

PARENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS SETTING CHILDREN'S  
ACADEMIC GOALS

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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## **Declaration**

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our 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.

**Student's Full Name & Signature:**

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## Approval

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## **Ethics Statement**

Hereby, I (Hasibur Rahman Sohan), consciously assure that for the manuscript “Parents’ Perception towards Setting Children’s Academic Goals” the following is fulfilled:

- 1) This material is the authors' own original work, which has not been previously published elsewhere.
- 2) The paper is not currently being considered for publication elsewhere.
- 3) The paper reflects the authors' own research and analysis in a truthful and complete manner.
- 4) The paper properly credits the meaningful contributions of co-authors and co-researchers.
- 5) The results are appropriately placed in the context of prior and existing research.
- 6) All sources used are properly disclosed (correct citation). Literally copying of text must be indicated as such by using quotation marks and giving proper reference.
- 7) All authors have been personally and actively involved in substantial work leading to the paper, and will take public responsibility for its content.

I agree with the above statements and declare that this submission follows the policies of Solid State Ionics as outlined in the Guide for Authors and in the Ethical Statement.

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## **Abstract**

Parents' dreams and thoughts for their children are the common factors influencing children's choices. Every parent wants the best for the children. The influence from parents can end up into multiple dimensions. The purpose of this study is to explore how the parents in Bangladeshi context think about their children's academic future. It aims to understand the influence of parents' decision in the future academic goals of the children. Using qualitative approach this study explains the patterns of thoughts from 19 parents of students across primary to secondary schools. The study uses FGD and interview as tools for finding the lenses from parents of an under-served low-income community. These findings are assessed against the Epstein's parental involvement framework. Interestingly, the parents from low income community have minimal expectations while they expressed a big desire to see their children to the top of the educational process. The tradition of who decides and influence of elders on the Youngers of the families has been found to a key factor in the influence of how parental engagement takes place influencing the landmarks for the children's education. This study definitely answers the questions on the assumptions, fear and beliefs that lead the parents to decide their children's academic future. Further studies are needed to develop gender based analysis of the context to find what gender-based and cultural factors might have been there influencing the parents' decisions.

**Keywords:** Epstein's framework, parental involvement, decision making, academic goals, perception, influence.

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## **List of Acronyms**

PTA Parents Teachers Association

NCLB No Child Left Behind

PAS Parental Attributions Scale

PIS Parental Involvement Scale

CRT Criterion-referenced Test

FGD Focused Group Discussion

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

### 1.1 Introduction

Parents are the role models for each child at the beginning of their life. However, a child's future can vary a lot, depending on the decisions taken by the parents and ambitions set by them. According to Paul (2012), the content of parents' discussions with children has its impacts. That is a significant point that raises concern about the importance of parents' role in children's future. Rayhan (2017) states that a professor at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education, Nancy Hill, has found that parents play an essential role in "academic socialization." It means setting expectations and linking current actions and future goals (going to college, getting a good job). While classrooms worldwide have different ways to approach a student's life goals, parents are core storytellers for their children to aspire or set ambitions in their lives. The interventions at the initial phase of a child's life create dreams and future pathways. While this is such a significant issue over time, the concern is about the parent's awareness of the influence they are on their children. If the parents are aware and taking steps, each of the parents' actions impacts; while the parents might not be familiar with acting consciously, they can influence their children's thought process and drive.

Academic goals for this study are the goals set by the parents of students. These goals consider aims parents want to perceive for the future of their children. Based on the context and for this study, we would consider parents' voices relevant to goals they set through grades of studies, national exam landmarks till graduation, or post-graduation educational plans.

Various studies indicate that parental engagement is an effective strategy to ensure student success (Barnard, 2004; Desimone, 1999; Hill & Craft, 2003; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Zellman &

Waterman, 1998). Parental involvement has several decisive outcomes on students other than academics, including raised motivation, self-respect, and self-confidence, leading to academic success regardless of economic background. Conversely, research asserts that low or no parental engagement provides lowering student achievement and engagement (Bower & Griffin, 2011). In reality, parents, siblings, and other essential relatives can create harmonious learning environments to enhance children's academic development.

Typical forms of parent engagement include- participating in school activities (e.g., Parent Teacher Associations [PTA]), community yard meetings, or volunteering at the school. Parental engagement through actions such as providing nurturance to their kids, inspiring cultural values, and communicating with their children, do not align with common forms of parental engagement as outlined by the school" (Bower and Griffin, 2011, p. 1)

## **1.2 Problem Statement of the Study**

A study by Duke (2004) reveals that parents do matter, notably in teens, when kids choose whether they desire to go to university and what jobs they aspire to as grown-ups. In primary schools of Bangladesh, many children pass the school while they are early teens or will be teens within a year or two. Some parents might set up a goal too early, even before a child's opinion is taken into account. The area of concern is how parents perceive their roles as they finish primary education and move into teenage. Bright side (2019) shares that they are setting up goals or aims for children without their opinions taken into consideration. The discussion on 'why' in such cases are an essential element of children's growth. There are stereotypical ideas in different communities about getting an education and jobs. Parents often make their children go against their children's interests and set for a life they never dream of leading. It creates a strange gap in parents' expectations for children with children's expectations for themselves. As the students pass through the primary schools and move into

high schools, there are more books to complete, more classes to attend, more studies get into the schedule. And, there is a chance for the children to think about why they are excited about spending energy and time for academic purposes. Schrobsdorff (2016) states that tension and grief in high school children have increased since 2012 following some years of durability. Thus, many children might have a high chance of living in depression and even go out of their way. Parents' role is tremendously important to understand the independence of thoughts and the independence of children's desire due to the unique quality they have within themselves. Indeed, parenting is not easy, and it becomes hard to allow children to explore and guide them towards a fruitful future. The complexity within the context might play vital roles at times. Research by Peng and Wright (1994), picking up on the NELS data, observed that 80% of Asian American parents of eighth-graders desired their children to achieve at least a bachelor's degree, compared with 50% of Latino parents, 58% of African American parents, and 62% of European American parents. The communal pressure on the kind of jobs aims or designations makes a lot of difference in parents' minds. Children in different communities get impacted by these norms set by the social dynamic that can mislead a person towards growing into their full potential. Besides, it's not always necessary for a child to study and grow in a specific academic arena and keep attached to that arena of study for building a career. A person can research zoology and fall in love with his/her hobby of wildlife photography. Frampton (2015) argued if anybody has paused for a while and considered how schools, colleges, and parents prepare their children for the newly-changed working world. These questions are essential to explore. We are moving into a fast-paced world with growing expectations while we have limited to enough composure for figuring out the essence of success for our future generations. The grade eight students are those happy students. They might have passed the primary level of education with limited investment from parents into them thinking about academic goals and how those will shape. As kids are more likely to spend more time with their parents initially in their lives,

the awareness among parents to think constructively about their day-to-day impact on the child's psychology is immense. Therefore, parents need to understand how they can play an active role in assisting and empower their children in setting up academic goals for themselves.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The study explores how parents in Bangladesh perceive their roles while supporting their children in choosing academic goals for the future. It is often a neglected issue, while it can be a way to involve children to lead a better experience. The study shall provide ideas about some thoughts and assumptions within parents prevailing today and how these assumptions are helping the parents play their roles. At the same time, it will be a source to discover how parents from the underserved community of Bangladesh think about future academic goals. The ambitions they have and the rationale of their aspirations are going to be coming through this study. With education being such a crucial element in employability, each decision parents take with the growth of their children marks defining steps in the exploration of the kids' potentials. The study shall focus on parents' prevailing bias and concerns based on their context and their practices related to their kids' future foreseeability. The patterns will inform about a few mindsets staying within parents that drive them to think and act in specific ways. Another purpose is to identify the eagerness of the parents towards supporting the future academic goals of children. As the study completes, it aims to bring up a few areas of need. These needs might show us what will make parenting fruitful for primary school children. Those areas would need interventions from different players in our system- parents, teachers, community members, policymakers, and curriculum experts. And, the study would focus on the role of parents, and the intention is to suggest few key responsibilities for parents to fulfill their roles in supporting their children towards choosing academic goals that would inspire the children to be empowered to achieve.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The study is significant in multiple ways. Firstly, it will be essential to know how parents nowadays think about their roles in choosing their children's academic goals. It shall focus on parents' perceptions to set up ways for the children to discover the potentials and interests of the children.

Secondly, this paper aims to add more information to the parents of this era on the actions and responsibilities they should be performing to help their children to dream about higher academic success. Parents' voices and actions based on their mindsets are vital factors to be explored in this study. Middleton and Loughhead (1993) talked of how parents can be an essential and positive influence in decisions affecting a young person's vocational development. Vocational development is a part of academic development.

Lastly, the study shall influence the parents to think from different dimensions and feel the empathy to set and support making better decisions for their children and choosing the best reasonable goals so that the children are excited to become academically successful. It would also allow the children to have more independent choices in achievements, careers, or learning. The findings from this study would be helpful for educators, school leaders, parents, and community activists to gain a little bit of understanding of how the thinking of parents is influencing their children towards academic goals and future aspirations.

## **1.5 Research Topic: Parents' perception towards setting children's academic goals**

The topic explores how parents think about their roles in creating meaningful academic goals for their children. One of the burning questions for children becomes- "What do I want to achieve in my studies?" While finding the answer to this question, children face differences

of opinion. For example, parents want their children to aim for one academic success while children might be more interested in seeking another academic success. This variation creates a contrast of expectations. The topic indicates the understanding of parents in their roles as parents, the investment they make, and the involvement they want to have in the coming times of their children's future.

Parents as caregivers play a severe role in choosing or allowing choices. The amount of flexibility of author or independence parents provide the children with has various interpretations. These might enable us to know or relate the elements of the culture the participants live. With the study, we would like to develop our understanding of the culture we have and how the traditions might influence parents to play a role in specific boundaries through making contextual decisions.

### **1.5.1 Research Questions**

The questions initially targeted FGD, and then these became incorporated for the interview. The research study answers the following research questions—

#### Research Questions:

Key Question01: What do parents think about academic goals for children?

Sub Questions:

1. What are the academic goals parents desire for their children?
2. Who gets the preference in setting academic goals? Why?

Key Question 02: What does parental involvement look like for parents to meet their roles?

Sub-questions:

1. How much parents involve the children in setting academic goals?
2. How do parents motivate their children towards setting ambitious academic goals?

Key Question 03: How do parents find their roles in empowering children's decision-making?

Sub-questions:

1. How much independence do the children have in choosing academic goals for themselves?
2. What are the assumptions or beliefs parents have in deciding academic goals for their children?
3. What kind of support parents want to offer in the journey towards the academic goals for their children?



## **CHAPTER II**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **2.1 Research Approach**

The research approach for my study is "Qualitative." "Qualitative research involves looking in-depth at non-numerical data. Think of the word 'quality when you think of qualitative data - you are taking a deep, quality look at a phenomenon." (Boyd, n.d.) I aim to focus on the quality of the phenomenon that involves the role of parents towards helping their children in setting and getting to the desired academic goals. Again, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative research as an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world. It means that qualitative researchers analyze things in their regular environments, trying to make meaning or explain happenings in terms of the implications people bring to them. The study aims to be naturalistic in approach. I shall be using my data collection tools in a setting while participants are in their households and within their best choices of the comfort zone. All these rationales make me comfortable and confident to choose a "Qualitative" approach for my research.

#### **2.2 Research Site**

The study took place at Tetulia, Panchagarh. The name of the area is Islambag. The site was necessary considering the primary school, Mondol Para Government Primary School, in the area. While working as a "School Leader" through the partnership of Teach for Bangladesh and the local education authority, I was living in the community to complete the study. My role would be an external researcher detailed out in section 3.6 moving forward. `

## **2.3 Research Participants**

The parents will be the participants of the research. In the research site, seven mothers and eight fathers will participate in the process. Fifteen parents will join from the community. They are the parents of primary and secondary school kids. Few of the participants have children in both introductory level and secondary levels. This research is small-scale research to explore some trends, beliefs, and practices. Hence, 15 participants are the initial targets for the study.

## **2.4 Research Methods**

Initially, I planned to conduct FGD with the parents. I planned to have a more general idea about the parents and their thoughts. During the FGD, I learned parents are getting influenced by each other while answering and thinking about the questions. The influence turned to such an extent when I realized that few participants agreed to other participants only. This incident helped me think about alternative processes for getting more authentic information. For the former plan, seven mothers and eight fathers came to discuss based on the research questions. Then I requested two mothers and two fathers for the one-on-one interview. Finally, I have two research data collection methods to continue with this study. Adding one more strategy helped me add individual stories and perspectives to the data. The rationale to avoid an interview was due to my previous experience as a participant in FGD. I felt mighty after participating in that FGD about economic issues. This time has taught me some lessons about framing, target audience, social structure, and the power dynamic within a group make a lot of difference in an individual's responses. I am glad that I could decide to take an interview. The parents were eager to join and share their voices with a lot more ease. This part of the journey is significant learning for me through this experience in terms of choosing methods.

Two data collection methods are in action for the completion of the study. The reason to use more than one method is to maintain a triangulation in the data collection process. One data collection method is "Focus Group Discussion (FGD)." Thoughtfully planned discussion meant to obtain opinions on a specified field of concern in an allowing, safe condition. It is administered to around seven to ten people by a proficient interviewer. The conversation is untroubled, convenient, and often pleasant for participants to share their thoughts and observations. Group members affect one another by replying to opinions and remarks in the discussion." (Krueger 1988, Gall et al. 1996) This study needs findings of how parents involve children to add value to their children's academic goals. Both fathers and mothers are equally important. FGD is a great way to bring both sides in one frame and get answers and opinions on the same questions. It is essential to discover their ideas and see how they influence themselves by sharing ideas within the limited time of FGD.

Another data collection process is- interview. In Merriam Webster ([www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com)), an interview is a meeting to acquire knowledge from an individual. Again, the interview, in the Oxford dictionary, is an exchange of question-answers between a journalist or radio or television presenter and an individual of public interest, used as a broadcast or publication basis. Here, the interview of four people will help to understand the more profound perceptions of their thoughts. The participants will answer questions that will allow the participants to explain their understanding of the roles of parents in shaping up the academic goals of their children. There is a questionnaire for an interview along with the schedule for the participants. These questions depend on the type of research. For this study, the questions are more open-ended so that the participants can be answering in their way. Each interview is around 30 minutes. The participants will come to primary school and participate in the discussion. The schedule for the interview got confirmation through communication with the participants.

The FGD #01 has seven mothers, #02 has eight fathers. The interview of two fathers (interview #03 and #04) and two mothers (interview #01 and #02) separately was chosen after finding how FGD had an environment influencing the voices within the group.

## **2.5 Ethical Issues**

The research study followed all the ethical issues. All the research data came with the permission of the research participants. The confidentiality of the research participants was the highest priority throughout the research work.

All the data collection tools were designed by withholding judgments. Moreover, withholding decisions about the research participants helped to deal with the research bias while collecting research data.

## **2.6 Role of the Researcher**

I conducted the research study while being a postgraduate student in education. Hence, being a teaching student, I was aware of the particular challenges in our education system. This understanding helped me design practical data collection tools and collect the data effectively following the tools.

From January 2016 to December 2017 (2 years), I taught in Government Primary School as a regular class teacher under Teach for Bangladesh Fellowship Program. Teach For Bangladesh is a nationwide movement of excellent university graduates and young professionals committed to expanding educational opportunities for all children in Bangladesh. Teach for Bangladesh Fellowship Program starts with a two-year professional Fellowship teaching in high-need communities. During the 2-years of Teach For Bangladesh Fellowship, I taught in a Government Primary School. Again, I interacted with the regular Government Primary School teachers and took part in the regular training program (for example, sub-cluster

training program) initiated for Government Primary School teachers. Then I visited the community, interacted with the parents, and ran various community action projects. All these experiences of mine, of being a regular teacher in a Government Primary School, gave me a more in-depth understanding of the challenges of our primary education. These experiences helped me ask appropriate questions while interviewing, observing, taking notes of the crucial part of the lesson effectively, and eventually drawing the findings based on the data evidence and my own experience as a Government Primary School teacher. While I knew that my experiences might enable my biases, I prepared to listen carefully and skip all my judgments to explore participants' responses.

I was careful to monitor myself and the actions I took to reduce bias. I tried to make sure that the methods for data collection were competent. I collected data through direct communication. I have not used any software or application to analyze the data while I have tried Google scholar to present my findings from the study.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Student achievement has several factors. Susan (2018) mentions setting goals as the first step towards achievement. While parents want the best out of their children, it would be wiser for them to set goals for their academic future. While parents attempt to engage in this educational goal creation process, they would require time to engage in the children's life activities. Hara & Burke (1998) points out that studies indicate that parental engagement is one of the most critical components. Educators have shared their understanding that parental engagement is key to stronger future academic performances from students. Griffith (1996) states that schools are giving their best to encourage parents to participate in their children's educational activities and schoolwork. This study aims to find the roles played by parents to support ensuring the future academic goals of the children. The study's findings may represent helpful information regarding parents' participation in and out of schools for their children, reflecting how they choose their role as parents. The idea of 'role' is associated with the behavior of a person (N. Nahar, personal communication, Apr 30, 2019). Therefore, we can find parents' behavior as indicators of their belief in their role in the children's lives. The following topics are in discussion to justify the understanding of the parents of their roles through their involvement: parental involvement based on Epstein's six types of parental involvement, history on the Influence of Parental Involvement, and the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement. The rationale to bring the student achievement here connects to the fact that achievement comes through a journey, and we have already indicated that goals are the first step of the trip. When we find some positive connection between parental involvement and student achievement, we can suggest why the parents realign their thought process based on the success criteria and find ambitious academic goals.

### **3.1 Epstein's Six Types of Parental Involvement**

Epstein's parental involvement framework is chosen for this study, considering how this framework guides us thinking about parents playing their roles. Epstein et al. (2009) mentioned that this research-based framework has six types of involvement— parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. It's usual for parents to have thoughts on their children's academic future. Academic future is associated with educational goals. The suggested involvement proves the awareness and belief of parents for their school-going children. As prescribed to be executed by the school, this framework has communication elements connected with parents' thoughts on their children's future academic goals.

Along with finding the goals, there is a need to know how parents think about the goals. And they support their children to lock the plans. Generally, as students, children learn to engage with a community where parents play a vital role in modeling and engaging with their children. This framework has elements to draw parents' parts and operate towards their children's choices. Here, the flexibility and parents' beliefs on their children would reflect through our findings in the next chapter.

Educators agree that parental involvement is essential to a student's academic growth. Academic growth essentially requires a goal to grow for the next academic term. On the other hand, the definitions of parental involvement vary. A formal report of parental engagement includes partaking in activities at school and at home, such as volunteering at school; interacting with teachers; helping with homework; and community yard meeting, and parent-teacher conferences (Bower & Griffin, 2011; Epstein et al., 2009; Hill & Taylor, 2004). On a different note, Lopez, Scribner, and Mahitivanichcha (2001) introduces parental involvement as parents are supporting students' academic achievement or participating in school-initiated functions. Taking the second half of the previous statement, we understand how engaging in-

school programs surrounding the students can represent a parent's role in collaborating with the children. With some definitions, we want to focus on the framework itself.

Epstein et al.'s (2009) framework consist of six kinds of parental involvement processes. 'Parenting' is the fundamental responsibility mentioned. We can term it as type 1. It refers to a family's responsibility to ensure the child's wellbeing and safety (e.g., family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families' backgrounds, cultures, and goals for children) to give favorable home conditions that improve learning and behavior. Type 2 comes with the act of communication. It refers to communication between the parents and the school about the academic progress of the students (e.g., memos, notices, report cards, conferences). It centers on creating two-way communication. Type 3 fundamental obligation of the school would coin as 'volunteering.' It pertains to parental participation in the school setting (e.g., involve families as volunteers and as audiences at the school or in other locations within events, workshops, or programs for the educational and extracurricular growth). The next, type 4, fundamentals of school's responsibility depends on learning at home. It involves families with the children learning at home, such as homework, making goals, and other curriculum-aligned tasks. In addition, it boosts educators to create assignments that empower students to participate and review exciting activities with the caregivers.

Type 5 comes with 'decision-making. This fundamental obligation of school empowers the parents of the students to get involved with the school system and influence decision-making for the school system. It includes families as members of the school's choices, governance, and promotion activities through school committees or development teams, boards, and parent groups (e.g., Parent Teacher Association [PTA], advisory councils, or other committees or groups). Lastly, the fundamental obligation of school refers to 'collaboration



with the community. This idea, type 6, involves collaborating with the district, which helps integrate various community agencies and resources that support school programs (e.g., after-school programs, parent institute committee, etc.) (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders, & Simon, 1997). These essential parents' actions can guide us to compare the parents' activities and their perceptions behind being the kind of parent they are. The more of the activities parents are doing, and the more regular they are, it suggests higher engagement. That indicates how the parent has prioritized the academic goals for the student. Within the framework, we have communication that would clearly define how careful the parent is to support students' educational purposes through continuous contact with teachers and students. The more collaborative the parents are, they are better prepared to allow independence to their kids and open for children's insights into their goals. The parent's role in volunteering for school work is another element that puts up an example for the children to find how their parents care about the role of parenting and engage in the life event of the children. Our data in the next chapter will see how the parents leverage these six involvement options to play their role in setting stronger focus for children. The more the parents will know about the children's study, activity and interests, it would be highly likely that the goals set by the parent and the student for the academic future of the student are more within common interest.

### **3.2 History on the Influence of Parental Involvement**

The studies, The World Bank (2017) show that gender, familial education, and family resources are vital determinants of a child's overall growth. It indicates how students are impacted and provides many insights into the necessity of the parents knowing what impacts the students in meeting goals. Let's focus on an example from the United States of America, one of the earlier countries, building parents' roles around the educational processes. According to the United States Department of Education's "No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001," parents have an essential role in their children's academic success. Regardless

of the law, schools should and are encouraged to develop new ways to involve parents in their children's education. The fundamental task of the school is to design a process that connects the parties- students, parents, teachers, and school administration. According to Lai and Vadeboncoeur (2012), parental participation has devolved into a passive act rather than a meaningful effort.

Furthermore, when it comes to assigning responsibility for student achievement, parents are frequently used as scapegoats. It's not uncommon for parents to be on the receiving end of a child's lack of development in projects, attentiveness in classes, activity improvement, and academic growth. For example, Bright side (2017) states that helicopter parents, the parents with all the instructions for the children with to-do and 'not-to-do lists, can be very harmful to the children's academic failures; and parents can play the roles of advisers, not deciders. With the progression of time, research continues to credit parental involvement to increase academic achievement effectively. Studies show that parents are, in fact, a solid independent variable in motivating their children to learn (Gonzalez-DeHass, 2005; Williams & Holbein, 2005).

Parental involvement, where parents identify their roles, corresponds to many school constructs. These engagements include attending parent-teacher conferences, contributing to extracurricular and co-curricular activities, monitoring student grades, imparting parental values, helping with preparation, and providing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. However, Lai and Vadeboncoeur (2012) recorded that schools have failed to involve parents fully. For example, many schools do not provide literature in a second language or interpreters at conferences for parents whose primary language is not English. Nevertheless, academic leaders must welcome parents as essential stakeholders in the school system and promote collaboration and teamwork. In addition, schools and teachers communicate with parents to learn about their children.

### **3.3 Relationship between Parental Involvement and Student Academic Achievement**

Gonzalez-DeHass et al. (2005) argued that when parents are involved in their children's schools, academic motivation and achievement increase. Student accomplishment is improved and promoted by students' interest in learning, competence, and comprehension of a subject area. However, homework is frequently the most challenging task for parents and students to do. Haas and Reiley (2008) investigated how specific interventions could help middle school pupils complete their schoolwork. One of the interventions asked students to meet daily homework trackers and parents to pen through a signature for confirmation that they check the homework as original work. Students who were regular with their study received a 'Gotcha slip' from school staff as a positive consequence of the hard work. The conclusions indicated that most parents cooperated. Despite some participants not being so active, the homework trackers, in a package with a Gotcha slip, provided opportunities for teachers and students and teachers and parents to have some dialogues between them. Haas and Reiley also found that not each kid would correctly fill out the homework trackers. The additional touchpoints with parents helped to raise these students' self-management skills and improve homework completion rates.

Hara and Burke (1998) investigated whether third-grade pupils demonstrated significant and sustained academic development when their parents were actively involved in the school. They led a test to determine what the primary school should do to ensure a successful parent engagement program. Overall, kids with involved parents increased their reading skills more than kids without active parents. In addition, Hara and Burke (1998) discovered that students were more eager in school activities, had better attendance, and had higher self-esteem. In addition, during the program's implementation, parental involvement grew by 43%.

Despite the teacher's efforts to incorporate parents in initiatives, Bower and Griffin (2011) observed little parent attendance. No evidence of participation was there in the study, and the findings now reflect a lack of engagement between parents and teachers. The researchers revealed that schools and teachers did not establish parent-teacher solid relationships. According to Bower and Griffin, the Epstein model does not effectively capture how parents want to be involved in their children's school activities. They recommended that we need more research to acquire a better knowledge of encouraging parental participation and communication.

Georgiou and Tourva (2007) investigated the link between parents' assessments of their children's academic accomplishments, their opinion that they are involved, and their actual engagement. 313 Greek Cypriot parents with children in primary through secondary education took part in the study. The average age of the parents was 36.7 years, and the majority of the parents were female (66.13 percent). A total of 145 parents with children in elementary school (fifth or sixth grade) and 168 parents with children in high school were in the study (ninth or tenth grade). Primary pupils were 11.2 years old on average, while high school students were 15.6 years old. Parents had at least a bachelor's degree, worked in a professional or semi-professional capacity, and had a household income above average by area standards.

To obtain data, Georgiou and Tourva used two instrumental scales. The first was O'Sullivan and Howe's (1996) Parental Attributions Scale (PAS), which got adapted to an attribution theory suggested by Weiner (1985). The 21-item measure looked at characteristics or attributions that parents make about their children's performance. On a 5-point Likert scale, respondents were asked to score things (5 = completely agree, 4 = agree, 3 = indifferent, 2 = disagree, 1 = completely disagree). The Parental Involvement Scale (PIS), based on a self-report assessment established by Campbell and Mandel (1990) and modified to Greek language and culture by Flouris, was the second tool (1991). The items in this category

referred to school-related activities that parents did at home and school. The PIS identified three sub-categories: a) child's schoolwork (e.g., examining homework), b) supervision of child's everyday activities (e.g., television viewing), and c) child's interests and hobbies development (e.g., art, music, and sports). Visiting schools, chatting with teachers, and attending school events were all part of the second phase of the PIS.

Georgiou and Tourva found that parental involvement was conducive to a child's success in school. In other words, if the parents understood they could make a difference, they were more likely to get involved in their children's academic pursuits. Those parents who understood that only teachers could help their children succeed academically tended to avoid school involvement.

Griffith (1996) examined the relationship between parental empowerment and student academic performance. First, he looked at the relationship between parental engagement and empowerment and school characteristics, utilizing the school as the unit of study. He chose 41 elementary schools from an extensive urban school system with a high expectation for the association between parental involvement and student academic progress. Participants took a 41-item survey that included a Likert scale and open-ended items culled from the national and regional school environment and satisfaction surveys. In addition, the survey inquired about parents' participation in school activities (Griffith, 1996).

The results revealed that schools with higher parental involvement and empowerment levels tended to have higher student criterion-referenced test (CRT) scores (Griffith, 1996). Additionally, in this study, schools with higher levels of parental involvement had fewer but more experienced teachers than did schools with less parental involvement. Griffith (1996) also noted that schools with high percentages of African Americans and Hispanic students enrolled in the free or reduced-price lunch program encountered lower parental engagement and lower CRT scores. Although further research is needed to incorporate concrete measures

of the relationship between parental engagement and academic performance, overall, the results showed a positive relationship between parental empowerment, involvement, and student academic performance (Griffith, 1996).

With all the positive correlations found, the research questions are more in the limelight of what the parents in the underserved communities of Bangladesh think about their roles and influences on their children's future, shaping the goals and beliefs of the next generations raise.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The study aims to understand the parents' roles influencing their children towards the desired academic goals. It seeks to explore how the parents in rural areas of Bangladesh think about their influence in setting ambitions for children and the rationale parents have for their choices for their children. Nineteen parents participated in the process from the same community. This chapter plots the findings from the parents. It analyzes the results through discussions on the framework and implications of the school system's ownership in setting up the process for any child's future. The analyses depend on qualitative data.

#### **4.1 Findings from the study**

The study has several layers of findings- starting from goals and expectations of the parents towards their orientation on communication with the kids, from prioritizing the goal setter towards the amount of support they are ready to offer within the coming years of their kids' development. The overall data achieved has been divided into segments based on the responses from the participants.

##### **4.1.1 Parents' aspirations for academic goals**

The participants responded about their ambitions and goals for their kids, particularly towards the academic future. The participants are less aware of setting educational purposes. One of them mentioned SSC as a milestone for literary ambition. They are often dependent upon the senior-most family members to decide for the children's future (FGD #01, 23-12-2019). Again, fathers share SSC and HSC as the academic goals for their children with a possibility of Degree courses. These are the expectations of their society, and their parents asked the same from them. They couldn't complete in their times (FGD #02, 23-12-2019). In

addition, one mother precisely shares that she wants her boy to complete the Master's in any field (Interview #01, 24-12-2019). At the same time, another mother shared her wish for her child to be a good person in life; she had no idea about academic goals. Her focus is more on what people will say about the child when she grows up (Interview #02, 24-12-2019). One father shared his idea of taking his children to the city and making them businesspeople. He already runs a small shop, and his ambitions are more towards making the children educated about business (Interview #03, 24-12-2019). Another father thinks about SSC and anything beyond in Dhaka for the child to study. He is unsure about the decision now (Interview #04, 24-12-2019). From the mother's point of view, culture might have a role to play in decision-making. Fathers named the same degrees over and over again throughout the FGD. It does reflect a general expectation from them. The traditional expectations are playing the roles. Their children have limited ways to explore more potential outcomes due to the conventional ceiling. At the same time, the expectation of a mother for a son to complete a Master's was unique here. Another significant point- the mother is a working woman. In addition, the voices from fathers focus on the economic side and age of the children while they share academic goals. At the same time, mothers have more specific outcomes in mind than fathers for their children. The common goals found from the overall discussion focus on SSC, HSC, or higher study in business-relevant subjects. The voices in FGD suggest that the parents are less aware of setting goals for their children's academic success. This awareness impacts their decision-making capabilities for their children's educational future. The confusion around the goal setting is visible within both sides of parents.

#### **4.1.2 Parents' rationales for the aspirations**

There are various rationales of the participants on the academic goals they have set for their children. The mothers of the children shared that education is necessary, the next generations can learn from their kids, and jobs would be easier to seek and get (FGD #01, 23-



12-2019). Again, fathers agree with employment in good companies (FGD #02, 23-12-2019). One mother clarifies her rationale- the kids need to be in a better situation compared to her. I hope that education will make their lives easier and peaceful (Interview #01, 24-12-2019). Another mother was unable to share anything. She shared her realization of how she didn't think this way. She skipped this thinking process about all the 'why' (Interview #02, 24-12-2019). One father shares another perspective on his desire for the educational success of his kid. He thinks better marriage proposals and prospects are there with better education nowadays (Interview #03, 24-12-2019). Another father shares how he has struggled with asset management due to his lack of education (Interview #04, 24-12-2019). Few reasons are prevailing within the parents.

One explanation came strong as job seeking. Marriage proposals for both genders are in considerations too. At the same time, few of the participants have no idea why they choose the academic goals. The lack of reasoning incites thoughts on awareness and aspirations on the part of parents. The educational objectives are around SSC or HSC mostly. Again, marriage proposals are in consideration to seek for the purposes. Both the reviews indicate an early marriage culture within the context. Though they have not shared directly about the issue of early marriage, it might just validate why mothers are clueless about study prospects. At the same time, fathers are confused about the success of working in the city or completing further education. The voices from fathers suggest the significance of asset management in the house and family business. They find education for their children to explore opportunities to have practical measurement skills on assets and businesses.

#### **4.1.3 Parents' priorities and rationales in choosing goals**

Three of the mothers share that they will consider their chosen goals over their children's ones. And, they think that the students are not knowledgeable enough to make such

crucial decisions. Two of the mothers have more inclination to the dreams of the children. They believe children's plans are more of a priority than their dreams. They also think that the children are too young to decide anything now. So, they will take the children's decisions when the little ones grow up (FGD #01, 23-12-2019). Four fathers share similar views on their priority on their goals and dreams set for their children. They provide rationales like- they earn and support, think more realistically, have more experiences, and kids might focus on random things that can't be feasible. Three other fathers come along with rationale like- they know the pain and suffering of life, they can't agree with the children as they identify them as very little, and they can figure out more feasible ambitions for the kids. So, they prioritize their goals only. One father has shared that his goals and his son's goals are similar because he regularly communicates with his son about his dreams for him, and it has positively impacted them (FGD #02, 23-12-2019).

One mother shares her priority on her goals as she can't prioritize a kid's thinking capacity for such an important thing (Interview #01, 24-12-2019). Another mother shares how she thinks her kid has no idea about life, and teachers' recommendations would be the priority (Interview #02, 24-12-2019). A father shares that his priority would be the goals and ambitions of his daughter. He wants to wait few more years till the child gets to grade 8 or 9. After that, he will ask his daughter to share more, and he believes that she will be mature enough to start sharing her ambitions (Interview #03, 24-12-2019). Another father shared his desire to send the child towards the town-side in high school for a better future. Therefore, he has skipped taking ideas from the kid on his future ambitions (Interview #04, 24-12-2019).

The children make day-to-day decisions on the study, yet we find that most parents prioritize their thoughts. They are okay with that. At the same time, they assume the children cannot decide on academic goals. Surprisingly, most of them shared general ambitions until SSC or HSC; they have high confusions. Despite being confused themselves, parents are more

inclined to their own choices for academic goals. This scenario illustrates how communication might be a little practice between parents and children. Three parents are thinking to listen from their children give us some signs of how the decisions and voices get regulated within the family. Most parents, both father, and mother, share how their dreams for their children are a high priority compared to the children's dreams. They have agreed to one rationale in general that children can't decide. So, they will choose it all for children. Few of them share how they have found value in children's decision-making with few discussions. Within the mix, one parent shares that she will only focus on the goals shared by the teachers because teachers know more. Here, the collaboration that is necessary within the community and school is entirely missing. None has expressed any clue about collaborating among themselves within the community for the future of their kids. The parents share about themselves and have limited awareness about the support they can seek from school authorities in decisions and problem-solving. They play the role of parents while being relatively unaware of the possibility they can create through their voluntary steps for collaborating with teachers and within themselves.

#### **4.1.4 Perceptions of parents on parental involvement**

In response to the amount of communication about education, engagement in-home learning, and conveying the expectations to children, the parents had different experiences. Three mothers shared their state of mind that talking to kids at such an early age can be unnecessary as they don't know what the adults think about their lives. So, they opted not to share anything with any of their kids. They are not thinking of engaging in home learning that much with the school has teachers and coaching facilities. One of the mothers shares some stories at times to keep her kid informed about her expectations. Another mother doesn't communicate expectations from the children on the academic side as she finds her kids going to school each day. She says that it is 'assuring' for her, and she doesn't share anything more unless the children miss any school day. And, she is not involved in home learning because she

believed that she doesn't have the capacity (FGD #01, 23-12-2019). One father shares his story time with his kids; he deliberately shares his hopes and dreams with his sons. The other fathers have shared their lenses on the age of students. The age for their kids is not the correct age for communicating future academic goals according to their thoughts. One of the fathers expressed that there is little time at home. That is a reason he doesn't get into such conversations. All of them share about their absence in the process of home learning for their children. They express that coaching and tuitions work fine for all the children's educational needs (FGD #02, 23-12-2019). One mother shares stories of the kid's uncles who live nearby to connect to a person who studied and became successful in getting a good job and a family life (Interview #01, 24-12-2019). On a different note, the other mother shares that she depends entirely on teachers to instruct and tell anything about the future to kids. She doesn't feel confident to share stories and set expectations (Interview #02, 24-12-2019). A father shares his thoughts. He has never thought about the idea of sharing expectations with the kids. He wants to think about this process. He skips the importance of home learning. He feels that children need more relaxation time at home (Interview #03, 24-12-2019). Another father shares some stories with his girl, and his girl shares some of her dreams. The local teacher helps with tuition as the girl gets full support to study outside school, not necessarily at home (Interview #04, 24-12-2019). The majority of the participants share how they haven't thought about communicating with their children about their dreams, hopes, and goals earnestly. Only one parent has deliberately shared how she tries to stay connected to school teachers and make sure she knows what to share with her kids. All the other participants have shared how they have seen the communication with kids are not of a great deal for the time being. Four parents shared their enthusiasm about their contact with the children on future academic goals, but none shared any clue how school is influencing them towards this action. All the other parents are considering such communication to be very early, and they will delay and think more. We find a lack of urgency in decision-

making from parents. Children would feel the heat of such delays from the parents in the coming days when expectations might vary in two sides. At the same time, they have not shared any contact they have with the school that influences them to engage with children more. It makes us think a lot about the role of school and how parents are distant from school as they continue their journey as partners of their children's learning process. Coaching and specific teachers are there in parents' minds, while home learning gets very little attention. We can derive how home learning to boost academic knowledge has declined. We might draw another critical point- the schools are missing two-way communication. The parents have little understanding of their home learning expectations, nor have they shared any relevant ideas where schools have communicated with them on the issue.

#### **4.1.5 Parents' perceptions on motivating children**

Two mothers talk to teachers about problems and motivation. They follow the teacher's ideas and try to motivate their kids. Another mother continuously asks her daughter to earn better marks, and he thinks that it serves as motivation. And, one mother shares how she manages the sports items like- bats, balls, and footballs to keep her kid motivated for school (FGD #01, 23-12-2019). One father shares that he asks his kids to study, and he will do everything for them, but it doesn't work as motivation. At the same time, the same expectation from another father works. Another father shares how he has given words to buy a cycle for some results. So, the kid is excited about the bicycle, and this idea has worked. He also checks with teachers on the marks of his kid, and his kid is aware of his father's focus and care. Again, one father shares tiffin money with the kid as an inspiration. Another father shares about a private tutor. He has managed a tutor for his children, and it has worked as a motivation for his kids. Another father shares that he has taken his kid to the field to help him with the crops. His son has shared that the experience in the area is quite tricky. Then the father has asked the son to study hard and get a better lifestyle. The potential future is how his motivation is working

(FGD #02, 23-12-2019). One mother has not shared anything yet to keep her kid motivated but, recently, she is thinking about sharing stories from her life (Interview #01, 24-12-2019). Another mother has a high dependence on the teachers. She believes her kids only listen to the teachers. So, she has decided to ask teachers to inspire her children (Interview #02, 24-12-2019). A father expressed how he finds the best resources within his capacity for his daughter. He is very eager to support her and believes that these resources keep his daughter motivated for academic success (Interview #03, 24-12-2019). Another father tries to share all the necessary resources for his children to keep them motivated (Interview #04, 24-12-2019).

The discussions with parents show their eagerness to support the children in almost all possible ways other than those who have financial constraints and are afraid to stay motivated. Again, some parents have expressed their motivation to go beyond their comfort zone for their children's success in academic results. Two significant points from the parents for motivating their children are- making sure of a tutor and offering some gifts in return for the efforts. One father has shared his communication practices with the teachers to know the regular updates of examination results of his child. Another mother expressed her gratitude to the teachers as she asks the teachers to motivate and instruct the child, and the teachers help her. Her voice brings about how often the parents collaborate with teachers, collect updated information, and encourage the children for their efforts.

On the other hand, the discussions show signs of a lack of communication from parents to their children and teachers. There is a sense of dependency on the coaching centers run by the local teachers. Home learning seems to have very little priority. It is also evident from the voices that a few parents choose not to communicate and discuss a lot on learning as they find it not the ideal time given their daily work and the age of children.

#### **4.1.6 Parents' perceptions in empowering children to choose**

One mother shares that children need to have the independence to choose while all others share that students can't have independence of choices because they are not adults and make mistakes every day. So, they will end up making too many mistakes. One mother has also shared that she would let the kid take more independence (FGD #01, 23-12-2019). One father thinks that kids shouldn't have the independence to choose their future goals, while all other fathers agreed to let their kids choose goals and ambitions. They want the children to aim and work for their ambitions as they wish to grow up (FGD #02, 23-12-2019). One mother shares that she wants to make things easy for her son, and she doesn't pressure him. She wants to support her son to become what he wants to be. (Interview #01, 24-12-2019) Another mother doesn't think her son's independence needs identification right now. She will focus on her thoughts only until the son gets more mature. (Interview #02, 24-12-2019) A father is clear that he would only allow his daughter to decide her academic goals; other goals are not hers to negotiate. (Interview #03, 24-12-2019) Another father has not thought about this idea of provisioning independence. His son is regular in studies, and he thinks it might not be required now (Interview #04, 24-12-2019).

The discussions clearly show us that the number of fathers agreeing to empower their children 'to choose' is more than that of mothers. The mothers have shared fear for the children, and they seek not to allow many free thoughts right now. It gives us narratives on female confidence in making decisions based on their experiences. Similarly, the fathers are more vocal on the freedom to choose, which shows signs of their growing up with some level of independence. Suppose we connect the dots from previous findings where we have found the elders taking most of the decisions for others. In that case, we can quickly see how this trend might be affecting mothers more as they work around the houses and face blockade in their independence.

#### **4.1.7 Parents' intentions to support children in achieving academic goals**

The mothers share a similar tone of expectations regarding their wishes to support their children with tutors, a better environment, shifting to towns, and discussion with the father to decide their children's academic success. One mother shares that she doesn't know about the kind of support in the coming days (FGD #01, 23-12-2019). Four of the fathers are ready to commit to doing anything to make sure that their children are academically successful. One father is hopeful to know from his kid about the kind of support the kid needs. Another father has no idea about these issues, and he will wait to understand what comes up. Two fathers are happy to engage with their kids and make sure their kids are on track through tuition and other extra study support (FGD #02, 23-12-2019). One Mother shares her desire to keep her son on a good diet, and she would seek help from her father's family if needed as she has limited finances to support colleges and further studies (Interview #01, 24-12-2019). And a mother has expressed that she has minimal resources, and she is scared of how much support she can provide to her son. So, she is not confident now to give any words (Interview #02, 24-12-2019). A father has high hopes and confidence in sharing all the logistical support for his daughter's academic future. He wants his daughter to succeed in any way possible. (Interview #03, 24-12-2019) Another father has expressed his desire to ask for people, especially in-laws, to support around her so that his kid grows into a beautiful human being. (Interview #04, 24-12-2019)

Most of the parents are eager to support in every possible way. Only two of the parents are not thinking a lot about this issue of 'supporting.' It indicates the desire of the parents to get their children to a better future. Their supports are relevant to the study materials, tuition fees, and moving house temporarily. The motivation of parents is evident from here. Another point to think about- mothers are more concerned with the financial constraints, while without one father, none has expressed such fear. It tells us about the communication and economical choices for females in the community. Males are more confident in supporting their children



financially than women. One mother shares about a 'healthy diet' to help her son in achieving academic goals. No other parents have shared anything related to healthy food. This information gives us valuable insights into the awareness of the parents in terms of health and hygiene. Very few parents are aware that their support doesn't only indicate educational materials but also physical wellbeing. Having or not having the awareness impacts the ability of the parents' decision-making capacity.

Parents desire goals for academic achievement and it is aimed to get a good job. They have shared more about SSC and HSC for academic goals. One of the mothers came up with Masters for her son. Some of the parents are not thinking of the goals now. It shows how the parents less aware of the importance and need of setting academic goals. Parents have shared openly how they think involving children in the decision making would not be wise. They take the full ownership to set any goal for now. Therefore, students are not involved in the decision-making process towards setting their academic goals. Parents are very little interested to involve their children now; and they think it would be wiser to involve the voices of children after SSC or so. Most of the parents are not into having conversation with students around academic goals. A few of the parents take their kids to the work place and share the struggles to motivate for better future while sharing some gifts for good grades in the examinations. In most cases, children have no independence of sharing voices. Girls are more often subjected to marriage around secondary examination. Therefore, there is a sign of gender-based differences within the academic potentials of students. Parents believe that getting the children to a good job is a target while girls are often preferred to get married for better future. While there are these realities, parents are very eager to support their students with resources and finance as much as they can to support their children go as far possible with academic success.

## 4.2 Discussions on findings

Some families are relying more on senior members to make decisions. Lea and Beatty (2002) discuss decision making; the grandparents are often the priorities in decision making in the Indian region. So, culture has a role to play in decision-making. The working mother has high ambitions for her child to complete a Master's level of education. From Wagner (2020), we know the expectations of a working mother; a working mother shares her example of working hard. She expects a similar level of outcomes from her children's efforts. It's not unusual for the mother who works tremendously hard and maintains a family that she would desire a lot from others in the future. Parents are in a puzzle to make decisions for the upcoming years of their children. Again, Kim (2019) suggests from the study that parents emphasized how their own parents' parenting (either as adaptation or rejection) greatly influenced their parenting in the Asian context. We can connect how these parents stressed that their parents' parenting (either adaptation or rejection) greatly influenced their parenting influence and may have confused them to think clearly. We have a different context with the market for educated people than before, and the voices of traditional thoughts might have confounded the parents of this generation. Their awareness has a connection to Epstein's involvement of parents in the choices. Epstein et al. (2009) support that decision-making is essentially missing in some parents due to their engagement in the activities relevant to students. It draws attention to the lack of thinking by parents for their children. It marks some attention to how parents are exercising their consciousness for achieving the future for their children.

There are various rationales of the participants on the goals they have set for their children. These academic goals and thoughts on the ambitions of parents came in through some definite reasons. Here, the mothers have clearly defined their expectations on jobs. Epstein et al. (2009) clarified how parenting depends on the decisions and communication that happen from parents to children. Georgiou, S. N., & Tourva, A. (2007) share the idea of a job that can

expect how parents are using their parenting skills to guide their children for better jobs. It's the rationale for them as they find better jobs more connected to success in this case. Again, fathers echoed the voices of mothers. Flouris, G. (1991) illustrates how lifestyle is a consideration that can derive from parents down to the children. It can have an impact on the thought process as the children start desiring. At the same time, Epstein et al. (2009) indicate volunteering from parents can be a compelling example for the children. The father's voice gives us ideas about how his lifestyle might impact his children's lifestyle, and he wants an alternative future for the children through educational means. He volunteers in the home learning of the child. It is excellent news, but we have not seen most of the parents thinking or practicing similarly.

Parents being unable to share anything about their rationale on what they decide indicates a gap of awareness. It's more connected to decision-making, Epstein et al. (2009) discussed, where parents are less involved with children developing potential outcomes. The maintenance of assets in the house and family business is essential. Flouris, G. (1991) states parental influence in inspiring children towards a bias that parents already have. Lack of education for parents has seemed to be one of the points restricting parents' confidence in decision-making. Epstein calls for better communication from parents; the suggestion is to catch up more with school and get informed. At the same time, the majority of the parents are not in regular contact with the schools. Epstein et al. (2009) stated about communication gaps and how parents can be powerful forces when involved with children's educational process, especially with continuous communication. The parents less prioritize home learning, and tuitions being more important is a sign of parents getting little invested within educational goals for their children. The involvement of parents, suggested by Dohner-Chávez, A. (2006), within the home learning process and the communication o education within the parents and children

have positive psychological benefits for children. They feel more cared for, and their academic goals get more importance through such practices.

Two parents show high regards for the school system to motivate their children, while all other parents find means from external sources. Epstein et al. (2009) have indicated that the parents' collaboration with the community; enables parents to boost confidence in their decisions. Parents' lack of awareness in this area is crucial. Motivation has come in the form of materials within the findings. We can consider how the materialistic approach can harm the children's mindset, as Flouris, G. (1991), mentioned growing up to accomplish and desiring in return for each accomplishment. The idea of getting return can be less practical given the village and parents are having a lot of flexibility to provide material support to their children as the years pass on. Academic goal would need dedication more focused and less impacted by the external elements.

The number of fathers agreeing to empower their children 'to choose' is more than that of mothers. The trend for the mothers to feel right to restrict the independence of children's thoughts connects to their way of being each day. Epstein et al. (1997) have touched on the phenomenon of parenting. 'Parenting' to behave and challenge behaviors to be in specific patterns influence children towards being more dependent in the decision-making process. Most parents are eager to support their children in every possible way. They are mentioning supports through study materials, tuition fees, and moving house temporarily. According to Epstein et al. (1997), parents volunteering to go beyond for their children creates examples for the children to achieve their academic goals. In addition, communicating with children about the volunteering experience makes them more invested in their ecosystem and what they need to focus on to succeed.

Economic choices for females in the community seemed little from the findings. Wagner (2006) shares about the reality of women who are not working and depending more on family income by others; they are in danger to fear the possibility of asking for financial help, especially in the rural areas. Another significant point- very few parents are aware that their support through healthy diet and wellbeing steps. Epstein et al. (1997) consider parenting skills to have the considerations of wellbeing for a child and how parents communicate the information to their children. As the child grows up with capacity, parents would need to gather more understanding on the wellbeing of the child. The growth of mind and that of body are connected; the social element of sharing similar ambitions by the parents and child come through many collaborative actions like- taking care of each other's wellbeing. It enables the child to express and parents can create a better supportive environment for their child to achieve.

The voices of mothers are more dependent on the family issues and what the fathers would agree for. Kokal (2015) found one of the critical gaps identified relates to the lack of comprehensive grievance and complaints mechanisms, limiting women's ability to make their voices heard. It has been a common voice found through the words of the women or mothers who shared. Noe of the mothers or caregivers has shared any voice where they are aware of their situation and want to empower their female child in the decision making on their own. It builds a lot of concerns for the coming generations in the area as well.

It is evident that parents are setting goals based on the degree so that students get a better employment. Parents are setting the goals and students voices for their ambitions are prioritized, making students indirect actors in the process. Hart (1997) clearly states as children shared opinions in developing a video, it developed self-determination for the children making them creators not just consumers. Therefore, parents need to involve children in the decision making process more to ensure the children are empowered, confident and creators. Again, the

parents are also thinking of male and female students' academic success differently. The risk of female students moving out of studies is more prominent. With female voices being less powerful, Wagner (2006) shares the necessity of equal voices in the family to have a better environment for the children to thrive. Thus, voices of girls and mothers need more emphasis within the community. In addition, parents are very little attached with school-related activities. They have limited interactions with teachers to discuss on the students' performance and Progress. Epstein (1997) clarifies the parents' communication with teachers develop parents' awareness on the kind of support the students might need. Hence, it is highly significant for parents to stay engaged with the school system and teachers.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study has identified significant points related to parents' thoughts on their influence and their lack of awareness in partnering with the school and taking ownership of their role as active co-developers of the school system. The discussions have enlightened us with specific needs. Parents' involvement with schools and teachers, students' involvement in decision making process, and parents' role in working for equal opportunities and voices for male and female students are the significant ones. The discussions helped us to be aware on the role of schools and government institutions towards meeting the needs found within this study.

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

Parents are the primary caregivers. They dream about a fruitful future for their children. For this study, we have found most parents thinking through the academic achievements around SSC or HSC; not very ambitious in this modern era of education. The majority of parents find jobs and financial gains in the coming years to measure successful education. We have much more to achieve through educational attainment, not only financial gains. While parents are dealing with confusion about academic goals and the rationales for choosing the plans, the cultural role the parents take on is dangerous. They often are more directive and indicative of their voices only. The perception parents hold to inspire empowering new generations is quite limited within the mindset of the parents. We have found mothers being more vulnerable to financial constraints than fathers. It passes on similar expectations and information to the children about gender roles as well. We find little to no awareness of such kind within the parents. With all the confusion and struggles, most parents are ready to support their children in every possible way. The context and social structure may have put them in a challenging

station, yet their eagerness to play their roles as parents is inspiring. The study has identified the priorities for the parents to rethink their involvement strategies. Achieving academic goals for children would be more accessible with parents understanding their roles and the kind of engagements they need to serve their children.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

This study has brought us some key recommendations for our parents, schools and government. For the sake of better understanding and connections, the suggestions are in a list below-

i) Parents must communicate with the children and the school through PTA (Parents-Teachers Association) regularly.

ii) Parenting skills need more emphasis. Parents must seek to learn parenting skills from the nearby school administrators or local government facilities. Government needs to emphasize on this issue so that parents engage in voluntary activities within and outside the educational process of the students.

iii) Parents must communicate more with the community about the children and form a better collective. They need more engagements to drive better decisions to support the children in the community with educational prospects. This collaboration will allow them to find ways beyond the traditional ones they live in. Their solutions are in their hands.

iv) Schools need to engage parents in the home learning process where students can interact with parents and keep learning. Government would need to enable teachers to mobilize this practice within their delegated catchment area.

The steps mentioned above are a few based on the findings of this study. Parents want the best for their kids. As parents are the more permanent members in achieving the students'



educational goals, parents' influence and awareness of how they influence their children are immensely significant for the school system and the community. It's a warning for parents that the power of parents' role can't have an undermined view with its implications resulting in long-term difficulties for the students. Therefore, the parts of parents are almost irreplaceable towards achieving children's academic success. They need a guiding framework, as we have mentioned in Epstein's parental involvement framework.

The schools and government have their roles in the process as well. Schools can create more projects and enable the parents' teachers' associations. This will allow parents get more involved in school activities and get better exposure to their children's education updates. At the same time government needs to emphasize the parents' involvement in the schooling and study process of each student. When there will be dedicated policy, instructions and follow up interventions on the parental involvement in education of the children, it will motivate, inspire and empower parents to understand their children better and aim higher academic goals for the future.

### **5.3 Recommendation for Further Study**

I want to share few aspects where more research needs to happen in the coming years within the same area of parents influencing students' future academic goals-

1. Conduct a qualitative study to determine the changes in parents' thought process orientations to set long-term academic expectations based on gender.
2. Conduct a qualitative study to identify school initiatives that foster parents' engagement and enhance students' mindset towards being more ambitious.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Letter of Consent

Date: March 15, 2018

Research Title: Parents' perception towards setting children's academic goals/

Researcher's name: Hasibur Rahman Sohan

Dear Sir:

I am Hasibur Rahman Sohan, a master's student at BRAC University's Institute of Educational Development and currently I am conducting a research on the parents' perception on their roles in shaping children's future academic goals. This is part of my Master of Education degree program. I invite you to be an interview / FGD participant in my research.

I am requesting you to be a participant because you have the experience as a parent. The objective of my research is to know how parents think about their roles for the benefit of their children. My questions would be generally in this line and include the thought process regarding the roles being played by the parents these days, how they see their influence in the decisions of children, what they really want from the children etc.

The interviews are designed to be for around an hour and the FGD may take one and half hours. Please feel completely free to decide if you would at all participate in this process or not. You can even withdraw in the middle of the process also. That would in no way influence our future relationships. All the data collected would be used for research purposes only, and the data will be used only for the research purpose anonymously.

This research probably has the potential to find ways to create awareness among parents for the education better by understanding the details of the situation in today's Bangladesh. Your questions and suggestions in this regard are always welcome.

I will give you a copy of this form for you to keep. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice after signing this form if you choose to discontinue participation in this study. Sincere thanks for your time.

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Signature of Participant & Date

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Signature of Researcher & Date

## Appendix B: Interview Guide

### Questionnaire

Name:

Occupation:

Gender:

Age:

Date:

1. What do you think about the academic goals of your children?
2. Which academic goals do you aspire for your children? Why?
3. Do you spend time talking to your children about future academic goals for them? Why or Why not?
4. Which goals are more important to you- 'your ones for the children' or 'those of children for themselves'?
5. How much would you motivate your children to meet the future academic goals set by you? Why or why not?
6. Do you think about the independence of your children to choose their career on their own? Why do you think this way? Can you explain a bit more?
8. Do you feel invested in supporting your children for their academic goals that match your expectations? If yes, how do you want to support it? If not, why?

## FGD Transcripts

Key Question-01: What are the thoughts parents have for the academic goals of their children?

- Academic Goals

FGD #01 Mothers, Dec 23, 2019

P1: Did I think like this? No. We have limited resources. I think SSC can be one thing I would like to share. The family will say more about what will happen.

P2: Boys will grow and share what they want. I want to know from him.

P3, P4, P5: Grandparents will decide and inform us more about the girl's future. We want HSC at least.

- Rationale for the goals

P4: They will help future students and family members.

P6: What can I say? It's important. Everyone says that education is necessary.

P2: My elder son has gone through SSC. I can't afford the illegal pay for jobs. I will ask him. If he wants to study more, I will try to help because he will need jobs.

- Communication

P7: I speak at times. I share my example with my children. I tell him that you can't be like us. We could not read and write. You can be better, please study. I want my kid to be careful from now. That's why I share these examples.

P1, P3, P4: no, we don't communicate normally. We have the thoughts in our minds. I think Grade 5 is not a very mature age to talk with kids about the future seriously.

P6: I didn't share because he is regular at school. So, I will share when there is any gap within my kids' studies. I think I will share later.

P5: I didn't realize that I could share the information with kids now. I just dream on my own. I do talk to her father.

P6: She is not mature enough now; I don't want to put pressure on my daughter in this early age about what to achieve. It is very serious for the age.

Key Question-02: How do parents set goals?

- Priority of who set the goals

P6: My dream is more important than the kids because I know more and understand better about these cases.

P7: I agree; I will choose my decisions.

P2: I can dream with life experiences, so my dreams about the kid are of high priority. Therefore, I will care more about my set of goals for my kid.

P1, P2: We will listen to them when they grow a bit more. They know very little. They always speak about sports only. They are too young to say these.

- Motivation for children

P2, P3: We always talk to teachers about the problems.

P5: I always ask my daughter to earn marks and share my expectations about academic results.

P7, P6: Always, we try to give them dolls and bat with balls, and footballs as well so that they study better. We try a lot.

Key Question-03: What do the parents think about children's freedom of choice and support the choices of the children?

- Independence of choices

P3: Student will decide his/her capacity.

P4: Students can't be left to choose on their own what to do in life and academics. They will go astray!

P5: No way, they should n't be left on their own.

P1; I would choose all the things for my kids.

P2: I agree that I talk to the kids at times and tell him all the things to do and not to do.

- Support towards meeting expectations

P6: I have asked his father and tried to manage the clarity on my kids' next academic goals.



P2: I want to make my kid a real human being.

P7: I always support and I am ready to support my girl. She is a very good student.

P3: I can see that there is no teacher around us; I will change schools and send them further towards the main roads. I will support him in better situations.

P1; I know that private teachers are not there in our community. I plan to send my kid to a teacher in Shalbahan and Bhojon pur (a further place from my house) for educational support.

P4: I think that I don't know but I think a lot of these boundaries.

## Interview Transcripts

Key Question-01: What are the thoughts parents have for the academic goals of their children?

- Academic Goals

Interview #01 Mother, Dec 24, 2019

P1: I want my boy to become a very good human being. I have not thought clearly about this issue but I have a thought on BA honours or Masters for the kid. I am going to observe for the year of Grade 5.

- Rationale for the goals

P1: I see my kid growing in seriousness. I see him working with the things shared from school. I am happy for him now. I want him to get a big job. I don't know about big jobs. But I want him to study and work in government jobs. I have less idea about what he will study and I have decided that Master's will make my kid avoid all the stresses I am going through now working so hard to manage my household.

- Communication

P1: I always talk about the stories of his uncle and make sure that he gets inspired about life. He can watch his uncle around him. I never shared my thoughts with my kid before about Masters or studies so far. I am poor and if I give words and find that we can't support education, it will be worse. I have none other than my sons and husband. I want a successful family but my assets are limiting me engage with such conversation. I was afraid and I can tell if you ask me to. I have already discussed it with his father.

Key Question-02: How do parents set goals?

- Priority of who set the goals

P1: My dreams are important because he will not get a lot of things due to his age. I will focus on the goals I have set.

- Motivation for children

P1: I can share stories with him from my life. I can share my dreams with him. I haven't done this yet. I don't think he understands anything by now.

- Independence of choices

P1: I will tell him about the goals. And, I will make things easy for him so that he can do what he wants to do. I will allow him to be what he wants to be. I want to agree with him about his wishes going forward because I don't want him to go astray and make bad decisions with misunderstandings. I have seen a boy beside my house ruining his life by wasting money from the house. I saw a girl who moves around the locality and does nothing to support family or anyone. She got completely out of social norms and that girl hit her mother. These situations made me feel scared that my relationship with my boy needs to be safe and good.

- Support towards meeting expectations

P1: I will do my best. I will ask from my father's family. And, I want to make sure my boy gets what he wants. But I am not that sure how much it will be possible. I will make sure that he is on a good diet and sit with him for studies. I will be with him asking for his updates and next phases of life. I will be there to solve issues he might face on the way of his education or day to day life.