

Parents' Perception and Practice of Early Stimulation for 0-3 Years
Old Children in Urban Areas

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

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Brac University
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

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

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Ethics Statement

Title of Thesis Topic: Parents' Perception and Practice of Early Stimulation for 0-3 Years Old Children in Urban Areas.

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1. Source of population: Parents who have 0-3 years old children.
2. Does the study involve (yes, or no)
 - a) Physical risk to the subjects (No)
 - b) Social risk (No)
 - c) Psychological risk to subjects (No)
 - d) discomfort to subjects (No)
 - e) Invasion of privacy (No)
3. Will subjects be clearly informed about (yes or no)
 - a) Nature and purpose of the study (yes)
 - b) Procedures to be followed (yes)
 - c) Physical risk (n/a)
 - 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 (n/a)
4. Will Signed verbal consent for be required (yes or no)
 - a) from study participants (yes)
 - b) from parents or guardian (n/a)
 - c) Will precautions be taken to protect anonymity of subjects? (yes)
5. Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee:
 - a) Proposal (yes)
 - b) Consent Form (yes)
 - c) Questionnaire or interview schedule (yes)

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Abstract

Research on early stimulation in Bangladesh is mostly concentrated on poorly resourced environments and from lower socio-economic background in rural areas. This study aimed to explore parents' perceptions and practices of 0-3 years old children regarding early stimulation related skills in urban areas of Bangladesh. Data in this study was collected through in-depth interviews with ten parents and focused group discussion with six parents and conducted in hybrid modality- both face-to-face (IDI) and online (FGD). The questionnaire was pretested and translated prior to the actual study. This study aimed to explore, parental perceptions towards early stimulation and its practices with children. Qualitative approach and purposive sample technique were employed in the study. Study reveals that, the parents who have prior knowledge and are working in Early Childhood Development (ECD) field are very much aware and practicing stimulating activities in their daily life. But the parents from non-ECD backgrounds having comparatively unclear perception of early stimulation. The practicing level is quite low as well. The ECD professionals are very conscious and doing different stimulating activities like singing, reciting rhymes, telling stories and playing while they get time. But the Non-ECD persons, they also do stimulating activities sometimes but are not much aware about its importance and have an addled concept about early stimulation. The benefits of early stimulation associated with other domains (cognitive, psychosocial and language) are mostly overlooked in non-ECD background parents' responses. Additionally, study reveals that both type of parents is aware of developing socio-emotional skills of their children. The study highlighted that some parents have the understanding that their roles and contribution are important factors for shaping their child's life but some have inadequate understanding and knowledge gap regarding the significance of their involvement through stimulating activities. From the research, it is recommendable that early stimulation, an important and unavoidable factor of a child life need to be spread in mass level.

To my Parents and Brother

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List of Acronyms

SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
BEN	Bangladesh ECD Network
ELCD	Early Learning for Child development
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
ECDI	Early Childhood Development Index
LMIC	Low- and middle-income countries
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
IDI	In-depth Interview

Chapter I: Introduction and Background

Introduction

All the signatory nations are following Sustainable Development Goals for their country's development. There is a significant indicator under goal 4 that solely focuses on Early childhood development (Indicator 4.2.1). Universal access to quality early childhood development and care is fundamental to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG, 2015). During the period of early childhood, children grow and develop rapidly. A child's brain development is almost 80% complete by the age of 3 and the next few years play an important role in enhancing the child's cognitive, social and emotional development along with motor development (UNICEF Bangladesh, 2017). Thus, children should be given proper care and stimulation during these years of life.

Early Childhood Programs focusing on early stimulation and the involvement of parents through those programs help to shape children's early and later lives as well. To optimize child's brain development and physical growth, early stimulation and proper care are a must. This is a time when their brain, body and immune system grows and develops significantly (Pregnancy birth & baby, 2019). The first 1,000 days of a child's life starts from the moment they are conceived until they have reached 2 years of age (24 months). This is a very crucial time in every child's life. These thousand days are referred to as the golden 1000 days of a child's life as this is the time that ultimately shapes a child's whole future (Nurturing Care Framework for Early Childhood Development, 2018).

It was estimated that 43 percent (or 250 million) children under 5 years of age are not achieving their developmental potential (UNICEF Bangladesh, 2017). It has been stated

in WHO guideline, child who do not receive proper nutrition, health, early stimulation, care, learning opportunities and protection, which are the elements of ‘nurturing care’, tend to have lower cognitive, language and psychosocial outcomes as well as executive functioning, which translates to lower academic achievement in primary school and, ultimately, drop out from school. It was estimated that 11 to 17 percent of children are at risk of or have disabilities. (UNICEF Program Guidance for Early Childhood Development, 2017)

According to renowned economist, James Heckman (2012), one of the benefits of investing in early childhood education is greater return on investment, 7 folds increase in benefits for every dollar invested (The High/Scope Perry Pre-school Project). Investing in early childhood also means creating a strong base for an efficient workforce in the future. The brain develops most rapidly in the very early years of life, where neurons form new connections at an astounding rate- up to 1,000 per second. And this occurs in a short period of time, which establishes the capacity to learn, develop psychological resilience and adapt to change. This small window of opportunity is limited for children who are facing adversity. The brain requires multiple inputs during this period. It requires care and stimulation to spark neural connections across multiple regions of the brain, to increase its capacity and function for early cognitive, social and emotional development and language skills. It requires nutrition and good health at the right time to feed and nourish not only the body but also the brain. It also requires safety and protection to buffer against stress and pollution and allow the absorption of nutrients for the growth and development of the nervous system, including the brain. All these aspects of the environment must work together to build a better brain during the early childhood period

of life. To optimize the opportunities in every child, parent's understanding and knowledge are very important.

The importance of early stimulation for this age cohort is also acknowledged in different policies. All countries that have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) are duty-bound to provide universal access to essential services for early health and well-being, with a particular focus on protecting the rights of vulnerable and marginalized children.

According to National Child policy (2011) of Bangladesh, in order to ensure the child's right to safe birth and live, steps shall be taken to ensure safe childbirth through nutrition, health care of the expectant and post-natal mothers. The growth of the child and necessary pre-natal, natal and post-natal care also need to be ensured. This policy was effective in Bangladesh before the Comprehensive ECCD policy was approved.

The Government of Bangladesh approved existing policy is an integrated one, which is, Comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD Policy, 2013) where it is mentioned about pre-pregnancy care, pre-natal and post-natal care, early learning, responsive care and early stimulation for 0-3 years children. There is also a Strategic Operational and implementation plan for the Comprehensive ECCD Policy in 2016.

Bangladesh ECD Network (BEN) provided technical support to the UNICEF-assisted Early Learning for Child development (ELCD) Project (Phase II) of Bangladesh Shishu Academy to develop the strategic operational and implementation plan where the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), played a role as the leading ministry for the implementation of the policy (Early Childhood Development in Bangladesh, 2017).

The lancet series 2017 made a conservative estimate that in developing countries on that time, more than 200 million children under 5 years fail to reach their potential in cognitive development because of poverty, poor health and nutrition, and deficient care. Children's development consists of several interdependent domains, including sensory-motor, cognitive, and social-emotional. All of these are likely to be affected. Poverty and the socio-cultural context increase young children's exposure to biological and psychosocial risks that affect development through changes in brain structure and function, and behavioral changes.

We have all the policies, National and International laws, structured frameworks, research papers and documents that create an obligation towards us to contribute and work more for the better development of 0-3 years old children. Parents also need to have proper information and knowledge and should practice it for their child's better development. But it is a matter of regret that, instead of having all the above-mentioned policies and guidance, still there is a need of programs focusing on this age cohort and increasing the implementation rate of existing programs and interventions in Bangladesh. Considering the importance of the need of improving parent's knowledge and their involvement in providing early stimulation, this study is set focusing solely on urban parents' perception and practice of early stimulation for 0-3 years children.

Problem statement

According to Statista, the importance of early stimulation and parents' involvement in early years activities has not been communicated to the majority of people across Bangladesh. In 2020, approximately 26.75 percent of the population in Bangladesh was aged up to 14 years old (Statista, 2022). In 2015, approximately 3,100,000 babies were

born in Bangladesh, or around 8,600 every day. Among young women (aged 20-24), 36 percent gave birth by age 18 (UNICEF, 2022). As the early marriage rate is very high and women are giving birth at a very early age, it can be easily assumed based on the situation in Bangladesh that they do not have much understanding of providing early stimulation.

The data from the 2012-13 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in Bangladesh make it clear that 78.0% of adult household members have engaged in four or more activities with children aged 3-5 years. Only 10% of fathers have engaged in four or more activities with their children and only 8.8% of child friendly books (3 or more) are available (MICS 2013). The data of MICS 2019 shows that, in Bangladesh, 62.9% of adult household members have engaged in four or more activities with children aged 2-4 years. Only 11% of fathers have engaged in four or more activities with their children and only 6% of child-friendly books (3 or more) are available for under 5 years old children (MICS 2019). From these data, we can see that the age cohort is different in these two data sets and the percentage has decreased from 2012-13 to 2019. There is a high urge to change the scenario in our country which is only possible while parental active involvement will be increased.

Again, if we focus specifically on the reading habit of this age cohort, it is found through the baseline of a program for 0-3 years children and their parents that, when parents are asked about learning materials they used for child's development, 'the most common reading materials were textbooks, religious books and only 35% of parents reported owning story books. This suggests that there are few child-friendly reading materials available in these homes' (Save the children, 2015-16). They don't know the importance

of early stimulation during early years, especially during 0-3 years to shape children's whole life.

According to World Bank (2021), 'Bangladesh government, with the support from World Bank, is providing cash benefits to over 6,00,000 poor pregnant women and mothers for participating in activities aimed at improving their children's nutrition and cognitive development.' Still, it is a matter of regret that, most of the parents, especially in rural areas don't receive much supportive programs focusing on this age cohort.

As the Government of Bangladesh serves educational support starting from 5+ age cohort and 4+ is also being covered partially from very early this year. Other needs like health and nutrition and other services are being provided and ensured through various wings of the Government. But there is a scarcity of initiatives focusing solely on 0-3 years children and parents.

On the other hand, non-government organizations are doing various research and designing and implementing different interventions for this age cohort. But the implication and practice are quite poor.

For a better understanding of the present scenario in urban areas of Bangladesh, this study is being set to see the perception and practice of how urban parents provide early stimulation to their 0-3 years old children. As the above discussion focused on either the rural perspective or the overall country, not specifically the urban areas, this study is set to focus solely to see urban parents' perception and their practices.

These statistics and data show the present condition and the high need for parents increased involvement in child's development. This is only possible when they will

understand the need and provide stimulation appropriately. Considering the present situation in Bangladesh, I choose to do this study which will be favorable to see parents' understanding and practice of early stimulation.

Purpose of the study

To build the future of nation ideal and strong and to shape child's whole life, parents' in-depth knowledge and practice of stimulation in daily life activities is a very important factor. This study focuses on parental knowledge regarding stimulating the children during everyday life chores and how parents are practicing these.

Significance and Justification of the study

It was estimated that 43 percent (or 250 million) of children under 5 years of age are not achieving their developmental potential (UNICEF Bangladesh, 2017).

In Bangladesh, only 11% of fathers have engaged in four or more activities with their children aged 2-4 years and only 5% of children have skin-to-skin contact with their mothers (MICS 2019). This percentage shows the present condition and the high need for parents increased involvement in child's development. This is only possible when they will understand the need and provide stimulation appropriately.

From this urge, I choose to do this study focusing on urban parents of 0-3 years old children. This study could be a background for a large-scale study in the context of Bangladesh to understand the parents' perception and the level of practice in daily life. Therefore, this study is designed to gain an in-depth understanding on finding out parents' perceptions that might help to design programs to increase their involvement to create a good bonding with their child along with contributing to their development.

Research Questions

- What is the urban parent's perception of early stimulation?
- How urban parents are practicing early stimulation to their children?

Operational DefinitionIn this part, 3 major aspects are being defined as per study requirements. These are- Early stimulation, perception and practice.

Early stimulation refers to especially in the first 1,000 days, has the potential to support child development. Early stimulation consists of doing simple, everyday activities with a child, like talking, singing, reading, and playing. (OVERVIEW OF EARLY STIMULATION INTERVENTIONS AND RESEARCH IN TANZANIA, 2018). On the other hand, in this study, early stimulation stands for interacting with children through talking, looking at the child, smiling playing and reading to some extent.

According to Oxford learners dictionary, perception means the way anyone notice things, especially with the senses. But in this study, parents' perception refers to their understanding and knowledge of early stimulation. How they think about its importance is focused here.

Again, the meaning of practice according to Oxford learners dictionary is doing an activity or training regularly so that someone can improve their skill. Other meaning is the time someone spend doing any activity. In this study, the term practice is used as the parents doing various activities to stimulate the child. So, the meaning is same here.

After reviewing all the documents, policies and literature, this can be assumed that, this study might be very much significant in developing and shaping a child's life.

Chapter II: Literature review

This part contains a review of related literature which aims to provide an overview of the literature related to early stimulation. The first segment is focused on concepts related to the topics of this study. And the second segment describes the reviewed literature and article of different scholars and writers about early stimulation.

Concept related to the research topic

Two concepts are crucial to understand this study better. That are- Perception and Early stimulation. These concepts have been defined below with reference.

Perception: Oxford dictionary defines perception as an idea, a belief, or an image you have as a result of how you see or understand something. In this study, it is the same.

Here researchers will find out parents' perception, ideas and thought to accumulate the study. Parents will share their knowledge about what they think of early stimulation, its need and its importance in the early years of children's life.

Early stimulation: Early stimulation consists of doing simple, everyday activities with a child, like talking, singing, reading, and playing. (Overview of Early stimulation Interventions and Research in Tanzania, 2018). In the earliest years, we acquire skills and capacities interpersonally, in relationship with other people, through smiling and eye contact, talking and singing, modelling, imitation and simple games (Nurturing Care Framework for Early Childhood Development, 2018). How parents are involved in these daily life activities with their children will be found out through this study.

Reviewed literature on the topic: There are sufficient empirical evidence on how or whether early stimulation has impacts on early years of a child's life. Many scholars have written about it which is discussed below.

Universal access to quality early childhood development and care is a fundamental part of Sustainable Development Goal 4.2.1. Children who do not receive proper nutrition, health, early stimulation, care, learning opportunities and protection, that are the elements of ‘nurturing care’, tend to have lowered cognitive, language and psychosocial outcomes as well as executive functioning, which translates to lower academic achievement in primary school and, ultimately, dropping out of school. It is estimated that 11 to 17 percent of children are at risk of or have disabilities. (WHO Guideline, 2020).

The first 1000 days of life - between a woman’s pregnancy and her child’s second birthday - is a unique period of opportunity when the foundations for optimum health and development across the lifespan are established. The right nutrition and care during the 1000 days window influences not only whether the child will survive, but also his or her ability to grow, learn and rise out of poverty. As such, it contributes to society’s long-term health, stability and prosperity. (UNICEF 2017). All these approaches along with others focused on shaping a child’s life which is possible by providing him/her with the utmost care and stimulation.

Research from diverse settings, including the low and middle-income countries, now demonstrates the positive impact that interventions to promote play, stimulation, early communication and responsiveness can have, not just on child development, but on long-term gains in education and economic growth (Who’s holding the baby, 2018).

Moreover, with sufficient interaction, play, motivation, exposure, and opportunities for practice, children can ultimately succeed in attaining age-appropriate skills and developmental domains.

José Manuel Salum Tomé stated that, babies in the womb are sociable and communicative beings, that they feel love or rejection of their mother, feel pleasure and pain, the stress of their mothers affects them not only emotionally, but even interferes in the formation of their organs, they have a certain degree of consciousness. He also added, the speed of change and the large amount of information and social variables, that characterize today's world make necessary a new type of family and social context that surrounds a newborn child up to three years old, it is for this reason that a correct learning, prenatal and postnatal stimuli, are becoming more and more necessary every day so that affective, cognitive, physical development becomes an ideal training process. (Tomé, 2021)

Pregnancy and the first year of an infant's life are critical times for laying the foundations for the child's future development. Research suggests that prevalence rates of developmental problems in the under threes range between 11% and 13% (Skovgaard et al., 2007; Tough et al., 2008). The identification of children at risk for developmental problems is important, as untreated developmental problems may have significant negative impact on the individuals and have economic and social impacts on society as a whole (Parfitt et al., 2014).

The early years of a child's life are very important for later health and development. One of the main reasons is how fast the brain grows starting before birth and continuing into early childhood (Ages between 0-8 years). Although the brain continues to develop and change into adulthood, the first 8 years can build a foundation for future learning, health and life success (Early Brain Development and Health | CDC, 2022). Preparing a child to become an active member of the society in which he lives requires support and interest

from parents (affection and interaction), the family, educators, healthcare professionals, with a view to good overall development, both physical and psychological (Meriem et al., 2020).

In 2007, 26% of children under 21 lived in single parent households and, in a majority of married couples with children under eighteen, both parents were employed. Furthermore, children beginning at approximately 6 months of age are passively entertained, watching about ½ hour of television per day and increasing roughly 1 h/year up to age 3. Finally, given that 14 % of parents perceive their neighborhoods as unsafe, in some community's children cannot play outdoors unless closely supervised (Kenney, 2012)

An initial estimate from UNICEF's Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI) based on reports from nearly 100000 caregivers show that 36.8% of children aged 3 and 4 years in LMICs do not achieve basic cognitive and socioemotional skills. ECDI scores are positively associated with caregiver-child joint activities such as reading, playing, listening to stories, counting, singing, or travelling outside of home, illustrating the centrality of the caregiving environment to child development (Black & Hurley, 2016)

Among 250 million or 43% of children in Low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) are unable to realize their full development potential in 2016 (WHO). Hence, this was predicted to create a 20 percent loss of adult productivity during the later stages of life.

What was concerning is that 25 percent of children in LMIC like Bangladesh were exposed to psycho-social risk factors such as poor stimulation, lack of learning opportunities, parent unresponsiveness, and parental inability to understand infant behavior (Begum, 2019).

There is an increased focus with growing research in the area of early cognitive development, there is increased focus on the significance of ECD. The early years of a child's life- from conception through 3-5 years of age, are most crucial with greatest opportunity for growth and development. Rapid brain development and sensitivity of brain architecture to the external environment during this period facilitates cognitive and social-emotional development (Gaikwad et al., 2020).

Experiences and research show that early stimulation can help child's learning and create immense opportunities for them. Parents' and caregivers' impactful involvement are necessary in this regard. The period from pregnancy to age 3 is when children are most susceptible to environmental influences. That period lays the foundation for health, well-being, learning and productivity throughout a person's whole life, and has an impact on the health and well-being of the next generation (Nurturing care framework, 2018). The five components (Good health, Adequate Nutrition, Responsive caregiving, Opportunities for early learning and Security and safety) of this framework are interrelated in terms of providing proper stimuli to the children under age 3.

Chapter III: Methodology

The purpose of this part is to provide a brief overview of the research design used for the study. In this section, the research design, research participants and selection of the participants, measures, data collection process, analysis of the collected data, limitations and ethics of this study are described.

Research Approach and Design: The design used is a qualitative study to conduct exploratory research to understand the underlying difference in reasons, opinions, motivations, and perceptions of urban parents who have 0-3 years children. To explore parental perceptions about early stimulation provided at home in urban areas of Bangladesh, a qualitative approach will be followed. As qualitative research means “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedure or other means of quantification” (Strauss & Corbin, 1991) it seems appropriate to employ a qualitative approach to the study. One of the aims of my study is to find out the point of view and practice of research subjects (urban parents) towards early stimulation instead of objectivity and generalization-which is also a reason of designing qualitative study. To fulfill the requirement of the study, In-depth-interviews (IDI's) and Focused Group Discussion (FGD) were conducted.

Research Site: Study locations were selected as Mirpur, Gulshan, Dhanmandi and Uttara of Dhaka city. All the location represents the middle-class and upper-middle-class income group.

Research Participants: This study was conducted with 16 parents (both fathers and mothers having 0-3 years old children) from different areas of Dhaka city.

Participant Selection Procedure: The study population is the parents who have 0 to 3 years old children. They have to reside in urban areas of Bangladesh. The sampling population is convenient but some criteria are fixed like parents having at least 1 child aged between 0-3 years, staying in Dhaka city and having a medium or high level of social and educational status. Parents willingness to participate were also considered for the selection process. The following diagram (Figure 1) represents participant selection procedure.



Figure 1: participant selection procedure

Data Collection Tools: The following measures were used to collect data:

- (a) In-depth interview questionnaire (IDI)
- (b) Focused Group Discussion Guideline (FGD)

Data Collection Method and Procedure: 1 FGD and 10 IDIs were conducted to collect the data. The Focus group discussion was conducted with 6 parents who have 0-3 years old children. Again, 6 parents having a child of below 3 years (both parents of 0-3 years old children) was part of an in-depth interview session. A semi-structured guideline was followed during both the IDI's and FGD. The guideline was prepared with the help of respective field experts. Parents answered questions about the importance and effects of

early stimulation for their children. Both the IDIs and FGD were recorded by the audio recorder and hand notes were taken as well.

Data Management and Analysis: After the data collection, it has been managed. Data was checked for completeness. And the IDI and FGD answers were transcribed and the researcher's answers that were in short notes was rewritten in narrative form. Then, reading and rereading was done to get an initial sense of the data. After that, the data was analyzed in a step-by-step process and then categorized into topics and themes and specific patterns was noted. Lastly, data was interpreted as an attempt to understand the meanings of the findings by looking for concepts relevant to the topic, consistent themes and findings.

Validity and Reliability: As it is a qualitative study, I collected in-depth information about the perceptions of urban parents through the use of In-depth Interviews (IDI's) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). According to Polit & Beck (2010), the goal of most qualitative studies is not to generalize because the focus is on the local, the personal, and the subject. Yet, for the study to add value, the tools were tried out first in a small group. After incorporating the learnings from the try out, the main FGD and IDIs were conducted. The tools were checked and approved by Faculties and ECD Practitioners for validation.

Ethical Issues: Ethical principles were strictly followed and are necessary to clarify under what conditions the research was carried out. All the parents were agreed to participate in the study voluntarily. Before carrying out the study, both male and female parents were sent an email and called over the phone to seek permission for the study. They were given details of the study- context of the study, purpose, objectives of carrying

out the study, reason for approaching them, researcher's profile, etc. Once their consent is received, the researcher then created a list of the willing parents who fall in the criteria. Only those who were willing and interested was shortlisted for the study. The lengthy involvement of the study was mentioned. All participants were assured that their privacy will be given utmost importance and that no personal details will be disclosed in the study. If any participant feels uncomfortable answering any question it can be skipped. If a participant is unwilling or unable to finish the IDI or FGD then their wishes were given priority. No information regarding the study is knowingly withheld. The researcher ensured the fact that she has no prior connection with the parents as that might influence the answers of the respondents.

Limitations of the Study: There are pros and cons to every study. Instead of having lots of advantages and future implications, this study has also some limitations. Such as-

- As the FGD was conduct online, the internet connection of participants sometimes interrupted.
- As the FGD was conduct online, the participants' body language was not be seen. Thus, some information might be misinterpreted.
- Limitations of the study in terms of methods- there is no observation in this study. Only an FGD and IDI's was conducted.

Chapter IV: Results/Findings and Discussion

The purpose of the chapter is to present the results and findings emerged from data. Data in the chapter is presented maintaining alignment with the two tools used in the study.

Data was first assembled from in-depth-interview questionnaire and then from the focused group discussion guideline. Data took the form of thematic approach identifying and analyzing emerging themes and subthemes. This chapter is divided into: Result and Discussion. The first section comprised of two main themes (Urban parents' perception of early stimulation and Practice of early stimulation of urban parents to their children) and ten subthemes emerged in the study. Discussion of the study is presented in the second section.

Demographic profiles of parents and children

Demographic profile in the study examined the age range of both parents (Father and Mothers of 0-3 years old children) and children, educational qualification of parents and their socio-economic condition.

The age range of parents was between 27-48 years. Information on age of parents shows that both young and older parents participated in the study.

In IDI's, six participants (Male and Female) have two children, one mother has one child and now is pregnant. Three parents (Male and Female) have one child. Again, in FGD, three participants have 2 children and three have one. Educational qualification levels of the participants were from graduate to post-graduate.

Most of the parents were working persons. Four mothers are working in private sector (NGO), two have their own boutique shop (business woman) and two are housewives. Fathers' professional qualifications included senior management position in reputed

Bank, Managing Director of readymade garment industry and the rest four works in private sector and two in Government wings. In one family, father is the only source of income.

Parental educational and professional qualifications empowered the families in terms of income. The participants live in their own or rented house and maintains a sobproof life. Most of the parents started the process of teaching to their children at home on a very basic level. In the study researcher did not assume that educated parents only understand the importance of early stimulation to their children, but tried to explore parental perceptions of early stimulation practices from different professional backgrounds. Age range of the children was between 0 to 3 years. Nine of them were male and seven were female.

Theme #1 Urban parents' perception of early stimulation

Under this theme, the researcher has tried to see the perception of parents, specifically, urban parents about early stimulation. There are four sub themes - Parents perception of 'Early Stimulation'; Observing the children during various activities of daily life; how it is helping children to enhance their learning process and Parent's awareness on Children's skills acquisition in early years.

Parents perception of 'Early Stimulation'

Half of the parents have clear concept about early stimulation. They can relate that, providing stimulation to their children through various daily life activities can help the children to learn, develop cognitive skills and the foundation of brain can also be

developed. But, half of them couldn't relate to much with the concept of early stimulation. One of the fathers said his perception about early stimulation,

I do play with my 2 years old children whenever I get time as I know, all these things will help him to learn more. Sometimes I take him in my hands and put him up in the air. At that moment, I can see fear and joy both in his eyes. He fears about falling down. Also learnt to trust me. He learnt new things by taking risks.

(Personal Communication: Interview# 5, 06.03.2023)

A mother who is an ECD professional as well said,

I was noticing from a long, my children didn't say the words 'please' or 'thank you'. I tried a lot but he never said those words. Then, I used to say those words. Like, if I want anything, I said please give me that. And when he brings it, I said 'thank you'. I also told my other family members to do the same. Thus, my child now, learnt to say thank you and please when needed. I think if I didn't stimulate my child with those words, then he wouldn't be able to learn it. (Personal

Communication: Interview# 1, 05.03.2023)

As few parents works or related somehow in the field of ECD, they have clear concept about early stimulation. One mother, who is a housewife and don't have any prior knowledge of ECD, couldn't relate to it properly at first. But, during the discussion, when she hears from others, could relate and added value to the study. She said, "I do not have much idea on how to stimulate my child. I used to search on YouTube and google and learnt a lot from there. Now, I have some sort of knowledge and can help my children to learn effectively. I also noticed, her way of reaction changes with her age" (Focused group notes# 1: 08.03.2023)

Another father said, “I don’t know much about stimulation and staffs. My wife basically has to handle the child as I have to give a lot of time in my workplace. Still, whenever I get time, I talk and play with my child” (Personal Communication: Interview# 7, 09.03.2023)

Observing the children during various activities of daily life

Most of the parents participated in IDI’s and FGD said, they do observe their children whenever they get time. As most of the parents are working persons, they cannot pay attention to their children during work time but after returning home and in weekends and holidays, they do observe their children. One of the mothers narrated,

I try to observe my children as much as I can. As I am a working mother and my child had to stay with the caregiver, he is automatically getting a lot of screen time. And he is getting habituated to eat with the screen on. (Personal Communication: Interview# 1, 04.03.2023)

Another father opined regarding this, “During playing, I try to notice her and introduce new things to her like counting, color identification etc. I observe, she tries to mix colors and create new things. I think all these things are helping her to develop in a very early stage.” (Focused group notes# 1: 08.03.2023)

How early stimulation is helping children to enhance their learning process

Most of the parents cited that they love to see children learning although they do not do those things with them every day due to time constraint and tiredness. They usually become surprised to see children learning new things with or without their involvement.

Participants have mentioned that children learn many things from elder siblings, neighborhood children, other family members and from caregiver as well. Regarding this, parents consider their second child is quite lucky as they got elder siblings. One of the participants notified, “I don’t have to give much effort to teach things to my younger one as she learns from her elder sister. I feel good when I see they are having fun and learning together.” (Personal Communication: Interview# 2, 04.03.2023). Another participant shared her feelings this way, “I was very proud and happy when I saw she is calling me by my name for the first time. As my husband calls me by name, she heard that and learnt it from there.” (Focused group notes# 1: 08.03.2023)

It appears that involvement of eldest children and the surroundings play a vital role in developing and enhancing child’s early learning process according to parents. It has also appeared that unsupervised and unstructured stimulating moments and activities done by parents and other caregivers are also factors contributing to the development of early learning.

Parent’s awareness on Children’s skills acquisition in early years

The parents who have prior knowledge of ECD agreed on one point, that is, early stimulation is a must to shape down child’s whole life. Their skills and learning capacity develop according to the stimulation they get from us and from others. One father said in this regard, “Children are like soft clay. It is in our hand if we want to turn it into a beautiful flower vase or just keep it pulped. It makes me happy when I see my child is growing up and learning things gradually” (Personal Communication: Interview# 6, 06.03.2023).

Another mother narrated,

When my child was 1 year old, he used to cry loudly if he needs anything. He was unmanageable. When he was 2+ years old, he became a bit stable. Gradually, I took him outside and create scopes for him to play with other children. I let him talk and make friendship with everyone around him, even if they are not belonging from the same socio-economic status. Slowly I saw, he is learning to control his emotions, stubbornness and most of the time can react based on the situation. (Personal Communication: Interview# 1, 04.03.2023)

Another mother narrated, “my 2.5 years old baby girl now can run, can solve a challenging task with help of her older one, can understand instruction and catch things very soon, also can add new things by her own.” (Personal Communication: Interview# 2, 04.03.2023)

The participants who are from different academic and professional background rather than ECD have some sort of different opinion on early stimulation. One mother said, “I basically focus on my child’s reading skills. For this, I buy her different child friendly books. She is 2.8 years old and can count 1-10, recite several rhymes and knows different fruits, flowers and animals’ name.” (Personal Communication: Interview# 9, 10.03.2023)

Another father opined in this regard, “As I am the only earning member of the family, I cannot give much time to my family and children. But I saw my child is learning to say different English words which is astonishing for me, I thing he learns them from YouTube and TV” (Personal Communication: Interview# 10, 10.03.2023)

Above mentioned excerpts showed different parental perception on how children of this particular age acquire skills. The parents with ECD knowledge focus on Socio-emotional

learning, whereas non-ECD professionals focus on language or academic knowledge acquisition.

Theme #2 Practice of early stimulation of urban parents to their children

This theme is basically focused on the hands-on practices of early stimulation that parents do with their children. Under this theme, there are six sub themes- Stimulating child during playing, eating, sleeping and bathing; Parents' response to children; Early stimulating on child's cognitive development; Early stimulating on child's Socio-emotional development; Early stimulating on child's Physical development and Early stimulating on child's Language development.

Stimulating child during playing, eating, sleeping and bathing

Some parents mentioned that, they do provide stimulation to their children during playing, eating, sleeping, bathing and other daily life activities which is very helpful for their development. However, some of them are not much aware of it. It is seen both in IDI's and FGD. One of the mothers said,

We sit and eat together all the time to inspire him to have food by his own. But never forced him to eat or to do anything. We play with swan, balls, make bubbles in the water and make a playful environment during bath time. Let him select his own dress and everyone in the house continuously talked to him. I think these things make him more confident, independent and self-sufficient (Personal Communication: Interview# 4, 04.03.2023)

Another father opined in this regard,

I cannot bath or feed my children always. Mostly his mother does these as I have to stay out of the house most of the time. But, in weekends, or holidays, I bath my children. We sing song together and sometimes I tell some stories while wiping his head. I usually serve the food on his plate and inspire him to have it by his own. Sometimes we do competition and I get defeated intentionally to let him finish the food. He talks a lot with me before sleeping and I enjoy it a lot.

(Focused group notes# 1: 08.03.2023)

Another mother shared, “I always encourage my children, especially during feeding. But as I am a working mother, the caregiver feed him with the screen open as it is easier for her. To minimize this, I limited the screen time and try to feed him by telling stories or letting him play with toys.” (Personal Communication: Interview# 1, 04.03.2023)

A father said, “I only get to spend some time with my children before sleeping. But this also happens very rarely because mostly I come home after he fall asleep. But, whenever he gets time, we talk a lot and I try to teach him new lessons through stories or activities” (Personal Communication: Interview# 7, 09.03.2023)

Form the above opinions, it can be said that, few parents are aware and practicing early stimulation through various daily life activities. This also creates a good bond with their children. Few parents cannot relate to it much. They have connections with their children but lack of clear perception of early stimulation is being seen.

Their response to children

Some parents said, they do response according to their child's need. They do stimulate their children during feeding, playing, bathing and through various daily life activities.

They do these whenever they get time. One mother narrated,

After having dinner, we come to our room and talk to each-other every day. As on that time, by both children having their father and mother together, they started to say all the things they did all day. We also listen to them very carefully and address those things. Also, my children are habituated to sleep by listening stories from me and my husband. (Personal Communication: Interview# 3, 04.03.2023)

Another mother said in this regard,

As I work in the field of ECD, I know the things that works for my child's development. Like, sometimes I provide him age-appropriate toys/materials and assign some tasks. Sometimes he is able to do it better than I think he would.

Then I give him some advanced level activities and help him if needed. (Personal Communication: Interview# 4, 04.03.2023)

Again, some parents are seen not being acquainted much with early stimulation and its needs. They either didn't answer or couldn't give much relatable answers. It is observed both during FGD and IDIs. For example, one mother opined that they took assistance from outside rather than taking intervention by themselves and narrated, "My child cannot talk clearly. He cannot say proper sentences and whatever he tries to say is hard to understand. So, I admitted him in pre-school. Now, he is learning to say words slowly." (Personal Communication: Interview# 8, 09.03.2023)

Another mother said, "my child is habituated to see his favorite cartoons during having foods. I let him to do so as it comes easier for me to feed him. I think this is helpful to

finish his food and time saving as well.” (Personal Communication: Interview# 9, 10.03.2023)

It can be seen in a wide range that, when parents interact and react according to child’s need, answering their queries and spending time with them, children are getting benefited. According to parents, they can see and feel the developmental changes in children. When they get proper information and knowledge through some sort of stimulation, they learn in a good pace. On the other hand, when they didn’t get proper stimulation and interaction from parents, their development is being hampered and cannot excel in skills according to their age. For this, parents are also being worried.

Early stimulating on child’s cognitive development

Some of the parents opined their view that, providing stimulation is a must for child’s cognitive development. Some of them think this is a natural process. One father who has the prior knowledge of ECD said in this regard, “I have created a colorful play zone in one corner of our room and decorate it with different play materials. Sometimes I saw he is playing with different toys, and sometimes with the same materials in a different way.” (Focused group notes# 1: 08.03.2023)

Another mother shared her thoughts, “sometimes I intentionally give advanced level activities, change the question pattern and ask to understand her level of development. Now I can see, she can understand instructions more clearly and easily.” (Personal Communication: Interview# 2, 04.03.2023)

Regarding child's cognition, a mother narrated, "I do puzzle games and provide him legos so that he can think and solve a problem." (Personal Communication: Interview# 1, 04.03.2023)

Contrarily, a father narrated, "Brain development is a natural process. Children gather knowledge and learn new things. They learn from books, TV, internet even from their grandparents." (Personal Communication: Interview# 7, 09.03.2023)

Another father said, "I think providing nutritious food or ensure safety to children is more important factor for child's physical and brain development. I always try to maintain a balance diet for my children and try to avoid junk foods." (Focused group notes# 1: 08.03.2023)

Some parents think that, early stimulation can help child to have more neural connections. The more a child will be stimulated rightly, the more connections will be stronger and brain will be developed. Again, a group of participants think that, it is a natural process.

Early stimulating on child's Socio-emotional development

In terms of socio-emotional development, all of the parents agreed that, children should get the opportunities to go out, interact with others and play with peers. One mother said,

My child is introvert. He latches on me and needs some time to open up. Then I started to take him out in different places. I take him to the shopping complex, grocery shops, and let him interact with everyone. I take him to play zone in weekends and let him play with other children. And gradually, he is now quite

flexible and can control his emotions. (Personal Communication: Interview# 1, 04.03.2023)

Another mother said, “I let my child play with children from different social status. I also teach her small things like, giving salam to elders, sharing toys, say hi when seeing someone etc. These things are helping her to learn social values and norms.” (Personal Communication: Interview# 1, 04.03.2023). A male parent said, “when I take my child in the playground, I encourage him to play in groups. I noticed one day, he was crying after losing the game. Another friend of him came and tried to calm him down. The feeling of empathy in a such young child is quite surprising and rare” (Focused group notes# 1: 08.03.2023).

Having a connection or bonding and spending time with the children before their birth is also being found in this study. A pregnant mother, who also have a 2.5 years old child said, “when I get tired or feel bored, I put my hands in my belly and talked to my child. I feel relaxed and so much connected with my unborn child.” (Personal Communication: Interview# 3, 04.03.2023).

Parents, no matter what their academic or professional background is, now a days, are quite conscious about developing socio-emotional skills in children and are taking necessary steps for that.

Early stimulating on child’s Physical development

In terms of physical development, some parents think that physical activities are very much needed for child’s development. Some thinks that, if nutritious food can be

provided, they will be healthy and will obtain appropriate height and weight. One parent opined in favor of stimulating physical activities,

I try to make my child active all the time. There are some sort of physical activities in his daily life. I take him to different play zone and open places to let him jump and run freely. At home, frog jump, hide and seek and other physical games have been played with him. At night, he went to everyone's room to say 'good night'. This also is a kind of physical activity for him. I give him more chances to do color to develop his fine motor skills. (Personal Communication: Interview# 6, 06.03.2023).

A father opined, "we go to the open field or sometimes we go to the rooftop and play football, cricket and badminton. We play those at home as well. She also drives her toy car and by-cycle inside the house." (Personal Communication: Interview#6, 06.03.2023).

A mother shared, "I play pick-a-boo with my children. When I hide my face, he tried to find me by babbling and throwing his hands and legs. When I unhide my face, he keeps his eyes wide open and smiles." (Focused group notes# 1: 08.03.2023).

Another father said in this regard, "Providing nutritious food to children is a must for their physical development. This helps them to grow and keeps them healthy and sound. I always try to provide balanced diet to all of my family members" (Personal Communication: Interview# 7, 09.03.2023).

Early stimulating on child's Language development

In terms of language development, some parents said, early stimulation helps child to develop in literacy. If children get proper stimulation, they learn new words and

sentences easily. Also, their imagination power and communication skill develop through this. On the other hand, some parents said, children learn language by hearing others. One mother narrated in favor of early stimulation and its need for language development,

My child had speech delay. When he was almost 1 year, the covid phase started. Some of our family members got infected along with me. So, we have to get isolated to keep him safe. On that time, he had a lot of screen time. There was no one to talk to him. At one point, He didn't talk for 3 months. Not even a single word. That makes me feel measurable. After that period, I completely stopped his screen time and all of us started to talk to him. We talked a lot, even, if he wants to have biscuits, we describe the biscuits shape, its, taste, the color of its packet and so on. And after some time, gradually he starts to speak and now, he talks all the day! (Personal Communication: Interview# 6, 06.03.2023).

A father said, "I recite rhymes and tell different stories to her before sleeping and I noticed, the new words she hears in the rhyme or story, used those while doing other activities. I feel good that time" (Personal Communication: Interview# 5, 06.03.2023).

A mother opined, "my child learns to say new words from the surroundings. Sometimes I got surprised to see him saying the words we never used in front of him. Sometimes he says such complex words. I think this is natural and he is getting all the words from us, from around." (Personal Communication: Interview# 8, 09.03.2023).

It has been found that, reading picture illustrated story books or reading aloud are the literacy activities commonly done by parents.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine parental perceptions and practices towards early stimulation of children. This part first discusses the issues emerged during the study and provides an analysis of the research evidence with reference to the literature review in chapter two. Secondly, some recommendations are suggested.

The demographic profile in the study indicates that most of the parents are well educated. Both parents' educational qualification empowered the families in terms of income and assets. The study shows that mothers are the primary care givers of children, irrespective of professional identity (working or home maker). Mothers involve more with children in stimulating practices than their spouses. Elder siblings, surroundings child and other family members' involvement are also valid factors contributing to the development of children. Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), the most prominent socio-cultural theorist also said in this regard, when problems or tasks are slightly above a child's ability level, adults use language and social interaction to guide children's thinking. This is called scaffolding. While scaffolding, adults indirectly guide children with hints or questions, or allow them to think completely independently, depending on what they need to learn. In this way, intellectual growth occurs.

Current findings suggests that, Parents who have knowledge of ECD or somehow related to the field of ECD are very much aware and practicing stimulating activities with their children. But the parents from different professional and academic backgrounds are not much aware of it and the practice level is comparatively low than their counterparts.

Study findings also suggest that some parents are aware of the fact that early stimulating practices should be started at an early age. Educated parents consider home as the first

leaning place and prefer children to learn at least few things from home. Parents sing, tell rhymes and let children play for learning at homes. They have the urge to spend more quality times with children, but time constraint prevents them from giving time to their children.

From FGD and interviews it would appear that parents accept the fact that children of this age learn through play and most of the parents give children the opportunity to play and do various activities with them. The reflection of parents' perceptions on how children of this particular age learn varies in two different opinions. Some parents stated, it does not focus on formal reading or academic activities rather it placed a high importance on the informal settings and time spent on doing activities through play. Some said that, these skills are being acquired naturally. There is nothing much to do stimulating activities.

José Manuel Salum Tomé stated in this regard, the real intention of the stimulation is to help form an unborn child who is capable of facing life in the future, with common sense, coherence, intelligence and good humor. (Tomé, 2021).

Again, José Manuel Salum Tomé said, the speed of change and the large amount of information, social variables, that characterize today's world make necessary a new type of family and social context that surrounds a newborn child up to three years old, it is for this reason that a correct learning, prenatal and postnatal stimuli, are becoming more and more necessary every day so that affective, cognitive, physical development becomes an ideal training process (Tomé, 2021). As we have seen in result part, a pregnant mother talks to her unborn child during her leisure time, it reflects José's prenatal stimuli which is also very important for a mother child bonding.

Research from diverse settings, including the low and middle-income countries, now demonstrates the positive impact that interventions to promote play, stimulation and early communication can have, not just on child development, but on long-term gains in education and economic growth (Who's holding the baby, 2018). The parents who are well aware and are practicing early stimulation with their children, they are actually ensuring a safe future and securing their child's life. As their foundation is strong, they will step forward and excel academically and economically in future. But the parents who do not have clear concept of early stimulation are facing challenges in this regard so as their children.

Parents tell rhymes, sing songs, teach alphabets, flowers, fruits and animals names at homes. They also share stories with children but not as a part of increasing their academic skills. Most of the times story telling is done at the time of feeding and bed time to make children finish food or to make them sleep early. It reflects that, parents do not view story telling as an activity of early learning but as a part of influencing the child to do something.

It is also seen that parents talk and interact a lot with the children whenever they get time. Few male parents are also very conscious in this regard. Listening to the children with importance and letting them share their feeling and things they experienced all day is very helpful for growing their self-confidence and thus, parent-child bonding gets stronger. Children find their parents as a reliable place where they can share anything and everything without any hesitation. Creating this space for children and making such bonding helps the children grow more confident, efficient and self-dependent. Erikson mentioned in the first stage among eight stages of psychosocial development in this

regard, children must come to trust that basic needs will be met by caregivers and that the world is a predictable and safe place. Otherwise, they will develop a feeling of mistrust in others and the world. (Childhood and society, 1990)

But the main difference seen in this study is between two group of participants. In both FDG and IDI's there were participants from ECD and non ECD backgrounds. It is clearly seen that, the parents who have prior knowledge and are working in ECD field are very much aware and practicing stimulating activities in their daily life. But the non-ECD people, their perception of early stimulation is quite addled. The practicing level is quite low as well. According to a Bangladeshi researcher, Taslima Begum, what was concerning is that 25 percent of children in Low-Middle Income Country (LMIC) like Bangladesh were exposed to psycho-social risk factors such as poor stimulation, lack of learning opportunities, parent unresponsiveness, and parental inability to understand infant behavior (Begum, 2019).

So, to spread early stimulation in mass level, an important and unavoidable factor of a child life, parental perception should be developed and practice level need to be increased. For this, more interventions and programs are need to be designed and implemented.

Recommendations: Based on the study findings, the following recommendations can be made for parents, caregivers, educators, researchers and policymakers-

- Parents need to be educated more and have clearer concept about the importance of early stimulation for their child's development. This can be done through various means such as: seminars, workshops and parenting programs.
- Parents should be encouraged to provide a stimulating environment for their children by providing them age-appropriate play materials, telling stories, reciting poems and

engaging them in various activities that promote physical, cognitive, language and socio-emotional development.

- Policymakers should invest in programs that focuses solely on early stimulation and its importance for this age cohort as well as provide support for parents to enhance their child's development.
- Researchers should continue to find out the factors that influence's parents' perception and practices of early stimulation and develop interventions to spread it in mass level.
- Finally, it is important to establish a collaborative efforts between parents, caregivers, policymakers and researchers to spread the importance and need of early stimulation to the mass level and enhance the development of 0-3 years old children in urban areas of Bangladesh.

Conclusion: Parents are the first caregivers of a child. Before and after the child is born, taking proper care and providing them with every kind of support is a must for their survival and development. Parents play the key role here. Having a clear understanding of early stimulation for early years children, especially children aged between 0-3 years can help them to provide the appropriate stimulation that their child needs. This study is focused on this area which will create an immense way to support the development of this age group of children and their parents.

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IDI Guideline

Topic: Parents' perception and practice of early stimulation for 0-3 years old children in urban areas.

Name:

Age:

Location:

Profession:

Salary:

Research Questions-

- What is the urban parent's perception of early stimulation?
- How urban parents are practicing early stimulation to their children?

Research Objective: To understand parents perception and practice about early stimulation for children 0-3 years old.

Questionnaire

Theme #1 What is urban parents' perception of early stimulation?

1. Do you observe and respond to your children? When and how? Please explain your answer.
2. Do you provide care and stimulation to your children during feeding, sleeping, bathing and playtime? How? Please explain your answer.
3. How do you enhance or stimulate your child to learn something new? Please explain your answer.
4. Stimulation is provided to help children to learn something new. What do you think is why early stimulation is important for your children's development?
5. Do you see any developmental changes (Physical, Cognitive, Socio-emotional, Language) in your children? Explain with examples.
6. What do you think are the positive aspects of early stimulation?

7. What is your suggestion for enhancing your children's development by providing early stimulation?

Theme #2 How urban parents are practicing early stimulation to their children?

1. Do you stimulate your children during feeding to see his/her responses? How?
2. Do you provide care and stimulation to your children during playtime? How?
3. Do you provide stimulation to your children during sleeping? How?
4. Do you stimulate your children during bathing? How?
5. Which activities are suitable to stimulate and provide care to your children?
6. How do you practice early stimulation to enhance the cognitive development of your children?
7. How do you practice early stimulation to enhance the language development of your children?
8. How do you practice early stimulation to enhance the socio-emotional development of your children?
9. How do you practice early stimulation to enhance the physical development of your children?

ইন্টারভিউ এর প্রশ্নপত্র

বিষয়: শহরাঞ্চলে ০ থেকে ৩ বছর বয়সি শিশুর মা-বাবার প্রারম্ভিক উদ্দীপনা প্রদান সম্পর্কিত ধারণা এবং চর্চা

নাম:

বয়স:

এলাকা:

পেশা:

গবেষণার প্রশ্ন-

- শহরাঞ্চলে মা-বাবার প্রারম্ভিক উদ্দীপনা প্রদান সম্পর্কিত ধারণা কী?
- তারা কীভাবে এটি শিশুদের ক্ষেত্রে চর্চা করছেন?

গবেষণার উদ্দেশ্য: শিশুকে প্রারম্ভিক উদ্দীপনা প্রদান সম্পর্কে ০ থেকে ৩ বছর বয়সি শিশুর মা-বাবার ধারণা এবং চর্চা বোঝা।

প্রশ্নপত্র

খিম ১: শহরাঞ্চলে মা-বাবার প্রারম্ভিক উদ্দীপনা প্রদান সম্পর্কিত ধারণা কী?

১. আপনি কি আপনার শিশুকে সময় নিয়ে পর্যবেক্ষণ করেন? কখন এবং কীভাবে? অনুগ্রহ করে বর্ণনা করুন।
২. আপনি কি আপনার শিশুকে খাওয়ানো, গোসল করানো, ঘুমানো এবং খেলার সময় যত্ন নেন বা তাকে আদর করে কথা বলেন? অনুগ্রহ করে বর্ণনা করুন।
৩. আপনি কিভাবে আপনার শিশুকে নতুন কিছু শিখতে সাহায্য করেন/ উদ্দীপনা প্রদান করেন? আপনার উত্তর বর্ণনা করুন।
৪. শিশুকে নতুন কিছু শিখতে সহায়তা করার জন্য উদ্দীপনা প্রদান করা হয়। আপনার কী মনে হয়, কেন প্রারম্ভিক উদ্দীপনা প্রদান শিশুর বিকাশে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ?
৫. আপনি কী আপনার শিশুর দক্ষতা ও যোগ্যতায় কোনো ধরনের পরিবর্তন দেখতে পান? উদাহরণসহ বলুন।
৬. আপনার মতে প্রারম্ভিক উদ্দীপনার ইতিবাচক দিকগুলো কী কী?
৭. উদ্দীপনা প্রদানের মাধ্যমে শিশুর বিকাশকে ত্বরান্বিত করার জন্য আপনার পরামর্শ কী?

খিম ২: শহরাঞ্চলে কীভাবে মা-বাবারা শিশুদের প্রারম্ভিক উদ্দীপনা প্রদান চর্চা করছেন?

১. আপনি কী শিশুকে খাওয়ানোর সময় উদ্দীপনা (আদর করা, চোখে চোখ রেখে কথা বলা) প্রদান করেন এবং তার প্রতিক্রিয়া পর্যবেক্ষণ করেন? কীভাবে?
২. আপনি কী শিশুর সাথে খেলার সময় যত্ন ও উদ্দীপনা (আদর করা, কথা বলা, হাসা) প্রদান করেন? কীভাবে?
৩. আপনি কী শিশুর সাথে ঘুমানোর সময় উদ্দীপনা (আদর করা, কথা বলা, হাসা) প্রদান করেন? কীভাবে?
৪. আপনি কী শিশুর সাথে গোসল করানোর সময় উদ্দীপনা (আদর করা, কথা বলা, হাসা) প্রদান করেন? কীভাবে?
৫. কোন কোন খেলা/এ্যাক্টিভিটিগুলো শিশুর যত্ন ও উদ্দীপনা প্রদানে বিশেষভাবে সহায়ক?
৬. আপনার শিশুর বুদ্ধির বিকাশের জন্য আপনি কীভাবে উদ্দীপনা প্রদান করে থাকেন?

৭. আপনার শিশুর ভাষার/কথা বলার বিকাশের জন্য আপনি কীভাবে উদ্দীপনা প্রদান করে থাকেন?
৮. আপনার শিশুর সামাজিক ও আবেগিক বিকাশের জন্য আপনি কীভাবে উদ্দীপনা প্রদান করে থাকেন?
৯. আপনার শিশুর শারিরিক বিকাশের জন্য আপনি কীভাবে উদ্দীপনা প্রদান করে থাকেন?

FGD Guideline

1. What do you know about early stimulation? Please explain briefly.
2. Why early stimulation is important for your children's development?
3. Do you see any developmental changes (Physical, Cognitive, Socio-emotional and Language) in your children? Explain with examples.
4. What do you think are the positive aspects of early stimulation?
5. How do you stimulate your child during daily life chores?
6. How is a child's brain development is linked with early stimulation? Explain your answer.
7. How do you practice early stimulation to ensure the holistic development of your children?
8. What is your overall impression of early stimulation?

ফোকাস গ্রুপ ডিসকাশন এর প্রশ্নপত্র

১. শিশুর বিকাশে প্রারম্ভিক উদ্দিপনা বলতে আপনি কী বোঝেন? সংক্ষেপে ব্যাখ্যা করুন।
২. আপনি কী মনে করেন, শিশুর বিকাশের জন্য প্রারম্ভিক উদ্দিপনা কেন প্রয়োজন?
৩. আপনি কী আপনার শিশুর দক্ষতায় ও যোগ্যতায় কোনো পরিবর্তন দেখতে পান? উদাহরণসহ বলুন।
৪. আপনার মতে প্রারম্ভিক উদ্দিপনার ইতিবাচক দিকগুলো কী কী?
৫. প্রতিদিনের বিভিন্ন কাজের মাঝে আপনি কীভাবে আপনার শিশুকে উদ্দিপনা প্রদান করে থাকেন?
৬. শিশুর মস্তিষ্কের বিকাশের সাথে প্রারম্ভিক উদ্দিপনা কীভাবে সম্পর্কিত? আপনার উত্তর বর্ণনা করুন।
৭. শিশুর সার্বিক বিকাশের জন্য আপনি কীভাবে প্রারম্ভিক উদ্দিপনামূলক কাজগুলো চর্চা করে থাকেন?
৮. প্রারম্ভিক উদ্দিপনা সম্পর্কে আপনার সার্বিক মতামত কী?

Interview Transcript

Topic: Parents' perception and practice of early stimulation for 0-3 years old children in urban areas.

Name: Fariha Afrin

Age: 33 years

Location: Uttara

Profession: Private Service Holder

Salary: 50,000

Research Questions-

- What is the urban parent's perception of early stimulation?
- How urban parents are practicing early stimulation to their children?

Research Objective: To understand parents perception and practice about early stimulation for children 0-3 years old.

Questionnaire

Theme #1 What is urban parents' perception of early stimulation?

1. Do you observe and respond to your children? When and how? Please explain your answer.

Ans: I do observe my children on weekends and holidays. I also have the facility of working from home once in a week. On that day, in between my works, I try to observe him. And over the week, after returning home, I observe him.

2. Do you provide care and stimulation to your children during feeding, sleeping, bathing and playtime? How? Please explain your answer.

Ans: Whenever I get time, I try to do stimulating activities. Specially, during feeding, I try to engage him more. As I'm a working mother and he is being brought up by the

caregiver, so he is having a lot of screen time. I cannot stop that but when I do feed him, I tell stories, recite rhymes and provide him toys to play and even play with him.

3. How do you enhance or stimulate your child to learn something new? Please explain your answer.

Ans: I can give an example- My child never says 'thank you' or 'please' from his very early age. I think these two words are very important to express his feeling towards others. So, I inbuilt these in him after a long try. Then, I started to say those words. Like, if I want anything, I said please give me that. And when he brings it, I said 'thank you'. I also told my other family members to do the same. At a time, I also set a rule and said to my child, 'If you want this, you have to say please give it to me mamma. Then I'll give you.' Thus, my child now, learnt to say thank you and please when needed. I think if I didn't stimulate my child with those words, then he wouldn't be able to learn it.

4. Stimulation is provided to help children to learn something new. What do you think is why early stimulation is important for your children's development?

Ans: It is very important to develop self-regulation in child. My child is fond of chocolates. But, I cannot give chocolate all the time, especially in the morning. So, to develop self-regulation in him and endure his temptation for chocolate, I try to distract him by doing other stimulating activities like, taking him to the roof top and playing with him or introducing him with the flowers, fruits that are planted in the rooftop.

5. Do you see any developmental changes (Physical, Cognitive, Socio-emotional, Language) in your children? Explain with examples.

Ans: Yes, I can. For example- when my child was 1 year old, he used to cry loudly if he needs anything. He was unmanageable. When he was 2+ years old, he became a bit stable. Gradually, I took him outside and create scopes for him to play with other children. I let him talk and make friendship with everyone around him, even if they are not belonging from the same socio-economic status. Slowly I saw, he is learning to control his emotions, stubbornness and most of the time can react based on the situation.

6. What do you think are the positive aspects of early stimulation?

Ans: Developed self-regulation, emotional regulation. Can maintain a structured routine life. Another thing I can say from ECD perspective that is, in stimulating environment my child is socially and emotionally more stable now.

7. What is your suggestion for enhancing your children's development by providing early stimulation?

Ans: We can enhance child's skills by providing stimulation but we the parents should take it in consideration that is, when we are providing positive stimulation to the child, is it somehow affecting the child negatively or not. When my child was in very early age, I was more focused on his conditional learning. I always feel like, if he does this, he will learn that. Things should not be like this. Or else, child's learning will always be focused on that condition. Rather we should let them learn on their own.

Theme #2 How urban parents are practicing early stimulation to their children?

1. Do you stimulate your children during feeding to see his/her responses? How?

Ans: Yes, I do. I noticed, when he watches TV and eat, he finished his food in a very short time. But when I try to feed him with the screen off and telling stories and rhymes or playing with him, it takes a long time. But as I want to develop his habit of having food both during screen on and off, it's getting quite challenging for me. Instead of having this drawback, I am trying my best.

2. Do you provide stimulation to your children during playtime? How?

Ans: Whenever I get time, I try to play with him. I couldn't manage time to make play materials by my own but when I buy toys for him, I always consider learning focused toys. Such as, I give him different sort of puzzles, legos by which he can play and enhance his cognition of thinking and making new things. In the weekend afternoons, my child. His father and I, we play together and have lots of fun.

3. Do you provide stimulation to your children during sleeping? How?

Ans: When he was a breastfeeding child, he used to eat and sleep till 22-23 months. While trying to shift this habit, I used to walk and tell stories to make him sleep. At first,

he used to cry but gradually, enjoys the stories. His father also tells his favorite 'Cow stories' before his sleep time.

4. Do you stimulate your children during bathing? How?

Ans: He take his toys in bath time. He likes playing with water. I never face difficulties to bath him. From a very early age, I make his habit of cleaning his own dress. After bathing, he washes his dress and put it in the sun light to dry. He also cleans his toys and let it dry in the same way. In my childhood, I also was habituated to clean my own cloths and my sun also learnt it the same way.

5. Which activities are suitable to stimulate and provide care to your children?

Ans: As my child had speech delay, all my family members including me always to talk to him as much as we can. Also, I get involve in the play rather than instructing him. We do different types of activities. My other family members also involve and plays with him.

6. How do you practice early stimulation to enhance the cognitive development of your children?

Ans: Play puzzle games and do brain engaging activities. Such as, when he learns to count till 1-10, I enhance him to learn to say 1 and 1 eleven, 1 and 2 twelve. Also, try to engage him in more household activities which I think is helpful for his cognition.

7. How do you practice early stimulation to enhance the language development of your children?

Ans: All of us talks to him a lot. As I mentioned before, he has speech delay and it occurred during covid. For almost 3 months, he didn't speak a single word. And for covid, we had to stay separated from him, there was no one to talk to him. He only gets to see tv, cartoons and YouTube. This was very harmful for him. To get rid of that, we started to talk to him. We describe everything in front of him. Like, if he is having biscuits, we describe its shape, taste and even the color of the packet. Thus, all of us tried and succeed to make him talk again. Now he speaks more than we do.

8. How do you practice early stimulation to enhance the socio-emotional development of your children?

Ans: I take him in different places. In weekends, he went to the bazar, shopping complex, or playgrounds in the afternoon. I let him play, interact and make friendship with everyone. He used to cling in my lap while going outside but now, it changes.

9. How do you practice early stimulation to enhance the physical development of your children?

Ans: I try to make him active physically all the time. Take him to different play zones or at home, play frog jump and other games which has more physical movement. Also, every night he went to everyone's room to say good night. This also a kind of physical exercise that helps him to develop I guess.

Consent Form for Parents

Title of the Thesis Proposal: Parents' perception and practice of early stimulation for 0-3 years old children in urban areas.

Researcher: Showmmi Naheed

Purpose of the research

I am conducting this research as a part of my Master's Degree requirement from the BRAC Institute of Educational Development (BRAC IED), BRAC University. The aim of this research is to explore parents' perception and practice regarding early stimulation for 0-3 years old children in urban areas.

Expectation from you

If you agree, you will be expected to share your perception, views and thoughts on early stimulation for 0-3 years old children. This will include the perception and practice of urban parents. The FGD and the in-depth-interviews may take 30-40 minutes, depending upon your response.

Risks and benefits

There is no risk in participating and contributing to this study; directly or indirectly parents, children and policymakers may be benefited. New interventions and programs can be launched in the future.

Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality

All the collected information will remain confidential. I would happy to answer any of your queries about the study and you are welcome to contact me.

Future use of information

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

Right not to participate and withdraw

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

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

Name of the Parents:

Name of the Researcher:

Signature of the Parents:

Signature of the Researcher:

Thank you very much for your cooperation. For any further queries, feel free to contact me. My contact no is- 01787536002, or you can email me at showmiswarno@gmail.com