

**STUDY ON PERCEPTION OF WORKING MOTHERS AND CAREGIVERS
ON THE SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AGE 2- 4**

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A thesis submitted to BRAC Institute of Educational Development in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Early Childhood Development

BRAC Institute of Educational Development
BRAC University
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Ethics Statement

Title of Thesis Topic: Study on perception of working mothers and caregivers on the social skills development of children age 2- 4

Student name: Ahlam Ahsan

1. Source of population: Working mothers of 2-4 years old children and caregivers for the same children
2. Does the study involve (yes, or no)
 - a) Physical risk to the subjects- No
 - b) Social risk- No
 - c) Psychological risk to subjects- No
 - d) discomfort to subjects- No
 - e) Invasion of privacy- No
3. Will subjects be clearly informed about (yes or no)
 - a) Nature and purpose of the study- Yes
 - b) Procedures to be followed- Yes
 - c) Physical risk- Yes
 - d) Sensitive questions- Yes
 - e) Benefits to be derived- Yes
 - f) Right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study- Yes
 - g) Confidential handling of data- Yes
 - h) Compensation and/or treatment where there are risks or privacy is involved- Yes
4. Will Signed verbal consent for be required (yes or no)
 - a) from study participants- Yes
 - b) from parents or guardian- Yes
 - c) Will precautions be taken to protect anonymity of subjects?- Yes
5. Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee:
 - a) Proposal -Yes
 - b) Consent Form- Yes
 - c) Questionnaire or interview schedule- Yes

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Executive Summary

From the very early stages, children have social needs. The early experiences of children frame their social skill evolving growth. While women in the workforce is increasing, motherhood is no more preference to be compromised to pursue career. Therefore, to support this change which is positive for the society we need to have proper environment and support for our children who are our future. The structure of child care practice of young children has been altered. However, not all of the modifications are appropriate and precisely implemented. My study is about working mothers' perception regarding this critical factor of social skills of young children and the arrangement they provide to continue for child rearing and pursuing a career. Also, this study aims to explore the caregivers' perception who attend to these children in non-formal settings to support the working mothers. While early childhood development emphasizes that social skill shapes a child's character, how much awareness does our working mom and caregiver and their extended family have regarding the importance. It has been made clear from the findings that our community still lacks understanding of the importance of the social skill of young children. Absence of social support such as day care centers and professional nannies also makes it compelling for mothers to seek assistance from extended families and change their location without absolutely choosing voluntarily. The modifications in childcare if not endorsed with adequate gears for execution, then in a second it can transform beneficial changes to negativity.

Key Words: social skills development, children age 2-4 years, working mothers, caregivers

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my sons, Ayman and Rafyn who have always been very empathetic and cooperative about my working hours. Without their love, care and understanding I would never be able to work and study, achieve my goals and fulfill this thesis. And my husband Farhan Adel for challenging me constantly to accomplish more .

I would also like to dedicate this to all working mothers like me, who irrespective of all barriers and hurdles are nurturing their children while continuing to pursue their career, with or without proper support of childcare facility.

To the caregivers who are bestowing their time and support to the working mothers by taking care of the children for the hours they are separated from their mothers. Last but not the least to the children for their unconditional love.

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List of Acronyms

COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
ECD	Early Childhood Development
IDI	In-depth Interview
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Chapter I

Introduction & Background

This chapter presents the introduction to the topic of the study along with the rationale and purpose.

Introduction

Childhood development is intertwined with intermediation by parents, caregivers and society. Any child's social emotional development is not just an in-born trait but is a collective outcome of the child's experience through interaction, support, coaching and environmental influence on his/her behavior. Social development is perceived to be of substantial importance for early age children. It is the most crucial time, because it actually shapes a child's behavior, attitude and relationship with others in society as an adult.

While all the early childhood theorists have emphasized that early social interaction is crucial for cognitive development and other psychosocial development, we often see in our society that this is given less importance and that more emphasis is laid on basic needs like nutrition, cleanliness, physical health.

The current urban setting in Bangladesh is changing from a joint family to more nuclear families where both parents are working. The physical and psychological support that a child can have growing up in a joint family of cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents is largely missing in the setting of a nuclear family. The support and nurturing required for social skills development of a child falls short in the smaller family setting that is now becoming the practice and the trend.

An old African proverb states that “It takes a village to raise a child” this clearly gives us an insight that overall development of a child is not a child’s own responsibility or an in-born trait. Society, environment, coaching support from parents, caregivers, peers, siblings, and families, all contribute to the development of children, to shape his/her over all behavior and attitude of their adult versions.

Emotional well-being has a strong influence on social interactions throughout the early years. Emotionally stable children are more prepared to develop and sustain supportive interactions with adults and peers alike.

According to Rothbart, M. K. (2004) and J. W. (2014), 'Social-emotional growth is important to the sense in well-being of a young child. Their first encounters help form who they are, who they become and their knowledge of the universe. The significant figures in the life of young children help set the groundwork for a number of social-emotional abilities (as cited by VLS, 2020).

Early emotional well-being contributes to build confidence in childhood, which is retained throughout adulthood. This also builds a positive attitude. These together contribute to the growth of an adult who is productive, positive and a boon to society.

Wiley (2007) wrote that each child has his/her own temperament. Some children enjoy higher levels of social activity while other children prefer less. While this may be preference children are born with, much of what experts call ‘social competence’ or the ability to get along with others is skill-based or learnt.

Children are born with the skills to socialize, like all other skills, like walking, talking eating. However, like all other skill this social skill needs support to enhance to flawlessness through learning and training and emulation of adults and role models for the child.

While experts, who have studied this aspect of a child's development, state that it contributes to the positive growth to adulthood, in our country this has not been a point for consideration. A case in point is the statement by Wiley. According to Wiley (2007), social skills create healthy and positive interactions and children can then communicate evidently, peacefully, and respectfully. They show consideration for the feelings and interests of their peers. They accept accountability for their actions, can regulate themselves and where appropriate, can express themselves. By experience with peers, examples and guidance from their parents, and time with adults, children develop social skills. Social skills also offer kids a feeling of trust and superiority over their world. The concept that a child's overall health deeply affects adulthood is brought to the forefront by Farooq (2018), who stated that a child's overall health throughout their life could be determined by the way they socialized when they were younger.

Considering and supporting a child in nurturing their positive attitudes and thoughts, contributes to the building of their confidence. This is substantiated by Kostelnik (2016), when he states that social competence is not a luxury but contributes heavily to how children feel about themselves and about how others perceive them. Socially competent children are happier, more successful academically and have a positive attitude.

Given the importance of social skill development in early childhood development, in the Bangladesh context there is almost no mention or dedicated activities undertaken to understand or study this issue.

Social skills may not be a term that is readily understood as such, or even recognized, but that a child needs support to learn whatever skill is a well-recognized fact. Social

skill is no different. The sooner we, as individuals or society recognize this, the more productive and positive an adult we can gift to the society

Statement of the Problem

Changes in family structure and practice: In Bangladesh, we have moved from the extended family structure to nuclear family structure. These developments have brought changes in parenting patterns and procedures. Previously females had support from family members if they pursued a career with motherhood. With changes to nuclear family structure, mothers have to depend on domestic helps or day care services for child support system.

Research findings claim that childcare is affected negatively by globalization because women are now more conscious about their own career development and employment opportunities (Hossain et al,2014). More women are joining the workforce to increase their family income. The International Anglican Family Networks (2007) reinforces that this process discourages them to solely play their traditional/domestic roles for childcare and responsibilities for the care of family and elderly people, in most of the cases, child caring is delegated to the housemaids who are significantly unskilled and uneducated domestic workers. Other family members may contribute only to some extent. A research conducted in Ireland shows that, 27% of children aged between 0 and 4 whose mothers work full time, do not get the access of paid childcare, and unpaid members are looking after these children (Collins, 2001). Absence of an effective childcare system can have a negative effect on child development process leading to a long-term detrimental effect on society.

Importance of social skills: Social skills are the building blocks of health and well-being of a child. Friendship and interaction with others create empathy and increases

the readiness of a child for the future. Despite the importance of social skill development in early childhood development (ECD) it is not addressed strongly and appropriately in Bangladesh.

Approach of caregivers: While parents are at work, their children are left with caregivers or extended family to be taken care of. While their basic needs like food and cleanliness are being taken care of, often the emotional and social needs and support are overlooked. The common perception is that social skills are more for older children and schooling is the best way to build this skill.

Bangladesh, though a small country, has a rich cultural heritage and strong family bonds. Parenting practices mainly follow traditional norms with some exceptions in better-educated and richer families. Parenting practices also differ in urban and rural contexts. Children are raised in an affectionate environment with both parents and with extended family members in most cases. However, there also exists a smaller percentage of single parent families with mothers most commonly as the single parent. Here childrearing practices are mainly focused on ensuring that the children are fed and educated. Parents often have little awareness about early child stimulation and parent-child interaction (Hamadani, et al. 2014).

Lack of awareness to support children's social skill development:

Often child's development is perceived to be only cognitive, language, and motor skill development. Parents concentrate on physical growth and nutrition but social skill of young children is often neglect and overlooked due to lack of knowledge about social competence, importance and also how to support a child to build his/her social skill.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is two-fold and stated below.

- To explore the perception of working mothers and caregivers of their children on social skill development of children aged 2-4.
- To explore the perception about the role adults can play in supporting the social skill development of children aged 2-4.

Significance of the Study

Why is social development so important- Social development can actually impact many of the other forms of development a child experiences. A child's ability to interact in a healthy way with the people around her can affect everything from learning new words as a toddler, to being able to resist peer pressure as a high school student, to successfully navigating the challenges of adulthood (SCAN, 2015.)

Basic need:

In our society the social need of children age 2-4 year is often overlooked while parents and caregivers are busy fulfilling the child's basic needs and thinking it is enough.

Part of the responsibility of parents is to educate their children, and teach them social skills, to make them a reasonable member of society (Skill Need, 2017).

Adults' perception:

Till the age of two, mothers are concerned about breast feeding and try their best to be with the child as much as possible. For children age of 2-4 years, parents feel children are grown up enough to be left alone with caregivers or family members while they go back to paid labor force. Unfortunately, parents tend to overlook the need for support to build and develop social emotional need of a young child, relying on schools or

caregivers and often perceiving that it is an in-born trait in a child to develop companionship, interaction, empathy, etc. They do not take the effort to address this development separately and consciously.

Children learn when we act as good role models. They benefit when we create the environments that reward self-control but there is nothing quite like practice. To develop and grow, kids need first-hand experience with turn taking, self-regulation, teamwork, and perspective taking (Dewar, 2018).

Lack of study in Bangladesh on social skills development of children age 2-4:

Though social skills development is a part of a child's holistic development and addressed in ECD, yet no articles or paper on this social skills development of children age 2-4 in Bangladesh could be found. Parents' and caregivers' awareness is mandatory for a child's overall development.

Lack of awareness among parents & caregivers about social skills development of the children:

The concept of support to develop social skill is still very vague, new and almost unknown in Bangladesh. The idea that social skill and confidence needs to be developed and strengthened is quite novel and neglected.

Research Topic and Research Questions

This sub-section presents the research topic and the questions that have been formulated with the intention of revealing the answers through this study.

The research topic is Study on perception of working mothers and caregivers on the social skills development of children age 2- 4.

Research Questions

1. How do working mothers perceive social skill development of children age 2-4?
2. How do the caregivers perceive social skill development of children age 2-4?
3. What kind of arrangement do the mothers make for childcare during their working hours?

Operational Definition

Social-emotional development Social development refers to the mechanism by which an infant learns to connect with those around them. They often learn abilities to interact with other persons and process their behaviours while they grow and perceive their own individuality within their culture. Social learning also commonly applies to how a child forms interactions and other associations, as well as how a child interacts with peer disputes. (SCAN, 2020).

According to Wikipedia A social skill is any competence facilitating interaction and communication with others where social rules and relations are created, communicated, and changed in verbal and nonverbal ways. The process of learning these skills is called socialization (Encyclopedia, 2020).

Social Skill: A social skill is any competence facilitating interaction and communication with others where social rules and relations are created, communicated, and changed in verbal and nonverbal ways.

Socialization skill: The process of learning these skills is called socialization.

A nuclear family: is an elementary family or conjugal family is a family group consisting of two parents (a man and a woman) and their children (one or more). It is

in difference to a single-parent family, the larger extended family, or a family with more than two parents (Hughes, 2019)

Working mothers: refer to women who are mothers and who work outside the home for income in addition to the work they perform at home in raising their children (Hughes, 2019)

Caregivers: are a family members or paid assistants who regularly take care and support the mothers in looking after the child during the mother's absence and presence.

Social skill of 2-4 year children:

Seven Most Important Social Skills for 2-4-year-old

- Benefits.
- Sharing.
- Cooperating.
- Listening.
- Following Directions.
- Respecting Personal Space.
- Making Eye Contact.
- Using Manners.

Theoretical Framework

Erikson's (1958) eight-stage theory of psychosocial development describes growth and change throughout life, focusing on social interaction and conflicts that arise during different stages of development.

Erikson mentioned that personality develops in a predetermined order through eight stages of psychosocial development, from infancy to adulthood. During each stage, the

person experiences a psychosocial crisis, which could have a positive or negative outcome for personality development (as cited by McLeod, 2018).

Vygotsky's (1978) theoretical work affirms that children learn and develop through shared experiences that stem from their sociocultural backgrounds (as cited Boules, 2017).

Bowlby (1969) proposed one of the earliest theories of social development. Bowlby believed that early relationships with caregivers play a major role in child development and continue to influence social relationships throughout life (as cited by Barnes, et al., 2018).

Chapter II

Literature Review

This chapter contains the review of related literature which aims to provide an overview of literature relating to perception of working mothers and caregivers on the social skill development of children age 2- 4. The main purpose of the study is to find out the perception of working mothers and caregivers on the social skills development of children age 2- 4. In addition, the study was conducted to explore their perception of their role in developing the social skills in such young children.

Children's social skill:

Social learning theory defines children's social skills in terms of specific social learning experiences, such as modeling, tuition, and reinforcement, and the cognitions, emotions, and behavior that emerge from these formative experiences (B.J. Zimmerman, 2001, p. 143-44).

Another opinion from play care (2016) is, "Social skills of their children while they are really young. Babies are unable to clearly inform you what they desire. This ensures that the acts and non-verbal signals that your baby provides would need to be paying attention to. Offer it to them because you realise what your kid wants. If that doesn't fit, you might have missed their criteria and could try something else."

Rothbart, (2004), Murphy & Moon (2010), jointly stated, "With a particular temperament, babies are born. No right or wrong, positive or terrible disposition occurs. You will try to use what you know of babies and toddlers to foster their talents and meet their interests through knowing temperament."

According to S. Brede Kamp et al. (1997), ‘Children are new to society. Therefore, they need to understand and learn the social competencies through coaching and support, something as simple as greeting someone appropriately. In general, they should be able to communicate politely and effectively with other members of society. They should be able to plan and make decisions by themselves to be able to be good members of society.’

Importance of social skills:

Different scholars have given different theories about the importance of social skills. Richter (2004) states that throughout infancy and adolescence, critical cycles of brain and biological growth commence prenatally and proceed. In the social settings in which children reside, learn and mature, the degree to which these mechanisms contribute to safe growth depends on the characteristics of stimulus, encouragement, and nurturing.

Similarly Morin (2020) stated, ‘Social skills are a collection of abilities that require constant refinement as the children grow older. They aren't anything that only your kid has or doesn't have. There are talents that, through effort and practise, may be acquired and improved.’

In keeping that Sara (2018) stated, “Babies need social interactions early on, but without even realising it you're probably providing it. In infants, social growth includes skin-to-skin touch, eating (including breastfeeding), talking to babies, story time, and cuddling. These are all directions to start making your child feel like a member of a culture that is the family at this stage. By living with their friends, peers and guardians, babies receive much of the social arrangements they require until age 3. Babies often socialise naturally by engaging with the world around them.

According to Berk, L. E. (2013) and Feldman, R. S. (2007), “Social preferences are another issue that may differ by culture, as well as country. Children learn through the social process, making it an important part of childhood. Children need the chance, in a social way to play with other children and to be around adults. Just help while they are communicating, when absolutely appropriate, and offer constructive input, so the next time they feel more secure. Speak about what they should do to make it get easier every time if things don't go right.” (As cited VLS, 2020)

Parents are also believed to be important socializing agents in the early years of our lives, and results from previous studies indicate that parental social practices influence children's school adjustment. Although children become more independent from their parents during adolescence, it is possible that parental social practices can also influence school adjustment also among students in late adolescence. Nonetheless, few studies have addressed this issue. It is unclear as to whether the relationship with parents remain important for their adjustment with school. (Studsrød&Bru, 2009, p. 538)

It highlights convincing evidence that the early interactions and connections of an infant set the tone for how a child handles emotions and desires, and responds to others, based on a thorough analysis of neuroscience and developmental research. It also illustrates emerging and possibly unexpected data that in the early years, emotional maturity and academic learning are far more strongly related than commonly thought. (Raver, 2020)

Role of mothers and caregivers in developing social skills

According to Wiley, (2007) each child has his/her own temperament. Some children enjoy higher levels of social activity while other children prefer less. While this may be a preference children are born with, much of what experts call ‘social competence’ or

the ability to get along with others is skill-based or learned. This means that it can be practiced and improved upon, especially if the child's parent is a patient coach.

The researcher spoke about the role of mothers in socialization that, the enormous asymmetry in power and competence between adults and children implies that the parent-child relationship must have a unique role in childhood socialization. (Maccoby, 1992, p. 10)

Kiel & Kalomiris (2015) showed that it is well-established that emotion regulation behaviors and capacities emerge from experiences within the early parent-child relationship, with previous theory and empirical research supporting the attachment relationship typically with the mother.

Likewise, researcher stated, 'As Your developing infant develops from a newborn to a toddler, and then their social networks will move and evolve drastically into a teenager and an adult. However there are different emotional and behavioural conditions that are addressed through socialisation during each stage of growth (Children's Bureau, 2020).

In general, during these ages 2- to 4-year-olds, infants may have acquired such social abilities and social signs: able to gain attention from others, establish social interaction with others both verbally (saying "Hi" and "Bye") and visually, look at a person who talks, have the capacity to speak turns, and laugh at ridiculous things and activities. And also are able to take turns when playing games, play with a doll or stuffed animal, and initiate verbal communication with actual words. These all are developed by mother or caregiver. (Play care, 2016)

According to Durlak et al., (2011) and Fantuzzo et al., (2007), "Basic social skills include a range of prosocially. Behaviors, such as compassion and respect for others' emotions, teamwork, sharing, and taking perspective, both of which are directly related

to the performance of children in both school and non-academic environments and should be supported by parents and other caregivers. These abilities are correlated with the potential progress of children in a broad spectrum of adult contexts.”

The Interaction Rating Scale (IRS) provides further evidence of the fact that in order to study children's social skill development, it is important to evaluate various features of the caregiver-child interaction as a predictor of social skills. (Anme et al., 2010)

Both intentional and unintentional socialization children learn from their parents. A child's overall health throughout their life can be determined by the way they were socialized when they were younger. Indeed, for the earliest development of a child the role of family is quite valuable on academics and emotions. (Farooq, 2020)

Working mothers and caregivers’ role on the social skills development children:

In Asian countries, and in many joint family systems, grandparents and other nonworking family members fulfill the need for childcare—they take over the job of childcare when the mother is at work. This is a very important benefit of readily available child support from the family members themselves. Joint families not only recognize that the working mother is an important member of the family, but also provides her the necessary support to be able to perform her dual role efficiently. (Paduval&Paduval, 2009)

But in a research, Tong et al., (2009, p. 20) shared a different opinion, “To decrease the likelihood of developmental regression, working mothers can maximise contact with their children in their spare time. Regular childcare assistance given to long-term working moms by family members or social groups is beneficial in mediating the detrimental relationship of mothers working with the growth of children”

According to an Indian research finding, “With both parents working, each family member has to play a more active role. Children learn social skills that they would not learn otherwise but it seems that mother’s employment has a negative effect as well as a positive one on their children’s development. In infant period child suffers badly due to mother’s employment. In that case mothers should be more careful (Singh, 2019).

Due to the employment of mothers, children are not always given time, in which case caregivers or nannies play an important role in developing the child's social skills. So, as a caregiver, babysitters and nannies spend a lot of time with kids during their critical developmental stages. In addition to working with what parents think is best, there are things that you can do to help with their kids’ social skills. (Sitter city, 2014)

Nanylane, (2006) stated that part of her role as a nanny is to provide the kids with stimulating experiences. Few people want to budget for a nanny that makes their children stay all day in front of a TV. A significant duty of the nanny is to ensure that the child gets academic and social stimuli during the day and one more point is that reading is a wonderful experience that a nanny and child should do together. Read to the kids every day. It is not only relaxing; it is also a strong means of promoting the benefit of reading at an early age. Co-author Laurence Roope of Oxford University says that the study proves that spending time in daycare has a “positive effect” on children. “It should give parents some reassurance that nurseries are not going to harm their children, and are likely to be beneficial.” (As cited by Harris, 2016)

Research has shown that children who feel safe in their most important relationships with parents and caregivers—will be much quicker to adapt to new situations, social or otherwise. If they do feel anxious, they will recover faster. (Cara, 2016)

As the perspective of Care Giver, Teresa Boardman, (n.d) stated in Nanny Options, “It could be a smart idea to invite another kid of the same age to your house to make the children play together while your child is a toddler. At that early age, you don't need to prompt them very often but leave them together to judge and maybe attempt to engage with each other. Toddlers are very proud of their field of play and loathe to share their toys with others. It might be a smart idea to only bring a new kid into the neighbourhood for a few days without revealing something. It has been found that toddlers lighten up over time and don't mind a new kid in their playing area. Yet most also enjoy playing by themselves. This eventually shifts in the game to incorporate other kids as well.

The study has found that, caregivers in every country do more socio emotional than cognitive parenting, and not leaving a child alone and taking a child out were the most prevalent forms of care giving, followed by playing, singing, and naming, and finally telling stories and reading books. (Bornstein, &Putnick, 2012)

Working parents have long been battling feelings of guilt as they try to juggle spending time with their children and earning a crust. But a new combined study from Oxford University and the London School of Economics has revealed that children whose parents both go out to work actually develop faster than those who stay at home full-time. Those who attended nursery had a 10 per cent positive impact on everyday skills while children who spent more time with grandparents showed a 5 per cent boost in conversing skills and performed 10 per cent better socially. (Harris, 2016)

Working mothers and caregivers on the social skills development of children - National perspective:

In Bangladesh, working mothers always face many questions for their babies 'caring. Bangladesh is going to be a developed and digitalized country. But still there is

superstition that working mothers' children are deprived from their motherly affection. (Sultana, 2020)

According to Nilu Momtaz, a child psychologist and special educator, the children of working mothers grow up differently than those of stay-at-home mothers. "The children have to deal with a lot of things alone, and the mothers have to give a lot of extra effort to maintain a regular and peaceful life for her children, so lacking of social skill is normal." (As cited The Independent, 2018)

According to UNICEF (2017), in Bangladesh, there is insufficient understanding and knowledge of child care and rearing among parents and caregivers. Many are ignorant of Early Childhood Growth criteria. All of the founding elements are early relaxation and understanding. Kids are decisively influenced by communicating, reading, singing, solving puzzles, and playing with others.

On the other hand, "A working mother typically lengthens her day in order to carry out some domestic chores before and after work. There will be other trustworthy family members, such as grandparents, uncles, aunts, in addition to a mother or parent, who can step in to help as caregivers. If these moms are in a nuclear family with a skilled career, though, it may be very challenging to take care of babies together with keeping job obligations and it requires a delicate balance. This scenario is common among the dual income nuclear families in urban Bangladesh and that is when a nanny service or a child daycare center can be a solution, where social skills can be developed." (Naheed, 2018)

Chapter III

Methodology

This section presents the methodology and the rationale that has been followed to conduct the study. It provides an insight into the respondents' demographic profile, research location and approach, data collection methods and analysis, ethical issues, validity and reliability of the study and the limitations.

Research Participants

The participants of the study are three mothers pursuing full-time (9-5) jobs in the private sector. Their age range is between 25 to 35 years. They have all completed their Masters level of education. They come from a middle-class background. They were carefully chosen to represent this particular social and educational section of the population. The rationale being that the women of this section are increasingly joining the workforce. It is anticipated that soon enough, if not already, child-rearing will become a major determinant for these women in choosing their jobs and professions which may hamper utilizing their full potential.

All the mothers have a single child who is being taken care of by caregivers while the mothers are at work. The mothers have all chosen to live very close to their extended families/parents to get the support in rearing the child.

Two of the caregivers are extended family members and they are both the children's maternal aunts. The aunts who are caregivers are between the ages of 25 to 35 and have completed their Master's level in education.

Only one out of the three caregivers is a paid domestic help and nanny and is about 25 years old. She does not have any formal education and in fact cannot read or write.

The mothers' and the caregivers' detailed information is provided in Chapter 4 Results & Discussion.

Research Site

The research sites or the respondents' location of residence were Shaymoli, Bashundhara Residential Area and Uttara. All the areas represent middle class and upper middle class income group. All six in-depth interviews were conducted with the respondents at their preferred place and time.

Due to the challenges posed by the pandemic, mother A and B and the caregiver A and B did not want the interview at their residence. Instead the interviews took place in a third neutral location. Mother C preferred telephonic interview for herself and the caregiver.

The initial study locations proposed in the proposal were Dhanmondi, Gulshan, Uttara. Due to the prevalent pandemic, respondents willing were available only in Banshundhara Residential Area, Shaymoli and Uttara area of Dhaka city. Thus, these willing respondents participated in this study.

Research Approach

To explore mothers' and caregivers' opinion and practice for shaping social skills of small children, to fulfill the research necessities, qualitative research approach is appropriate and was therefore chosen.

To fulfill the requirement of the study, in-depth interviews were conducted. The in-depth interviews were carried out in an informal manner in order to get the maximum out of the respondents. Both semi-structured and open ended questions were asked in the interviews as conversation and in natural settings and over telephone.

Data Collection Methods

Consent to participate was sought from mothers and caregivers. After the selection of the mothers, each participant was individually asked for their consent and convenient time and place to be interviewed. Both parties discussed the time and content of the interview, the nature of the research, the whole procedure that would be used and the concerns of confidentiality. All notes and answers were taken and recorded by the researcher in writing. Recording was not done as the participants did not feel comfortable about recording.

Participation was voluntary. During the in-depth interview, clear direct questions and few open ended questions were asked in a way so that respondents could answer flexibly to express their own opinion. Questions were placed to the respondents with care to ensure that it did not directly evoke sensitivity or mislead the respondent such that the questions were evaded.

Questions were semi-structured. All interviews were casually and informally conducted to make participants comfortable and maintain consistency with the features of in-depth interview in qualitative approach. The responses were recorded via written notes (field notes). During the interviews, researcher took note of all the nonverbal behavior and moods.

Questionnaire for in-depth interview was developed and thereafter reviewed by experts. Questionnaire was modified and edited based on feedback received from the supervisor and the expert. The chapter aims to provide a brief overview of the research design used for the study. The multi-stepped procedure of research methodology begins with study design & method, research site, research participants, participants characteristics, tools

used, followed by a brief discussion about data collection, data analysis process, ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

Sampling Procedure

In this study, purposeful sampling methodology was used. The target population was the working mothers who have 2 to 4 years old children and caregivers who look after the children of those working mothers. The specific purpose guided the participant selection to reach a target population (Gay et al., 2012). The researcher had selected the participants based on some specific criteria. The inclusion criteria were:

- Mothers who have full time job
- Mothers who have children age 2- 4 years old
- Caregivers who look after the children age 2-4 and whose mothers have full time job

Data Analysis

The data collected were organized according to themes and sub-themes. The two themes were perception and practice. While designing the questionnaire, the questions and points of discussion were placed such that the perception of the respondents could be revealed. This was applicable for both types of respondents, mothers and caregivers. Similarly, questions were also framed to reveal the practices of the mothers and the caregivers.

On collecting and collating the responses of the questions, the sub-themes were revealed and they were grouped accordingly. Each respondent was questioned to validate the sub-themes that were revealed.

Ethical Issues

- All ethical issues related to research involving all participants addressed according to the Ethical approval committee of BRAC IED, BRAC University.
- Verbal consent was taken from all six participants after informing them in detail about the purpose of the study.
- Voluntary participation: Participants were agreed to participate in this study voluntarily.
- Informed consent: Participants were all well-informed about the study and the purpose of the study. With their voluntary consent they signed a consent form which was given to them before the beginning of the interview.
- Confidentiality and anonymity: All participants were assured about the confidentiality of the data that was collected. Also they were assured that their name or description will not be revealed in the study at any time or for any other purpose.
- Participants were allowed to refrain from answering particular questions that they felt violation of their privacy.

Validity & Reliability

The validity of the questionnaires, methodology was substantiated by the experts of Early Childhood Development faculty of the university. Due to the prevalence of the pandemic, and the limited timeframe, piloting could not be conducted at this stage and for this study.

However, to get a more holistic view of the social skill development perception and practice of mothers and caregivers, both were taken as respondents, and they were for the same child. This ensured data triangulation.

Limitations of the Study

- The study was focused on full time working mothers from private sectors only who have 2-4 years old children in Dhaka city area. Diverse working field could give more depth and rich data which was not possible in such short time.
- The number of participants is limited due to limited time and current pandemic situation.
- However, though the researcher was able to do one to one interview with four participants, only one mother and caregiver were interviewed via telephonic conversation. This made the researcher unable to observe the interviewees. And for the caregiver's response, it was hard to say if the interviewee was being completely unbiased and frank and honest.
- Lack of study on Bangladeshi children and their social skills development was an obstacle in my literature review section. Context comparison was difficult with our societal and cultural practice.
- No study was found on effect of social development skill on children's future behavior in addition, personality advancement in national perspective.
- The children, as subjects of the study, could not be observed at all due to pandemic situation. This was a major drawback in triangulation of the data.
- The prolonged lockdown has affected the children's social skills in this present unnatural situation which has affected the study in a way.

Chapter IV

Results & Discussion

This part of the analysis presents information gathered from in-depth interviews over phone and face-to-face meetings on working mothers and caregivers' perception and practice on social skills of children age 2 to 4 years.

Information was gathered by asking questions prepared for the interviewee. Results were collected from mothers and the caregivers of the children of working mothers on their perception and practices of the social ability of the child. Below are the outcomes from their responses. The period of conducting the interviews were from 25 October 2020 to 27 October 2020. The answers were coded for ease of organizing the responses according to themes.

Mothers' Demographic Details:

The age range of mothers was between 25-35 years. All three mothers have single child. They all hold postgraduate master's degree. All three mothers are working in private sector and regularly going to office in the current pandemic situation. While at work, they leave their children with their arranged caregivers. They are all staying inside Dhaka city in areas like Uttara, Mirpur and Bashundhara R/A. Mother A has family members living with her. Total members living in her apartment is seven (father, sister, mother of participant, husband, child and participant herself and domestic help). Mother B's total number of family members in the house is four (husband, wife, child and a domestic help). Mother C's total family members living in the apartment is four (husband, wife, child and domestic help). In case of mother B and C, both live in the same building with their extended family, which gives them the access to have support

from their sisters and parents to take care of the child while they are at work. The information is summarized in table 1.

Respondent	Educational Qualification	Date of interview	Age	Occupation	No of child	Child's Age	Child's gender
A	Masters	25.10.20	26	Service holder	1	2 year 4 month	Female
B	Masters	25.10.20	30	Service holder	1	2.year 7 month	Female
C	Masters	27.10.20	33	Service holder	1	4 year 3 months	Male

Table 1: Mothers' demographics

Caregivers' Demographic Details:

Caregiver A is approximately 28 years old and holds a Master's degree. She is unmarried and living with her sister's family. She is the child's aunt. She is looking after the child from the age of four months. Caregiver B is a graduate and married with a child of her own, her age is approximately 32. She is taking care of child B from age of 6 months. Caregiver C is a domestic help with no formal education, her age is approximately 21. She has been looking after the child from the age of eight months.

Respondent	Educational Qualification	Date of interview	Age	Occupation	No of child	Child's Current Age	Gender
A	Masters	25.10.20	28	Stay home	1	2 year 4 month	Female
B	Graduate	26.10.20	32	Homemaker	1	2 year 7 month	Female
C	No education	27.10.20	21	Domestic help	1	4 year 3 months	Male

Table 2: Caregivers' demographics

Theme1: Perception of Social Skills

The following paragraphs present the different aspects of the perceptions that mothers and caregivers have about social skills and its development as related to that of a child aged 2 to 4 years.

Mother's Perception

Mothers have their own perception about the social skills of their children aged 2 to 4 years old. These perceptions are revealed in the interview conducted with them. Those are presented below.

Opinion about the child's personality and temperament

To all mothers their child is always good and sweet. While mother A and B said their child is active, cheerful, and curious in nature, Mother B described her child specifically as emotional.

Mother C said, "My son is much matured compared to his age. Expresses expectations and very convincing to get what he wants. He is very independent." (IDI #3: 27.10.2020)

Feelings and attachment of the child with mother:

All mothers believe that their child is very attached to them. Mother A mentioned that after she goes back from work her child spends all her time with the mother.

While mother B mentioned that though her baby is attached to her but she thinks that she is more attached to her father and expresses her needs and feelings more to her father. Mother C stated that her son is very attached to her.

Behavior with extended family members & friends:

Mother A stated that her child is usually very curious and when she meets other family members and friends, initially she is shy and takes time to warm up. Eventually she gets friendly.

Mother B stated similarly and mentioned that it takes about an hour for her to warm up to new people. Mother C said that he is very playful and not shy when he meets guests.

Nevertheless, all three mothers mentioned that COVID -19 situation has brought some changes and as they are kept more isolated and not get to meet people from outside

often or go out often this has made them a bit hesitant and shy. Now when they see or meet guests or new people they do not warm up easily.

Same age social interaction:

All three children are single child but they have same age cousins. Mother B and C live close to their extended family. The children have the privilege to meet their cousins on a regular basis.

While mother A mentioned that previously her sister lived with her who had a baby of similar age but a year before she has moved out and for the pandemic, she does not let her child go to any family gatherings.

Child's behavior and mood during activities

Mother A & B mentioned that after they return from their job their children are very happy to see them.

Mother A shared, “When I enter the house, if she is awake she is so excited that she doesn't let me go anywhere or let me change until I play with her for a while” (IDI #1:25.10.2020). Mother B said that her child is very active and she is in good mood when she plays or does activities with her. Mother C mentioned as her son is four-year-old and she planned to put him in a preschool, due to the pandemic she could not. Therefore, every day after she returns from work she spends her time teaching her son academic preschool curriculum. She said that her son does not enjoy that and he becomes restless and inattentive during that time. However, he enjoys playing with her and usually always in good mood when they play or do other activities besides studying.

Child's behavior in new environment:

All three children seem to enjoy going out with their parents. All three mothers mentioned that as whole week both parents work, they used to make it a point to take their children out to parks and restaurants in the weekends before the pandemic. However, all mothers complained about the covid-19 situation which has made it difficult to take their children out and which has changed and affected their behavior to be unfriendly and unreceptive to new environment.

Perception about social skills & child's development:

All three mothers said social skills are about interaction with others, playing, sharing, and following instructions which they learn from their own family and nurturing by the parents and other family members. Both mother A & B only stated that social skills have an effect on child's development but could not give further clarification.

On the other hand, Mother C shared her thoughts about the development of social skills of a child,

“Yes, I believe that social skills are relate to a child's development which they develop and learn from family as they grow up, such as, how to greet people, how to interact, how to adapt to new environment.”(IDI #3: 27.10.2020)

Pace of social skills development:

Mother A is happy with her child's pace of social skills development. She said that more awareness is necessary especially among family members and fathers to support in practicing social skills of a child, especially that now more couples are shifting from joint family structure to nuclear family.

However, mother B and C are very satisfied with the pace of social skills development of their child.

Mother C reiterated, “My son is much matured compared to his age.” (IDI #3:27.10.2020).

Challenges in developing social skills

Mother A shared her opinion regarding the challenges she faces in developing social skills of her child,

“Grandparents at times do not understand the need or support for building social skills. I feel their thoughts and generation gap with us make it difficult to introduce them to the new concept’ (IDI#1, 25.10.2020).

She feels that there is a need to support a child in learning to express emotions, to react and adapt to situations and their environment. The respondent clearly stated that it is a skill that can be learnt not congenitally instinctive.

Mother B stated, “I feel that my mood after whole day at work affects my daughter’s interactive moments with me. In addition, at times when I go back from work I have little patience to attend to her needs and I lose temper at times. I do not feel like talking or playing with her, which makes her aloof, non-receptive, and quiet.” (IDI # 2, 25.10.2020)

Mother C stated that she faces no challenges or hurdles about her son’s social skills development. Moreover, she feels, given his age he is quite advanced in his social skills. Though when asked about her awareness about social skills milestones for children of this age, she mentioned that she is not aware of any milestone.

Caregivers' Perception:

The interview conducted with the caregivers revealed their perception about the social skills of children. The following data show the different aspects of perception of the caregivers. In this case, the caregivers are already taking care of a child of that age group.

While conducting the interview I felt that caregiver A and B both are close relatives of the child and that has an impression on their evaluation of the children under their care.

Child's behavior, temperament and personality:

Caregiver A& B both said that both the children under their care are very playful, active and friendly.

Caregiver C stated about the child she takes care of as, *"He is a good boy, very friendly. Not naughty."* (IDI #3: 27.10.2020)

Relationship/ attachment with the child:

Caregiver A said, "She is very attached to me. She looks for me, if she does not see me in the morning. Often after her mother comes back home she still looks for me and wants to play with me." (IDI #1: Caregiver # A. 25.10.2020)

Caregiver B also stated that the child is much attached to her but more attached to her daughter as they are of same age and play together. She also mentioned that the child is very attached to her dad.

Caregiver C is the domestic help and nanny and she said, *"Babu loves me a lot. He likes to play with me and talks to me very nicely. He never disturbs me."*(IDI#3: 27.10.2020)

Child's emotional communication:

Caregiver A& B both said that the children under their care express their feelings and needs to them. They also added that they have no problem understanding the children's need or emotions.

Caregiver A shared,

"If she doesn't like something or wants something she always tells me or tries to explain if she cannot name it, especially about food and toys." (IDI# 1, 25.10.2020)

Caregiver B thinks the child is more expressive to her father than with her mother or the caregiver herself. She also stated that when the baby needs anything she goes to her dad first. Caregiver C "Babu always expresses what he likes and dislikes and is very specific about food. He does not like the bath time" (IDI #3: 27.10.2020)

Peer interaction:

Caregiver A said that the child is fond of her cousin but nowadays she does not go out or interact with same age children due to the pandemic.

While caregiver B said that baby is fond of her cousin who is little older than her and plays a lot. She copies her like a role model. She also feels jealous when her cousin gets more attention from her aunt or mother.

Caregiver C said that the boy has an eight-year-old cousin sister with whom he plays. Beside her, he does not have any other same age children in the building to play or interact with.

Behavior with extended family & friends:

Caregiver A & B said that the children are friendly with extended family and friends but as they do not see them often now a day, the children take time to get friendly and playful around new people.

Caregiver C only replied that he is well behaved with guests and new people all the time.

Perception on sharing skill:

All three caregivers shared the same opinion that the children like to share with the people they know.

While caregiver A mentioned particularly that the child likes to share her food with her during mealtime.

Understanding of social skills

Caregiver A stated that social skills are about how friendly the child is with adults and other children.

According to caregiver B, social skills are about active interaction with everyone around the child, like talking and playing.

Whereas, for caregiver C, social skills when explained to her she stated that a child's social skills are about good behavior and talking nicely with respect to her and following her instructions.

Perception on children's social skills and development

When asked about the child's social skills and child's development they take care of, all the caregivers seem to think that behaving well and being able to interact and play are good enough for such age children's social skills development.

Caregiver B stated, "Children are nice and sweet to all and that comes to them naturally."(IDI #2: 26.10.2020). She feels that such young children's social skills are not something separate from their normal growing up behavior.

Caregiver A only agreed but she did not give any clarification about her perception of social skills and development.

Caregiver C had no comments.

Adults' role in social n skills development:

All three caregivers agreed that children learn from their elders around them. Family has a big part in teaching social skills to the children.

Caregiver C stated that children learn from their parents how to talk, behave and interact.

Challenges in child caring:

Caregiver A thinks that patience is important to teach and make the child follow instructions which at times she finds challenging.

While caregiver B & C stated that the children are not naughty and good kids who listen to their instructions, so they do not face any challenges in taking care of the children.

Theme 2: Practices of Social Skills

The following data present the different aspects of the practices that mothers and caregivers conduct and follow that may be attributed to the development of social skills and its development as related to that of a child aged 2 to 4 years.

Mother's Practices

The interviews show that mothers have their own practices, which they either consciously or unknowingly perform for the child. Their practices are presented below.

Time spent with children:

All three mothers are doing full time job in private sectors and all answered that they get to spend on an average 15 hours every day with their children during weekdays. On weekends they try to give full time to their children.

Daily routine:

Mother A and B follow basic daily routine for meal, nap and bath time. However, they both admitted that no strict routine is maintained or followed.

While mother C stated that she does not believe in following a routine. She stated, "One should adapt and maintain timetable as per need and the child's preference" (IDI#3:27.10.2020). She also opined,

"All children are different and have their own temperament and ways to do things, instead of maintaining a routine it is better to adapt and adjust along the way." (IDI #3:27.10.2020).

Arrangement for childcare while at work:

Mother A & B have arranged to keep their children with their extended family. Both mothers leave their children with their sisters.

Mother C hired a house help who is also a nanny for her child and has been taking care of the child from the age of eight months. She previously lived alone with her husband; however, two years back she moved to Uttara and took an apartment in the same building where her parents and sister live. She mentioned that she made this change for her baby so that she has the support of her family to look after the child while she is at work.

Activities practiced with the child:

Mother A and B spend time playing with their children after they return from work. They try to have the evening snacks together with their children. Both mothers stated that their children like reading time with their mothers.

While mother C has started preschool curriculum with her child and every day after work she tries to teach him for two hours. On weekends, she prefers to make the day more playful and the child spends most of his time with his dad.

Activities to build social skills:

Mother A and B take their children out and arrange playdates, teach greetings, how to interact with new people, and do play activities.

Mother C said she does nothing extra and going out, meeting people are regular things, which they do, and the child learns from their regular activities.

Measure/practice to overcome challenges:

In the perception theme, we already got the mother's view on issues they perceive as challenges, Mother A perceived it as a challenge that awareness about social skills of children is not clear and inadequate among her family members, which includes her parents and husband. To overcome this she tries to counsel her family about the importance and practice and how they should support the child in building such skills.

Mother B said that after work she at times gets tired and has less patience to support her child with extra activities. She stated that daycare facility would be very helpful for her as her child would get more peer interaction and could do more activities instead of solely depending on the parents and caregivers for building social skills.

Mother C perceives that there are no tough challenges in developing social skills of her child for which she needs to practice any special activities.

General comments by the Mothers:

Besides the questions asked to the mothers during the interview, there was an open-ended question for their comments about this topic.

Mother A suggested,

“Fathers need counseling about the importance of building social skills of their children. We should also create awareness among the older generation and others who are taking care of the child in my absence. Social skills’ importance should be emphasized in schools and in the community. Media can help to build this skill as most children are now attached to digital media. Media like television can help create

awareness among all about the need for social skills in children.”(IDI

#1: 25.10.2020)

Mother B also has similar opinion that children learn from elders so being a role model is very important for both parents and caregivers. Awareness among all parents and caregivers and society is essential for the need to build social skills among children. In addition, for working mothers daycare can help to overcome the separation anxiety of the child when the mother goes to work. She explained it further as,

Besides separation anxiety, the child’s loneliness is taken care of by the peer interaction available in a day care. Support of daycare facility can help reduce stress for mothers who are going to work and provide provision for mental wellbeing for both mother and child (IDI #2: 25.10.2020).

Mother C mentioned a number of suggestions to develop children’s social skills. These are, working parents need to give more time to children; need to take the children out more; support the children by teaching them social skills; give the children positive motivation; share family bonding and make day care facility available in work place for the working mothers. (IDI #3: 27.10.2020)

Caregiver’s Practices

Caregivers also follow a routine and practices when it comes to caring for the child.

The practices are presented in the following.

Time/ hours spent with the child:

Each caregiver spends 10 to 12 hours daily with the children after their mother leaves for work. Caregiver A& B are related to the mothers and have extra help from the extended family to keep the child engaged whole day through.

Caregiver C previously took care of the child alone by herself while the mother went to work. Nevertheless, from last two years after they shifted to Uttara, the child spends most of his time with the grandparents and his aunt and cousin. She only looks after his meal and bath time nowadays.

Daily routine:

Caregiver A, B and C all sated that besides following a timely routine for their meal, bath and naptime they do not have any strict routine. They go with the flow and do what the child is comfortable in doing.

Peer interaction

Both child B & C have peer interaction even during COVID-19 time and both caregivers said that the children like spending time and playing with them. Before COVID-19 days they had more interaction with same age children when guests and friends came over.

Caregiver A said that the child had regular interaction with her elder sister's daughter but now for COVID-19 she does not get to interact with same age children. This isolation has changed her behavior and made her a bit aloof when she meets new children.

Response to interaction

All caregivers said that the children are very friendly. Caregiver A and B said that though it takes a while for the children to warm up to new people but they interact with them after they get comfortable. Both caregivers also stated that the child they take care of are good in sharing and make eye contact while they talk to them.

Caregiver C had very little idea about what is meant about children interaction skill. She thinks that the child speaks nicely, he is not naughty, and listens to her instructions, which she feels that makes the child's interaction skills good.

Key Findings:

From the results presented above, some significant aspects have surfaced. Some key findings are that social skills are practiced irrespective of awareness and an understanding of the concept of it or even how to practice it. A child's social development milestones are not recognized due to a lack of knowledge about it. One of the greatest challenges faced by the nuclear families now is the lack of daycare centers where the child can be exposed to more diverse and peer interaction along with different situations and environment. In fact, mothers feel pressure and often relocate to live closer to extended family for the support in rearing the child both physically and psychologically in the absence of a daycare.

Discussion:

In this section, I am going to discuss the major findings from the results presented. Interpretation of the findings is presented with related appropriate literature. Children's social skill is a concept that is old in practice but new in its form as an independent concept to parents and caregivers. While development of the social skills of children is taken for granted 'to be developed as they grow', it is not considered as something to be nurtured or consciously supported with focused activity and effort.

In the context of nuclear families that are becoming more prevalent in Bangladesh, the social skills of children are being affected due to several reasons. These reasons are

often embedded in the past societal structure and practices experienced by the adults when they were children.

Perception of social skill by mothers and caregivers.

Like all other skills that the child needs to learn like walking and talking, social is not considered a skill that needs to be learnt. It is assumed that the child will instinctively pick it. Mother A mentioned that her family thinks that social skill is an in built trait in all children. Especially elderly people think it is a trait that develops as children grow up. However, in the changed context of nuclear families, the child often cannot enjoy peer interaction and so does not have any peer model to relate to. It becomes more important to help the child to develop the social skills. Mother C said, “I believe that social skills are related to a child’s development which they develop and learn from family as they grow up, such as, how to greet people, how to interact, how to adapt to new environment” (IDI #3,27.10.2020). Maccoby, (1992) expressed a similar view, “The enormous asymmetry in power and competence between adults and children implies that the parent-child relationship must have a unique role in childhood socialization.”

Grandparents have a gap of understanding the need for extra effort and support to help the children with social skills. From their own previous experience, they feel it’s unnecessary and mothers fuss too much about these issues. “Grandparents at times do not understand the need or support for building social skills.” (IDI #1, 25.10.2020). The change in the family structure often does not come into their consideration. All three caregivers seem to think that social skill is only related to good behavior. Since it cannot be objectively measured, parents and caregivers are not clear on what social skills are and why or how it needs to be nurtured. Mother A & B only when asked if there is any

need to nurture this skill they both stated that social skills have an effect on child's development but could not explain why or how it should be done. While it is clear from a study by Play care, (2016), "Helping children to develop these important skills requires a different set of strategies in each stage of development". In other facets of life, cultivating social skills in children trains them for a future of healthier experiences.

There is a vague understanding of the physical growth and mental development of a child. While social skill is a part of the mental development, it is rarely separately considered or even understood. This vagueness contributes to the lack of concerted or focused effort to assist the child. From the interviews, the findings show that all six participants are more focused on meal, and play and basic needs rather than peer interaction, communication with others or even the child's temperament. Caregiver B stated, "Children are nice and sweet to all and that comes to them naturally" (IDI #2, 26.10.2020). She feels that such young children's social skills are not something separate from their normal growing up behavior. This vague understanding often makes parents and caregiver callous about their activities. In an article of how to build a child's social skills, it is mentioned that "When they are socialised, children stand to learn a lot. It is a natural part of growing up and is important. Those kids who are not offered the chance, or allowed to socialise, may end up being disconnected and have trouble getting along with others. When individuals effectively socialise, they are more inclined to blend better with society and get together better with others." (Universal class, 1999)

The interrelation of physical and mental development is stated as "Children's experiences in their earliest year's affect how their brains work, the way they respond to stress, and their ability to form trusting relationships." (Gilmore, 2007) All interviewees are concerned about the children's physical need and though caregiver A mentioned about the child's mood and her temperament, she was not clear that this has

any interrelationship with her development. For example, Caregiver A said, “If I talk to her rudely or harshly or even at a high tone, my niece doesn’t like that and does not respond to my instruction.” (IDI #1,27.10.2020) While a study by Children’s Bureau, (2020) states that “In all phases of life, good social interactions with others can ensure balanced growth, both physically and emotionally. Just note, children learn from experience and the witnessed actions can assist with their social abilities and cognitive processing later as they encounter supportive interactions or are emotionally assisted. While child B and C have some peer interaction of same age but child A due to the pandemic has no peer interaction. Caregiver A stated that previously when the child had her cousin in the same house she was more playful and liked playing with the baby. It is clearly stated in a study that “Children need the opportunity to play with other children and to be around adults in a social manner.” (Universal class, 1999) Mother B mentioned that in her general comments that day care facility would help her child to interact more with children of same age, giving her more exposure and opportunity to learn and play. As we know that in peer interaction is not only important for the child to emulate, but also to vent their energy, to address their loneliness and learn from negative emotions in their own levels of maturity. The findings show that there is a misconception that with so many loving adults to attend to the child, peer interaction and relationships are not that important.

The milestones for social skills are not a common and recognized concept. Like Mother C said, “My son is much matured than his age. Expresses expectations and very convincing to get what he wants. He is very independent.” But she is not aware that it is normal for a four-year child to be opinionated and express his/her needs. Thus, mothers lack the awareness of the existence of milestones, the knowledge to recognize it and analyze it and therefore, the activities to undertake to fulfill any gaps and develop

the child. Findings from the result shows that both mothers and caregivers perceive the more docile a child, the better the child is. Caregiver C said in her interview that the child she takes care of is well behaved with guests and new people all the time, which she believes to be a good social skill. However, in reality the nature of a child is to be fun loving and active and not docile. This indicates that the child has a gap in the development. Parents and caregivers are unaware of this and thus fail to recognize the actual 'development' of the child. An educational blog (PlayCare,2016) states that during these ages 2- to 4-year-olds, infants may have acquired such social abilities and social signs: able to gain attention from others, establish social interaction with others both verbally (saying "Hi" and "Bye") and visually, look at a person who talks, have the capacity to speak turns, and laugh at ridiculous things and activities. And also are able to take turns when playing games, play with a doll or stuffed animal, and initiate verbal communication with actual words. These all are developed by mother or caregiver". These milestones are not consciously known to either the mothers or the caregivers.

Through my interview all three mothers stated that day care facility would be very supportive for them. "Support of daycare facility can help reduce stress for mothers who are going to work and provide provision for mental wellbeing for both mother and child". All mothers stated about the lack of day care facility that they perceive if available would have been very supportive in nurturing their children. According to the study on Challenges of working mothers, "Women who are in professional field, balancing career and family life, even when they have a choice of selecting only one, might be facing emotional, psychological and physical burdens while effectively juggling between professional and child rearing responsibilities". (Kadale et al., 2018, p. 29-05) Day care is not only a support for the working mothers but also it helps

in child's development through creating the environment for peer interaction, learning to share and communicate. Article from HealthyChildren.Org (Working Mothers, n.d.) indicated that "A child's development is influenced more by the emotional health of the family, how the family feels about the mother's working, and the quality of child care."

Practices of social skill development by mothers & caregivers:

Results that derived from the interviews show that most educated families are undertaking activities for the development of the child's social skills, but not on a concerted and focused way vis-à-vis a child's weight and height. In fact, the more docile a child is, it is considered to be good. Parents and caregivers do not recognize this docility as a sign of under-development of the social skill of a child. From the six interviewees, all mothers and caregivers feel that child being quiet and not naughty, following instruction without tantrum is a good sign of social skill development. Though all three mothers are well educated and two of the caregivers too, it still seemed there is lack of awareness and knowledge on their part about appropriate social skill of these age children. Sara (2020) in her article stated, "Babies need social interactions early on, but without even realising it you're probably providing it. In infants, social growth includes skin-to-skin touch, eating (including breastfeeding), talking to babies, story time, and cuddling. These are all directions to start making your child feel like a member of a culture that is the family at this stage. By living with their friends, peers and guardians, babies receive much of the social arrangements they require until age 3. Babies often socialise naturally by engaging with the world around them"

When both parents are working, they do try to give their free time to the child but taking the child out or playing with the child, however, it is not with a conscious thought to help the child grow the social skills. Studies say that "Practicing proper activities can

help be more adept to the skills.” (Bhatnagar, E. S., 2020, June 18) Thus, while there can be joint activities with the child, they are not necessarily as effective in development of the social skill of the child. Mother C said she does nothing extra and like, going out, meeting people are regular things, which they do, and the child learns from their regular activities. Time together is limited and mostly spent on how and what the parents want to do rather than on providing the child with the stimulus that is required on a regular basis. It is often because the parents are unaware of what activities would assist their child to grow. Mother A and B take their children out and arrange play dates, teach greetings, how to interact with new people, and do play activities. In *Ways to Improve Your Child’s Social Skills* states that “Socializing is an art one is mastering every single day of growing up. Teaching your children to pick up social skills and communicate well is a big task for parents.” (Bhatnagar,2020) Lack of knowledge on the activities that should be practiced like teaching emotion, empathy, eye contacts, communication, storytelling to children age 2-4, leaves a gap between what should be done and what is actually being practiced. While it is evident from studies and articles that “Social skills come naturally for kids through modeling and the experience they get when they are in a classroom setting and on a playground or interacting with other adults.” (Dedic,2020)

Conclusion

This study was done with the intention to get an insight into young children's social skill development. Mothers being the primary caregiver in our society have to solely take up the challenges of nurturing her child while maintaining a career.

Social skill is taken for granted by society and often it is perceived as a teacher's duty to teach these skills. While in the western world studies show that social skill that is ingrained and practiced during the young age is what builds the character of an adult human being and it is not solely teachers or societal duty. It starts from home and family

which makes the child confident enough to face the environment and adapt. Peer interaction is a vital part of a child's social skill which we do not realize. Families with a single child and nuclear structure provide a severe challenge for such children to interact and communicate. All these eventually hamper a child's academic performance and ability.

From my study, I can conclude that though a norm of social skill is practiced unknowingly, conscious awareness is much needed in our society. Especially for working mothers, a support system is essential for nurturing the child and help in better development. Lack of childcare is an issue that mothers face, which often forces them to relocate and stay in places, which otherwise they would not be doing. They do this for the sake of their children. Father's role and their awareness in building social skills is not only crucial but also mothers feel that it can have vital impact on child nurturing support system. The findings also show a gap in the perception and practice of social skills for such young children. This might have been more elaborately investigated if the children could be observed. Due to limitations for the Covid-19 situation, I had to rely on the replies of mothers and caregivers, which can be bias given that two of the children are being taken care of by their own aunts. None of the participants is aware of the milestone and the importance of social skills for children. This awareness of supporting social skill development can have a major change in the children's growing up time. The lack of studies in our country regarding this issue also states that how unaware we are about the importance of social skills of children and that from birth it is a practice that has a lifetime effect on adults' behavior.

To fix this issue, more studies are required and take action for supporting the practice of social skills which will help build a better nation with a more empathetic human being.

Last but not the least, affordable and accessible childcare centers will impact a child's development without mothers having to stress about the children or drop out of work. Over the long run, we get a sound grown-up and a practical equilibrium in the labor force.

Recommendation:

The main objective of this brief study was to gain an objective understanding of the perception of a child's social skills development held by a child's mother and caregiver and the activities that are practiced for this development.

The findings indicate aspects and areas that may be considered for further study in order to gain greater benefit as a family and as a national holistically. Based on the findings, the following points are recommended to achieve a better understanding of social skills development of children and areas of improvement for the adult caregivers and parents in helping the child to develop in a healthy way.

1. Create awareness through media and social platform about the importance of social skills.
2. Create awareness and train parents and caregivers about the development milestones of children, at least through print, digital media advertisements, and others.
3. Have online virtual community for parents to interact and share their challenges on nurturing children. Sharing experiences will help parents overcome challenges.

4. Door-to-door community social workers, working on reproductive health and others, to be additionally trained on child social skills development, so that they can share the information, knowledge and good practices.
5. Promote child care giving as a profession and make early childhood education mandatory for a caregiver to pursue this career.
6. Despite the reservation regarding technology introduction to such young children, promote the idea of virtual play school or virtual play dates so that children get scope for peer interaction using Google meet, Zoom, etc. This will help alleviate the stress of mothers going out after a long day at work.
7. Encourage ECD advocacy as an essential part of curriculum or training. This will help both mother and child in constructive ways.
8. Encourage and assist in further in-depth studies about social skill development of children age 2- 4 in Bangladesh. This will also assist in formulating practices and activities specific to the social setting, to help mothers and caregivers.
9. Proper day care facility making it affordable and available for working mothers will also support and contribute in a healthy development of a young child to grow up more confident and empathetic.

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Annexure

A. In-depth interview questionnaire for caregiver

Research Title- Study on perception of working mothers and caregivers on the social skills of children age 2- 4

Research Objectives-

- To explore the perception of working mothers and caregivers of their children on social skill development of children aged 2-4.
- To explore the perception about the role adults can play in supporting the social skill development of aged 2-4.

Research Questions-

1. How do working mothers perceive social skill development of children age 2-4?
2. How do the caregivers perceive social skill development of children age 2-4?
3. What kind of arrangement do the mothers make for childcare during their working hours?

Section A:

Information of the participant

Date:

1. Name:

2. Profession:

3. Gender

Male Female

4. Location/Area:

5. Relation with the child:

grandmother/grandfather aunt /uncle caregiver/maid Other Specify

6. Number of children in your care

1 child 2 children More than 2 children

7. Age of the children in your care:

2-3 3-4 4-6 Other Specify

8. Education Level

- SSC HSC Graduation Masters Other
Specify

Section B

Questionnaire for in depth Interview to understand perception of adult's and their role about social skills of children age 2-4

(2-

৪ বছর বয়সী শিশুদের সামাজিকীকরণ দক্ষতা সম্পর্কে প্রাপ্ত বয়স্কদের ধারণা এবং তাদের ভূমিকা বোঝার জন্য গভীরতার সাক্ষাত্কারের জন্য প্রশ্নাবলী) -

The following questions will be asked related to child's social skills to the **caregivers**.
(যে প্রশ্নগুলির কাছে শিশুদের সামাজিকীকরণ দক্ষতা সম্পর্কিত নিম্নলিখিত প্রশ্নগুলি জিজ্ঞাসা করা হবে)

1. What is your relationship with the child you take care of?

আপনি যে শিশুটিকে দেখাশুনা করেন তার সাথে আপনার সম্পর্ক কি?

2. Age and gender of the child you take care of?

আপনি যে শিশুটিকে দেখাশুনা করেন তার বয়স এবং লিঙ্গ কি?

3. Behavior of the child in general?

সাধারণত শিশুর আচরণ কেমন থাকে?

4. How will you describe the child's personality in few words?

আপনি অল্প কথায় কিভাবে শিশুর ব্যক্তিত্বকে বর্ণনা করবেন?

5. How long do you spend time with the child in 24 hours?

২৪ ঘণ্টার মধ্যে আপনি কতক্ষণ শিশুর সাথে সময় কাটান?

6. Can you describe your attachment with the child?

আপনার সাথে শিশুর কতটুকু বন্ধন আছে তা বর্ণনা করতে পারবেন?

7. Does the child share his/her feelings with you?

শিশুকিতার অনুভূতিগুলো আপনার সাথে শেয়ার আপনাকে প্রকাশ করে?

8. What is the daily routine that you follow for the child once his/her parents leave?

শিশুর বাবা, মা চলে যাওয়ার পর আপনি কি প্রতিদিনের কোন রুটিন / নিত্যকর্ম অনুসরণ করেন?

9. Does the child have same age peer interaction? (Siblings/ Cousins/ Neighbors)

শিশুটির সমবয়সী কোন শিশুর সাথে মেলামেশা করে? (ভাইবোন, কাজিন, প্রতিবেশি)

10. How does the child behave with his/her peer/siblings/cousins/neighbors?

শিশুকীভাবে তার ভাইবোন চাচাতোভাই- বোন / প্রতিবেশীদের সাথে আচরণ করে?

11. How does the child act when relatives/friends/guest come to your home?

আত্মীয় / বন্ধুবান্ধব / অতিথি বাড়িতে আসলে শিশুকীভাবে আচরণ করে?

12. Does he/she like sharing?

সে কি ভাগাভাগি শেয়ার করা পছন্দ করে?

13. How does he/she respond to your instructions?

শিশুকীভাবে আপনার নির্দেশনাগুলোতে সাড়া দেয়?

14. What do you understand about social skills? (sharing, listening, interaction, following instructions, following routine)

সামাজিক দক্ষতাবলতে আপনি কি বঝেন? (ভাগাভাগি, শোনা, মিথস্ক্রিয়া, নির্দেশনাবলী অনুসরণ করা, রুটিন অনুসরণ করা)?

15. What do you think of social skills of children of such small age?

এতকম বয়সী শিশুদের সামাজিক দক্ষতা বিষয়ে আপনার ধারণা কি?

16. Do you feel social skills help a child's development? (sharing, adapting to new situation, following instruction, willingly interacting with others, enjoy playing with others)

শিশুর বিকাশে সামাজিক দক্ষতা কোন সাহায্য করে বলে আপনার মনে হয় কি? (ভাগ করেনেওয়া, নতন পরিবেশের সাথে খাপ খাওয়ান, নির্দেশনা অনুসরণ করা, নিজের ইচ্ছায় অন্য কারো সাথে মেলামেশা করা, অন্য কারো সাথে খেলায় আনন্দ নিয়ে উপভোগ করা)

17. Do you think adults can play a role in developing child's social skill?
আপনিকিমনেকরেনপ্রাপ্তবয়স্করাশিশুদেরসামাজিকীকরণদক্ষতায়ভূমিকানি
তেপারে?
18. What kind of challenges do you face while taking care of the child?
শিশুরযত্ননেয়ারক্ষেত্রেআপনিকোনধরনেরঅসুবিধারমুখোমুখিহন?
19. What do you do to overcome the challenges?
বাঁধাগুলো/অসুবিধাগুলোকাটিয়েউঠতেআপনিকিকরেন?

B. In-depth interview questionnaire for mothers

Research Title- Study on perception of working mothers and caregivers on the social skills of children age 2- 4

Research Objectives-

- To explore the perception of working mothers and caregivers of their children on social skill development of children aged 2-4.
- To explore the perception about the role adults can play in supporting the social skill development of aged 2-4.

Research Questions-

4. How do working mothers perceive social skill development of children age 2-4?
5. How do the caregivers perceive social skill development of children age 2-4?
6. What kind of arrangement do the mothers make for childcare during their working hours?

Section A: Information of the participant

Date:

1. Name:

2. Profession:

3. Location/Area

- Gulshan Dhanmondi Uttara Others Specify

4. Number of children

- 1 child 2 children More than 2 children

5. Age of the children:

- 2-3 3-4 4-6 Other Specify

6. Education Level

- SSC HSC Graduation Masters Other Specify

Section B

Questionnaire for in depth Interview to understand perception of adult's and their role about social skills of children age 2-4

২৪ বছর বয়সী শিশুদের সামাজিকীকরণ দক্ষতা সম্পর্কে প্রাপ্ত বয়স্কদের ধারণা এবং তাদের ভূমিকার বোঝা (জন্মগতীর তারসাক্ষাত্কারের জন্য প্রশ্নাবলী) -

The following questions will be asked related to child's social skills to the **mothers**.

(মায়েদের কাছে সন্তানের সামাজিকীকরণ দক্ষতা সম্পর্কিত নিম্নলিখিত প্রশ্নগুলি জিজ্ঞাসা করা হবে।)

1. How many children do you have?
আপনার সন্তান কয়জন?
2. How old is your child/ children?
আপনার সন্তান/ সন্তানদের বয়স কত?
3. Are there any other family members living with the child other than the parents? How many and who are they?
শিশুর সাথে বাবা মা ছাড়া পরিবারের অন্য কেউ সদস্য কি সাথে থাকে?
তার সংখ্যা কতজন এবং কারা?
4. How will you describe the child's personality in few words?
কিভাবে আপনি অল্প কথায় শিশুর ব্যক্তিত্বকে বর্ণনা করবেন?
5. In 24 hours, how long do you spend with the child?
২৪ ঘণ্টার মধ্যে আপনি কতক্ষণ শিশুর সাথে সময় কাটান?
6. Can you describe your attachment with the child?
আপনার সাথে শিশুর কতটুকু বন্ধন আছে তা কি বর্ণনা করতে পারবেন?
7. What is the daily routine that you follow for the child?
আপনি আপনার শিশুর জন্য প্রতিদিন কি রুটিন অনুসরণ করেন?
8. What is your arrangement for the child care, while you are at work?
আপনি যখন কাজে থাকেন তখন শিশুর দেখাশোনার জন্য আপনার কি ব্যবস্থা আছে?
9. Do you have any specific instruction for your caregiver to follow for your child while you are away?

আপনি যখন বাহিরে থাকেন তখন আপনার শিশুর কেয়ার গিভার এর জন্য কোন গুনি
দিষ্ট নির্দেশনার যোগেছেন?

10. What are your regular activities with your child after you come back from work?

আপনি কাজ থেকে ফিরে এসে আপনার শিশুর সাথে নিয়মিত কী কাজ গুলো করেন?

11. Does the child have same age peer interaction? (Siblings/ Cousins/ Neighbors)

শিশুটির সমবয়সী কোন শিশুর সাথে মেলামেশা করে?
(ভাইবোন, কাজিন, প্রতিবেশি)

12. How does the child behave with his/her peer/siblings/cousins/neighbors?

শিশুকীভাবে তার ভাইবোন / চাচাতোভাই- বোন /
প্রতিবেশীদের সাথে আচরণ করে?

13. How does the child act when relatives/friends/guest come to home?

আত্মীয় / বন্ধুবান্ধব / অতিথি বাড়িতে আসলে শিশু কীভাবে আচরণ করে?

14. Does your child like sharing, enjoy playing with others, make eye contact when listening or talking, express feelings?

আপনার শিশু কি ভাগ করেনেওয়া, অন্যের সাথে খেলাউপভোগ করা,
শোনাবাকথাবলার সময় চোখের যোগাযোগ করে, অনুভূতি প্রকাশ করে?

15. When the child is engaged in any activity with you how is her/his mood usually?

যখন আপনার শিশু আপনার সাথে কোন কাজে যুক্ত থাকে তখন তার মেজাজ কেমন
নথাকে?

16. How does your child adapt to new situation? E.g. at the market, restaurants or guest place?

আপনার শিশু কীভাবে নতুন পরিস্থিতির সাথে খাপ খাওয়ায়? যেমন বাজারে,
রেস্টোঁরাত বা অতিথি বাসায়?

17. Do you feel social skill helps a child's development? Please explain.

আপনার কি মনে হয় সামাজিকীকরণ দক্ষতাকোনও শিশুর বিকাশে সহায়তাকরে?
দয়াকরে ব্যাখ্যাকরুন।

18. Do you make extra effort or plan activities to build social skills of your child? (example play dates, story time, interaction during meal time, weekend activities)

আপনিকি আপনার শিশুর সামাজিকীকরণ দক্ষতাতৈরির জন্য অতিরিক্ত চেষ্টা বা প
রিকল্পনাকরেন? (উদাহরণস্বরূপ প্লেডেট, গল্পের সময়, খাবারের সময় কথপকথন,
সাপ্তাহিক কর্মকাণ্ড)

19. Are you satisfied with the pace of social skills development of your child? Please explain with some examples.

আপনিকি আপনার শিশুর সামাজিক দক্ষতাবিকাশের গতিতে সন্তুষ্ট?
কিছু উদাহরণ দিয়ে ব্যাখ্যাকরুন।

20. Do you face any challenge in developing the social skills of your child? Please specify the areas.

আপনার শিশুর সামাজিক দক্ষতাবিকাশের ক্ষেত্রে আপনিকি কোন বাঁধার মুখোমুখি
হন?

21. Have you taken any measures to overcome it?

আপনিকি এই বাঁধা থেকে উত্তরণের জন্য কোনও পদক্ষেপ নিয়েছেন?

22. Do you have any other comments to make in this regard?

এই বিষয়ে আপনার অন্য কোন মন্তব্য আছে কি?

C. Parents' & Caregivers' Consent Form

Title of the Research: Study on perception of working mothers and caregivers on the social skill development of children age 2- 4

Purpose of the research

As a part of my degree requirements from the Institute of Educational Development- BRAC University, I am doing this study to know mothers and caregivers perceptions regarding social skill development of children age 2-4.

Risks and benefits

There is no risk to you for participating in this study and but directly or indirectly mothers and caregivers of young children of age 2-4 will be benefited in future by raising awareness on social skill development importance.

Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality

All information collected from you will remain strictly confidential. We would be happy to answer your questions about the study and you are welcome to contact me.

Future use of information

Some of the information collected from this study may be kept for future use however in such cases information and data supplied to other researchers, will not conflict with or violate the maintenance of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of information identifying participants in any way.

Right not to participate and withdraw

Your participation in the study is voluntary, and you are the sole authority to decide for and against your participation in this study. Refusal to take part in the study will involve no

penalty. If you agree to my proposal of enrolling yourself in my study, please indicate that by putting your signature the specified space below

Thank you very much for your cooperation

 <hr/> <hr/>	
Signature of Investigator	Signature of Participant
Date:	Date: