# Understanding Parental Involvement in Children's Learning

By

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A thesis submitted to the BRAC Institute of Educational Development in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education in Educational Leadership & School Improvement

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It is hereby declared that

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# Approval

The thesis/project titled "Understanding Parental Involvement in Children's learning "

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of Summer, 2021 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Education in Educational Leadership & School Improvement on 3ʳᵈ August, 2021.

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## Ethics Statement

This research is is completed with full compliance with the ethics norm and upor approval of BRAC Institute of Educational Development's research ethics committee. A research proposal has been submitted to BRAC Institute of Educational Development (BRAC IED) before data collection. After getting approval from BRAC IED the research has been conducted. Consent has been taken from all the participants before doing the interviews. In case of children – the consent has been taken from their parents as they are aged under 18 years old. The participants have  also been ensured to have the freedom to withdraw their statements anytime they want.

# Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore the parental support and its different kinds along with the influence it has in the learning of children. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic the data collection has been online where six parents of primary grade students and three children of primary grade have been chosen through purposeful sampling from three different government primary schools. Semi structred interterview guidelines have been used to explore how do the parents involve in their children's learning and what are the barriers concerning parental involvement in children's education. Regular communication ; friendly relation; enlightment about real life; appreciating children have been highlited as different kinds of involvement. Parents have mentioned about some family and social factors as barirers in their involvement. Strong parent-teacher relation; communation through regular activities; support in academics and mental health have been recommended at the end of the study for a positive influence in children.

**Keywords:** Parents's perspectives; Children's view; Parental involvement; Barriers ; Children's learning; Primary school

# Dedication

This Thesis is dedicated to my family for their love, support and motivation in every phase of my work.

# Acknowledgement

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

## 1.1 Introduction

The behavior parents generally show towards their children including praising, loving, encouraging for good work, giving physical affection along with discussing with children, giving support to children, communication with school falls under parental support (Juvonen et al). Again, there are supports that are not very visible but given to children by parents e.g., trusting children with their work, giving children space to take or make decisions. According to Durisic & Bunijevac (2017), parental involvement is very necessary for child's growth and development. It not only improves the behavior of a child but also motivates them to work on self-esteem and attitudes.

The interest in this research in this particular area grew from having inadequate research on detailed information about parental involvement in primary grade children's' life even after working with them. According to a research done in America, parental involvement varies based on the motivation level of parents; barriers faced by parents and the understanding parents have about their own support (Watson et al., 2012). Again, a study done in the rural secondary school of Bangladesh states the reason of parents having less involvement in child's learning. The study says, parents do not consider the importance of having parental involvement in child's learning (Hasnat, 2016). All over the world, parental involvement varies depending on the perception parents have about their own standing in their child's life.

This study focused on knowing the perception of parents and children of primary grade and looked for recommendations to work on in the future. As parents of primary grade children, parents are differently involved in providing guidance and they come up with different ideas.

Also, children understanding the importance of parental support shared their view in the research. The research suggests that parents and children should share a friendly bonding among them to get the best out of that combination. Sharing each other's experience will give a broad view and help make better decisions.

As part of the study, I asked parents and children about their experience of parental support in their life and the impact of the support. They also have been asked about different kinds of support, the demands of children and the level of satisfaction of parents after giving the support.

In the following part, the sections are organized as Research Topic, Problem Statement, Research Questions, and Purpose of the Study, Significance of the Study followed by chapters named Literature Review and Conceptual Framework; Methodology; Results; Discussion and Conclusion.

## 1.2 Research Topic

Parental involvement in guiding primary school children

Diverse challenges in different areas have been noticed while working with primary school going children and parents which directly or indirectly impact the children and their learning. One of the very important but unaddressed issues is in the area of parents' guidance on children which includes parents' perspective as well as their willingness and preparedness in providing guidance. Parents are not only at times unaware of the types of support they can provide but also ignorant of the importance of that support.

Through the research, my purpose has been to identify different types of involvement the parents of Dhaka government schools have in the life of their children as their involvement plays a vital role in child learning and their daily life.

## 1.3 Research Title

Understanding Parental Involvement in Children's learning

## 1.4 Problem Statement

While working directly with parents and children of the primary level, I have noticed two common scenarios a) a gap in the willingness of parents' in providing proper guidance in their child's learning b) Parents being unaware of the importance of their support in child learning. Some previous research studies addresses the issue of unwillingness of parents which is the result of lack of motivation yet the unawareness of parents is hardly addressed as a problem. A study says, the attitudes and beliefs parents have been the result of having lack of knowledge and information about the importance and possible kinds of involvement (Hasnat, 2016). Another study states that diverse kinds of parental involvement have an overall positive impact on the children's life about which parents have no clue (Anderson and Minke, 2010).

Moreover, different unknown viewpoints become barriers in addressing any issues in this particular area. Thus, knowing that lack of guidance or different ways in guidance of parents directly or indirectly impact children' learning is important for parents.

## 1.5 Research Questions

Through the research questions mentioned below, different kinds of involvement in guiding children and how that guidance influences children's learning has been identified.

1.  How do the parents involve in their children's learning?
2.  What are the barriers concerning parental involvement in children's education?

## 1.6 Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the qualitative study is to understand how parents perceive their guidance on children on government primary schools of Dhaka. The second purpose of the study is to understand to what extent parents involve to guide their children for better learning experience and what are the ways they get involved. This study intends to explore diverse kinds of involvements of parents' in guiding their children and how that guidance

influences the learning of children. Knowing the perspective of primary school going children and their parents about parental involvement and how they get involved may put some shed on these topics and suggest some steps to provide the best guidance for better learning on the basis on the data collected.

## 1.7 Significance of the Study

This study focused on understanding the parents' involvement on the concept of cooperation and the importance of their support and guidance of children. Also focus has been given to identify the ways parents can support and guide their children which influences learning and performance. This study provides the real data to the stakeholders as well on parents' perception on their own guidance to children in the primary schools of Dhaka. This study can also benefit the teachers to figure out the exact mindset of parents and that can result in more active involvement of teachers and parents and help to improve child learning. Alongside, the study can also help children get the most effective support throughout their learning journey.

# CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

## 2.1 Literature Review

The chapter gives an overview of parental support and its meaning in different context followed by the factors influencing parental involvement in children's' life and the barriers parents face while providing support. Reviewing the previous literatures have helped connect the data from previous research to support the present research in the discussion chapter which mentions about parents having various perceptions on parental involvement and having multiple factors influencing parental support. Along with the perception of parents in the previous studies, understanding the perception of children has been considered as an important side in the present research.

Before reviewing literature on parental involvement, it is important to know what parental involvement mean in different context and what are the general expectations and thoughts on parental involvement.

- ### 2.1.1 Definition of Parental Support

Parental involvement in a child's life works as a support system in extending a child's learning at home and school. It is not only the responsibility of a teacher to look after a child's academic performance (Ramanlingam & Maniam, 2020). The collaboration between parents and teachers is needed for a better academic achievement and general learning of a child (Driessen et al 2005). The article of Ramanlingam & Maniam (2020) also mentions the important role parents play at home to ensure the learning of their child. Home-educating parents are mentioned as "Bona fide" educators by Terrence (2011) in his article which examined the role of home-educating parents from their own perspectives. About the roles of parents, it is mentioned that parents play the roles of learners, partners, teachers and pioneers according to the findings of

the study. The role construction depends on the expectations of individuals and their responsibilities (Dempsey et al, 2005). Moreover, child go through a personal development through multi-focused learning like getting motivated towards learning, constructive thinking and analytical ability.

Both motivational factors and barriers that play part in shaping the role of parents in getting involved with their children are discussed below:

■ 2.1.2 Factors Hindering Parental Involvement

Authors have also tried to look for factors that impact the involvement of parents in child's learning. According to a study of southwest Asia (2014), parents fully support their children in their learning activities regardless of what socioeconomic status they have. However, their educational level has a great impact on the involvement strategies (Al-Matalka, 2014). On the other hand, in south Asian countries like Bangladesh, besides the educational level of parents, the socioeconomic status plays a great role and thus it has been noticed how low-income parents are comparatively less involved with their children and plays a little role in their learning (Aboud, 2007). According to them, their responsibilities are limited to the child's basic and socio emotional needs, emotional support and socializing manner. They also believe they have less time and flexibility to look at child's learning and meet involvement expectations (Drummond & Stipek, 2004). Moreover, besides parents, children get involved in child labor for extra income. The reason of missing school and poor performance in class is clearly financial crisis of the family but parents are mostly reluctant to admit this fact (Salmon, 2005). According to UNICEF, children below three need support from their parents in playing, education and nutrition. But the parents need prior knowledge and skills on child care and nurturing. Without any early development care and proper parental involvement, children can face poor educational attainment at well.

According to new research ((Hasnat, 2016), another factor influencing parental support is political influence and system. Lack of government intervention, policy and action results in limited practice of parental involvement. Appropriate action, strategic implementation, and information dissemination and training by government can ensure effective parental involvement (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Moreover, communication between school-parent and parent-children has been proved as another barrier in parental involvement (Anderson & Minke, 2007b). Not having adequate up-to-date relation with school, lack of adequate information, not getting trained by school or institutes have been mentioned on the top as barrier in parental involvement (Watson et al., 2012).

- ▪ 2.1.3 Individual and Social Barriers in parental involvement

Parents' perception about their support in child's learning sometimes depends on the skills they have. In case they have inadequate skill, they feel low and pass the involvement responsibility to someone else in the family. Though there are some parents who get less involved in academic side of own child because of some barriers, most of the parents understand the importance of the involvement (Dempsey et al., 2005). Garry and Rayleen (2011) mentioned about four particular areas in their article which are considered as barriers to the development of effective parental involvement. The areas are: individual parent and family factors (beliefs, context, class, gender); child factors (age, learning difficulties, and behavioral problems); parent-teacher factors (differing goal, attitudes); and societal factors (political and economic status).

Factors acting as barriers:

> **Individual parent and family factor**

What parents believe about parental involvement plays a vital role. Because the perceptions parents decide the invitations on the role of parental involvement. Their perception and their role somehow get influenced by the current life context of that family, their class and ethnicity and their gender.

> **Child factor**

Parental involvement varies in case of child of different age. Not all kinds of involvement successfully work in case of primary grade children. According to Garry and Rayleen (2011), children can have various kinds of learning difficulties and disabilities. Without observing those for a time being, it is not usually possible to design the involvement or apply regular parental involvement technique. In some cases, children have born gifts and talents which plays a positive impact while learning but there are cases where children have multiple behavioral issues which are needed to dealt carefully.

> **Parent-teacher factor**

Though the support and involvement of parents and teachers are equally important and have individual importance in a child's learning, they must be aligned. Difference in agendas, attitudes and language used make it difficult for parents and teachers in giving support and the learning outcome of children is not satisfactory as well.

> ➤ **Societal factor**

Historical, demographic, political and economic falls under societal factor. Each of the factors are very closely connected and have great influence in child learning. Studies show detailed reasoning on how societal factor influence the learning and its process. It is evident from the previous studies that parents face different factors that influence their perceptions while thinking about and giving support to their children. Some factors motivate and some hinders in the ways parents want to get involved in their child's learning. The pervious study suggests the importance of knowing the perception of parents about their own involvement. Thus, this study is to explore the perception of parents along with primary grade children on parental involvement.

Besides Gary and Rayleen, there are authors talking in support of the four factors. According to Dempsey et al (2005), having a collaborative action plan in supporting children not only make it easier for teachers to have a positive learning outcome for children but also make the parents self-confident. They get confident enough to take decisions as parents and work along with the teacher to support their children (Durisuc & Bunijevac, 2017). The mindset is thus important.

There have been many researches on the parental involvement in the learning of children all over the world. But there has been less information about the parental involvement in government primary school going children's learning particularly in Bangladesh. I, as a researcher am interested to explore the current scenario of parental involvement in the life of primary grade children.

## 2.2 Conceptual framework
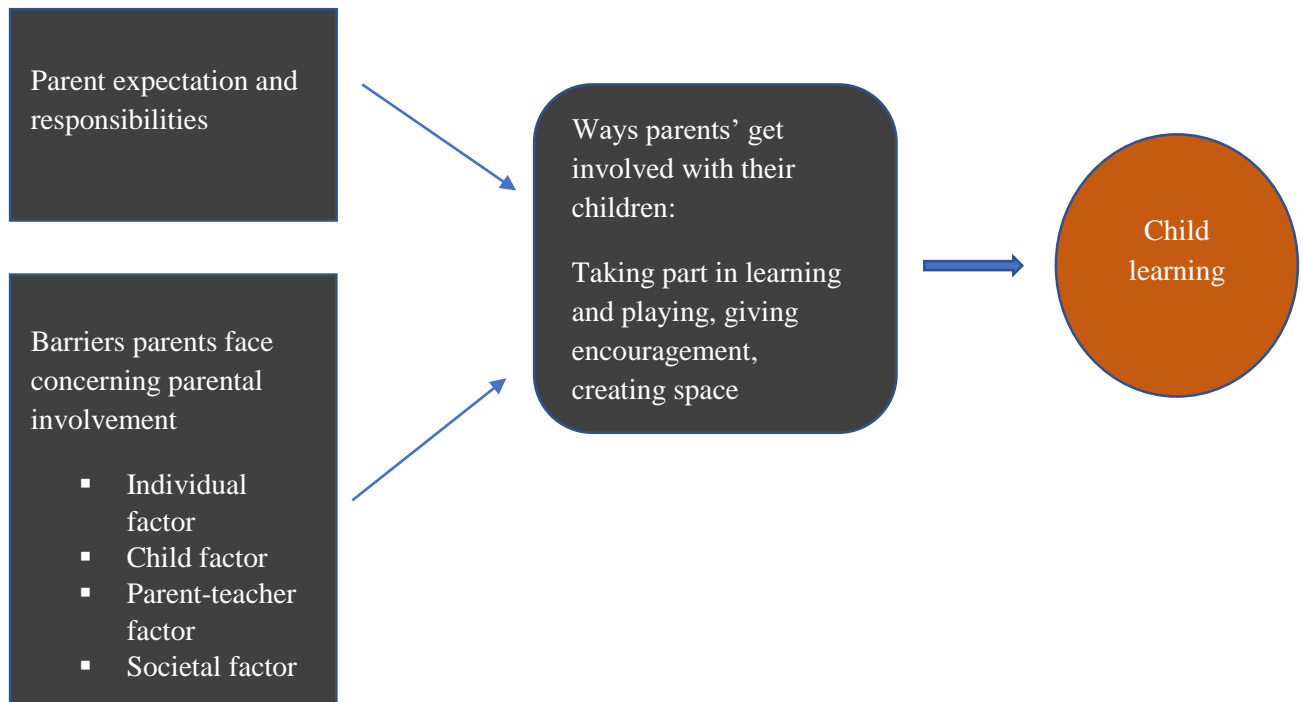


In this study, 1. How do the parents involve in their primary school going children for learning? 2. What are the barriers concerning parental involvement in children's education? – has been answered. Conceptual framework works as a representation of main concept and dependent (ways parents get involved instead of various perception and barriers) and independent variables (parents' perception and barriers in parental involvement) give an overview of presumed relationship with each other.

Based on the above literature review's part, it is assumed that parental involvement varies from context to context but people from similar socio background can have similar barriers. The researcher believes, depending on the combination of parents' expectation and responsibilities and barrier's parents face, the ways of involvement can vary from family to family. Identifying the barriers after knowing the expectations help to plan the ways parents can give support to their children.

In this research study, both parents and children has been interviewed with a semi structured interview guideline in order to understand the different ways of their involvement, and keep space for extra information. The framework indicates that the combination of parents' expectation and various barriers plays a role behind the ways of involvement of parents have.

# CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter covers the methodology part of the research study which includes research approach, research site, research participants, sampling procedure, data collection method, interview method, data analysis process.

## 3.1 Research Approach

Qualitative research approach has been used to this research study. Qualitative research approach helped to collect detailed information about various kinds of parents' involvement in guiding primary school children and how that influences their learning. For exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups, this study approach has been a great help (Creswell, 2014). I made interpretations of the data collected through different questions and procedures.

## 3.2 Research Site

The three schools chosen for the research are government primary schools of Dhaka. They are situated in under developed part of the urban area and the children mostly belong to underprivileged families. All three schools follow the same NCTB curriculum and run under similar administrative system. Being a teacher in the government primary school for two years I have experienced seeing inadequate number of teachers, unskilled teachers, teachers not willing to cooperate with parents, overcrowded classrooms. The three schools chosen are no different than the usual scenario (Quality, Continuity for Primary Education, 2014).

The schools have eight hundred, three hundred and six hundred children having ten, five and six classrooms respectively. Classes are held in two shifts starting from 7.30am to 2.45pm of the day. Due to the Covid pandemic, the schools are completely closed and parents and children do not visit schools. Thus, for avoiding any risk, the research has been held online. The

participants were in their respective houses and I conducted the interview from my place through online platform.

## 3.3 Research Participants

For the study, the criteria behind selection the parent participants were the parents need to have at least one government primary school going child and preferably who belongs to a low-income family. For children participants, the criteria were set that they needed to be current primary school going children. In total nine participants – 3 children and 6 parents from three schools of Dhaka have been chosen for the study. Three of the children who have been selected are government primary school students of grade three, four and five aged between eight to twelve years old. The other six participants are parents of primary grade children who have minimum one and maximum four children among whom at least one goes to government primary school. Full permission has been taken from the participants using the letter of consent for avoiding any ethical issues later on (Creswell, 2014). In case of child participants, permission was sought and parents have given full consent to interview the children.

## 3.4 Sampling Procedure

Three children and six parents from three government primary schools of Dhaka have been the targeted population for this study. Purposeful sampling has been done to choose these three schools and nine participants from Dhaka for the research to explore data going in depth (Creswell, 2014). Purposeful sampling is commonly used for qualitative research. It means selecting research site and participants according to the need of the study.

## 3.5 Data Collection Method

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic and school closure it was not possible to go to the research site in person and meet the participants. As a former teacher of one of the government primary school and having contact with some other assistant teachers and HTs of different government

primary schools I had chance to connect to some parents. At first, I made call to HTs/Assistant Teachers of the schools and requested them to connect with some parents of primary grade for research purpose. After they contacted with some parents, they shared the contact numbers of the interested participants with me. Getting the contact numbers in hand, I contacted with the participants online who has been selected through purposeful sampling. There were six parent participants and three child participants. At first, I made casual phone call and asked about their free time. Later we discussed about the convenient platform to conduct the interview online and a time for it. I had given them options of IMO (an online instant messing software), whatsApp, zoom for the conversation. The participants chose the platform and the time for the interview according to their convenience. The video call links were sent to them directly in the app used or direct messages in their contact numbers.

Semi structured interview guidelines were used to collect data. The data has been collected based on the research questions in the month February. Participants answered the questions in video calls and I took instant notes. Each of the call with individual participants were around 15 minutes to 30 minutes long and consent was taken in between the icebreaking session and interview. The icebreaking sessions were designed in a way that participants become comfortable with the researcher. Some of the interviews have also been recorded with the permission of the participants. The data has been analyzed after collecting the it.

## 3.6 Interview Method

The interview has been conducted using semi-structured interview guidelines. The interview of parents has been done at first and then the children have been interviewed. The calls were on IMO/WhatsApp/Zoom and most of them were recorded with the permission of the participants. In case of children, the permission has been taken from parents.

The participants were asked questions covering a few themes which are: Background of participants, perception of parents about parental support, kinds of parental support, factors influencing Children's' learning, demands of children from their parents regarding support, perception of children about parental support, barriers parents face while giving support. After the interviews, the data have been transcribed from the records. Later the data have been thematically analyzed by identifying themes from the data.

## 3.7 Role of the Researcher

In a qualitative research, the researcher is considered as the primary research instrument. According to Maxwell (2005) whenever researcher brings something to the research from his/her own experience that is regarded as his/her biasness. As qualitative research is an informational research, the biasness, own thoughts can leave an impact in the data collected (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Similarly, my own role in the research process may have an impact on the data collected.

From February 24, 2021, I started contacting the participants of the study. Through the contacts and conversations, I started getting the information based on the research tool. I tried to make sure that my personal and professional work experience do not influence the research in any way. My experience as a teacher resulted in the belief that parents' involvement; parent-teacher positive relationship brings a positive impact in child learning. I have witnessed many barriers' parents face while giving support to their children. But I avoided those thoughts while interpreting the data collected. The interviews have been recorded and later transcribed. After transcribing the data, the I have called some of the participants to review the content for accuracy. Calling all the participants would have been time consuming. Later, I have presented the data with enough quotations form the p[articipants in the result section for clear picture (Maxwell, 2005).

## 3.8 Data Analysis

The data collected is qualitative in nature. Merriam (1988) and Marshall and Rossman (1989) contend that data collection and data analysis must be a simultaneous process in qualitative research. Similarly, in this study, thematic analysis has been done simultaneously along with data collection. After getting familiar with the data, different themes have been looked for in all the interviews based on the themes given earlier. Finally, the themes have been reviewed and named for the main report.

In the data analysis process, interview data and documents covered have been complied and discussed. A two-layer process has been used in the analysis of the data. Firstly, the data collected has been analyzed under subject analysis which is based in the interview discussion and conversations. Here the data collected from the parents and primary grade children has been fully used. In the second part, the collected data has been compared with the existing data and discussed in detail for connecting the dots.

Thus, the data has been identified, analyzed and then reported. According to the pattern of thematic analysis, for getting a general sense, all the data were read from the excel sheet where the interviews were written after the translations. Later the data has been read and have been tilted with different themes keeping surprising facts and unusual facts in mind. Then, the themes has been used to generate the description of the setting for analysis.

Data has been recorded while the interviews with the consent of the participants. Then the data were written as surely as possible in a excel sheet. The same spreadsheet maintained a detailed information about the participants including their age, occupation, duration of the interview and time. The spreadsheet has been copied in the secured place as a backup along with the written transcription.

All the data recordings have been transcribed into written forms for the easier access and representation. They have linked with analytical notes as well and later themed based on different topics. Close observations and some hints from the participants have been added in the data.

As all the interviews were in Bangla language, after transcribing data has been translating into English. For translating, the data have been read multiple times to understand the source text. Keeping the meaning in mind, the most appropriate vocabulary has been used.

The simple operation of identifying similar information, making a bunch and labeling them with a theme falls under thematic analysis. In this research, the data analysis has been done once the data were labeled with different themes and categories in mind. The data in the spreadsheet had been labeled into different segments. The research questions were kept in mind while making the interview guidelines. Thus, the different segments all together covered the research questions. Reviewing the data several times, filtering data and labeling them- the data analysis process has been completed. During the analysis process, all the data along with the relevant themes has been brought all together and used for descriptive analysis. However, before the analysis the data has been gone through to understand different perspectives. Based on the data outcome, the thematic analysis has been done aligning with the research questions.

## 3.9 Ethical Issues and concerns

Before going to the field to collect data, a research proposal has been submitted to BRAC Institute of Educational Development (BRAC IED). After reviewing the proposal, BRAC IED has given signed ethical form as permission to conduct the research.

Going to the field level, consent has been taken from the research participants before doing the interviews. In case of children – the consent has been taken from their parents as they are aged under 18 years old. I have played a neutral role and participants has been given the full freedom to share their opinions regarding the research issue and ensured about the confidentiality of the

data taken. The participants are also ensured to have the freedom to withdraw their statements anytime they want.

## 3.10 Trustworthiness and rigor

Member checking has been done after getting the data from the participants which is a technique to explore the credibility of the results (Creswell, 2014). The interviews have been recorded and later transcribed. After transcribing the data, I had a phone conversation where the findings were shared with the participants. The participants approved the findings and then it has been used as results of the research. To develop dependability and transferability of the data collected, the information has been reaffirmed and summarized during the interview by asking questions to the participants. This step ensures accuracy of the data.

## 3.11 Limitations of the Study

Because of the pandemic situation access to people is not like before. Having in total of 9 participants for data collection and that through video calling is a limitation of this research. Again, the data collection has been done through video calls and not everyone in the research site has proper internet access at all times. I had to face technical challenges. Because of time and access limitation the data has been collected only through interviews. Not being able to use any other research method has not allowed data triangulation. Time availability of the participants has been another challenge during the data collection period of the study as the participants belong to different social and professional context. The credibility of Qualitative data depends on the ability of researcher. Some of the participants were using the online platform for the very first time. Even using ice breaking sessions and having casual conversations could not break the uncomfortable situation of the some of the participants. Thus, the data collected from those interviews were not very to the point and authentic.

# CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

**Introduction**

The primary purpose of the study is to understand parental support in children's learning in the primary schools of Dhaka. The other purpose of the study is to identify the barriers regarding parental support in primary grade children's education.

The experiences and responses of the participants added value and insight to the research questions of this study. By collecting the information and analyzing the experiences of the parents and children's data has been gathered about the parental support in primary grade children' learning, children's' point of view and the overall scenario. In this chapter, the two research questions are addressed with supporting evidence including some direct quotations and thoughts of the parents and children.

## Demographic background of the participants

The results of this qualitative study are based on the interviews of six parents and three children from government primary schools. Among six of the parent participants, one was male and other five were female. Three of the parents work in different places and other three are housewives. The age of the parents is between thirty-five years to forty-five years old. The parent participants have minimum one and maximum four children among whom at least one goes to a government primary school. The participants come from a low-income family working as day laborer or house keeper. Those who are housewives have partners working as day laborer in different places. As they belong to the lower quintile of the society and have a very low monthly income they cannot fulfill all their regular needs. The child participants are all current primary going children of three different government primary schools. Two of them

are female and one make between eight to twelve years old and lives with their parents and siblings. The detail information of the interviewees is given below:

**Parent participants**

| Participant (Parent) | Age | Gender | Profession |
|---|---|---|---|
| Interview 1 | 40 | Female | Home tutor |
| Interview 2 | 35 | Female | Housewife |
| Interview 3 | 31 | Female | Housewife |
| Interview 4 | - | Female | Housewife |
| Interview 5 | 41 | Female | Housewife |
| Interview 6 | - | Female | House helper |

**Children participants**

| Participant (Children) | Age | Gender | Grade |
|---|---|---|---|
| Interview 7 | Nine | Female | Four |
| Interview 8 | Eight | Male | Three |
| Interview 9 | Twelve | Female | Five |

All the participants participated with consent. The Head Teachers/ Assistant teachers of the schools were contacted beforehand. With their support, the parents and children were contacted for collecting data.

## Research Results

The participants who have taken part in the study were cooperative and shared their thoughts in detail. Different themes emerged from the research data. The major themes identified are:

I. Parents' perception of their involvement in child learning

II. Kinds of parental support given by parents

III. Connecting parents experience with their support

IV. Satisfaction level of parents regarding their support

V. Children's perception and reaction on parental support

VI. Barriers parents face while giving support

First five of the themes answer the first research question from different angels and the last theme addresses the second research question from the point of view of both parents and children.

Each theme is described in details below:

**i) Parents' perception of their involvement in child learning**

Six of the participants were parents of primary going children and they mentioned about a few poi[nts when asked about their perception of their involvement in child learning. Two of the parents said, they provide continuous support through regular communication; daily activities; taking part in learning at home; playing with the children etc. The parents also feel the necessity of preparing their children for future and real-life challenges. Thus, they want to ensure the full support from their side. Some of them believe becoming friend to their child will create a safe space in between them and the learning will be more effective. One of the parents mentioned,

"I want to be my daughter's best friend. I always want her to share everything with me and I want to do the same. That way I will know what she thinks and what she needs (Interviewee 4)." There are also some parents thinking about having a bonding of a teacher, peer and advisor with their child besides being a friend. One of the parents said in this regard, "I try to be my son's teacher, friend, mother and advisor at the same time (Interviewee 3)." Parents believe in playing different roles in the life of their child in accordance to their need.

In addition, there are parents thinking that the role of school is equally important. Schools along with the support of parents should keep working for motivating the children in doing some extracurricular activities besides their studies.

> "Our children spend a lot of time at school with their peers and teachers. They get motivated with everything they see and feel there. School authorities should have a well-planned structure to engage children in multiple other activities other than academic stuff. That will not only give them a break but also motivate them to take part in different extra-curricular activities. And that will add value to their learning" (Interviewee 2)

Thus, parents have shared various opinions on their own parental support how as parents they believe in regular and free communications with children playing different roles. They also make sure to take part in different activities to enlighten children about real life challenges. Some participants have added the importance of having school support alongside.

### ii) Kinds of parental support given by parents

The parents shared about their different kinds of support in a child's life like in learning, playing, building new skills, giving encouragement in taking new challenges. Relating real life experiences along with bookish learning; giving space to children for sharing their thoughts and understanding; connecting the present world with the past experiences of parents are the main factors mentioned by parents when asked about different kinds of support. A mother shared, " I do not have a fixed thought on how to give support to my son. I keep observing his need and based on that I connect with him. " She also shares that there are times when she feels her son needs some encouragement to go after his dream and she supports him to the extent

she can. Again, there are times when she thinks her son should get some space and have the liberty to think by himself. "I try not to interfere in such cases unless he comes by himself (Interview 3)." Because parents believe along with their support the children also need to be independent by themselves from the very early stage knowing the fact that they will have their parents by their side whenever needed.

The child participants also shared about their view on the kinds of support they get from parents. Some shared parents give learning about time management, religion, regular life activities besides study. "My father shares with me different religious stories so that I can learn from them. He also shares the importance of time management in regular life for better output" (Interviewee 8). Thus, the child shared how the father supports in different types of learning. Another participant shared that they get support from parents or near ones when they do not understand something related to their study as well as games. "I get support in learning materials when I do not understand studies. Also, while playing ludo and chess; regular life activities. My mother also helps me with religious learning regularly," Interviewee 7 mentioned. The participants shared an optimistic view in getting support both in learning and playing related stuff. Another interviewee shared about their "Kite flying time" when they not only fly kites but also have many general knowledge discussions. Besides helping in learning, giving encouragement and creating space for children praising them for different activities, giving physical affection for making them feel loved were also mentioned by the participants when asked about different kinds of support.

### iii) Connecting parents experience with their support

The parent participants mentioned about their own childhood experience and they current life experience while addressing the questions asked. The ones getting full support for their families want to ensure that type of support for their children. Again, the ones having some negative experience like not being able to go out to play; not getting motivation in learning; not getting

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space to share their opinion in family matter also want to ensure an open and flexible life for their children so that the children do not suffer like the parents did in their early age.

> "We did not have such opportunities to enhance our learning. These days children are getting enough support from school, peers and friends. Also, they have friendly family members who encourage them to continue learning (Interviewee 3)."

Thus, she encourages her children by comparing with her early life and showing them the present opportunities, they have now. She suggests her to make the best use of the available scopes.

Besides the experiences of their early life one of the participants (Interviewee 1) shared her view on the present work experience and the impact of that in child's life. She mentions about her experience as a home tutor when asked how her work experience help in guiding her children. She shared that being both mother and teacher helps her combine her responsibility in each case and lets her give the best support to her child. "I am a home tutor and I use that skill and knowledge while helping my kid in learning new things because my experience as a tutor adds value in my role as a parent. Sometimes as parents we miss out something that we understand when we play the role of a teacher." Again, another parent (Interviewee 2) mentioned how she took learning from the time she dealt with her first child and now correcting her while giving time to the second child.

> "Giving some space to children is very much important to make them understand the reality of world. Always being with them like a shadow makes them dependent. It is not always important to be with child to make them learn. "

Connecting with own experience and relating to the need of the present world, parents believe in giving leaning to children in different ways life direct teaching, helping in learning and connecting learning to reality.

### iv) Satisfaction level of parents regarding their support

Four parent participants mentioned about the dissatisfaction they have about their parental involvement. " I am not fully satisfied with the support I am giving my children. I am not being

able to meet all the necessities (Interviewee 1). " Because of my other responsibilities I am not being able to focus on my younger children the way I did in case my eldest son. I have that inner dissatisfaction within (Interviewee 2)." On the contrary, two of the parents think that they are giving their full support instead of having many barriers. According to them, they as parents are managing well and making sure to give the full freedom and space to their children so that they can have enough opportunity to use the available resources. "I do not want my children to go through any lacking in anything and I can work as much as needed to ensure that. Their father also works really hard to meet all the necessities out children have (Interviewee 4)." Again, another parent mentioned, she tries to meet all the demands her daughter makes earlier or later.

> "I do fulfill all the demands of my daughter the time she wants or a day later. I only have one child and her happiness means the world to me. In case I cannot, my children understand me (Interviewee 5)."

She believes her happiness and satisfaction lies in the happiness of her daughter and thus that's her only priority. In case she cannot manage, she explains the scenario to her children and they understand. Thus, she is satisfied.

### v) Children's perception and reaction on parental support

According to child participants, the support of parents is very significant thing in their life. Without that support they feel to get lost and confused in almost every step ahead. Children participant shared how he feels confident when his parents support him in his regular tasks or learning. "I get confused when I need to decide something on my own. Having the support of my parents make me confident," Interviewee 8 mentioned. Another child participant said, "I do not want my parents to take decision and inform me rather I want them to discuss with me and decide something (Interviewee 9)." On the other hand, this child thinks that knowing and obeying the decision of parents is not enough and is not something she wants. She wants her parents to discuss with her and take decision with her consent. Another child also added, she

feels good when she shares about her problems regarding education or peer or teacher with any of her parents. She finds peace there. " I feel relaxed sharing about my school problems with any of my parents. They always give me mental support to deal with it (Interviewee 7)."

The child participants were also asked if they ever feel overwhelmed getting their parents' support. The responses were both affirmative and negative. Some of the them mentioned they get overwhelmed when parents become much protective. Also, parents keep saying the same thing more than once which they do not appreciate. One of the children said, "I get overwhelmed when my parents care too much and becomes over protective. They also keep saying the same thing again and again which I do not always appreciate (Interview 8). Oppositely, one of the children participants said she never feels overwhelmed.

> 'the support of my parents is never overwhelming rather I feel confident in each step of life and learning. Even if I take any decision on my own, I want my parents to reconfirm me about that step. Sometimes there are things I do not have any idea about. Those are the times I feel I cannot do stuff without my parents' guidelines (Interview 7)."

She has the utmost believes that her parents always think the best for her. She wants to reconfirm her each step by her parents to feel confident.

### vi) Barriers parents face while giving support

The parents have to face multiple kinds of barriers while giving support to their children which they mentioned during interviews. Financial barrier is almost mentioned by all the participants and they think an improved financial state could give them some more opportunity to support their kids. Not having financial stability keeps them in fear all the time and that works as a barrier while giving support. Some believe their children need more tutoring support which is not being possible because of the financial restrictions the family is facing now. "My daughter needs more tutoring support for her studies and I am not being able to give her that because of my financial condition," Interviewee 1 mentioned. According to her, from the present situation they have, they are trying to give as much support as they need but being unable to meet the necessities. There are families who have three to four children in the family. According to some
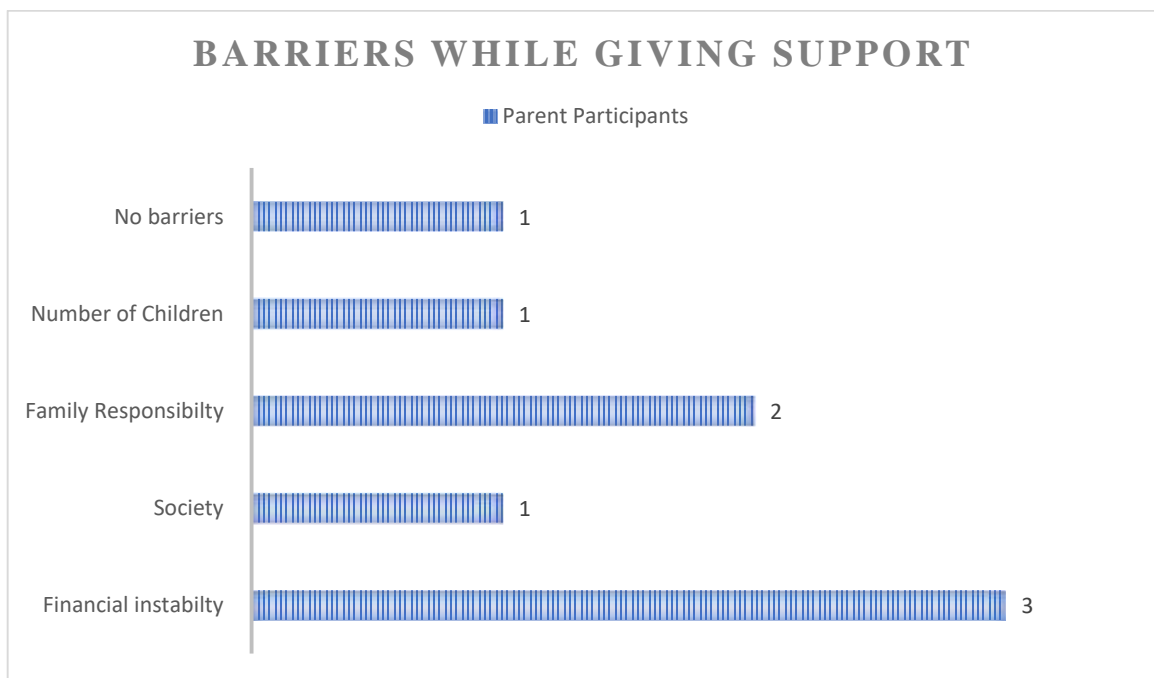
of them, providing the same opportunities to all the children is not possible because of the changing financial condition of the family. There are cases where the eldest son/daughter gets all the best services from the family but by the time the younger gets to that position of getting that support, the family faces financial crisis. Children are also getting involved in child labor besides study to have some extra income. Though some of the parents do not take that as a wrong thing. Because they believe their son is utilizing the time, getting extra money home and learning something new. "My eldest son goes to a clothing store as a part time worker and that brings some extra money to the family. I do not think that hampers his study a lot (Interviewee 3)." Besides financial barriers, having more than one child in the family is also a barrier according to one participant. "I have a 3-month-old kid. I have to be with her all the time and thus cannot give time to my son"- (Interviewee 3). Moreover, along with the number of children other family responsibilities also work as barriers at times for some parents. "Having other family responsibilities like doing household chores, giving time to younger kids, looking after the family is a barrier while giving support in my son's leaning (Interviewee 1)." When parents do not have enough time to give to children for any other work, that particular work is regarded as a barrier in the way of giving support. In addition to these, not having adequate skill learning knowledge is regarded as a barrier by some parents. " My husband is not enough educated to give any support to my children. Thus, I give as much as I can in their learning and my husband looks after the financial side of the family (Interviewee 3)." "I can support my daughter much because of having inadequate skill. I suggest other elder people at my family who have learning knowledge to help her in learning (Interviewee 4)." Parents face the barriers of not supporting their child due to lack of skill and comes up with instant solution like taking support from someone outside or family with adequate skill. Next, the society has been regarded as one of the barriers in case of parental involvement. Parent mention how the surrounding is not a safe place for children and they cannot live with full security with their children. "The surrounding

is not at all safe for the children to go out and roam around. I cannot permit my child for everything he wants" (Interviewee 6). Because of society many of the demands of children are not fulfilled and many a times parents are not allowed to let their children live according to their will.

On the contrary of all the barriers, only one parent participant thinks there is no barrier in her way of giving support to her child and thus she is giving full support. She mentioned,

> "We, the parents are aware of our skills and expertise. We have divided our work that way and trying to ensure the best learning and living life for our children. I support my children in their studies and be with them in their free time. Whereas my husband's education level is not adequate for helping them and thus he looks after the financial side all alone (Interviewee 3)."

In a way, parents try to identify their barrier and come up with possible solutions if they can.



BARRIERS WHILE GIVING SUPPORT

■ Parent Participants

| Barrier | Count |
|---|---|
| No barriers | 1 |
| Number of Children | 1 |
| Family Responsibilty | 2 |
| Society | 1 |
| Financial instabilty | 3 |

The table represents about the barriers mentioned by the participants while giving parental support. Financial instability has been the major barriers among many of the participants. Family responsibility like household chores, taking care of elderly people and managing house; societal barriers like having no security outside home, having more than one child have also been mentioned by participants as barriers.

The chart shows only one parents among six parents thinks there is no barriers in the way of giving parental support and she is fully satisfied with the support she is giving.

## Summary

The chapter presented the results from the nine participants of government Primary school parents and children. The findings have been presented in multiple themes which have been identified based on the research questions and interview guidelines. Most of the participants have shared their perspective on parental support from their own experience and also have an idea about their position in this regard. The parent participants mentioned about the way they provide their support to their children and the lacking they feel while giving the support. They also mentioned about a few barriers which they think stops them in giving their 100% support. Moreover, the child participants shared their view on parental support, the importance they feel in their life and how they feel about that support. The responses address both the research question of the study and helped in understanding the parental support in Children's learning.

# CHAPTER 5: Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter will cover the discussions of the results and its implications for various stakeholders' groups.

The discussion of the results is followed by some recommendations for future researches.

## 5.1 Discussion of the Results

At the beginning of the research paper, some themes have been pointed and discussed based on the prior articles and journals. The previous chapter also covers multiple themes based on the research results. The results cover the perception of parents of their own support; kinds of parental support; role of parents' previous experience; barriers faced by parents; satisfaction level of parents in giving parental support and finally the perception of children in this regard. According to Ramanlingam and Maniam (2020), parents play multiple roles in their child's life to ensure their learning. Learners, partners, teachers and pioneers are the roles focused in the article. Response from the participants has given a similar idea which says parents spend time with their child while regular communication, playing, studying, wandering to places. Playing only one role can create gaps according to them. There was another parent participant according to whom sharing everything with kids create a safe space for both parents and children. That not only lessons the existing gap because of different generation and age but also helps them in learning new things. Moreover, creating a friendly environment for a child helps in the mental and learning development of him/her. Parents think having a friendly relation with child helps to know them better. Another parent also mentioned about the importance of preparing their children for future and real-life challenges. As Terrence (2011) mentioned home educating parents as 'Bona Fide' educators – parents need to understand the need of their own child and work accordingly. The parent participants also mentioned the need of the school involvement along with their support in child learning to have the best outcome. Because

children pass a lot of time at school as well. Having involvement of both parents and school is thus important for ensuring child learning.

Parents get involved with children in different ways and every way has its own importance. The research data says, besides bookish learning parents feel it is necessary to get involved with children through regular life communication; giving life lessons; sharing stories or own experiences; giving them hand in things children need support. Parents help children to form good learning habits along with promoting active lifelong learning by motivating children to complete their homework and take part in different learning (Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2011). At the same time, giving some space to children at times is also very important according to them. One of the parents mentioned how she does not have a fixed way to support her child. She analyzes the situation and gives support accordingly. According to a previous study on why parents get involved, some specific reasons play a role in parental role construction. Parental role construction is defined as parents' beliefs about what they are supposed to do in connection to their child education. Also, in connection to the patterns of parental behaviors that is followed to follow those beliefs. Parents beliefs on their child development; steps parents take to ensure effective child development process; guidance parents provide to make children succeed at school are regarded as influencing factors in parental role construction (Dempsey et al, 2005). Thus, the role of parents takes different forms in different situation yet very important for a child.

Besides parent participants, child participants also shared about the learning and support they get from their parents. Time management, religious learning, regular life lessons are some of the important ones according to them. The importance of appreciation and encouragement from parents have also been mentioned by child participants when asked about the kind of support they get. According to them, that encouragement help them learn new things.

Again, according to Durisic & Bunijevac (2017), the prior experiences of parents have a direct connection with the leaning of children. Like, some parents have low self-esteem because of not having any accomplishment in their personal life and thus hesitates to get involved in the learning process of their children. On the other hand, this research data gives some insight about the parents who shares their past experiences for the betterment of their children learning. They believe, children can relate their current scenario with the struggles or achievements of their parents and use that learning now. They want to ensure that their children do not experience the same things like not getting motivation for learning; not being able to go out and enjoy freedom; not getting encouraged to do something creative. Rather the parents want to open new door for their children to enjoy life to the fullest and learn beyond limitations. According to parents, children these days have a lot of opportunities compared to their time and thus they should make the best use of it. In addition, some parents mentioned how their work life experience add value to the learning of their children. Like being a home tutor in profession helps a parent play the role of both mother and teacher because she knows both the sides differently. Again, another parent shared how she took learning from the time she was mother for the first time and how she corrected herself based on that. Previously she stayed as a shadow for her first child and now she gives some space to her another child to make him learn things on his own. Thus, any experiences lived by the parents in past help in forming the present of children.

The barriers parents face while giving parental support are mostly well highlighted in research or real life. According to Garry and Rayleen (2011), four particular areas are there as barriers which are individual parent and family factors, Child factors, Parents-Teacher factors, and Societal factors. Similarly, this study has identified two factors such as the 'family factor' and 'societal factor'. The participants of the study perceive number of children, family responsibility, society and financial responsibility as the barriers on their way toward giving

support to their children.. When parents are unemployed or earn less than the need of the family, that works a huge barrier (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Participants of this study mentioned financial instability as a barrier but not only in the way of giving support to child's learning rather also in fulfilling some of the needs or their demands. In Southwest Asia, parents fully support their children in learning activities despite not having favorable socioeconomic status or having a lower educational level. They follow different involvement strategies like providing tutoring support to children, connecting to a family person who can help in learning, passing the responsibility to elder kids, having regular communication with children and creating a safe space for leaving impact on learning (Al-Matalka, 2014). According to previous research, South Asian countries like Bangladesh get involved in their child's learning based on their socioeconomic state (Chudgar & Shafiq, 2010). Though the research data of the study gives a different result in this regard. The participants of the study have a very affirmative view about parental involvement and most of them ensures their full support instead of coming from a low-income family. For them, the learning and need of their children are in the top priority list. They believe in working hard day and night and bringing smile in their child's face. They are ready to sacrifice their time to ensure all the necessities of their children so that they do not suffer for anything or face the lacking of something. Adding to that, participants mentioned about a similar factor mentioned in the article of Drummond & Stipek (2004). Some of the parents thinks they are too engaged with other family responsibilities or household chores. Being with other infants at home, fulfilling the expectations of elder members does not allow some parents give time to child's study and leaning. Thus, they can rarely focus on child's learning. But according to the participants of the study, they directly do not get involved in the learning process but ensures that learning through home tutors or their siblings unlike the article which mentions that the learning is not ensures because of the business of parents. Another factor got focused in the data which is not having required skill for helping in child's learning.

While discussing parents' perception on parental support, the article shares not having adequate skills makes parents perception vary. According to the article, parents feel low and pass the responsibility to someone else. Thus, they understand the importance of the support but feels low not being able to give that support directly. Again, there are parents who believe they are aware of their skills and expertise. They divide their work accordingly and try to ensure the best learning and living life for their children. They shared how they support their children in their studies and be with them in their free time. Moreover, there are cases where one of the parents' education level is not adequate for helping children and thus that parents look at the financial sides whereas the other parents help child with studies (Watson et al., 2012). Lastly, according to some research participants, the surrounding is another barrier is the way of giving parental support. Participants mentioned, even though they want their children to have freedom and learn by themselves about the world the surrounding is not safe for the children to go out. Thus, they have to stop their children inside home at times and that disturbs the learning of children.

In regular day-to-day life, children keep demanding things from parents and also have different necessities. Be it in case of learning or regular life necessities. According to the research data, fulfilling those demands completely depend on the will and scope of parents. Some parents are determined to fulfill all the demands instantly or later as the happiness of their child means more than anything else to them. Again, there are parents who tries to fulfil to demands but have to depend on the situation and fail. Parents shared the unsatisfaction inside them which is because of not being able to meet all the necessities of their children. Though parents try their best to fulfill all the demands and necessities instead of having many barriers sometimes the situation is not in favor. Thus, in case the situation does not allow, they explain their child about the scenario and the reason behind the failure to meet the demand. They believe discussing openly help the child learn about the reality of the world.

In this research, the perception of children about parental support has also been covered. Child participants have shared the significance of parental support in their life. Some shared they feel lost without the support of their parents, some said they feel confident when they get opinion of their parents in their decisions. Again, according to some, parents not necessarily have to take all the decisions rather discuss all the things with them that impacts their life. One of the children said, she never wants her parents to force any decision on her but she definitely wants to discuss with them. On a different note, child participants shared how they feel overwhelmed when parents become over protective regarding anything. They also shared that does not help them learn anything rather not much appreciated by them. Besides support in taking decision or discussing things, another factor has been highlighted in the response of child participants. Children feel it relaxing to come home to their parents and just share about any problem they face outside in learning or with peer or teacher. Thus, parents can also support children just by being good listener. From this particular experience children can learn the important of patience and sharing as well.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the research findings on parental involvement in children learning, the following recommendations have been highlighted.

- Maximum effort should be given by both parents and teachers to ensure parental involvement in children's learning as they are directly linked to the learning environment of children.
- Parents should continue to have regular communication with children in their daily activities; take part in learning and playing; have up-to-date information about school; get engaged with teachers and other stakeholders who impact the learning of their children.

- The parents need to confirm giving support in academics as well as provide them with mental support whenever needed demonstrating a positive attitude towards everything.

Having regular communication; supporting them in studies; enlightening them about real life scenario mentioning the positives and negatives; having family time are some of the major highlights from the findings that have a positive impact in the learning of children.

## 5.3 Summary

The chapter started with the research finding and discussion based on the research data and previous research articles and journals. In the later part it is mentioned how it can help the stakeholders in planning their future steps with the focus on children learning. The chapter also made some recommendations for future research.

The study concludes that the parents support in child learning is seen in a positive way by both parents and children. Though there are few barriers in the way of providing support those barriers are well known to the parents themselves. Thus, instead of fearing those barriers parents are trying to ensure giving as much as support possible for helping the learning of their children.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A. Letter of Consent
Interview
Consent Letter

**Title: <u>Understanding Parental Involvement in Children's Cognitive development in the Primary schools of Dhaka</u>**

Dear Respondent,
Greetings!

I am Inshirah Ali, a Master (M.Ed) student of BRAC University. I seek your cooperation for my thesis purpose. My thesis title is: "Understanding Parental Involvement in Children's Cognitive development in the Primary schools of Dhaka." In partial fulfillment of my Master's degree, I need to do this research project and conduct interviews. For this purpose, I'm undertaking the above mentioned research project. In this respect, I seek your generous co-operation and you are cordially requested to participate in the interview. Note that all the information provided by you will be strictly confidential and your answers will not be published in any circumstances. Your kind response will be used only for this academic research and the data will not be published in the future. If you feel uncomfortable to answer any question, feel free not to answer. But you are requested to respond the correct answer that you believe to be.

I would really appreciate it if I could take 30-40 minutes of your valuable time.

Thanks in advance
Inshirah Ali
M.Ed Student,
BRAC University

I have read the above and discussed it with the researcher. I understand the study and agree to participate.

_____

Signature and Date

**Personal Interview**

I would like to ask some questions about your view on "Parental Involvement in Children's Cognitive development." You will be answering the questions asked as a parent and you are requested to share your true opinions and perspectives. Please feel free to be honest while answering as this conversation will be fully confidential.

**Q1.** Tell me a little about yourself.

- What do you do?

- How many child do you have?

- How long do you stay at home?

- How often do you sit with your child/children in your free time?

**Q2.** What do you think on your guidance on your children?

**Q3.** Which areas do you focus on while guiding your child/children?

**Q4.** What are the different ways you use regularly to get involved to your child in daily life?

**Q5.** Which factors of your guidance do you think influence child's learning?

**Q6.** What are the advantages according to you if your child gets constant guidance from you?

**Q7.** What are the disadvantages according to you if your child gets constant guidance from you?

**Q8.** What do you think will happen if a child does not get any kind of guidance from parents?

**Q9.** Do think you are guiding your child (if guides) in the best way? If yes/no, why?