course, but it brought adverse effects, especially in the social aspect of the children’s lives.

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