

**EXPLORING THE EFFECT OF FOLKTALES ON CHILDREN'S
DEVELOPMENT IN THE EARLY YEARS: A PERCEPTION STUDY
OF PARENTS & TEACHERS**

Submitted By:

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

Brac Institute of Educational Development

Brac University

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/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.

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The thesis/project titled Exploring “The Effect of Folktales on Children’s Development in
The Early Years: A Perception Study of Parents & Teachers”

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Ethics Statement

Title of Thesis Topic: **Exploring the Effect of Folktales on Children's Early Years: A Perception Study of Parents & Teachers**

Student name: **Sarwat Sarah Sarwar**

1. Source of population: **Parents of children aged 3-5 years and living in Dhaka City, and Teachers employed in pre-primary schools in Dhaka city**

2. Does the study involve (yes, or no)

- a) Physical risk to the subjects **No**
- b) Social risk **No**
- c) Psychological risk to subjects **No**
- d) discomfort to subjects **No**
- e) Invasion of privacy **No**

3. Will subjects be clearly informed about (yes or no)

- a) Nature and purpose of the study **Yes**
- b) Procedures to be followed **Yes**
- c) Physical risk **Yes**
- d) Sensitive questions **Yes**
- e) Benefits to be derived **Yes**
- f) Right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study **Yes**
- g) Confidential handling of data **Yes**
- h) Compensation and/or treatment where there are risks or privacy is involved **Yes**

4. Will Signed verbal consent be required (yes or no)
- a) from study participants **Yes**
 - b) from parents or guardian **No**
 - c) Will precautions be taken to protect anonymity of subjects? **Yes**
5. Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee:
- a) Proposal **Yes**
 - b) Consent Form **Yes**
 - c) Questionnaire or interview schedule **Yes**

Ethical Review Committee:

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Abstract

During the kindergarten stage, folktales can play a critical role in fostering children's socio-emotional and language development as well as build children's imagination. Folktales contain valuable morals and philosophies and foster important language skills in children. They are also deeply rooted in the community and play an integral role in shaping children's cultural identity. In the 21st century, storytelling and folktales is becoming obscure in Bangladesh. This study was conducted to identify parents & teachers' perceptions regarding the effect of folktales on children's socio-emotional & language development, current storytelling practices Bangladesh, and the relevancy of folktales as cultural artefacts. Findings show that both groups believe that age-appropriate, child-friendly folktales can foster children's moral development, social skills and language; they are also as well as important for children's cultural identity. Findings show that folktales are disappearing in urban Dhaka due to easy access to digital entertainment for children, changing family structures and low parent-child-family interactions. To preserve the heritage of folktales, parents and teachers suggest creating a suitable environment for storytelling, increased interaction between caregivers & children for story time, suggestions to incorporate more folktales into the school curricula, and introduce folktales to children, through modern technology.

Keywords: Socio-Emotional & Language Development; Folktales; Cultural Identity; Moral Development; Digital Age; Interaction & Storytelling

Dedication

This research is dedicated to my family and friends, for providing me with support, love and patience throughout, and for helping me out in various ways.

A special thank you to my husband for giving me encouragement throughout the course, and for always pushing me to explore new horizons.

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Table of Contents

Chapter I: Introduction & Background.....	13
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	16
1.3. Purpose of the Study.....	18
1.4. Significance & Justification of the Study.....	18
1.5 Research Topic & Questions.....	19
1.6. Operational Definition.....	21
Chapter II: Literature Review.....	23
Chapter III: Methodology.....	32
3.1. Research Approach.....	32
3.2 Research Site.....	32
3.3. Research Participants.....	32
3.4. Participants Selection Procedure.....	33
3.5. Data Collection Tool.....	33
3.6. Data Collection Method and Procedure.....	344
3.7.Data Management and Analysis.....	344
3.8. Validity & Reliability of Guideline	35
3.9. Ethical Issues.....	35

3.10.Limitations of the Study.....	35
Chapter IV: Findings & Discussion.....	36
Discussion.....	49
Conclusion.....	61
Recommendation.....	62
References.....	65
Appendices.....	70

List of Acronyms

- i. Early Childhood Development: ECD
- ii. Socio-Emotional Development: SED
- iii. Early Learning Development Standards: ELDS
- iv. In-Depth Interviews: IDI

Chapter 1

Introduction & Background

In the kindergarten stage, it has been observed that folktales and rhymes play a very important educational role in the development of children (Huiyu, 2018). From western folktales such as Little Red Riding Hood, Snow White & the Seven Dwarves and more, to ancient *Puthis* and *Gitikas* of Bengal such as *Mohua*, *Chandrabati*, *Thakurma'ar Jhuli* ('Grandmother's Bag of Curious Tales' (Parvin, 2009)) and traditional rhymes, these stories and rhymes teach children about morals, promote language development and improve children's imagination & creativity. The ages 3-6 years is a particularly critical time for children (Huiyu, 2018) in regards to language development. During this time, children learn to imitate sounds and words, and try to memorize a language. Providing children with a rich selection of folktales, full of rhymes and exciting narratives, can foster this language learning period greatly; "The language of folktales is the crystallization of language" (Huiyu, 2018). Many, but not all, folktales have elements of fantasy such as anthropomorphic or talking animals, heroes and heroines setting off on grand, out-of-the-world adventures in castles or fighting dragons, and so on. These fantasy elements fuel children's imagination, which bolsters their curiosity, helps them think about situations and circumstances in unfamiliar settings, and helps to keep their minds elastic and willing to grab new concepts and ideas (Yulistia, 2015). During and after storytelling children often discuss their empathetic responses (Ihalagama, 2019).

When listening to or reading folktales, children utilize both their cognitive and emotional intelligences to stay engaged and enthralled with the content and narrative of the stories.

Additionally, studies have shown that storytelling and folktales create a sense of belonging and identity for communities (Costello, 2021). Human beings have historically used the method of storytelling and story sharing to make sense of the world around them, to create a purpose for their existence and to have a shared sense of belonging, no matter what age or generation. By sharing unique tales and rhymes from the community, passed down from generation to generation, children develop a sense of inclusivity and belonging which can foster their socio-emotional development. Families sharing stories, songs and rhymes of unique characters, heroic adventures and exciting plots can foster empathy, resilience and understanding of a world beyond themselves (Costello, 2021). Through riddles, stories, myths and superstitions and more, the ancestors of this land have left their mark, for future generations to gather an insight and understanding of not only the past, but a journey within themselves as well, giving an insight into the socio-cultural and ethnic background of the region, as well as the morals, values, habits and customs of the community (Parvin, 2009). Finally, sharing traditional folktales fosters the inheritance and cultivation of local and national cultures for children (Huiyu, 2018). As such, folktales contribute greatly to the literature, customs and legacy of a community and is the root of Bangladesh's culture and heritage (Parvin, 2009). From the Maurya dynasty to the Mughal Empire, Bangladesh's traditional folklore showcases the country's diverse ethnicities, formulated from years of different groups who have resided in this land (Parvin, 2009). Transmitting these tales from generation to generation through

children instils a love for one's culture and community and a desire to retain and preserve traditional practices (Huiyu, 2018).

This research attempts to explore the unique stories and rhymes of the people, the lessons they have to share, and how relevant they are for urban children's socio-emotional and language development. As of 2022 Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh, is a megacity with over 44, 215, 107 million people (Bangladesh Population & Housing Census, 2022), coming from different socio-cultural backgrounds and residing in various socio-economic dwelling areas. Therefore, this location was selected to gather a diverse range of data regarding current storytelling practices in Dhaka city, and what roles folktales & traditional rhymes play in the lives of children and families in the city. For this research, parents from different income settings, with children in the early years, and teachers from various pre-primary schools were selected to discuss their perceptions regarding folktales and rhymes and their outlook on children's socio-emotional and language development. It is to be noted that there have been a few researches conducted on folkloric practices of Bangladesh ((Ahmed, 2014) & (Billah *et al*, 2022). Ahmed (2014) focuses on understanding the themes and types of folktales located in the Sylhet region of Bangladesh, while Billah *et al* (2022) discusses on the sustainability of folktales in the digital age through computation of the Bengali language via natural language processing systems. This research primarily differs from the others in that it focuses on understanding the perspectives and opinions regarding the effect of folktales on children's early childhood development (with focus on socio-emotional and language development) and their cultural identity. It is hoped that this study will build on already existing research by opening avenues for exploration in Bangladesh in regards to Early

Childhood Development (ECD) and traditional folktales and rhymes. Additionally, the landscape of folktales and storytelling in 21st century Bangladesh will also be discussed in detailed form in this research, and how relevant these practices are in the digital age, at home and in school. In Bangladesh, this particular type of research can open up avenues for exploration on folktales as an instrument for positive childcare and stimulation in the early years, as well as a key pedagogical learning tool for teachers working in the pre-primary level.

The first chapter of this study will outline the statement of the problem, the justification of the study, and the research questions which will guide the study throughout. The second chapter will discuss the relevant literature review collected and compiled by the researcher. The fourth chapter will outline the methodology process, including the study sample, sample size, data collection method, research location, while the final chapter will focus on the findings which have been collected from the sample, as well as the discussion, suggested recommendations and conclusion of the study.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

In the modern age, as society moves towards a more digital age (Huiyu, 2018), and as schools and societies are focused more on children's academic pursuits (Alam, 2022), storytelling and folktales are being pushed to the sidelines (Dorji, 2010). Alam (2022) argues that, globally and in Bangladesh, teachers and parents are putting increasing pressure on children's academic pursuits, focusing intently on getting them ready for primary school, which can hamper children's developmental outcomes. All this has the potential to create a slow extinction of storytelling practices, and the relevancy of folktales and fables in the modern world and would impact society and communities

detrimentally by creating a loss of valuable cultural and traditional learning for modern-day children (Dorji, 2010). The valuable lessons and customs which help foster children's development will disappear slowly with time.

Additionally, in Bangladesh, the percentage of mobile phone users between the ages of five years to seven years is nearly 55.9% or half of the children from this age group (Sultana, 2022). In many cases, parents and caregivers would use mobile phones to keep the children distracted through passive engagement in the mobile phones, with easy access to short, animated videos during feeding time, before bedtime, or even in restaurant outings. This is more than the recommended dosage of mobile usage suggested by World Health Organization (WHO)'s Guidelines on Physical Activity & Sedentary Behaviour (2020), where it was recommended that children below the age of five years should have less than one hour of screen time and focus on more physical activities as well as quality sedentary activities such as storytelling, reading and so on. Changing family structures, a break-down of traditional joint family practices, increased participation of family members in the workforce have also resulted in lack of time within families to foster traditional practices such as storytelling, play, etc. (Samad, 2015).

Additionally, in Bangladesh, there is a dearth of research on the effect of folktales on children's development. What little information is available mostly consists of collections of stories and videos in blog posts and scattered newspaper articles. While other East and South Asian countries including China (Huiyu, 2018), India (Dey, 2015), Sri Lanka (Ihalagama, 2019) and Bhutan (Dorji, 2010) have published detailed research papers on

different aspects of the importance of folktales on children (on child development, culture preservation and more), Bangladesh has remained behind in the race.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

This research is presented to understand the effect of folktales on children's socio-emotional development, language development and cultural identity, from the perceptions of parents and teachers, and will attempt to identify whether participants see any discernible change in children's socio-emotional development and language due to the practice of narrating folktales and rhymes.

Through interviews with parents and teachers, the research will also work to identify the old stories participants grew up reading and listening to, their outlook on folk narratives and its role in fostering children's cultural identity, whether participants engage with and continue the tradition of storytelling with their children, whether teachers implement the tool of storytelling in their classrooms, and how they can be adapted to in the digital age.

It is hoped that, with this proposal, there opens up more avenues of exploration for research on folktales & child development in Bangladesh, as well as ways for cultural preservation through the archiving of old stories and continuance of folk narratives.

1.3. Significance and Justification of the Study

As mentioned, there is little research being conducted in regards to folktales and their impact on children's development in Bangladesh. Existing source materials include a few blogs and scattered articles. It is, therefore, important to create a stepping stone which will discuss the relevancy of folktales on children's ECD and whether parents focus on storytelling practices and folktales to foster parent-child interaction. The research will

also address the role and number of folktales in different school curricula, and their relevancy as a pedagogical tool. Additionally, there is a plethora of rich oral narratives that have been passed down from generation to generation in this region (Parvin, 2009), which showcase the rich heritage of Bangladesh, the morals, emotions, rhymes and perspectives of the people of this country. In the digital age, steps need to be taken to ensure an archive of stories collected from across this region, which showcases the rich tapestry of traditional folktales of Bangladesh where ancient lessons, values and morals are preserved for future generations. This research hopes to explore the nature of storytelling in current Bangladeshi contexts, how traditional folktales can be translated and passed into modern contexts in the digital age such as videos and audios, and whether parents & teachers find these modalities to be as effective as traditional oral narratives.

Through this research, it is hoped that the unique folktales of Bangladesh can be brought to the global limelight. This is to ensure not only the preservation of culture and identity of the country, in all its myriad lenses, but also bring forward a greater interest and future study on the impact of traditional stories and rhymes on the development of Bangladeshi children and the retention of cultural identity in different circumstances.

1.4. Research Topic & Research Questions

Research Topic: Role of folktales, rhymes and storytelling on children's socio-emotional development, language and cultural identity

Research shows that age-appropriate folktales and rhymes have various roles to play in fostering different developmental domains of children in the early years (Huiyu, 2018). However, in modern times, the practice of storytelling and folk literature is becoming

obsolete (Dorji, 2010). Nevertheless, modern technology can be used to ensure that storytelling practices and child-friendly folktales and traditional rhymes are conveyed to children of the 21st century (Dorji, 2010).

Research Questions:

- i. What are the traditional folk stories & rhymes of Bangladesh?
 - a. What are the folktales and rhymes parents listened to or read in their childhood?
 - b. What stories and rhymes do parents narrate to their children?
 - c. What types of folktales and rhymes do teachers narrate to children in pre-primary schools?
- ii. What are parents' and teachers' understanding on the effect of traditional stories and rhymes on children's development?
 - a. What are parents' & teachers' opinions regarding the role of folktales and rhymes on children's socio-emotional development
 - b. What are parents' and teachers' perceptions on the effect of folktales and rhymes on children's language development?
 - c. What are parents' and teachers' beliefs in regards to folktales and the development of children's cultural identity?
- iii. What are parents' and teachers' perceptions regarding folktales and storytelling practices in modern day Bangladesh?
 - a. What steps can be taken to preserve folktales in the digital age?

1.5. Operational Definition

i. Definition of Folktales: According to the Oxford English Dictionary the word ‘folktale’ or ‘folklore’ is defined as very old and traditional stories of a particular place, passed on to people in an oral form. The words are, respectively, a combination of the word folk (people from a particular country or region who have a particular way of life), tale (a story created using the imagination, one that is full of action and adventure) and lore (the stories and traditions of a particular group or people, shared orally and not written down). As such, it can be said that folktale or folklore are the creations from people’s imaginations (Parvin, 2009). In this proposal the terms ‘Folktale’ and ‘Folklore’ will be used interchangeably.

ii. Cultural Acquisition or Identity: Cultural acquisition or identity is determined by different socio-cultural forces a child grows up surrounded by, including language, ethnicity, myths, traditions, etcetera (Stavrou, 2015b). Children grow up to imbibe these elements from their culture, taking in the wisdom of different generations or folks. As such, folk culture is an important component which seals the heritage and knowledge of different communities. Folktales introduce children to their cultural history and provide a source for both intellectual and socio-emotional development (Stavrou, 2015b).

iii. Socio-Emotional Development (SED): The **Massachusetts Standards for Preschool and Kindergarten Social Emotional Learning and Approaches to Play and Learning** (Love, 2015) follow a framework based on five interrelated sets of competencies to assess children’s socio-emotional development. These are: Self-

Awareness (understanding oneself, developing self-perception and confidence), Self-Management (impulse control and stress management), Social Awareness and moral development (developing empathy, understanding what is right and what is wrong, social attitudes & behaviours, and recognizing diversity and respecting differences), Relationship Skills (ability to resolve conflicts, communicate positively and provide and seek help when required), and Responsible Decision Making (demonstrates personal and social responsibility and understand that actions have consequences (Love, 2015)). SED includes children's experiences, expressions, management of emotions and how to develop rewarding relationships with others, i.e. the community (Cohen *et al*, 2005).

The Bangladesh Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) (2020) states that children's socio-emotional development can be defined as a child's ability to love and respect oneself as well as others, maintain emotional regulation and build self-confidence, self-awareness and individuality. The Bangladesh ELDS (2020) also adds moral development, cultural identity, sharing a love and awareness of one's heritage & culture, love for nature and other creatures, fostering empathy, the ability to share & develop friendship, as well as creating positive interaction with parents, family members, neighbours, and peers to be, among others, positive milestones of socio-emotional development.

iv. Language Development: Language Development refers to how children understand and master sound, grammar and the connection between words, sounds and meaning ("Language Development in Children: 0-8 years", 2021). Typically, children learn to acquire language through expansion of vocabulary before the age of 5 years. Language development fosters support for other forms of development, including cognitive and

socio-emotional. Communicating with children by talking, sharing stories and reading books fosters positive language development (“Language Development in Children: 0-8 years”, 2021).

According to the Bangladesh ELDS (2020), children’s language development is defined as, among many other things, as children’s ability to listen to and understand sounds and words as well as their ability to conceptualize words and sounds into sentences which convey meaning and intention. Through language development, children are able to read and understand written words and alphabets, convey their understanding when looking at pictures, and formulate the capacity for understanding societal rules and regulations as well as for communication.

Chapter II:

Literature Review

2.1 Types of Folktales

In this proposal the terms ‘Folktale’ and ‘Folklore’ will be used interchangeably. A few, common examples of folktales are:

Fairy Tales: These are magical stories of fairies, goblins, elves, etc. (in western literature), *pori*, *shakchunni*, *rakkhosh* and *petni* (in Bangladeshi & South Asian literature), *djinns* and *ghouls* (Arabian literature) and their interactions with ordinary human beings (Roos, 2022). *Ghumanto Puri* (‘The Sleepy Mansion’), *Shaath Bhai Champa* (‘Seven Brothers of Champa’) (Parvin, 2009), ‘Sleeping Beauty’, ‘Snow-White

& the Seven Dwarves’, ‘Tales of a Thousand and One Nights’, etc. are examples of fairy tales.

Fables: These are allegorical stories with moral lessons, usually with anthropomorphic animals (Roos, 2022). Some examples of fables are the stories from Aesop’s fables such as ‘The Hare and the Tortoise’, ‘The Fox and the Grapes’, ‘The Goose that Laid the Golden Eggs’, etc.

Tall Tale: Exaggerated stories, sometimes about real people, which have been greatly exaggerated (Roos, 2022). ‘Jack and the Beanstalk’ is an example of a tall tale.

Myths: Myths are stories which are used to explain a phenomenon of nature or the world (Roos, 2022). These stories are passed down through time, and often feature ancient pagan gods and goddesses, or heroes and heroines setting off on great adventures. For example, the Greek stories of the adventures of Hercules are considered to be myths.

Ghost Stories: Scary, horror stories passed down from generation to generation.

There are a few other types of folktales, such as trickster tales, origin tales, etc.

Additionally, folk songs, riddles and rhymes are also an important category of folktales and folklores (Roos, 2022).

Examples of folktales from the region of Bengal and Bangladesh include, but are not limited to, the following (Parvin, 2009):

a. *Puthi:* *Puthis* are a collection of folktales and religious stories of ancient rural Bengal, composed by Munshis or writers for the entertainment and education of the masses (Parvin, 2009). *Puthis* have an important role in the folkloric practices of this region.

Stories from *Thakurma 'ar Jhuli* such as *Suo Rani Duo Rani*, *Shukhi Dukkhi* are considered to be *Puthis*.

b. *Gitikas*: Epic ballads which narrate a single event or story (Parvin, 2009). Most of these ballads were composed by rural poets and stories often revolved around a true story or incident that happened many years ago. *Maimansingha Gitika*, a collection of folk ballads from the Mymensingh region of Bangladesh, is a famous example.

c. Folk Songs: Folk songs are a core aspect of Bangladeshi culture (Parvin,2009). These songs are usually composed by rural communities and themes usually revolve around the expanse of human emotions, connection to Nature, the relation between God & human beings, etc. *Baul* songs, composed and sung by ancient *Bauls* (mystical minstrels), is an example of traditional Bangladeshi folk songs.

Additionally, rhymes, lullabies and traditional riddles are also essential aspects of Bangladeshi folktales.

2.2 On the Importance of Traditional Folktales for Children's Socio-Emotional & Language Development

Although folktales affect children's development in a multitude of ways, for the purpose of this research, our primary focus will be on children's socio-emotional development and language development through folktales.

Imagination & Socio-Emotional Prowess: There have been several international researches conducted on the effect of traditional folktales on children's development. In regards to the effect of folktales on children's socio-emotional development several studies have shown that these stories open up children's prowess of imagination, foster

curiosity, and help them think about familiar things in unfamiliar ways (Yulistia, 2015). Folktales help children live through the trials of the heroes and heroines, and help them develop their decision-making process, and understand the consequences of different decisions. Through the development of imagination, children understand the nuggets of truth hidden beneath the magical and curious tales, shielded by cultural fears and values (Yulistia, 2015).

Moral Development: Some studies have shown how folktales also have several positive benefits on children's health, their ethics and morals on life, and even on how they resolve conflict (VisikoKnox-Johnson, 2016). Folktales have an important role to play in fostering children's moral education (Huiyu, 2018). Through the use of colourful characters and unique plotlines, these stories instil different learning lessons in children such as perseverance, diligence, honesty, courage, safety, and more. Different stories discuss different themes; in western literature, the story of the 'Three Little Pigs' foster the concept of resilience and protection while the story of 'Cinderella' discusses the effect of pride and generosity on children (Hohr, 2000). In Bangladesh, the *Maimansingha Gitika* sing themes of love, loss and their impact on different social conflicts (Parvin, 2009). These perceptions remain ingrained in the minds of children, where they weave context and understanding using their imagination and creativity. Through folklore, children learn how difficulties can be overcome, the value of kindness, and becoming empathetic individuals in a community (Huiyu, 2018). Folktales help children process their doubts, anxieties, and their inner and external conflicts. Through such stories, children can explore new ways to express their "existential-developmental anxieties" in an effective manner (Shekhawat *et al*, 2018).

Development of Cultural Identity: In South Asian studies, a study conducted in Sri Lanka on understanding how the relationship between folktale practices and culture communication can foster child socialization (Ihalagama, 2019), explains that folktales are useful tools towards socialisation and cultural acquisition of the child. Cultural acquisition or identity, is determined by different socio-cultural forces a child grows up surrounded by, including language, ethnicity, myths, traditions, etcetera (Stavrou, 2015b). Children grow up to imbibe these elements from their culture, taking in the wisdom of different generations or folks. As such, folk culture is an important component which seals the heritage and knowledge of different communities. Folktales introduce children to their cultural history and provide a source for both intellectual and socio-emotional development (Stavrou, 2015b). Through such tales, children try to understand different contexts, situations and philosophies, under the guise of fantastical characters and plots, about not only the world around them, but also within themselves. One study identifies that the structure of old stories, the cut-out heroes, heroines & villains and the easy-to-follow storylines of traditional tales can foster children's ability to build their own identity and understanding of themselves and the world around them, unencumbered by external facets (Shekhawat *et al*, 2018).

Conceptualization & Crystallization of Language: Several researches have also discussed the impact of folktales on children's language development and acquisition of words. Through folklore, children not only learn language, but the effective, meaningful and engaging usage of language (Nhung, 2016). These stories also provide children with the ability to use their creativity, understand negotiations and proper interactions between individuals in the real world. Studies have shown that, in regards to language, children

orient towards meaning instead of form (Nhung, 2016). Folktales usually have a common structure (Nhung, 2016) with an opening (e.g. “Once upon a time,”), with an introduction of cut-out characters who are human beings, mythical creatures such as fairies and elves, anthropomorphic animals and so on). Following a description of the setting (e.g. a forest, a village, a castle, a riverside, etc.) the tales introduce the problem or dilemma, along with a series of obstacles and barriers which the protagonist(s) need to overcome. Finally, the resolution of events brings the story full circle, where usually the good wins over the bad, the evil queen is killed by the brave prince, etc. The story resolves the characters’ future by ending with a formulaic expression (usually with “And they all lived happily ever after.”). Folktales provide meaningful, comprehensible content for children to decipher meaning and understanding from (Nhung, 2016). In folktales, characters from different communities interact and communicate with one another as they would in real life and young children are provided with a rich tapestry of stories, themes and contexts to weave through and make sense of (Nhung, 2016). Folktales have usually used oral narration as its vehicle which creates scope for children’s listening and speaking vocabulary. Oral storytelling also engages children to listen, remember and participate in (Nhung, 2016).

2.3 On Violence, Negativity and the Duality of Folktales

While there are many researches on the positive effects of folktales on children’s socio-emotional development and language, some studies have outlined the dark and often violent nature of folktales, where tyrannical monsters, evil witches and cruel stepmothers or kings feature abound. The Grimm Brothers’ collection of folktales, titled, ‘*Kinder-und Hausmarchen*’ (‘Children’s and Household Tales’) often feature stories revolving around

gruesome murders, mutilation, abandonment, and so on (Singh, 2017). A branch of studies believe that these stories may bring about deep fear in children and which manifest in different ways such as a fear of darkness, trauma of non-existent monsters who have not been vanquished, nightmares, and so on (Warner, 2020). On the other side of the debate, in a piece titled, “The Importance of Being Scared” (Popova, 2022), Polish poet and Nobel Laureate Wislawa Szymborska stated that writers of fairy tales such as Hans Christian Anderson wrote not only about the joys and ecstasies of life, but also of its woes and grief. Szymborska further wrote that these stories discuss the universality of human nature and life itself, taking into account the good aspects as well as the darker side, providing children with a realistic outlook on life (Popova, 2022), what to expect, what to protect themselves from, how to look after one another, and so on. Another study discusses that through folktales, children are introduced to the complexities of human nature, one where both good and evil exist (Shekhawat *et al*, 2018). Through these tales, children come into contact with darker emotions, reactions and impulses, which they conceal in their daily lives but which are also just as important (Shekhawat *et al*, 2018). Violence and dark themes in folktales have been an ongoing debate amongst folklorists, psychologists and child-care practitioners, with different studies weighing in on both sides of the discussion.

2.4 Themes & Lessons Typically Found in Folktales

According to literature, folktales are indigenous literature which incorporate social contexts and are laden with moral lessons (Dahal & Bhatta, 2021). Generally, through anthropomorphic animals and magical settings, these stories are shared to convey wisdom of the community, the moral values of that group, the choice between good and evil,

understanding the inner workings of human nature, share what is proper behaviour, and teaching children about diverse cultures (Dahal & Bhatta, 2021). Many stories also discuss the structure and rules of a particular culture or society and an overview of character traits, their origins and so on. Folktales are often region specific and there is many a time a geographic element attached; set against the backdrop of nature's dynamic changes is the complex socio-cultural and linguistic structures which are often fantastical manifestations of social and individual issues (Dey, 2015). Dorji (2010) also relates how folktales teach lessons on filial loyalty, kindness, good thoughts and intentions, law of karma, the connection between human beings and nature, and understanding the world around us, and more. These stories are also an enjoyable way to escape reality and delve into other worlds (Dahal & Bhatta, 2021).

2.5 Fostering Traditional Folktales for Cultural Preservation

In some South Asian studies, we can understand that folktales play an integral part of a community's identity (Dey, 2015). In a study titled "Folk Tales of North East India: A Relook for Environmental Studies Classroom Transaction" Dey (2015) discusses how folktales help people understand the environment around them. In South Asia, Dey (2015) discusses how storytelling is considered an art form, where grandparents, elderlies, pundits pass on ancient fables through oral narration. Studies have shown that, for some South Asian countries, these narrations form the basic flow of values, ethics and principles of the modern South Asian individual, narrated through time and beyond by ancestors (Dey, 2015). In a study conducted in Bhutan (Dorji, 2010), folktales are essential for societies and communities as they have valuable ancient lessons to teach.

2.6 Changing Dynamics of Folktales and Storytelling in the 21st Century

In recent years, some studies argue that, as society progresses continuously towards modernity (Huiyu, 2018) and as early education is more targeted towards academic performance (Costello, 2021), traditional stories and rhymes are being pushed aside. In a study conducted in Bhutan (Dorji, 2010), it is argued that the oral tradition of storytelling has remained intact for decades. It is only in the modern times, in the age of digital entertainment, that folktales are being pushed to the sidelines and that an extinction of folktale practices can lead to a loss of valuable learning for children. Dorji (2010) further stated that, in order to ensure that folktales do not become completely extinct, it is important to align with the digital age and create online archiving systems to ensure a permanent preservation of folklores and rhymes. In Bangladesh, 47% (15,512) households have access to the Internet at home and 97% have access to mobile phones (Bangladesh Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Report, 2019). Add to that, the dynamics of family structure have been undergoing rapid changes in the last few years (Samad, 2015). Expansion of educational opportunities, easier and increased access to employment, as well as increased empowerment has led to both parents becoming active members of the Bangladesh workforce. This has obvious benefits and positive connotations, such as economic prosperity and security. However, transitions of Bangladesh's family structure have also led to a breakdown of the joint family structure and a reduced time allocated for interaction between parents, family members and children (Samad, 2015).

Chapter III:

Methodology

3.1. Research Approach & Design

This research design was an in-person qualitative study. A qualitative method was decided upon to understand similar and differing perceptions, opinions and ideologies of teachers, parents and, by extension, their families & communities. In-Depth Interviews (IDI) were utilized for the qualitative study and a tailored checklist/guideline was the research tool.

3.2. Research Site

Research was conducted primarily in Dhaka City, Bangladesh. Dhaka city is a diverse melting pot where people from different social-economic spheres live and work. Sites for research included middle-class residences, slums/low-cost housing areas, as well as private and public English and Bangla medium schools in Dhaka city. These sites were selected to ensure a diversity of participants in order to gather different forms of data.

3.3. Research Participants

Ten participants were selected for this qualitative research. Five of the participants were parents (four mothers and one father) with children aged between 3-5 years. Four of the parents are working parents, while one of the mothers moved to Dhaka city two months ago from her rural village. Five teachers were selected for the study. Three of the teachers are currently teaching in pre-primary English Medium schools. One of the teachers is a pre-primary teacher in a Government Primary School with a Pre-Primary section for

children aged between 4 to 5 years. Another teacher is a Bangla Medium teacher teaching in the junior section.

3.4. Participants Selection Procedure

For the IDIs the study population selected was based on the following inclusion criteria:

i. Selected parents were working and non-working parents, currently living in Dhaka city (but may come from other geographic locations), residing in middle-class residences or slums/low-cost housing areas, with children aged 3 to 5 years. The parents came from a mixed socioeconomic bracket. ii. Selected teachers were those employed in both English and Bangla medium primary schools as well as from Government Primary Schools with pre-primary sections. Selected schools were: South Breeze School, Sunbeams School, Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) School, Abul Bashar Government Primary School with Pre-Primary Section. iii. Age and gender limitations of parents and teachers were not included in the study.

3.5. Data Collection Tool

Research tool for this study was a tailored guideline (added to Annex) which incorporates relevant questions focusing on the research questions. The guideline focused on steering participants towards relevant research questions, and tried to ensure that participants did not stray away from the research objectives. A total of ten questions were developed and designed; the questions focused on understanding, identifying and exploring whether parents observed any effect of folktales on children's socio-emotional and language development and attempted to discover what types of, if any, folktales and rhymes parents and teachers grew up listening to, what folktales and rhymes they like to tell to their children, and exploring participants' understanding of the connection between

folktales and cultural identity. Questions for this guideline were open-ended in nature, to get the full perspective of participants.

3.6. Data Collection Method and Procedure

As this research study was qualitative in nature, ten IDIs were conducted in-person to understand parents' and teachers' perceptions. Research tool for this study was a tailored guideline which incorporates relevant questions pertaining to the research. Prior to conducting the interviews, a written consent was taken from all participants. Participants were also briefed on the topic and the purpose of the interviews. Once the signing of the form is complete, the interview sessions commenced. If participants provided closed answers, the interviewer expanded on the questions to guide them into making more open-ended answers. All answers, comments and observations were recorded via mobile phone and also jotted down using a pencil and paper. Total time for each session were 45 to 50 minutes.

3.7. Data Management and Analysis

Following completion of IDIs, data collected was transcribed from Bangla to English and then jotted down in the English language. Then, the data was cleaned and written in narrative form. The narrative data was then assessed and analysed to identify which themes they fell under. Based on this, themes were identified and the information gathered from the data was categorized according to the themes. Finally, the data was analysed once more and potential answers relevant to the research questions and objectives were recorded via written narrative for this research.

3.8. Validity & Reliability of Guideline

The guideline was composed in both English and Bangla, and the first drafts were shared with expert reviewers for their feedback and observations. Following incorporation of expert reviewer's feedback, the updated and standardised guidelines were used as the tool for the IDIs. This guideline was initially piloted on early participants. Following the piloting, any questions which seemed confusing, irrelevant or repetitive were removed and the guideline was simplified accordingly.

3.9. Ethical Issues

To the best of the researcher's capabilities, the research followed ethical principles strictly. Prior to the survey all participants were provided with a context, purpose and background of the research. Participants' written consent to their answers being recorded were also taken prior to the IDIs and they were informed prior that the proposal may go for publication. If participants were uncomfortable or unwilling, they were not forced or coerced into participation. The Researcher maintained, to the best of abilities, confidentiality and did not disclose participants' personal information beyond the research & thesis supervisors for guidance. Data collected was unaltered and assessed in its truest form. The Researcher maintained neutrality and unbiasedness (to the best of abilities) during questioning and data collection. During data assessment, only factually accurate information based on data will was compiled and reported to the truest extent.

3.10. Limitations of the Study

This study has potential limitations. As this is a perception study, it is based on individual observations, opinions and beliefs of parents and teachers. These are, therefore, subjected to biases and judgmental opinions. Additionally, the sample size of the qualitative study

may be considered too small for the study which, along with the limited time frame, may not represent the perceptions of a larger group. Finally, as this is a qualitative study, there was an array of different perceptions and opinions which were sometimes widely diverging and tangential. This made the categorizing of theories and findings a challenge. Despite these limitations, there were interesting findings which were cleaned and compiled under clearly outlined themes. As such, this study may provide a range of opinions and ideas which encapsulates a cultural tapestry of ideas which may be interesting for further studies. In order to reduce the gaps, large scale researches, with a broader sample study more representative of the larger community, can be conducted over larger periods of time, combining a mix of qualitative and quantitative studies. This will ensure a thorough research which is not only qualitative but also quantifiable.

Chapter IV:

Findings & Discussion

Based on the IDIs conducted, there were various interpretations, opinions and interesting findings from both parents and teachers.

4.1. Effect of Folktales on Children's Socio-Emotional & Language Development

Parent's Perceptions

Almost all the parents believe that listening to or narrating folktales foster children's socio-emotional development in various forms. Folktales allow children to know about different lands and cultures of diverse communities.

“...through these stories and storytelling, the narrator can catch the child’s attention and the child can learn about different people, different lands, this of course benefits children’s socio-emotional development.” (IDI#2, 5/03/2023)

Such stories, parents believe, are helpful for children to understand different circumstances, replicate & process emotions, and build empathy.

“When my child is playing with other children, and if he gets into a quarrel or a fight with others, then he remembers the lessons he learned from these stories and stop...” (IDI#4, 20/02/2023)

For a few parents, listening to stories and rhymes, and mimicking different characters can help lessen children’s behavioral difficulties and make children calmer, more confident and kinder towards parents and other children.

“There are certain characters in a story, the way they interact and converse and develop relationships, can calm a fidgety child who is emotional, build their listening power, and develop their emotional regulation. (IDI#3, 1/03/2023)

All of the parents agree that folktales have a huge impact on children’s language development. Some of the parents have stated that folktales and traditional rhymes help children learn new words, which they repeat and try to incorporate into their daily conversations or plot discussions.

“He (my child) asks a lot of questions about characters and the meanings of new words he just came across or heard.” (IDI#4, 10/03/2023)

Some parents believe that when children listen to stories, they are processing them internally, and through questions and connecting fantasy to reality, children form meaningful sentences.

“Stories help to create messages in his head which he can convey through sentences.”
(IDI # 3, 1/03/2023)

Another parent also expressed how children learn to narrate stories themselves using the power of language and imagination.

Teachers’ Perceptions

Some of the teachers believe that through stories children learn important social and emotional skills such as sharing, empathy and helpfulness.

“...children are usually nervous and initially they don’t like to share. However, when we narrate these stories about moral lessons, the importance of sharing and such, these children imbibe these lessons and try to apply them in real life.” (IDI#6, 27/02/2023)

Many of the teachers have also expressed that such stories help build connections between children, help them overcome shyness and nervousness, and foster self-confidence. A few teachers have also stated that folktales and stories may also have an effect on positive behavioural changes in children, especially for children who are coming to school for the first time or are transitioning between grades.

“Through these storytelling school experiences children learn kindness, and develop the capacity to share and talk with others. Some children, who would not talk to others, would start to speak eagerly.” (IDI#7, 13/03/2023)

In regards to language development, many of the teachers have mentioned that stories provide children with the capacity to listen and learn a new word which they later try to apply it in their daily lives by formulating sentences.

“ They (children) can name the stories, the characters and, when asked questions, they can answer and explain what each character does in sentences using new words.”

(IDI#9, 11/03/2023)

Some teachers have also added that through stories and rhymes, children not only learn words and form sentences, but also build the confidence to narrate their own stories.

4.2. Regarding the Effect of Violent or Scary Undertones in Some Folktales on Children’s Socio-Emotional Development

Parents’ Perceptions

Many parents believe that many folktales, western or traditional, contain violent or dark themes. Almost all the parents believe that children between the ages of 3 to 5 years are too young to be exposed to such content. For parents, children of this age group are still not able to differentiate between fantasy and reality; exposing them to such stories would blur the line between the two more and bring unnecessary fear in children. For parents, children are too young to understand the underlying messages and circumstances behind such themes.

“...when I am telling a child a scary story of fear, about monsters, something that doesn’t even exist but I am formulating an image in his/her head that such a thing does exist, and it lurks in the dark, waiting to spring suddenly.” (IDI#2, 5/03/2023)

Less than a few of the parents believe that it is alright for children to be introduced to such themes. For a few parents, exposure to such stories may hold lessons for children to learn, as well as foster their curiosity.

“Stories should not just end in violent and dark bits as there might be an effect otherwise, but there should be a grounding message.” (IDI#3, 1/03/2023)

Teachers’ Perceptions

All the teachers agree that there are many folktales which have dark or violent undertones and many of the teachers expressed that such stories are not appropriate for children of such a young age.

“I do not think such stories are appropriate for children because this is not the time for them to learn such negative, heavy topics. This would be detrimental to their learning.” (IDI#9, 11/03/2023)

Some teachers, on the other hand have expressed that stories with dark themes may actually have a beneficial role to play in children’s learning and safeguarding.

“Folktales show these dualities [of good and bad] in a beautiful way... These stories build children’s cognitive skills and help them understand issues such as safety and security.” (IDI#8, 4/03/2023)

4.3. Imagination & the Role of Folktales

Parents' Perceptions

Most parents have mentioned that the unique plots, different characters, colorful backdrops of these stories build on children's imagination and that these magical elements foster children's imaginative capabilities.

"She [my child] tries to imagine the situation and characters, what they are doing, how they would move if it was a cartoon, when listening to a story." (IDI#1, 20/03/2023)

4.4. Folktales as Important Artefacts of Culture

Parents' Perceptions

All parents have agreed that folktales are an important heritage of one's culture and society, which builds on children's unique cultural identity.

"These (stories) fall into our culture, not outside. So, if we talk about not the storybook fairy tales but these unique folktales then we can understand the essence of the local culture." (IDI#2, 5/03/2023)

Another parent has highlighted that folktales offer direction and guidance, in-between imaginative plots and characters.

"Through stories we can engage in problem solving and this gives us hope. Understanding the lives of our ancestors help us hold on to culture, give us direction, provide entertainment, and makes us feel good." (IDI#3, 2023)

Teachers' Perceptions

Many teachers have also expressed that folktales carry important cultural and historical assets, as well as valuable moral lessons, which are valuable to children's development of unique cultural and personal identity.

“Through these stories children can learn and understand what happened in the past and connect these stories with their lives. They will develop a sense of what is right and what is wrong, an idea of morals. They will also learn about the history of the Bangla region, our culture, how we have come so far.” (IDI#7, 13/03/2023)

4.5. Folktales as Valuable Vehicles for Moral Lessons

Parents have stated that folktales can provide valuable moral lessons for children. Some of the parents have mentioned that folktales showcase important philosophies and lessons.

“...they (folktales) discussed themes like honesty, speaking the truth and how the truth sets us free from ordeals...The clear definition of good and bad is often shown in these stories. (IDI#4, 10/03/2023)

Teachers' Perceptions

Teachers agreed that folktales do have valuable lessons to teach children including understanding social nuances, bonding, as well as different aspects of family dynamics and friendships. A teacher believes that such stories have different types of emotional learning for children, one which spans beyond human beings and extends to connections with Nature.

“There is not just one story but all folktales and fairy tales are unique and carry a different type of emotional learning. For example, the story of Moana (Note: Disney animated movie based on ancient Polynesian myths and legends) teach us to foster love and connection to Mother Earth as a basic need for existence.” (IDI#8, 4/03/2023)

Another teacher believes that such stories foster healthy habits in children, which adults can also revise when teaching children.

“These stories and rhymes teach us the value of time-keeping, punctuality, fosters healthy eating habits and positive behavioural changes.” (IDI#6, 27/03/2023)

Less than a few teachers expressed that folktales do not have any intrinsic lessons to provide to children.

4.6. Practice of Storytelling in 21st Century Bangladesh

Storytelling & Folktales in Modern Family Households

Most of the parents have stated that they narrate some form of folktales and rhymes to their children, more or less. These folktales are usually varied and range from moral fables and fairytales to ghost stories and rhymes. These tales are a combination of both western and traditional stories (usually from Thakurma’ar Jhuli).

Out of these, a participant mentioned how she tries to narrate such stories to her child but feels that folktales are too difficult for her to grasp, especially those in Bangla.

“My child (aged three years) is still too young to grasp folktales. I tell her small stories from storybooks, easy rhymes. Bangla is actually a difficult language and it took her time

to learn the language and she is now starting to learn Bangla recently.” (IDI# 1, 20/02/2023)

A parent did mention that they do not tell stories or rhymes to their children, stating that children of the 21st century have neither the time nor the interest to know or listen to such stories.

The full list of collected folktales and rhymes are added to the Annex.

Teachers’ Perceptions

Teachers stated that the stories and rhymes they narrate to their children are from the ones in the school curriculum.

“We narrate thirty-five rhymes every day. These rhymes not only foster language acquisition but also instil manners and etiquettes which we constantly try to teach.” (IDI#9, 11/03/2023)

Many of the teachers expressed that they usually narrate rhymes more than stories, which teachers believe foster language development and help children acquire manners and etiquette.

“In our curriculum we are allowed to read stories once or thrice a week. These stories usually revolve around morals, sharing with others and so on.” (IDI#6, 27/02/2023)

A teacher from the Government Primary School mentioned that they narrate all kinds of folk tales and rhymes, even those from their childhood.

“Yes, I narrate a few folk stories and rhymes. These are stories we learned from our families and we share them with the children as well.” (IDI#7, 13/03/2023)

An English Medium school teacher added that most of the stories and rhymes they tell children are in English. Further, fairy tale folktales are usually avoided and selected stories are usually moral tales.

“We are not allowed to read Bangla stories as we are in an English Medium School, but we narrate a lot of English stories. We try to avoid fairy tales and try to read stories with a moral or a lesson at the end.” (IDI#6, 27/02/2023)

A full list of stories and rhymes is added in the Annex.

Landscape of Folktales in Modern Bangladesh

Parents’ Perception

Many parents have agreed that the practice of folktales and storytelling in the modern age is becoming extinct. Most of the parents believe the reasons for this phenomenon are an increased use of mobile phones and gadgets by children, lack of parent-child & family interaction, and a lack of interest from children themselves.

“The practice of folktales in this day and age is not common beyond a few storybooks we get from the Boi Mela (Book Fair). My children mostly watch cartoons and videos.” (IDI# 2, 5/03/2023)

Interestingly, a parent who recently moved to Dhaka city from the village mentioned that the practice of storytelling is still very much alive in villages and rural areas of Bangladesh

“In my village, when we are tending to cows and ducks and other farm work, when we gather around, we share different folk stories and rhymes, poems by poets of the past, what used to happen before.” (IDI#4, 10/03/2023)

Teachers' Perceptions

Many of the teachers have also expressed that storytelling is a dying practice in the modern age. In the opinion of the teachers, some of the main causes for this is the rise in the usage of mobile phones by children, less time allocated for storytelling and lullabies by families, and a breakdown of traditional family structures.

“The days are changing and it is all about mobile phones. Children are forgetting folktales and have no knowledge about the old stories and rhymes.” (IDI# 9, 10/03/2023)

Presence of Folktales & Storytelling in the School Curricula

Perception of teachers in regards to the adequate number of folktales in the school curricula was varied as the teachers were selected from English, Bangla and Government Primary Schools. Teachers from most English Medium schools have expressed that the number of folktales incorporated into their school curriculum and the allocated time for storytelling sessions are not adequate.

“I do not believe there is enough folklore in our curriculum. These stories should be increased and every day there should be a story time...” (IDI#6, 27/02/2023)

A few teachers explained that some of the reasons for this low number of stories and rhymes could be because schools place more emphasis on aptitude, academia and established curriculums which are difficult to change.

“There are not many stories in the curriculum. These are not the main subjects and so are few in number. The main subjects are mostly academic and those which test students' aptitude.” (IDI#10, 10/03/2023)

4.8. Fostering the Practice of Folktales, Storytelling & Children’s Development in the 21st Century

Creating an Environment for Storytelling

A few parents discussed the importance of creating a suitable storytelling and reading spaces, at home and school, for children, which will attract children towards the world of stories.

“Creating a reading circle and storybooks hours, at home and in school, will develop children’s interest.” (IDI#1, 20/02/2023)

Increased Interaction between Caregivers & Children for Story Time

All the parents have agreed that there should be more caregiver interaction with children in where caregivers can set an adequate amount of time for storytelling and folktales with children.

“I believe that after a long day of work, when we come back home, be it you or your siblings or your parents & grandparents, we should tell stories to keep the practice of storytelling alive.” (IDI#4, 10/03/2023)

More Parent-Child Engagement and Increased Story Sessions at home

Many of the teachers have expressed that there should be increased story time sessions at home. Some of these teachers have expressed the importance of sharing bedtime stories with children.

“Bedtime stories help children’s development and it is important that parents should be more connected, to improve child engagement.” (IDI# 9, 11/03/2023)

“Instead of giving phones during feeding time or bedtime, we should share rhymes, lullabies and stories.” (IDI#7, 13/03/2023)

Using Digital Tools to Re-Introduce Children to Folktales

Parents’ Perceptions

Some of the parents were keen on the idea of using modern-day digital tools to reconnect children to folktales and storytelling. These included using more video content and podcasts to engage modern children with. Very few parents also suggested that modern stories have more to offer than old folktales and that children should be provided with more access to those stories, like Meena cartoons.

“If we bring these (folktales) in video or via a podcast or in some auditory format, then children would enjoy that. Through these, there would be a bigger access to folktales than before.” (IDI#1, 20/02/2023)

It is to be noted that a few parents were hesitant to provide more screentime to children, urging the use, value and feel of physical books instead of digital ones.

Teachers’ Perceptions

A few of the teachers suggested that schools can utilize modern technology and their resources to introduce children to folktales in the modern age, such as through regular viewings of folktale videos in school via projectors and creating video channels or apps to archive the stories for easy download.

“An interesting way to bring folktales into the modern world is to embrace the digital age, if there is a YouTube channel where there are categories to show stories with moral

lessons, educational rhymes, on mobile phones, laptops, etc., that would be good...Teachers can download these stories as well.” (IDI#6, 27/02/2023)

Discussion

This research sought to understand the perceptions of parents and teachers in regards to the effect of folktales on children’s socio-emotional & language development, and whether folktales are important items of one’s cultural identity.

Findings from the study have shown that the majority of parents and teachers are of the opinion that folktales do have an important effect on children’s socio-emotional development and language in some form or another, and can foster the development of different social skills, emotional learning, moral & cultural identity, as well as imagination, particularly fables or moral stories which have a lesson to share at the end.

Violent aspects and dark themes of some folktales can be counter-productive and detrimental to their development. Alternately, such stories may also showcase important learning lessons for children such as safety, child protection, good vs. evil, and so on.

Folktales and rhymes instil curiosity in children which enables them to learn new words which they use to formulate sentences which are meaningful, and apply in their daily communication. The study also highlighted that the selected participants from Dhaka city do believe that traditional folktales and storytelling are important artefacts of culture and should be protected as they foster children’s cultural identity. In the modern world, such practices are slowly becoming obsolete due to an increased and high usage of mobile phones & other technological gadgets, a lack of interest in children regarding folktales,

limited time for parent-child interaction, a steady rise in the number of nuclear families and not enough stimulating environments for storytelling. While folktales and storytelling practices are becoming obsolete in major cities like Dhaka, the practice is still very strong in villages where many children still live in joint families and where people continue the practice of storytelling. In order to ensure that children living in Dhaka are benefitted from the many valuable lessons of folktales and storytelling, children need to be provided with a positive space for storytelling at home and school, where more time is allocated for story sessions, incorporation of fables and moral stories into the school curricula, increased parent-child and family interaction, limited mobile phone usage, and ensuring that the practice storytelling is a part of the daily routine (including during bedtime and feeding times). Additionally, introducing folktales in digital technologies for modern children to get acquainted with is also a positive step towards the marriage between modernity and traditional folktales. This can be done via story apps, videos as well as podcasts which feature folktale narrations, and by utilizing school resources to have regular viewings of such videos in school. While this research sought to create a comparison between English Medium and Bangla Medium schools in regards to folktale and storytelling practices, the only major difference is that English Medium schools focus more on western folktales (rhymes in particular); in Bangla medium schools, however, traditional folktales and rhymes are already incorporated into the curriculum, as per government instructions. Many of the teachers have suggested that there be more folktales added into the curriculum, as they provide valuable lessons for eager children.

i. Effect of Folktales on Children's Socio-Emotional Development

Moral Development: In line with the findings of the study, it can be assessed that there is a correlation between folktales and children's moral development. Findings have shown that such stories can help children learn different aspects of social and emotional skills such as manners, etiquettes and behaviour regulation. This is in alignment with research works which determined that folktales introduce children to their cultural history and provide a source for both intellectual and socio-emotional development (Stavrou, 2015b). Folktales can also build empathy for fellow human beings as well as other creatures, and foster concepts of sharing and kindness. Through folktales, children are introduced to important life lessons and philosophies such as resilience, courage, goodness, humility, and more. Fables or moral stories in particular, are important sources for children's moral development. Both Huiyu (2018) and VisikoKnox-Johnson (2016) discussed. Similar aspects were discussed in other research works (Huiyu, 2018) & (VisikoKnox-Johnson, 2016) which showcase how the use of colourful characters and plots have important life lessons which children can use to develop their moral identity with. Another study also identifies how folktales help children understand their inner consciousness, using which they process their inner and external conflicts and their "existential-developmental anxieties" effectively (Shekhawat *et al*, 2018). Discussions can be made to incorporate folktales more into storytelling practices at home, as well as have more conversations about using folktales as pedagogical tools for moral lessons and ethics.

Development of Children's Imagination: According to findings children are introduced, through folktales, to new and interesting adventures in different lands and contexts, with unique and vibrant characters (which they may consciously or

unconsciously try to imitate the characters after listening to a story), which can build on their imagination, creativity and cognitive development. Folktales use different devices to build children's imagination and creativity such as through the use of colorful characters and interesting, adventurous plots, and help children to facilitate their capacity to visualize a story, what the characters are doing, they would move or react, what they should do in times of crisis, the difference between right & wrong, and so on. Such stories can develop the capacity for children to create their own stories. Moreover, such stories are often the outlet for children to escape into different worlds and cultures, and help them gather new perspectives, understandings and ideas of foreign lands and different customs. This viewpoint is in alignment with research conducted on how stories can develop children's imagination by placing themselves in the role of the protagonist, as well as being passive decision-makers for the heroes and heroines, thus imbibing a part of the characters' characteristics into their own (Yulistia, 2015).

Violence & Other Dark Themes in Folktales: Findings from the study indicate that for many participants, the age between 3 years to 5 years is not an appropriate period for children to get acquainted to violent and dark themes often present in many folktales. Children's brains are still forming and their identities are still malleable; such stories will create a flooding of negativity in their minds which will consume their thoughts. In one study, it is expressed that in almost all fairy tales, the plot follows a similar sequence, whereby an evil person that is out to get another character in the story (Bruno, 2017). Most of these characters and plots can affect children dramatically, to the point of having nightmares." Dark themes of such stories can bring about a fear of the unknown as well as of make-believe monsters and witches, which can be detrimental to children's

wellbeing. While a fear of the unknown is an instinctive feeling, such stories and characters are thought to heighten feelings of fear and distrust in children to irrational levels and introducing them to such concepts at such an early age can distort children's critical thinking and consume their thoughts. This aligns with research by Warner (2020) which discusses how such stories may create a continued unaddressed trauma in children which manifest in different forms (fear of dark, etc.).

It is interesting to note that there were limited findings which counter these views and point out that it is alright for children to be introduced to such themes (as long as they are age-appropriate and have a learning lesson at the end) as they open avenues for children to question and understand different moral and safety lessons such as stranger danger, the presence of both good and bad people in this world, and so on. Stories from Thakurma'ar Jhuli, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Snow-White and the Seven Dwarves, and other such folktales are all stories that children are or will be exposed to sooner or later and which showcase the darker side of life. This is similar to what Szyborska Popova (2022) said about how such stories not only discuss the joys and ecstasies of life, but also the darker aspects, and address valuable lessons such as how to be brave and overcome fear in different circumstances and be open to positive energy. Such stories, according to findings, are thought to showcase the duality of life, in all its good and evil aspects, in the guise of monsters and witches, or princes and princesses, to teach important lessons to children such as safety & protection. Boudinot (2005) quotes Charles Darwin in his research and states, "Fear is an instinctual aid to survival, according to British naturalist Charles Darwin, and it shapes psychological and sociological structures."; in many communities, fear was often used as a tool to ensure child protection & safety. This spans

across folktales in different cultures, to teach children lessons on how to protect oneself, stay away from harm, and which foster children's judgement and thinking skills (Boudinot, 2005).

Once again, we can see that the issue of violent or dark themes is a continuously debated one, which can polarise different parties. This discussion is interesting to consider as some dark themes may be used by parents and teachers as cautionary messages for children's safety and safeguarding, as long as the stories are not too traumatizing and are age-appropriate for children.

ii. Effect of Folktales on Children's Language Development

Conceptualization & Meaningful Application of Language: Findings indicate that folktales play an important role in children's language development. When children listen to these stories, they are eager to share them with their friends and discuss the plots and characters. This facilitates both language and socio-emotional development. The interesting plots and adventures of different characters foster children's curiosity. Children ask many questions regarding the characters, the storylines, characters' back stories and so on. This helps develop not only their conceptual understanding of the story, but also new words which the child is curious about and starts to use in meaningful sentences. This is in alignment with what Nhung (2016) said about children learning the effective and meaningful use of language through folktales.

Huiyu (2018) stated that the ages between 3 years to 6 years is a very critical time for children's language development; through folktales, children are able to acquire a range

of vocabulary (Nhung, 2016) thus fostering positive early literacy skills. Findings indicate that the acquisition of language may be connected to socio-emotional development; folktales facilitate confidence in children, even the shy and introverted ones, to ask questions through which they formulate sentences. In various studies we have seen that children use language learned from folktales to understand how to apply in real life (Nhung, 2016). This bolsters children's courage to narrate rhymes and stories on their own.

In the findings we see that most of the teachers prefer to use rhymes which they believe tap into children's understanding more smoothly. This is something to consider in regards to folktales as a pedagogical tool for children and help teachers identify traditional rhymes for children's development. Additionally, a few parents and teachers also mentioned the role of modern cartoons and videos as more effective than traditional folktales. It would be interesting to discuss how to balance the two categories and open more avenues for discussion regarding the marriage between folktales and modern animated stories.

iii. Formation of Cultural Identity in Children

Findings showcase that folktales are indeed important pieces of an individual's culture and identity and align with various research works conducted on understanding the impact of culture on folktales and, by extension, on children. From findings we understand that the practice of listening to and sharing stories can sometime also be a communal activity, where family members and other children interact and share stories together during daily chores, often a source of enjoyment, engagement and interaction for children. There is also a lot of discussion centred around the role of folktales being an

important facilitator of children's cultural identity as, through folktales, children learn about the traditions, history, the livelihood of ancestors, as well as the diverse landscape of different regions. These stories are inherently local, and unique to the region, like the local trees that surround a village, or the "pitter patter of rain on a tin roof". Findings also show how these stories highlight the diversity of local agrarian communities in rich, pastoral details, for everyone to know and learn about and are important because they offer an escape from the daily toils of life. As such, folktales can be considered a wealth of literature which almost all generations have grown up listening to and that they provide a myriad lens into the lives and societies of people who lived in the past, a tapestry of stories which showcase the history of the land. Children can connect these aspects with their lives, as well as take guidance from their ancestors. This is also in alignment with what Stavrou (2015b) also said about cultural acquisition or identity being determined by different socio-cultural forces a child grows up surrounded by, including language, ethnicity, myths, traditions, etcetera. Through findings we can see that, through folktales, children can learn about sceneries and stories of different cultures, as well as those which are uniquely from one's own. Children grow up to imbibe these elements from their culture, taking in the wisdom and heritage of different generations or folks. This once again aligns with research by Stavrou (2015b), where it was stated that, through such tales, children try to understand different contexts, situations and philosophies, under the guise of fantastical characters and plots, about not only the world around them, but also within themselves. It is therefore a point of discussion on how to ensure the continuance of these stories and rhymes from generation to generation, to ensure that all children have access to the wealth of literature which folktales provide.

iv. Types of Lessons Typically Found in Folktales: Findings showcase the different lessons and philosophies different folktales can outline, which children and adults can learn from, such as the duality of human nature, the distinction between good and evil, the connection between human beings & God, oneness with Nature, concepts of beauty and ugliness, pride and goodliness, morality & deceit, and so on. Folktales can provide different forms of emotional learning, an awareness and understanding of staying closer to one's roots, healthy habits and practices, the laws of the land; topics which adults can learn as well and re-learn how to view life through a simpler, child-like lens. These are concurrent with the collected literature which highlighted themes such as the workings of human nature, societal values & intrinsic morals, role of human beings against the dynamics of God and nature, etcetera. This perspective aligns with what Dahal & Bhatta (2021) stated in their about how the nature of folktales and their unique characters are able to share community wisdom, moral values and convey abstract philosophical or existential ideologies.

There were very few counter-findings, which suggest that some participants do not find any intrinsic value in folktales or fairytales (it was interesting to note how, in many cases, the two were used interchangeably). While it is indicated that folktales may be education, not all folktales have positive messages and the discerning parents or teacher need to sift and filter through them, in order to identify stories and rhymes which have positive, age-appropriate messages. These lessons and values shared are important points for parents who want to share valuable lessons with their children, and for teachers to consider when discussing how best to incorporate folktales into the curriculum and what are the best lessons to share with children in their early years.

v. Landscape of Folktales & the Role of Storytelling in the 21st century: It was clear from the study that some form of folktales and rhymes were narrated to children, more or less. These folktales are usually varied and range from moral fables and fairytales to ghost stories and rhymes, focusing on good habits, etiquettes, good and evil, etc. and are a combination of both western and traditional sources. In regards to schools, different institutions have different curricula which are followed by teachers diligently. However, many of the teacher participants believe that the time allocated for story sessions, as well as the number of stories in the curriculum is not enough. Additionally, in most English medium schools, folk stories from the Bengal region are narrated less and more emphasis is placed on English stories and, particularly, English rhymes as the teachers identify that children under their care respond greatly to the latter. Whatever stories are told in these schools are mostly western folktales such as The Little Red Riding Hood, The Gingerbread Man, The Ant and the Grasshopper, and so on; this may result in children being unaware of the rich literature of local stories and rhymes from the Bengal and Bangladeshi region. In Bangla Medium Schools and Government Primary Schools, there are many folk stories and rhymes added into the curriculum but many teachers believe that more should be added for children's learning and gratification.

Both groups of participants identified that folktales and the practice of storytelling is becoming obsolete. For many, storytelling was a common activity when they were growing up, surrounded by family members, in circles and sitting beside a fire or at a family event. Such practices are thought to be dying out as the country progresses towards modernity. The primary cause for this phenomenon could be due to an increased usage of gadgets, whereby children had access to other forms of digital entertainment and

lack of interest in old stories which are slow to build up. This aligns with research by Dorji (2010) where it was stated that increasingly easy and frequent use of digital entertainment is causing folktales to become obsolete for many children. Additionally, the busy working schedules of parents themselves, the breakdown of the joint family structure leading to less family-child interaction, and so on are also thought to be barriers. This aligns with research conducted on the modern Bangladeshi households and the changing family dynamics (Samad, 2015). These challenges have important implications as they affect children's development in different ways as children are exposed to technology from a very early age.

Additionally, parent-child interaction is a key component to providing the primary social learning context from infancy and children are exposed to different socio-emotional processes such as emotional regulation, gesturing, references, communication and more (Iarocci & Gardiner, 2015) Storytelling can foster positive bonds between parents and children, all the while promoting children's literacy, cognitive skills, emotional development, imaginative powers, and so on. Family interaction through stories is just as important as narrating old folklores and fables, and should be continued through everyday conversations during mealtimes, where family members share their daily experiences and stories. This aligns with research conducted by Kiser *et al* (2010) which discusses how family interactions through storytelling is an important aspect of child development as, through stories, families transport values, morals, emotional learning and lived experiences to the children of the next generation (Kiser *et al*, 2010).

It is interesting to note that, findings signify that the practice of folktales is less common in major cities like Dhaka, but is still predominantly active in rural villages, where the

practice of communal family practices is still active. When people go back to their country homes, all the members of the family gather around during their daily work, when they are tending to farm work, and share stories that they know or have heard of before. This practice is continued by aunts, grandparents, and other relatives, where children also enthusiastically take part in. Through such practices, the rich oral narratives predominant in Bangladesh are still being protected, at least for now.

We can see that these findings align with existing literature review regarding limited parent-child-family interaction in modern society, which leads to less storytelling activities. Additionally, more children are immersed in digital media which provides quick, visually eye-catching entertainment, as opposed to oral storytelling or reading from books, which are usually slow in build-up. This once again brings forward the conversation: how effectively do we connect ancient folktales to modern children, to ensure that the latter are not deprived of developmental and cultural values, all the while keeping in step with the modern world?

Conclusion

The research states clear evidences that, for selected parents and teachers, folktales have a very important role to play in fostering children's socio-emotional & language development, as well as fostering cultural identity of individuals. In the 21st century, the practice of storytelling and folktales is disappearing due to easier access for children to digital entertainment, less interest among children in regards to in traditional stories in general, less parent-child-family interaction in modern family households, and limited

scope for folktales in the school curricula of different schools. To ensure that children are not deprived of the valuable lessons and morals that are found in many folktales, more concrete steps need to be taken to ensure that the practice of storytelling is protected, along with the archiving as well as continuation of narration of age-appropriate folktales and parents and teachers both have a very critical role to play in this regard. Additionally, more large-scale research in the field needs to be conducted in Bangladesh, to best align age-appropriate folktales to children's development, and ensure that the cultural heritage of the country is protected through the archiving and documentation of folk stories, rhymes, morals and lessons. In this way, it is hoped that the cultural wealth of the country is not only protected, but it transfers to the generations of tomorrow who will understand its value and benefit greatly to become resilient, brave, morally upright individuals of Bangladesh, with a strong cultural, moral and personal identity, even in situations where they may be uprooted from places of familiarity and relocated elsewhere.

Recommendations

- **Steps to Protect & Reacquaint Children to Folktales in the Modern Age** was something that participants majorly believe. Participants expressed that storytelling and folktales should be protected and revived but feel unable to do so due to changing social dynamics, easy access of children to modern technological devices and, alternately, old established school curricula that focus on academic performances greatly. Despite this, parents and teachers have suggested a few

steps which both groups can take, to reacquaint children to folktales and to ensure that these stories, so deeply entrenched in our cultural values, do not get lost.

- **Creating an Environment for Storytelling** is important as creating suitable storytelling and reading environments for children will attract them. This practice needs to be ensured in different ecological tiers of children, not only within family levels but also in schools, ensured by teachers. As such, participants have suggested the use of open-faced book shelves at home, creating reading circles, ensuring adequate story sessions and devoting ten to fifteen minutes each day (at home and at school) to the habit of narrating, reading and sharing stories with children.
- **Increased interaction between caregivers & children for story time** is a factor groups of participants discussed the importance of increased interaction between family members, parents and children through sharing stories. Participants believe that such actions will hopefully foster a stronger bond between caregivers, family members and children. By making sure that, instead of giving phones and gadgets, caregivers can narrate stories during bedtime or feeding time, use physical books instead of digital ones, and share conversations and stories after a long day of work, increased family-caregiver and child interaction is likely develop a love for stories and a positive stimulation for children.
- **Suggestions to incorporate more folktales into the school curricula** and to increase the story time session were suggestions voiced by almost all the teachers. In both English medium and Bangla medium schools, the time set for story time is very little as schools mostly focus on academic results and learning. As such,

children are deprived of the valuable learning lessons which many folktales hold. Additionally, many teachers believe that more folktales should be incorporated into the curriculum, so that children can get introduced to the stories. However, for some teachers, already established rules set by old institutions prevent them from having a say in modifying the curriculum.

- **Introduce folktales and traditional stories to children, through the use of modern technology** so that children can be reintroduced to old stories and rhymes. Participants believe that children would be more engaged with these stories if they were adapted into age-appropriate videos or podcasts, which are more in tune with their attention spans, as opposed to holding a book and reading, or listening to someone. This can be through the use of videos, podcasts or audios, which will introduce children to a larger archive of stories. Creation of story apps and utilizing school resources to screen folk stories on projectors on a regular basis were also discussed, although there were a few participants who are of the opinion that folktales do not have much learning value and steps should be taken to showcase modern cartoons and videos which have a learning message. Ultimately, we have to heed to the cautionary message, where we need to toe the fine line and balance modernity with traditional stories, ensuring that children are not deprived of either, but are also not consumed by one or the other.

The current study can be concluded as the first step towards creating concrete pathways for researchers and experts to conduct wider research on folktales and early childhood development in Bangladesh, understanding the role of traditional folktales on children's socio-emotional development (in particular children's behavioural and moral identity),

language acquisition, and identify how these stories and rhymes are valuable cultural assets which set up children's cultural identity. This research can also be broken down and different aspects of it can be explored more intensively, which will help to understand the dynamic role of folktales & storytelling practices in addressing the development and wellbeing of children coming from different socio-economic landscapes. Further, elements of this research can also be used to explore whether folk stories and rhymes of the community may also be utilized when working on building the resilience, cultural identity and wellbeing of marginalized or displaced children migrating from different regions.

It is to be mentioned that, although detailed, the results of the study should still be taken with caution, owing to the limited sample size, the closed geographic location, and the short duration of time taken for this research. It is hoped that this research will ultimately not only hold a spotlight on this pertinent field in Bangladesh for researchers and policy makers to identify steps to incorporate more folktales and rhymes into different curricula, but also bring the rich array of folktales & rhymes, and the important role of storytelling in children's early years' development, in the global arena for global ECD advocates to discuss and work on.

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Appendices

Appendix A.

List of Stories and Rhymes Collected from Parents & Teachers

A.1. List of Stories

1. Stories from Thakurma'ar Jhuli
2. Cinderella
3. Stories from Radhukap
4. Snow-White & the Seven Dwarves
5. Ukuner Buri (The Old-Woman with Lice on Her Head)
6. The Little Red Hen
7. Giant's Day
8. Cat's Soft Ball
9. The Hunchback of Notre Dame
10. Khorgosh O Kochhop er Golpo (The Hare and the Tortoise, an Aesop's Fable)
11. Sheyal Bagh-er Golpo (The Fox & the Tiger)
12. Kumir Bachhar Golpo (The Crocodile Baby)
13. Stories from Islam
14. Traditional Ghost Stories
15. Assorted Fairy Tales
16. Legendary *Puthis* by the Munshis
17. Story of Dukkhu Shukkhu
18. The Fox & The Mongoose

19. The Goatherd Who Cried ‘Wolf!’ (Cultural variation of The Boy Who Cried ‘Wolf!’)
20. The Two Rival Lovers
21. The Fair of the Fox
22. Rakkhosh Pori-r Juddho (The War Between the Monster & The Fairy Queen)
23. Rakkhosh Je Chhagol Khai (The Monster that Ate All the Goats)
24. Rakkhosh O Aam (The Monster & the Mangoes)
25. Bhabhi’s Sari (Sister-in-Law’s Sari)
26. The Goat & The Tiger
27. *Gaachher Petni* (The Witch Who Lived on the Tree)
28. The Jealous Wives
29. The Ugly Duckling
30. Traditional Folktales of Legendary Kings, Queens, Princes & Princesses
31. Duo Rani Suo Rani
32. Stories from Aesop’s Fables
33. The Greedy Thief
34. Thumbelina
35. Pinocchio
36. Little Red Riding Hood
37. Three Little Pigs
38. Goldilocks & the Three Bears
39. The Ant & The Bees
40. The Little Mermaid

41. The Lion King (Thought to be loosely based on William Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' which in turn was loosely based on a Scandinavian folktale)
42. Moana (Thought to be loosely based on Polynesian myths and legends)
43. The Sleeping Beauty
44. The Greedy Dog (an Aesop's Fable)
45. Bok O Bagh (The Heron & the Tiger, an Aesop's Fable)
46. The Gingerbread Man
47. The Ant & the Grasshopper (An Aesop's Fable)
48. Raja O Teen Konna (The King and His Three Daughters)
49. Komola Banu
50. Porider Golpo (Stories of Fairies)
51. Kaak Kolshi (The Crow and the Pitcher, an Aesop's Fable)
52. Aladdin's Lamp
53. Rakhal O Baagh (The Cowherd and the Tiger)
54. Gopur Biraal (Gopu's Cat)
55. Stories of Gopal Bhar the Medieval Court Jester
56. Khoka Chhotobela Ki Korto? (What Did Khoka Do When He Was A Child?)
57. Danob-er Bagaan (The Giant's Garden)
58. Chhoto Chhele Belal (Little Boy Belal)
59. Personal stories and folklore of families and ancestors
60. Fair of the Forest Animals

A.2. List of Rhymes

1. Shurjo Brishti

- 2.Itol Bitol Gacher Kotha
- 3.Ata Gaacher Tota Pakhi
4. Bhor Holo Dour Kholo
- 5.Jhor Elo Elo Jhor
- 6.Bak Bakum,
- 7.Noton Noton
- 8.Oi Dekha Jai Taal Gaach
- 9.Railgari Jhomajhom
- 10.Pitthar Golpo
- 11.Tona Toni
- 12.Petuk Moshai
- 13.Doyel Pakhi (Doyel Bird)
- 14.Nanu'r School
- 15.Baburam Shapurey
- 16.Taal Gaach Ek Paaye Dariye
- 17.Twinkle Twinkle Little Star
- 18.Wee Willie Winkie
- 19.Good Morning Good Morning
- 20.Hot Cross Buns
- 21.Pat a Cake Pat a Cake
- 22.Two Little Dickie Birds

23. Incy Wincy Spider
24. One Two Buckle My Shoe
25. Brush Your Teeth Brush Your Teeth
26. Humpty Dumpty
27. Our Village
28. Spread a Little Sunshine
29. Chew Your Food
30. Life Cycle of a Butterfly

Appendix B.

B.1. Guideline for IDIs with Parents (English)

1. As a child, what were the stories or songs you grew up listening to? Were some of these traditional Bangladeshi folktales?
2. Did you have a few favourites? If yes, then what are they and why did you like them?
3. Do you think folktales of Bengal and Bangladesh are important artefacts of our culture? Why or why not?
4. Do you narrate folk stories or rhymes to children? If so, which ones do you narrate? If not, can you tell me some of the reasons why?
5. Do you believe that traditional folktales have an impact on children's development? If yes, then how so? If no, then what are your reasons for thinking so?

6. Do you think listening to or reading folktales affects children's socio-emotional development and language? If yes, then why do you think that is?
7. Do you think that folktales can sometimes have scary undertones or themes? If yes, do you think they are appropriate for children? Why or why not?
8. Have you noticed any changes, in regards to socio-emotional development and language, in children who listen to or read folktales?
9. What lessons, if any, do you believe traditional stories and rhymes teach children and adults?
10. In the modern world, do you think the practice of storytelling and folktales should be protected? If so, then what steps can we take to revive them so that they are in tune with the digital age?

B.2. Guideline for IDIs with Teachers (English)

1. Do you think folktales of Bengal and Bangladesh are important artefacts of our culture? Why or why not?
2. Do you narrate folk stories or rhymes to children? If so, which ones do you narrate? If not, can you tell me some of the reasons why?
3. Do you think folktales and rhymes are impactful in regards to children's socio-emotional development? If yes, then why do you think so?
4. Do you think folktales or rhymes have an effect on children's language development? If yes, then why do you think so?

5. (If the answer to the above questions were yes) in your opinion, what are some of the stories or rhymes which can help children develop their social skills and language acquisition?
6. Do you think that folktales can sometimes have scary undertones or themes? If yes, do you think they are appropriate for children? Why or why not?
7. Can you provide a few examples as to the developmental changes (in regards to socio-emotional development and language if any), you may have noticed in children who listen to or read folktales?
8. What lessons, if any, do you believe traditional stories and rhymes teach children and adults?
9. Do you think enough folktales are incorporated in the school curricula? Why or why not?
10. In the modern world, do you think the practice of storytelling and folktales should be protected? If so, then what steps can we take to revive them so that they are in tune with the digital age?

B.3. Guideline for IDIs with Parents (Bengali)

১. ছোটো বেলায় আপনি কি ধরনের গান বা গল্প শুনতেন? এগুলোর মধ্যে কয়েকটি কি ঐতিহ্যবাহী বাংলাদেশী লোককথা ছিলো?

২. আপনার কি কোনো পছন্দ ছিলো? যদি হয় তাহলে কোনগুলো এবং কেন?
৩. আপনার কি মনে হয় এই বঙ্গপ্রদেশ এবং বাংলাদেশের লোককথা ও রূপকথা আমাদের সমাজ ও সংস্কৃতির একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ঐতিহ্য? কেন বা কেন নয়?
৪. আপনি কি আপনার শিশুকে রূপকথার গল্প বা ছড়া শোনান? যদি হয় তাহলে কোনগুলো? আর যদি না হয় তাহলে কি বলতে পারেন কেন না?
৫. আপনি কি মনে করেন এই রূপকথার গল্প এবং ছড়া শিশুর সার্বিক বিকাশে কোনো প্রভাব ফেলে? যদি হয় তাহলে কিভাবে? আর যদি না হয় তাহলে কি বলতে পারেন কেন না?
৬. আপনি কি মনে করেন এই রূপকথার গল্প এবং ছড়া পড়া এবং শোনার মাধ্যমে শিশুর সামাজিক ও আবেগীয় বিকাশ ও ভাষার বিকাশে কোনো প্রভাব ফেলে? যদি হয় তাহলে কেন?
৭. আপনি কি মনে করেন এই রূপকথার গল্পগুলো খুব ভয়ংকর করে তোলে? যদি হয় তাহলে আপনি কি মনে করেন তা শিশুর জন্য প্রযোজ্য? কেন বা কেন না?
৮. আপনার কি মনে হয় এই রূপকথার গল্প পড়া ও শোনার মাধ্যমে শিশুর সামাজিক ও ভাষার বিকাশে কোনো পরিবর্তন এসেছে?
৯. আপনার মতে এই রূপকথার গল্পগুলোর মাধ্যমে আমরা কি শিখতে পারি?
১০. আপনার মতে এই আধুনিক যুগে গল্প বলার চর্চাটি কি বজায় রাখা উচিত? যদি হয় তাহলে আমরা এই ডিজিটাল যুগে কি পদক্ষেপ নিতে পারি?

B.4. Guideline for IDIs with Teachers (Bengali)

১. আপনার কি মনে হয় এই বঙ্গপ্রদেশ এবং বাংলাদেশের লোককথা ও রূপকথা আমাদের সমাজ ও সংস্কৃতির একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ঐতিহ্য? কেন বা কেন নয়?

২. আপনি কি শিশুকে রূপকথার গল্প বা ছড়া শোনান? যদি হ্যাঁ হয় তাহলে কোনগুলো? আর যদি না হয় তাহলে কি বলতে পারেন কেন না?
৩. আপনি কি মনে করেন এই রূপকথার গল্প এবং ছড়া পড়া এবং শোনার মাধ্যমে শিশুর সামাজিক ও আবেগীয় বিকাশে কোনো প্রভাব ফেলে? যদি হ্যাঁ হয় তাহলে কেন?
৪. আপনি কি মনে করেন এই রূপকথার গল্প এবং ছড়া পড়া এবং শোনার মাধ্যমে শিশুর ভাষার বিকাশে কোনো প্রভাব ফেলে? যদি হ্যাঁ হয় তাহলে কেন?
৫. উপরের প্রশ্নটি যদি হ্যাঁ হয় তাহলে কোনধরনের ছড়া বা গল্প শিশুর সামাজিক ও আবেগীয় বিকাশ এবং ভাষার বিকাশে উন্নতি লাভ করতে পারে?
৬. আপনি কি মনে করেন এই রূপকথার গল্পগুলো খুব ভয়ংকর করে তোলে? যদি হ্যাঁ হয় তাহলে আপনি কি মনে করেন তা শিশুর জন্য প্রয়োজ্য? কেন বা কেন না?
৭. আপনি কি রূপকথার গল্প পড়া ও শোনার মাধ্যমে শিশুর সামাজিক ও ভাষার বিকাশে কোনো পরিবর্তন এসেছে তার উদাহরণ দিতে পারবেন?
৮. আপনার মতে এই রূপকথার গল্পগুলোর মাধ্যমে আমরা কি শিখতে পারি?
৯. আপনার কি মনে হয় এই রূপকথার গল্পগুলো আমাদের স্কুল পাঠ্যক্রমে যথেষ্ট পরিমাণে আছে? কেন বা কেন না?
১০. আপনার মতে এই আধুনিক যুগে গল্প বলার চর্চাটি কি বজায় রাখা উচিত? যদি হ্যাঁ হয় তাহলে আমরা এই ডিজিটাল যুগে কি পদক্ষেপ নিতে পারি?

B.5. Participant Consent Form

This is to state that I, _____, of
_____, agree to take part in this qualitative research study,

