

**Exploring Parental Perception on Fathers' Involvement in
Child Development for 0-3 Years Old Children**

By

Rahima Akter
22355005

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
May 2024

©2024.Rahima Akter
All rights reserved.

Declaration

It is hereby declared that

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

Student's Full Name & Signature:

Rahima Akter
22355005

Approval

The thesis/project titled “Exploring Parental Perception on Fathers’ Involvement in Child Development for 0-3 Years Old Children” submitted by

1. Rahima Akter 22355005

of SUMMER, 2022 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science in Early Childhood Development on May 2024.

Examining Committee:

Supervisor:
(Member)

Zarrin Tasnim
Lecturer, Early Childhood Development
Brac Institute of Educational Development
Brac University

Program Coordinator:
(Member)

Ferdousi Khanom
Senior Lecturer, ECD Academic Program
Brac Institute of Educational Development
Brac University

External Expert Examiner:
(Member)

Dr. Dilruba Sultana
Senior Lecturer, M.Ed Department
Brac Institute of Educational Development
Brac University

Departmental Head:
(Chair)

Md. Abul Kalam
Research Fellow
Brac Institute of Educational Development
Brac University

Dr. Erum Mariam
Executive Director
Brac Institute of Educational Development
Brac University

Ethics Statement

Title of Thesis Topic: Exploring Parental Perception on Fathers' Involvement In Child Development For 0-3 Years Old Children

Student name: Rahima Akter

1. Source of population: Educated fathers and mothers who had at least one child aged 0-3 years
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 (no)
 - e) Benefits to be derived (no)
 - f) Right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study (yes)
 - g) Confidential handling of data (yes)
 - h) Compensation and/or treatment where there are risks or privacy is involved (yes)
4. Will Signed verbal consent for be required (yes or no)
 - a) from study participants (yes)
 - b) from parents or guardian (yes)
 - c) Will precautions be taken to protect anonymity of subjects? (yes)
5. Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee:
 - a) Proposal (yes)
 - b) Consent Form (yes)
 - c) Questionnaire or interview schedule (yes)

Ethical Review Committee:

Authorized by:
(chair/co-chair/other)

Dr. Erum Mariam
Executive Director
Brac Institute of Educational Development
Brac University

Abstract

Research suggests that, it is now established that fathers play an essential role in the upbringing of their children. And they are as sensitive and nurturing to their children as mothers can be. A father's nurturing presence can benefit children and help them develop cognitively, socially, and emotionally as they grow. The purpose of the study is to explore parental perception on fathers' involvement in child development for 0-3 years old children. Data were collected through in-depth-interviews and group discussions. First, the study discovered that most of the participants have the clear idea about child development and fathers' involvement. They tried to explain about child development by saying it is a holistic growth and development that covers physical, mental and social development of a child and it starts from birth. Second, the study's findings revealed that fathers have been doing different kinds of activities in supporting their children's holistic development. Fathers gave emphasis on spending quality time with their children. They also help their children in their daily activities. Third, all participants mentioned that fathers face various challenges regarding their involvement in child development; they try to mitigate the challenges in many ways and get involved in child caring and development. Finally, the report concludes with directions for future research and calls for more comprehensive and exploratory research in this area. For more activities, training, workshop, and different programs can be undertaken to promote the importance of ECD.

Keywords: Fatherhood; Fathers Perception; Fathers Involvement; Child Development

Dedication

Sincere gratitude and love go out to my thesis supervisor, my dear parents, my younger sister, my sister-in-law and my husband, who have always been my support system and given me the strength to keep up going when I want to give up.

Finally, I want to give thanks to the Almighty Allah.

Acknowledgement

At first, I would like to thank the Almighty Allah, for blessing me with sound health and all the opportunities to complete my Masters of Science at Brac Institute of Educational Development, Brac University. Then, I would like to express my wholehearted gratitude to my supervisor Ms. Zarrin Tasnim for her valuable time, suggestions, motivations, and guidance in every step throughout this journey. It would not be possible to complete this thesis work without her suggestions, feedbacks, and continuous support that impelled me to do better in every step of this thesis. I have learned many things from her throughout this learning process.

I would like to convey my sincere regards to the course coordinator, Ms. Ferdousi Khanom, as well as the rest of the Academic Committee Members and Faculties have been invaluable resources throughout this program from whom I have learned and gathered a lot of knowledge regarding the Early Childhood Development and got inspired to look into the ins and outs of Early Child Education.

I am very grateful to the fathers and mothers who gave their valuable time for the interviews and the group discussions and shared their thoughts and opinions. I would like to thank my loving mother for the love, care and positive attitude and being patient and taking care of my children while I was busy with my thesis paper. I am grateful to my sister-in-law for supporting and uplifting me to accomplish my thesis. I am also grateful to my family and friends for motivating me, especially Rezwana Afroze Shorony, Principal of Akij Foundation School and College Manikganj who always supports and encourages me. Last but not the list, I am thankful to my husband from the core of my heart. Without his continuous support and sacrifice, it would not be possible.

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	ii
Approval	iii
Ethics Statement.....	iv
Abstract.....	V
Dedication	vi
Acknowledgement	vii
Chapter- I: Introduction & Background.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Introduction.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Statement of the Problem.....	3
Purpose of the study	6
Significance of the study.....	6
Research Questions.....	8
Operational Definition.....	9
Chapter-II: Literature Review	10
Chapter-III: Methodology.....	18
Research Approach and Design	18
Research Site.....	18
Research Participants	18
Sampling Procedure/Participants Selection Procedure	19
Data Collection Tool.....	19
Data Collection Method and Procedure	20

Data Management and Analysis	20
Validity & Reliability	21
Etical Issues	21
Chapter-IV: Results/Findings& Discussion	22
Results/Findings.....	22
Demographic Details of the Parents.....	22
Discussion.....	49
Conclusion	55
Recommendations.....	57
References.....	58
Appendix A: In-Depth-Interview Guideline.....	66
Appendix B: English Questionnaire.....	67
Appendix C: Bangla Questionnaire.....	69
Appendix D: Consent Form for Parents.....	71

Chapter I: Introduction & Background

Introduction

The first three years of a child's life are truly a significant time and provide a unique opportunity for physical growth and development. During these three years they depend on their parents for almost everything. This is when children develop physically, cognitively and emotionally faster than at any other time in their lives. Every child's first year changes dramatically—by their first birthday they become more mobile, developing strength and balance as they go from sitting unsupported to standing and eventually walking (Dance Babies, 2020). Fathers play an important role in a child's development and can influence a child's social competence, school performance, and emotion regulation. Fathers are important for the well-being of children. Responsive, empathetic, concerned fathers contribute to children physical, cognitive, emotional and social adjustment. Fathers also influence children's well-being in conjunction with mothers and other caregivers, making it important to understand the father-child relationship as part of the whole family system (Jennifer E, 2021).

Since the 1960s, urbanization and industrialization have led to smaller families and nuclear family groups have become more common. Most research on parenting has ignored the importance of fathers' involvement in child development in the early years and has given paying attention only on mothers' support (Tekin, 2012). Nevertheless, existing research reveals the importance of fathers in child development. Fathers contribute uniquely to childhood development by promoting risk-taking and problem-solving behaviors through greater physical involvement with children than mothers. Fathers also influence their children through role-modeling behavior during childhood and adolescence (MB Nierengarten, June 12, 2019).

With increasing interest in the father's role in shaping child development, research has shown that father involvement through direct interaction with the child positively affects a wide range of child outcomes. Father involvement may prevent or reduce children's involvement in health-risk behaviors during adolescence (J Choi, June 14, 2021).

At the age of 0-3, children are learning to trust their caregivers, as well as their own ability to influence the world. Children's attachment experiences are thought to be the foundation for their later social, emotional and cognitive development (Emerging Minds, 2020). When both parents are involved with the child, children are attached to both parents from the beginning of life. Higher levels of father involvement are associated with high levels of friendliness, self-confidence, and self-regulation in children (Children's Bureau of Southern California, 2023).

Both parents play a very important role in the care of a child and in today's world, stereotype gender roles are no longer relevant. Nowadays husband and wife share the responsibilities equally between them. In the modern family, the woman is not the sole breadwinner, nor is the man the sole financial supporter. In the last 50 years, the role of women in the workplace has expanded. Currently 26.56% of the total 5,447 are working as Class-I Administrative Officers (Munirah Jahan, Jun 11, 2021).

Bangladesh has been aiming to adhere to the Sustainable Development Goals since its inception. Goal 5 is particularly about ensuring equal opportunity. However, the absence of this situation is actually unsatisfactory, when it is said that we are one of the most capable countries in the world to achieve the SDGs according to UNDP (Munirah Jahan, Jun 11, 2021).

Fatherhood plays a significant role in shaping Bangladeshi male characteristics. At the same time as mothers are the main caregivers of children, then fathers are the decision makers concerning children's healthcare, learning and social life (Jessica Ball and Wahedi, 2010).

It now appears that the role of traditional parenting is changing as fathers become more involved in the straight think about of children. These circumstances provide a great opportunity to conduct research to understand parental perceptions of 0-3-year-old child development in Bangladesh and fathers' involvement in their knowledge and practices. Both fathering (the social and symbolic status accorded to fathers) and fatherhood (the activities that fathers engage in and conduct to care for their children) have largely been conceptualized through a Western lens. Theory, research, and program models focus on traditional Euro-Western cultural values, family, structure, and the contribution of fathers to children's well-being toward child development. For various reasons, these perspectives are unlikely to apply to fatherhood in Bangladesh (Jessica Ball and Wahedi, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

According to the 2020 US Census, 18.4 million children have no biological father. They are living without a biological father. That means 23% of 73 million children in the United States are currently without a father. This number is increasing double since 1968 and continues to rise (Urban Light Ministries.org).

Children with low involvement with fathers are affected in many ways, such as being less physically fit, having less socio-emotional development, having fewer relationships with extended family, experiencing more financial instability, learning how to be a father (Cher Murphy, November 18, 2021).

A child in a fatherless home may suffer from psychological problems such as anxiety and depression. Fatherless children may begin to think they are less valuable than other children

who have fathers and wonder why their fathers abandoned them. Children who do not grow up with fathers are also more likely to be aggressive and develop other externalizing problems (Jerrod Brown, 2023).

According to the data, mothers remain the primary care providers in both rural and urban Bengali and Malay households. Fathers in urban Bengali families reported spending more time with children than their counterparts in Malaysia. Fathers and mothers in both Malay and Bengali families were equally involved with their male and female children. Although fathers spent more time playing than feeding or cleaning children, Malay families spent more time with children than fathers. Whereas the overall evidence portrays fathers in both Bengali and Malay families as moderately involved with their children, field observations showed that fathers in both groups were highly involved with their children (Z. Hossain, 2013). 90% of urban fathers in Bangladesh feel and believe that fathers and mothers have separate roles in child rearing (Edubirdie.com, 2022).

A female worker is entitled to 16 weeks of maternity leave under Section 46 of the Bangladesh Labor Act 2006. Therefore, if a female employee becomes pregnant while working, she gets maternity leave. Naturally, a woman gets more benefits than a father because of breastfeeding and post-pregnancy physical condition. However, instead of enforcing social standards through legislation, fathers' right to paternity leave should be protected to ensure good care and upbringing of the child (Network.Com.BD).

Adequate paternity leave greatly increases a father's chances of being involved in the lives of his young children. It can improve gender equality at work and at home. And it creates a positive change in interpersonal interactions, parental responsibilities and underlying preconceptions about what parenting should be like. In the majority families, a mother often bears most of the childcare responsibilities. According to recent research, fathers who are

actively involved in raising their children have long-term effects (The Daily Star, February 7, 2023).

In 2021, 115 of the 185 countries assessed by the ILO were found to provide paternity leave rights, with 33 new countries implementing such policies in the past 10 years. This indicates a growing acceptance of men's role in childcare, meaning that 4 in 10 potential fathers live in countries that offer paternity leave (The Daily Star, February 7, 2023). Recently a social media post by clothing and lifestyle brand Aarong went viral. It was titled "Embracing Fatherhood" and noted that Aarong offers its male employees a month's paternity leave caring for and bonding with their newborns – that is what people love (The Daily Star, February 7, 2023)

Rabindra University, Sirajganj, has introduced maternity leave as well as paternity leave. The provision of paternity leave was approved in the 24th syndicate meeting of the university on September 26. As per rules a teacher gets 15 days paternity leave (Prothom Alo.Com, 2023). Rabindra University Vice-Chancellor Shah Azam said, 'Rabindra University is a new university. Young and talented teachers are teaching here. There are also young officers and employees. We have taken into consideration the law of maternity leave as well as paternity leave to look after their children. A father's role is as important to a child as a mother's. The provision of paternity leave will act as a motivation among teachers, officers and employees. As a result, they will be more focused on university work (Prothom Alo.Com, 2023).

In many European countries, such as Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland, fathers receive several months of paid paternal leave. This is to encourage fathers to take leave, and participate in the care of their children. In Bangladesh, however, there is no statutory provision for paternity leave for private sector workers. Unfortunately, the government has not yet introduced a national policy on paternity leave. Some companies offer paternity leave,

but it is usually for a few days and is not legally binding. But NGOs like BRAC are providing 1 month paid paternity leave which is definitely amazing in today's times (Munirah Jahan, Jun 11, 2021).

This means that, in Bangladesh, new fathers have no legal right to take time off from work to bond or spend time with their newborn and must rely on employer policies or generosity or their own annual leave. This can be a challenge for new fathers who want to take an active part in their child's care, and also for companies as they may lose skilled workers.

Finally, it can be said that if Bangladesh Government arranges paternity leave along with maternity leave, it will be very helpful and beneficial for new fathers and new born babies. If fathers can spend time with their newborn babies, they will get peace of mind and the babies will develop in different ways. The aim of this study is to exploring parental perception, their understanding and knowledge about fatherhood and father's involvement in child development.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to understand parents' perception on father's involvement in the development of children aged 0-3 years in Bangladesh. Fathers play a key role when they are loving and supportive; it greatly affects a child's cognitive and social development. It also instills an overall sense of well-being and confidence. The aim of this study will also find out what are parental understandings, practices and challenges usually fathers face in regard to their involvement in child development.

Significance and Justification of the Study

Parenting, which occurs at the child's micro system level, has immediate and lasting effects on a child's daily life as well as their experiences and learning opportunities. Parents are the

building blocks for building secure relationships. Warm and sensitive parenting has a positive impact on child development (Kevin S, 2020). Parenting, especially the father-child relationship, has a huge impact on children's positive relationships, development and maturity. Therefore, increasing father child relationship is essential for better future citizens.

Furthermore, according to World Health Organization guideline, enabling young children to achieve their full developmental potential is a human right and a critical requirement for sustainable growth. Given the serious significance of enabling children to have the best start in life, the health sector, among other sectors, has an important role and responsibility to support nurturing for childhood development. The guideline provides guidance on strengthening policies and programs to better address early childhood development (WHO, 5 March, 2020).

Although Bangladesh is a diminutive country, it has affluent enlightening tradition and sturdy family ties. Parenting practices also different between urban life and rural life. Children mostly grow up in loving surroundings in the midst of parents and comprehensive family members (Fahmida & Jena, 2014). Fathers can fulfill their children's requirements by nurturing, supporting, guiding and advising them. The international community at the conference gave importance to this issue and in 2000 our neighboring country, India formulated a policy called "Indian National Population Policy for Responsible Parenthood". This principle emphasizes the involvement of men in family affairs such as equal opportunities for both men and women in all areas of family responsibilities. Because it promotes superiority and reinforces encouraging family values and brings better reimbursement to children (Chakma, 2010).

Although Bangladesh is relatively homogenous, significant diversity exists, with a small but highly diverse population of indigenous peoples, a portion of the population (11%) that is

non-Muslim, a small number of very wealthy families, a rapidly growing number of urban families with one or both parents in the labor force, as well as rural areas. Normative assumptions and cultural stereotypes about the "Bangladeshi father" will prevent fathers and families from understanding the unique needs and goals of diverse populations and receiving the support needed to ensure optimal family and child outcomes (Jessica Ball and Wahedi, 2020).

The study is noteworthy and crucial as it introduces a new aspect of research on fathers' involvement in the development of children aged 0-3 years. From the above discussion it can be said, time and society claim exploration of the importance of father involvement in child care, child development and well-being during and after crisis. Policies and practices need to be introduced in our country to promote greater involvement of fathers in child care and well-being.

Furthermore, this study can assist policy makers and program designers to formulate policies and design effective programs on father's involvement in child development of children aged 0-3 years. Therefore, it is hoped that this study on involvement of fathers in the development of their children (0-3 years) will help to give a picture of how fathers are contributing to the development of their children (0-3 years) with changing circumstances.) and what they have actually practice. Lastly, the study will give a clear notion about the challenges those parents face in regard to involvement in child development and how can be these challenges be overcome. And from this study we will get some suggestions about increasing father's involvement in child development.

Research Questions:

- What are parental understandings about father's involvement in early childhood development of 0-3-years-old children?

- What are the practices regarding fathers' involvement in the development of their 0 to 3 years old children?
- What challenges do fathers face in regard to their involvement in the development of their 0 to 3 years old children?

Operational Definition:

Father and Fatherhood: A father is the male parent of a child. Fatherhood is a lifelong responsibility (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). Fatherhood is a biological and social relationship and a cultural institution. The theory of social patriarchy, the principle of legitimacy, male dominance and the family as a property system are introduced (S. Coltrane, 2012). Furthermore, (Lamb, 2000) defines a father as "a breadwinner, a moral teacher or guide, and a sexual role model" Therefore, fatherhood is considered the most valuable part of men's lives and plays an indispensable role in their characteristics (Pleck, 2010).

Father's Involvement: Studies have used different definitions of father involvement, ranging from the amount of time spent with the child to the provision of financial support and recognition of the father's role. Greater involvement has been linked to improvements in children's social skills, cognitive abilities, and life satisfaction (Fatherhood.gov). Father involvement is defined as direct interaction with the child in the form of care giving, play, or leisure (A McMunn, 2017). Father involvement is defined as men's "positive, extensive, and active participation in the lives of their children." (Marsiglio et al., 2000, p.276).

Child development: Child development, cognitive growth, emotional, intellectual and behavioral abilities and functioning during childhood (J Kevin Nugent, January 31, 2024). Child development refers to the sequence of physical, language, thinking, and emotional changes that occur from birth to the beginning of adolescence. During this process a child moves from dependence on his parent/guardian to increasing independence. Child

development is strongly influenced by genetic factors (genes passed down from their parents) and prenatal life events. It is influenced by environmental information and the child's ability to learn (Kid Sense Child Development).

Perception: Perception is the process by which sensory stimuli are translated into organized experience (Britannica, 2023). A recognition blog of a Verywell mind; define perception, "Detecting environmental stimuli through the five senses. Perception refers to our sensory understanding of the world. It is the process of using our senses to become aware of objects, relationships. It is through these experiences that we gain information about the environment around us. The process of perception is through this, we are able to both detect and respond to environmental stimuli (verywell mind, 2023).

Chapter II: Literature Review

Fathers can have a lasting impact on their children's well-being by being consistently involved in their upbringing. Studies show a connection between well-adjusted children who perform well in school and fathers who are an encouraging and supportive presence in their lives (Kid Central tn.com).

Fathers' involvement in early childhood development improves child cognitive and learning abilities. Research has shown that improved father involvement can lead to higher IQ levels and better learning performance in children, and to more flexible and healthy growth. Father's presence strengthens the family bond (Rainforest Learning Centre Inc, 2023).

More particularly, father involvement benefits children in five developmental domains, including academics, cognitive, social, emotional, behavioral, and language development (Wang & Chen, December, 2023).

Studies recommend that affectionate, supportive fathers who react peacefully when their children behave badly or are upset make their sons less aggressive and less negative

daughters than their peers. Studies also show that when fathers are involved with their daughters at a young age, they are less likely to experience early puberty, early sex, and teenage pregnancy. Father involvement in early childhood leads to positive child development, including improved language development. While mothers tend to use words that infants already know, fathers are more likely to introduce new words (Kid Central tn.com).

A new study shows that fathers who feed, change and play with their young children are making a big contribution to their development. Over the past 20 years, research has consistently shown that fathers have a unique way of engaging with young children. Vigorous bouncing, lifting, tossing and chasing takes over from more gentle play, and accommodation of this roughness leads to better self-control and school readiness in children by age 5, studies show. Father's rough-and-tumble play was also associated with better gross motor skills in the child, regardless of father's income or education level. (Pinker, S. 21 September, 2023)

A strong affection and bond between a father and his child is important for a child's on the whole development and well-being (Pleck, 2007). It is broadly recognized and well-known that child's early years are crucial for their proper development and future success. Additionally, fathers who spend quality time with their children help children develop cognitive skills, language, social-emotional skills, and physical skills (Wilson & Prior, 2011).

In short, the involvement of fathers in child development cannot be ignored not only for the welfare of children but also for the satisfaction and happiness of fathers.

Importance of Fathers' Involvement in Child Development:

"A father is worth more than a hundred school-masters" - George Herbert, a magnificent British poet. Quotes regarding fathers reflect the importance of fathers in a child's life, progress and rearing. Unquestionably, father's involvement in child care is crucial for suitable

development and well-being of children. Besides, fathers play a very sensitive role in the development and well-being of children (Sonali & Mishra, 2013).

The parent-child relationship has a profound impact on a child's overall and long-term healthy development. Babies who are involved with their father in daily care giving, such as feeding, bathing and playing together, are more positive and enjoy stronger social links with peers as they grow. Study shows that protected attachment have positive benefits that last into adulthood. Securely attached children do better academically; they are more social and make better choices throughout childhood than children with less secure attachments (Zero to Three, 2016).

Now-a-days, expectations from fathers have varied. They are encouraged to be equal partners in parenting, sharing the responsibilities of rearing, educating and providing for the family. This change not only creates a balanced family dynamic but also contributes to the holistic development of children, enriching their lives in immeasurable ways. (Motherhood Center.com, November 10, 2023)

Furthermore, for preschool and school-age children, fathers' active involvement in caring has a positive effect on children's problem behaviors (Aldous and Mulligan, 2002). Additionally, children of involved fathers are able to acquire richer vocabularies, language skills, and better literacy skills (Allen & Daly, 2007). Parent's involvement helps to form a child's educational pathway and emotional and physical development (Senin & Halim, 2021).

As pointed out by Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan (1997) children (especially boys) have problems growing up without a father area of gender-role and gender-identity development, school performance, psychosocial conformity, and possibly control aggression. According to the American Pediatric Association, children with involved fathers perform better academically and socially than those with less involved fathers. Children who grow up

listening to their fathers are more adaptive and better at managing their emotions, including self-soothing during times of stress. (Mari Jo Rapini, June 15,20223).

Fathers' active participation in childcare has positive effects on children's cognitive, physical, social and emotional development. On the other hand, father's emotional unavailability, anger and physical and verbal hostility, especially physical aggression towards the mother adversely affects the child's development. (Nair Sapna, December 19, 2023).

If a father wants to be a role model in his child's life, he must give time to make his child a good person, if the father does not show compassion, how the child will learn empathy. A child's learning about everything starts in the womb, and then forms the family and form the environment. Besides giving birth and breastfeeding, every father can be a part of the baby's development and growth, providing some good moments that is very helpful in the baby's long-term memory improvement. Currently is the time to engage fathers and create constructive perceptions of fathers' involvement in child development for children aged 0-3 years and launch programs to support fathers' involvement in creating an enabling environment for young children which is gaining ground to practice International Social Sector Development (Jessica Ball and Wahedi, 2010).

Father's Involvement and Child Development: Global Context

Fathers' involvements in childcare vary from culture to culture and from county to county. In the 70s and 80s, fathers' involvement in child care enlarged and it became more significant to recognize how fathers also act as nurturers and caregivers for children's development.

Like mothers, fathers are the pillars of a child's emotional well-being. Children look to their fathers to make and enforce rules. They look to their fathers to provide a sense of security, both physically and emotionally (Pediatrics Associates of Franklin, 2023).

According to a study conducted in Turkey, 44.0% parents said that days spent at home strengthened their relationship with their children and 56.4% felt that it allowed them to take better care of their children (Tarsuslu et al., 2021). In early childhood development, the effects of father involvement have been investigated. According to the Census Bureau 1991, men are taking a more active role in childcare. 20% of preschool children were cared for by their fathers while their mothers worked outside the home (O'connell, 1993).

According to a survey, Japanese fathers spend 3.1 hours per day on childcare (Ishii-Kuntz, 2013). Individual and family factors are affecting Japanese fathers' participation in child care. In addition to these factors, work-related factors such as father-friendly environment at work, meeting parents' needs at work, workload, and autonomy are associated with Japanese men's participation in childcare (Ishii-Kuntz, 2013).

According to research study conducted in Tamil Nadu, South India (2017-19), fathers' involvement in early initiation of care giving and cognitive development activities has positive effects on a child's socio-behavioral, cognitive-educational and psycho-emotional development (Nair Sapna, 2020).

However, in some low-income countries such as The Gambia, Colombia and Zimbabwe, fathers are less involved in childcare. Surprisingly, only 11% of fathers are emotionally and cognitively involved with their children, that is very low (Gromada et al., 2020).

However, a study conducted in India (Lucknow) revealed that fathers' involvement in childcare largely depends on and is influenced by fathers' educational qualifications and occupation (Sonali & Mishra, 2013). In the Netherlands, fathers are equally involved in childcare. Fathers in the Netherlands are more involved in physical and logistical child-care activities (Crespi & Ruspini, 2015).

In numerous studies, positive father involvement is associated with children's higher academic achievement; greater school readiness; strong math and verbal skills; greater emotional security; high self-esteem; fewer behavioral problems; and greater social skills than are found in children without caring, involved fathers. Involved fathers are sensitive, warm, close, friendly, supportive, loving, nurturing, encouraging, comforting, and accepting. Involved fathers are associated with positive effects on their children from before they are born. During pregnancy, partner support is associated with fewer maternal health problems and more positive maternal and infant outcomes than those without a supportive partner. Research also suggests that prenatal bonding during parenthood is associated with improved later father-child relationships. A parent's supportive (or abusive) behavior can influence mothers' attachment to their child, and the quality of the partner relationship often predicts how both parents will respond to their child's needs. (University of Wisconsin-Madison, February, 2020).

In Germany in 2019, fathers spent 2.8 hours per day on childcare. Child care involvement among fathers increased by 89% and even more involvement was observed among preschool fathers (Kreyenfeld & Zinn, 2021).

The overall level of involvement of fathers in childcare and feeding activities was high at 63.5% of respondents in Northern Ghana. The results confirm previous studies showing that fathers' involvement in childcare activities, including feeding, is positively associated with improved infant feeding practices. Findings point to the need for policy changes in which both men and women play key roles in interventions designed to improve child nutritional status in rural settings in northern Ghana. (Cambridge University Press, 10 October, 2022).

Existing studies on fathers' involvement in child development reveal the pattern of fathers' involvement in childcare. For example, in the UK and US, highly educated fathers are more

involved in childcare than fathers with lower educational qualifications (Sullivan et al., 2014). Furthermore, 24% of fathers in the United States serve as primary caregivers for preschool-age children (Flippin & Crais, 2011).

Similarly, in Germany (2017), men spend less time on childcare and housework than women; and on an average day, they spend just three hours on childcare and housework while women spend around five hours (Kreyenfeld and Zinn, 2021).

Father's Involvement and Child Development: Bangladesh Context

Bangladeshi society is well known for male dominance. In this country, a father can be defined as a man biologically related to the child's birth; and fatherhood is a man's duty which continues till the end of his life (Chakma, 2010). Moreover, in Bangladesh father is the main breadwinner and decision maker of his family. Here, fathers act as a creator of opportunities to explore and develop different skills for their children in the outside world (Jessica Ball and Wahedi, 2010).

Fathers can influence children's behavior, intellectual growth, and school adjustment. Research shows that fathers are as important caregivers as mothers, ideal individuals for facilitating their children's social and emotional behaviors. Fathers staying at home and spending more time are relatively new structures that have emerged in our culture, and women's stronger financial gains, increased corporate layoffs, and men's stronger sense of self have created the basis for greater father-child involvement (Chowdhury, Fareha, Islam and Obaydollah, 2018).

Euro-Western values of fatherhood have minimal acceptance in South Asia, particularly Bangladesh. The basic foundation of social and family life in Bangladesh is determined by strong family ties and symbiotic relationships. Individual roles are defined and assigned to each person by these values of family ties (Jessica Ball & Wahedi, 2010).

According to the results of a survey, 44% of urban fathers are not conscious of mental well-being. On the other hand, 14% of fathers knew how to offer collaborative care to stimulate children, and 18% of fathers played and walked with their children as activities that supported their children's emotional development (Haider, 2003).

In Bangladesh, fathers' involvement in childcare varies within families. For example, fathers of nuclear families are more involved in child care activities than the fathers of extended families (Akter, 2019). How fathers perceive their ideals of child rearing and care giving remains to be explored in Bangladesh (Chakma, 2010).

But in recent times, urban father's notion is changing day by day, and they tried to play and spend time with their children after coming from office (Khatun, 2020). Besides, urban fathers try to spend an average of 3-4 hours daily (Akter, 2019).

In Bangladeshi culture, the elders, especially men are the head of the household and the decision maker and women are not economically well off, and there is a gap between gender roles in social life. Bangladeshi cultural ideals on parenting differ from Western ideals. Due to Bengali and Islamic culture regarding gender roles, default care of mothers is essential (Jessica Ball & Wahedi, 2010). Nevertheless, very little and rudimentary research has been conducted on father involvement and fatherhood in child development practices in our country. Therefore, this is a matter of concern, and research needs to be highly focused. In Bangladesh, parents have limited knowledge and practices about early childhood care and development. Cognitive, social and emotional development is stronger for those whose parents are consistently present and involved in children's education. However, most studies have focused almost entirely on mothers' involvement and have underestimated fathers' involvement when focusing on the early years of schooling (Tekin, 2012).

Finally, Based on the above literature, the involvement of fathers in the development of children aged 0-3 years in our country is not yet fully established. Hence, it is the need of the time and society to explore the importance of father involvement in child care.

Chapter III: Methodology

Research Approach/ Design

A qualitative research approach was used for this study. Qualitative research is a type of research that explores real-world issues and provides deeper insights. Qualitative research collects participants' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors. It answers how and why instead of how many or how much (S Tenny, September 18, 2022). Qualitative research is defined as "the study of the nature of phenomena", including "their quality, various manifestations, the context in which they appear or the perspective from which they can be perceived" (L Busetto, 2020). The primary purpose to select this method was to understand the parent's perception about father's involvement in 0-3 years old child's development.

Research Site

The proposed research was conducted in Saturia Upazila of the Manikganj District. IDI and FGD were done in different parts of the area mentioned above.

Research Participants

In this study, participants were purposively selected. The study participants were fathers and mothers of children aged 0-3 years. Total twelve parents were selected for this research where six parents (3 fathers and 3 mothers) for Focus Group Discussion and six parents (3 fathers and 3 mothers) for IDIs. Among them 6 fathers and 6 mothers and they were from the same family or from different families. They were selected based on the convenience of researchers.

Participants Selection Procedure

Homogeneous group of fathers and mothers from rural middle income families, either employed or engaged in business who have at least one child (age 0-3 years) and live in Saturia Upazila of Manikganj District. Most of the participants were from nuclear families and a few were from extended families. All the participants had educational qualifications minimum at the Higher Secondary School level.

Total twelve parents were selected to conduct this study where six parents (three fathers and three mothers) for Focus Group Discussion and six parents (three fathers and three mothers) for IDIs. In this study, the selected fathers were from different educational backgrounds with a minimum of higher secondary school certificate (HSc) levels and belong to middle-class families. Moreover, the selected mothers also had a minimum educational qualification of HSC level. To understand the questions asked during the interview, explaining one's perception, the ability to distinguish good and bad in child development practices claims a minimum level of knowledge and education. Participants were selected purposively.

Data Collection Tool

To collect data for the study, following two different tools were used:

- Guidelines for thematic In-depth interview (IDI):
- Guidelines for focus group discussion

In-depth interview (IDI) questionnaires and group discussion guidelines were developed based on the research questions. The guidelines were composed of simple terms for easy understanding by the participants. The questionnaire consisted of some dichotomous questions and some open-ended questions.

Data Collection Methods and Procedures

In order to conduct the study, the data was collected through six IDIs (3 fathers and 3 mothers) and one focus group discussion (3 fathers and 3 mothers). In-depth interview (IDI) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were the qualitative study method that was adopted to understand similar and different observations, perspectives and ideologies of parents and tailored guidelines were the research tool. The duration for IDI was around 40 to 60 minutes and the duration for FGD was around 60 minutes.

Participants had a broad discussion of their goals before the interview began. They were also informed that these interviews would only be used and kept for academic purposes only. Face-to-face interviews were conducted after obtaining their consent.

They were also told that their participation in the study was optional and that they could finish or skip interview sessions at any time. In the beginning, there was a general exchange of greetings and some mediums informal questions make the interviewer comfortable with the participants so that the participants should easily share their experiences and thoughts. With participants data recorder along with audio recorder and relevant notes were also written nicely and thoroughly organized. Participants were thanked at the end of the interview for their time, sharing answers and cooperation. Throughout the session, participants addressed every questions and answers. Names of each parent and child and other personal information was carefully noted.

Data Management and Analysis

So, after having all the data, the researcher organized the data in a systematic process. First, it was checked whether all the information had been collected correctly. The IDI and FGD responses were then transcribed and include all brief notes taken by the researcher during the interview. Detailed data management and analysis were done by using the content analysis

methodology. The data was organized into different categories and reviewed several times. The findings were summarized under themes and sub-themes.

Validity & Reliability

The researcher was very attentive to maintain the validity and reliability of research. Various methods for data collection, such as In-Depth Interviews and Group Discussions were discussed. Each required tool was reviewed by ECD experts at BRAC University. The responses and feedback were given by the panel experts that was reconstructed and redesigned by the researcher. The reliability of the interview questions was tested by piloting and thus the researcher ensured the validity and reliability of the study.

Ethical Issues

Ethical approval was taken from BRAC IED, BRAC University. For study data collection, participants participated voluntarily and without pressure.

Participants were contacted and the same details of the study were shared with them after obtaining their prior consent and at a convenient time. The participant's rights, dignity and autonomy were adequately protected throughout the process. There were no physical, mental, legal, political, religious or social harm during the study. Confidentiality all information was kept by both the researcher and BRAC University authorities and the 12 participants were ensured that their responses would be used on record for academic purposes only. IDI questions were done in such a way that no one's sentiments are hurt. Participants received accurate information about research methods, objectives and data storage.

Chapter IV

Results/Findings & Discussions

This chapter contains the findings of the study and discussions on the findings. The findings and discussions are placed in two different sections. First, all the collected data from IDIs and group discussions are displayed according to the selected themes in the Findings sections. Then, on the other hand, the data is assembled based on the relevant literature and research reflection in the Discussion section. Finally, this chapter is concluded with a conclusion and recommendations.

Findings

The findings of this study have been shown based on the collected data from the interviews and group discussions with the fathers and mothers of 0-3-years old children. A point worth mentioning is that the findings of this exploratory research are focused on the three research questions. The section starts with the demographical details of the participants and moves forward to the themes and sub-themes, where the description of the findings covers all the research questions.

Demographic Details of the Parents

A total of 12 participants have participated in this study, where six participants are fathers, and six participants are mothers. The demographical details of the participants were examined based on educational qualifications, the age range of parents and children, and their socio-emotional status. The age range of the participants is between 25 to 40 years. The age range of the children is between 0 to 3 years old, seven of them were female kids, and eight were male kids. Most of the parents have two children except one father and one mother; they have one child. The educational qualifications of the fathers range from Higher Secondary

School (HSC) level to Master of Science where the mothers had minimum educational qualifications of Higher Secondary School level to Master of Science.

Among the parents, three fathers are businessman, and three are job holder. Most mothers are housewives, and two mothers are service holder. All the participants belonged to middle-class families and were selected from the Sauria Upazilla of Manikganj District. Most of the participants are from extended families, and a few are from nuclear families.

Theme 1: Parental Understandings about Father's Involvement in Early Childhood Development

Parental Understanding of Early Childhood Development

In this study, in in-depth-interviews and focus group discussions, parents shared their thoughts and opinions about early childhood development of their children. According to most of the fathers and mothers in the IDIs and FGDs, the early development of the child plays an important role in his future life. For example, if the early development of the child is good, if he gets good stimulation from his family, parents and surrounding environment, then a child can face all the challenges ahead in his life. Early childhood development means the holistic development of a child consisting of all form of physical, mental, and social development that starts from the birth of a child. During the interviews, one of the participants of IDIs stated that early childhood development refers to the role that care a child receives in the first few years of life plays in their brain development, mental and physical development, and cognitive development. However, there is some variation in children's intellectual development by socioeconomic status that begins at a very young age. One participant expressed it in details,

“Early childhood development refers to the time when a baby is in the mother's womb and actually develops. We know that after a certain period when a mother is pregnant, the baby

can hear and understand a lot. Early development is often 5 years and in some cases up to 8 years. Early development is actually a time of sowing the seeds for a child's future life. Seeds of a child's future life are actually sown at this time. If he can sow this seed well, if he lives in a good environment, if his parents treat him well, if those in his family treat him well, then he can improve a lot in future life. And children are imitators; children like to do what we do. They want to learn very quickly, so when they are a little older they learn about what is and isn't happening around them. So, of course early development of the child is very important for his future life.” (IDI#04, 09/03/2024)

One of the respondents from IDIs expresses that, early childhood is the period from the time a child learns to understand or the overall physical or mental development from the beginning of his birth. A child's early development plays a very important role in his future life and I think it has many aspects. For example, when a child is physically or mentally complete, he will not have any worries about his future or everything will be perfect and I think he can take a responsible role in determining his future. Among the participants, one of the respondents answered differently. She claimed,

“In fact, we have more or less idea about what is required for physical growth in the first stage of a child's life, but we lack sufficient knowledge and skills about what are required for mental development. The first five years of a child's life are called early childhood and this development is called early childhood development. A child's early development plays a very important role in his future life. He has to rely on his parents and other family members for everything. The process of postnatal development begins with birth. From birth, human life development proceeds in an uninterrupted flow. Family is the child's first school. Whatever the child learns from the family is reflected in his future life. In this case, if he learns something good from the family, sees a good relationship between the parents or every member of the family leads to good behavior, good side, good direction, then surely the child

can expect to get something good in later life and the child learns something good. The child is then able to take up the later stage of life.” (IDI#01, 26 /02/2024)

In focus group discussion one of the participants expressed that, *“Early childhood development refers to the mental and physical development of a child from birth to eight years of age. A child's later life learning, physical and mental development depends to a large extent on this early development.”(FGD, Participant#06, 04/03/2024)*

In FGD one of the respondents explained that, “early childhood development starts from the birth and continues through brain development, physical and mental development, language development, emotional development and cognitive development that takes place between zero-eight years of age.”

Another participant in focus group discussion stated that, early child development is the physical and mental development that occurs along with intellectual development of children aged 0 to 8 years. Early development plays a very important role in a child's future life. That's why every parent should be very careful about their child's early development. Few mothers told about adequate nutrition can enhance the early childhood development. The future of a child depends on early childhood development, added by one of the fathers.

Key Persons to Play a Role in Child Development and Father’s Involvement

According to all fathers and mothers in IDIs and FGD; parents, his family and society and the environment around the child all plays an important role in child development of a zero-three year’s old child. One father emphasized that the child's mother and father play a major role in the early development of a child between the ages of zero and three. First, in families where the parents are present, they play the largest role. Then, in the social context of our country, in the extended families, the grandparents, that is, the first blood relatives, grandparents,

uncles and aunts play a very important role. That is why those who live in the family along with the parents must play a very important role.

One of the respondents shared that,

“In my opinion, parents play the most important role in the early development of a zero-three year old child. A child is born as a member of a family. Thus, he is intimately involved with the happiness and sorrows of the family and various problems. Among the family members mainly influence the child's character are the mother and the father, besides close relatives such as brothers and sisters, grandparents, uncles and aunts who live together in the family. They also act as different models for different behaviors of children. Although many people believe that the child first imitates the mother. Yet studies have shown that both mothers and fathers successfully influence children from a very early age. Both successfully influence the child as the child grows up. In this case, as the child grows up, the influence of other family members increases on him. However, those with whom children spend more time are more affected.”(IDI#04, 09/03/2024)

One of the participants added that, *“I believe that parents, his family and society and the environment around him all play an important role in the early development of a zero-three year old child.” (IDI#02, 29/02/2024)*

One of the respondents emphasizes on mother's role and he mentioned that a mother's role is inevitable for nurturing a child properly.

Importance of Father's Involvement in Child Development

In the in-depth interviews and FGDs, all the parents expressed the same opinion that proper care and interaction with the child during this period determines how successfully he can utilize his potential later in life. Research has shown that children who receive the care and proximity of a father or paternal figure in their early days have a higher success rate later in

life. As a result of developing a trusting relationship with both parents, children feel secure, and they advance in education and work. Even family life is able to create better relationships. It becomes easier for the father to become involved in the child's care if he understands how deep the impact of involvement with the father is on the child's life. Father involvement refers to feeling responsible for the child and behaving responsibly. Being physically and emotionally close to the child, ensuring material services, taking care of the child and making decisions regarding its upbringing.

Another respondent explained that, *“My opinion is that in a family where the father gives enough time to the children, participates lovingly in the upbringing of the child, there are less behavioral problems in the child. A study has shown that even father involvement helps children prevent teenage drug addiction or any type of delinquency. So I think father has a unique role in child development.”* (IDI#02, 29/02/2024)

One of the participants expressed that, *“A father's role in a child's early development is very important. A close connection with the father in the early days brings life-long benefits for the child. The first eight years are called the early stages of child development. Care and growth during this time sets the course for his future health, learning, happiness and even relationships. More specifically, 75 percent of the human brain is formed within 1,000 days of birth. During this time, the connection between brain neurons starts to happen at the fastest speed.”* (IDI#01, 26/02/2024)

Another participant said that, the role of the father in the development of every child is absolutely immense. They think there is no alternative to the father's role in the child's development. A child's development is not complete without the participation of a father.

According to a participant in IDI, *“father's involvement in child development is of immense importance. Our social system is - patriarchal social system. In that case, it is seen that in*

our social system, men are more active outside, work more; fathers are more involved in all kinds of social, family or financial work. In that case, when they guide the child or teach the child when they say something, explain, then he will teach thinking from the overall aspect of the environment. (IDI#03, 09/ 04/2024) /)”

Another respondent explained that, now in the light of our practical and social position, it can be said that fathers can give little time to children. Here we have to see how much time the father is giving, how he is giving it. How is father spending time with children? It has been observed that a father is tired by working 12/13 hours, he gets one hour. How is he spending this one hour with her kids? Businessmen and working fathers spend time with their children differently. When working fathers get time off, that father should take children out for outings, take them out to play, take them out for walks, talk to them well, and encourage them to learn good things. Because every children love to imitation. We should talk to them well. Do not get angry with them unnecessarily. He may make a mistake, if he makes a mistake, he must be convinced by killing him. Or he is not eating, maybe mom is busy with cooking, then dad can feed him by talking to him or encouraging him to finish the meal. In the afternoon, father can take him for a walk in the field. A study has shown that if a child plays sports for 15 minutes, thousands of neurons are formed in his brain. The participation of a father along with the mother is very important for child development.

One of the participants shared that, *“father's involvement in child development is of immense importance. Because if father gives more time to his children then the talent of a child will develop properly. The more a father spends time with his children, talks to them, mingles with them, the more the children develop physically, mentally, intellectually and intellectually. A study has shown that the more time a father spends with his children, telling stories, the child will do much better in education in the future. Will develop into an ideal citizen, maintaining*

social relations, empathy towards others and helping tendencies are more common in those children.” (IDI#05, 12/03/2024)

In FGD one of the participants narrated that, *“Father's involvement in child development is important for many reasons, along with mother, father has many responsibilities. In addition to many family responsibilities, fathers play an important role in the development of children. When a child grows up, it stays very close to its mother and father. For this reason, I think that the role of the father along with the mother is very important in the development of the child. The more a father mingles with his children, spends time, talks, takes them outside, the brighter his child's future will be. For this reason, I think that the role of the father along with the mother is very important in the development of the child.”(FGD, Participant#01, 04/03/2024)*

In the FGD one of the respondents said that, just as mother has many responsibilities and duties towards her child, so father should also fulfill his responsibilities and duties towards his child, giving him more time. As a mother spends a lot of time on her child, nurtures, feeds, sleeps. A father should also talk to his child, spend time with him, go for a walk, feed him, and put him to sleep, help him in his studies. A father who gives more time to his children has a brighter future, they do better in education and they become ideal citizens in the future.

One of the participants in FGD narrated that, *“It seems to me that the involvement of the father in the early development of the child is very important. Along with the mother, the father should also give more time to his children, take the children for outings, participate in sports with them, and discuss various issues of the family and the surrounding environment. Answering the questions that young children ask, keeping an eye on not getting mixed up in a bad environment, keeping a check on regular commute to school. Ensure healthy food. I*

believe that father plays a very important role in a child's early development, including these overall factors.” (FGD, Participant#06, 04/03/2024)

Most of the parents think that spending quality time and providing mental support is important for child development.

Understanding of Fatherhood

Most parents mentioned that, fatherhood is a vital duty for a father. They thought that this duty starts with childbirth and continues for life long. Few of the participants responded with different answers. *“Fatherhood generally refers to being a father or a man can become a father after the birth of a child. In that case, as a father, we have many responsibilities and duties to do, which are called fatherhood.”*-mentioned by one of the participants during IDI. (IDI#03, 09/03.2024)

One of the respondents mentioned that, *“Fatherhood means the rule of the father. It literally means father's rule. A father has many responsibilities. The father has to take responsibility for the maintenance of a child; the father has to step forward in case of danger. Fatherhood is a really big topic and it's hard to sum it up. Fatherhood in the overall sense - he has to discipline, he has to cares, he has to love, he has to be corrected if he is wrong. A child can often learn something wrong from the environment; he needs to be brought back from it. And these responsibilities of a father are fatherhood.”* (IDI#04, 09/03/2024)

Most of the participants mentioned that there is a well-established term for fatherhood in our society which is only limited to giving financial support and decision making. All of them agreed that it is a crucial duty. One respondent stated that,

“By fatherhood I mean, a father who directly works and gives time to a child from its birth to its growth that is called fatherhood. A father should take care of his child along with mother. In families where the child's father is more attentive to his children, and the mother and the

family provide the right stimulation, children in those families flourish in all aspects of their development. A father's role is basically called fatherhood.” (IDI#02, 29/02/2024)

One of the participants answered that, *“Fatherhood is the state of being a father. A man enters fatherhood when he becomes a father. This usually happens when their child is born. Responsibility and duty towards children is called fatherhood.”(IDI#01, 26/02/2024)*

One of the respondents narrated that, *“Fatherhood actually means being a father. The responsibilities and duties of the father, to provide security for his future life, the responsibility of education, ensuring food and clothing etc. are later in fatherhood. In a word, fatherhood is the responsibility and duty of the father.”(IDI#06, 17/03/2024)*

Based on the above findings, it can be said that fatherhood is a duty and responsibility toward children. Most of the participants consider fatherhood as a vital duty. However, some of the participants believed that it is a challenge.

Fathers’ Involvement in Child Care and Development in Nuclear and Extended Families

Most of the participants agreed that there are differences in fathers’ involvement in child care and development in nuclear family and extended families. Most of them think that fathers who belong to nuclear families are more involved in child caring than the fathers of extended families. One of the participants mentioned that,

“A small family usually consists of a child's parents and siblings. Here it is very easy to give time to each other. Their relationship with brothers and sisters is good. It is possible and easier for parents to help their children develop properly by giving them proper education. On the other hand, extended families usually consist of a father, his parents, siblings, and his wife and children. In this case, a father working all day outside and coming home may not be so caring or affectionate towards his child, nor can he give time. In this he cannot play the role of father in child development. And on the other hand, if the child's mother is a

housewife, then she neglects her child by giving time to the elders of the family or doing all their work, finishing the cooking for everyone in the family, fulfilling all the responsibilities. Can't give time to the child, can't play with him, and can't talk to him often. It disrupts a child's intuition, disrupting the child's early development.” (IDI#02, 29/02/2024)

One participant expressed that, *“Father Involvement varies somewhat in small families and large families. A small family consists of only the parents, i.e. a child and the parents. When I treat my children as a father in such a family, they find me in a form. And when I am with my family, where my parents are brothers and sisters, my behavior, intimacy, and behavior with them, the way I talk, everything affects my children. Therefore, father involvement must be different in large families and in small families.” (IDI#03, 09/04/2024)*

Another participant mentioned that, *“Father Involvement in child care and development varies somewhat between small families and large families. In small families, fathers can spend a little more time with children. But in big families a father cannot do this. For example, a small family consists of only parents and children. So a father gets a lot of time to talk, talk, and go for a walk with his wife-children. But in a big family, the child's father gives time to other family members. And perform various duties and responsibilities towards them. So he cannot give much time to his children despite his desire.” (IDI#05, 12/03/2024)*

One of the participants answered that, *“Yes, of course the father's involvement in child care and child development varies between small families and large families. In this case, if the child is involved in a single family or parents are limited, then the development of the child will be very limited. On the other hand, if the child grows up in a extended family, then his physical and mental development will definitely be much higher.*

But in joint families, the behavior of grandparents, uncles, and aunts influences the child immensely. As a result, the child can easily mix with others and physical and mental

development is achieved. In this case his cognitive development and language development and social emotional development happen very well. As a result, the child can develop much better in a joint family than in a single family. And it brings much success in his future life.” (IDI#01, 26/02/2024)

One of the participants expressed that, “In a large family a father has many responsibilities and duties towards his parents, brothers and sisters. A large family has many people. So a father has a lot of responsibilities. While fulfilling the responsibilities and duties towards the family members, many fathers cannot give proper time to their children and cannot talk to them. Even, many times the father doesn't even get time to talk to his children. But in small families, a father can spend a lot of time with his children, take them for walks, play with them, and talk with them. But it is not possible in big family. So I think parents can work more and give more time for children's mental and intellectual development in small families.” (IDI#06, 17/03/2024)

One of the participants explained that, “In a large family, a father not only has responsibilities and duties towards his children, but also many responsibilities and duties towards other members of the family. A father in a large family cannot devote adequate time to the care and development of his children. But in small families the number of members is less so the father can give enough time to his children. A father can spend enough time caring for the children by talking to them, telling stories, taking them out for outings, reading different types of story books. Therefore, children from small families grow up with more care and love from their parents.” (FGD, Participant#01, 04/03/2024)

One of the attendants answered in FGD that, “I find that between small families and large families, father involvement in child care and child development is greater in large families. Because there are many family members' lives together in the large family such as

grandparents, uncles and aunts who share the household work altogether. This gives everyone more time and in that family the father can spend more time with his children. And the problem of small family is that the number of members is less, everyone is busy with work, so the members of small family can give less time to children. That is why I think that the father of a large family can devote more time to the care and development of his children than a small family.” (FGD, Participant#06, 04/03/2024)`

All the participants agreed that fathers’ involvement is very essential for their children’s every developmental area. Most of the parents believe that fathers should involve in children’s playing, learning and overall mental well-being.

The above findings revealed that there are more or less differences between fathers’ involvement in child caring and development in nuclear and extended families. Finally, it can be said that most of the participants revealed that fathers are more engaged in child development in nuclear families than the extended families.

Theme 2: Practices Regarding Fathers’ Involvement in Child Development

Spending Quality Time with Child

All the parents spend time with their child by doing different activities. One of the participants expressed that, *“My husband and I go on vacations with the kids. When I am busy, my husband feeds my children, bathes them, talks, and plays. I have two children. While I am busy with the older child, my husband spends time with the younger child, helping him to sleep, feeding him. This is how we spend time with our children. Sometimes the mother is in a bad mood, then a father should give time, caress to his child. Then the gap created by the children is filled by the participation of the father. And when the father is very tired or the father is in a bad mood, the mother should take care of her children or give her time.”(IDI#06, 17/03/2024)*

Most of the participants expressed that they enjoyed spending time with their children. As an example, one participant mentioned,

“My husband and I spend time with our children in many ways. For example, I take him to play in the field in the morning and in the afternoon. We spend a lot of intimate relationship with him even while sleeping. He is fed by pretending to play with many toys. When the child cries a lot, we try to calm him down by showing him different toys, telling him stories, playing different games. And when he doesn't want to eat, we try to feed him by pretending to play with toys, telling stories. I definitely feel that it is affecting my child physically and mentally. We spend time with him by treating him well, by teaching him something good. As a result, he can learn how to behave with others in the future. And thus he will be affected physically and mentally.” (IDI#01, 26/02/2024)

One of the respondents mentioned that, *“As a person I like to spend as much time as possible with my children playing sports, regular activities, studying, sleeping, waking up, eating and drinking. Yes, it is physically or mentally affecting. Because they react more when I am with them, they prefer to be with me more than they are comfortable with everyone else. In that case, of course my role is very important to them. So I think they are being affected mentally and physically.”(IDI#03, 09/03/2024)*

One of the attendants expressed that, *“My husband or I spend time with our children, play different games with them, go for walks, and sometimes read them story books. Of course, it is affecting them mentally and physically because when a child is neglected by his parents and family or is not properly nurtured, the mental or physical development of those children is hindered. When a child eats from his mother's or father's hand or plays and spends time with his whole family, a kind of bonding is formed between them. So, we try to spend enough*

time with our baby. Because we believe that a child's primary education and development comes from his own family.” (IDI#02, 29/02/2024)

All the participants agreed that father’s involvement in child development is very important. Most of them share similar opinions regarding fathers’ involvement in child development.

Managing Childcare Habits/Practices

In the in-depth-interviews and FGDs all the fathers and mothers expressed their different opinion that every parent handles their child care habits/practices differently. Most of the parents shared that it is very important for all the caregivers to have the minimum knowledge about child development from the time of pregnancy. All the fathers should be caring and supportive towards the pregnant mother.

One of the participants stated that, *“My husband and I try to handle our baby care routines a little differently. We are not mobile centric, we try to spend more time with our children. Talk to them a lot, play with them, feed them and encourage them to eat with their own hands. What happens in this, a child can get right habits or right education from his parents and his family. We often try to attend various family and social events with children. So that, their mental development, physical development, intellectual development and social development takes place. We want our children to acquire good habits.” (IDI#02, 29/02/2024)*

One of the respondents explained that,

“In my case, my wife stays at home most of the time. He does most of the housework or whatever the children need to do. So whenever I go home, I try to participate in whatever work is done for my child. In that case, the tasks of my wife, say- there are many personal tasks for the child, feeding the child, sometimes bathing or sometimes toileting or cleaning after toileting. I happily participate in these childcare tasks.” (IDI#03, 09/04/2024)

Another respondent said that, *“My husband and I manage our baby care routines differently. We try to have a very close relationship with the child. Talk to the child more, read story books to her according to her age, take her for walks in the morning and afternoon, play with her a lot with toys. She is still very small; she cannot eat with her own hands. So we feed her. At this age his physical and mental development as well as intellectual development takes place. So we bought different types of toys for his intellectual development. For example, some building blocks, wooden letters, puzzles, Lego, different types of bus and truck.”* (IDI#01, 26/02/2024)

One of the participants expressed that, *“Most of what we do in childcare is for the child's mental and physical growth. We try to feed the children nutritious food keeping in mind their mental and physical growth. And if the child is not physically healthy then it is not possible for the child to develop mentally. That's why we give them importance on habits like eating nutritious food, playing sports, physical exercise, going for walks, reading age-appropriate story books.”* (IDI#06, 17/03/2024)

Parental Engagement to Support their Child’s Development

In-depth interviews and FGDs were taken to explore parent’s engagement in early childhood development of their children. Most of the parents think that spending quality time, providing nutritious food and providing mental support is very important for child development. According to IDIs and FGDs, parents shared that they usually spend quality time with their children by telling a story or read aloud a story, by playing different types of games, go outside for a walk or enjoy the sites which are helpful for child’s holistic development. One of the participants mentioned that,

“We try to ensure that our children have the necessary nutrition for their physical development. We both husband and wife try to follow that which food is good, or if such

nutritious food is given today or if there is any nutritional deficiency or if there is any problem due to nutritional deficiency. Early childhood is the period from the time a child learns to understand or the overall physical or mental development from the beginning of his birth. For example, when a child is physically or mentally complete, he will not have any worries about his future or everything will be perfect and I think he can take a responsible role in determining his future. We call this period early development. Early development plays a very important role in a child's future life. That's why every parent should be very careful about their child's early childhood development.” (IDI#03, 09/04/2024)

Most of the participants added that, obviously every fathers and mothers should involve with his child in many activities otherwise the child may go to astray or a wrong way. They said that obviously more involvement makes more security and better bonding which leads to a happy life.

In group discussion, one of the participants expressed that, *“We do many things for our child's physical, mental, cognitive and social emotional development. For example, we ensure nutritious food for physical development, so that they do not have any problem in terms of physical structure and lack of any nutrients. And for the development of knowledge we play various games, read various story books, spend a lot of time with them, take them outside for a walk, discuss freely, see how much their range of knowledge has increased. Many children are found to have developed physically but not intellectually. This is how we take care of our child's cognitive development. Language development is very important for a child. A child learns its first words from its mother. Every child imitates the way parents talk. So we all try to speak cleanly and nicely with children. In terms of child's language development, we try to explain it in different ways whether the child understands or not. Socio-emotional development - we take care of whether he can adapt himself to the surrounding situation, how he is playing with other boys and girls etc. This is how my*

husband and I take care of various aspects including social-emotional development of our children. (FGD, Participant#01, 04/03/2024)

In group discussion one of the respondents firmly narrated that, *“What we do when it comes to physical development is giving children nutritious food with a special focus on nutrition. If the child is not given nutritious food according to the nutritional needs of his body, he will not grow up properly. Then we look at whether cognitive development is taking place. We try to make sure that what he is seeing, what he is learning is correct. Language Development- A child is like mud, whatever we tell him, he will learn whatever he hears. That's why we try to speak properly, use proper language with them. So that they can learn the correct language and can speak properly. By social development we mean whether the child is interacting with the surrounding children or people, whether the child is playing properly, learning the right thing from there, whether he is on the right path. We try to take care of these things so that his mental development, nutritional development, language development, cognitive development and socio-emotional development are not hindered. (FGD, Participant#06, 04/03/2024)*

In all IDIs and focus group discussions, all the parents are very conscious about providing nutritious food to their children. Most of them mentioned that, they give nutritious food to protect their child from diseases. One of the participants shared that,

“We engage ourselves in various ways in child development. We try to control their eating habits, their regular habits for the physical or nutritional development of the child. And for social-emotional development, we take them for walks, ask them to mingle with people, ask them to play with their friend circle. They are now of preschool age, so we try to explain and encourage them how to mix with classmates, how to behave with cousins, how to speak and behave politely to outsiders. When it comes to language development, my husband thinks that

our children will learn to speak beautifully if we first speak to them well and clearly. Then their speech style, behavior is somewhat nourished. For cognitive or intellectual development, we usually read different age-appropriate story books with children, read different religious books, read biographies of different sages with them. For the development of their intelligence, we have bought different types of toys. We have bought various types of toys including building blocks, abacus, wooden letters, wooden numbers, Lego which will develop their knowledge very easily by playing with them. There are some indoor playgrounds where playing helps children develop physically, mentally and intellectually. Sometimes we visit there with our kids.” (IDI#02, 29/02/2024)

One of the respondents shared his opinion that, we feed our children different types of nutritious food for physical and nutritional development; and go outside walk with children in the morning and afternoon. Every day we keep egg, milk, fruits, green vegetables, enough protein in the food list as per as our child’s age and taste and avoid the outside food and fast food. For cognitive development, read different types of age appropriate story books. For language development- speaking pure language, telling them about different languages. For socio-emotional development, take them to various social events, visit relatives home, and behave well with neighbors. Every effort should be made to foster social-emotional development in children from early childhood.

Another respondent shared that, *“We engage ourselves in our child's development in various ways. For physical development, take him to play in the field in the afternoon or evening, so that his physical development takes place. Besides, he also enjoys a lot when he sits on the swing. When he goes to the field and meets his peers, he tries to share his feelings with his friends. Then the behavior of his friends began to influence him. As a result, his knowledge develops. Even children develop language through gestures or behavior towards each other and we try to talk to him very nicely at times so that he can express his feelings very easily.*

Also, we try to take him around a lot of people or to various gatherings or social events, so that he comes in contact with other people and can easily mingle with them. As a result, his social-emotional development is also very well matched. (IDI#01, 26/02/2024)

One of the respondents shared that, “But it is up to the father to ensure that a child's food is nutritious for their physical and nutritional development. In our society, sometimes mothers can help in this regard. But in our social situation a father has to play a major role here. It is the responsibility of both the parents to see that the physical nutrition of the child is proper. Cognitive development refers to- I think, if a parent speaks well to his child then that child will learn to speak very well. If I speak the regional language he will also learn the regional language. But I think children should always be spoken to in pure language. Then he will learn to speak beautifully. Socio-Emotional Development – A child learns social skills from his family. How a father talks, behaves with his wife and other family members. Children will learn so. Socialization is actually learned by a child from the family. Many of us may have quarrels, there may be trouble between husband and wife, and then children should separate a little and reconcile with husband and wife or other family members. We should not quarrel in front of children, it is better not to engage in any argument in front of children. (IDI#04, 09/03/2024)

Another participant expressed that, “We give more importance to nutritious and quality foods for physical development. The physical development of the child depends more on the nutritious food of the child. The physical, mental structure and growth of the child will be complete only if we can ensure that the body needs vitamins, minerals, proteins. And I think the child's cognitive development is the child's mental development. I play games with the children for mental development of the child, discuss how to live together, take them for a walk, play together with younger brothers and sisters, and give more importance to these things. And take care of language development so that the child can speak fluently with

beautiful and clear pronunciation. That's why we talk to our children nicely. Social and emotional development means the surrounding conditions or the external environment, How to get along with other relatives of the society, how to behave with whom, respect the elders, love the younger, ethics and moral values are part of socio-emotional development and we pay a lot of attention to these things” (IDI#06, 17/03/2024)

Theme 3: Challenges Faced by Fathers in Regard to their Involvement in Child Development

Challenges Faced by Fathers in Child Development

All the participants expressed that they faced various challenges, which decreased their involvement in child care and rearing practices. Most of the participants mentioned that economic stability, professional pressure, family environment, and cultural norms are the factors behind the less involvement of fathers in child development. One of the participants shared her opinion that,

“My husband and I have faced many challenges in child development. A child grows up in close proximity to both its parents. So we try to give him time as much as we can. But many times it doesn't happen. For example, my husband is away from us most of the time due to his work pressure or job. He comes home after 2-3 months. Even sometimes I am unable to give my children as much time as they need due to the pressure of family work. In this case, his development may be somewhat disrupted. And when my husband comes home for vacation after a long time, he remains very tired. And he can't give as much time to children as they want. In this case, I think the proper development of the child is being disrupted.” (IDI#01, 26/02/2024)

Few participants said that, they did not face any problem yet. One of the participants said that, we have not faced any kind of problem yet. Because we live with our family, everyone in our family spends a lot of time with our children. One of the respondents explained that,

“We who are working fathers cannot devote much time to the care and development of their children, cannot take them anywhere. And when I leave for office in the morning my child is asleep and when I come home from work at night he is still asleep. I can't spend time with my children except on holidays. This seems to me a very big challenge.” IDI#05, 12/03/2024)

One of the participants added that, *“No, we have not faced any such problem yet. Everyone in our family spends a lot of time with our children and everyone in our family has a very good understanding with each other. So far we haven't faced any challenge.”* (IDI#03, 09/03/2024)

Another respondent tried to answer in a slightly different way. "Actually, we have not faced any particular challenges," he said. Because, the way we nurture them nurture them, talk to them, give them time and we have not faced any challenges or obstacles in the way. But it's kind of a challenge for a parent to take care of their children, to make time for them. Because a father working outside or doing business or coming to work from outside cannot give as much time to his children or if a mother is a career worker or a housewife then how to give time to her children is a challenge. It is big challenges for parents how to raise a child as a human being, how much positive impact he will have in daily education or language learning or socially. One of the participants from IDIs mentioned that,

“My husband and I faced some challenges in child development. For example, I am a working mother. When I wasn't working I gave full time to my children, taking care of them a lot. But now due to my job, I can't give them full time; I can't take care of them. Can't even speak at right times. And because of my husband's busy work, he is not able to give time to children like before. Because of this, their boredom, stubbornness has increased, they used to

get along well with everyone, talk and play. Now doesn't mix with anyone, doesn't talk, and doesn't even want to play with his friends. Now she prefers to be alone like herself. We are facing this challenge. (IDI#06, 17/03/2024)

In focus group discussion one of the participants expressed that,

“I have faced various challenges in child development. One of them is that I am a working mother. I am not able to give full time to my child due to my job. Lately my child has become very bored, very stubborn due to lack of baby time. Before getting a job, when I gave my child full time, he was very fresh minded, played with everyone, talked, answered everyone's questions. But lately due to lack of time many changes are taking place in the child. She now doesn't want to play with friends like before, doesn't want to talk and doesn't want to answer anyone's questions has become more stubborn than before. That seems to me to be the biggest challenge right now.” (FGD, Participant#01, 04/-3/2024)

One of the participants from FGD shared that, he also faces some challenges in his child's development. For being a working father he has to go to office in the morning and come home at night. That's why he could not get enough time to spend with his child during the day. He thinks that the more time spent with zero-to-three-year-olds, the more they develop. This time is a very sensitive time for children. He can't go around with them, can't talk because of work. Many times it cannot be saved by making many demands. This is a big challenge for them. Another participants from focus group discussion shared his thought that,

“I think we all face some challenges more or less in child development. Business requires me to be away from home a lot, due to which I am not able to give full time to my children. I can't do it because of my busy schedule to take my children out for a walk. Even though I am home most of the time, I don't give them much time. Playing with them, feeding them or

taking extra care, it doesn't really happen. Due to which I think they have faced a major obstacle in their mental development.” (FGD, Participant#06, 04/03/2024)

Ways to Overcome Challenges

In the in-depth-interviews and in focus group discussions, all the fathers and mothers shared their thoughts and opinions regarding some challenges faced by parents in child development.

One of the participants from IDI narrated that,

“I think the best way to overcome challenges is to make my child my highest priority. Whatever time I get is the time I give my maximum output to my child. In that case later it will get a very good result. In many other ways, it happens to some working fathers or mothers, they sometimes cannot adjust the time. In that case they can overcome it through negotiation. Mother can give them time when dad is too busy and dad can give time to his kids when mom is busy. At least we have to make sure that there is no gap for children.” (IDI#03, 09/03/2024)

One of the participants explained that, many parents around us face the challenge of not being able to give enough time to their children as both parents are working. Sometimes some anti-social or unusual behavior of children around is seen. His parents may not be able to spend time with their children because of their work outside. Their children may be somewhat bored, stubborn or somewhat antisocial as a result. Even, if any relatives from outside come home, they do not talk to them well. They are becoming primarily mobile centric. Due to being mobile centric, their own relatives or anyone else can't interact with them normally when they come home, they don't want to talk. One of the respondents from focus group discussion shared that, *“One way out of this challenge is to spend as much time with children as possible. They have to spend as much time as possible in the midst of their busy schedule, they have to travel, if it is not possible once a week or once a month, they have to be taken to*

a new place somewhere far away once a year. Show them something new, feed them new food or introduce them to a new environment. Overall, this challenge can be overcome by spending more time with them.” (FGD, Participant#06, 04/03/2024)

One of the participants shared that; ways to overcome challenges- when faced with a challenge, husband and wife should talk about it. Talk to other family members to discuss how to deal with the challenge or problem. In this case, parents have to play a role here.

Another participant from IDI said that, *“To overcome this challenge, a father can spend some time with the children in the morning before going to the office or spend some time with the children after returning home from the office. At night they can catch up on their studies and have meals together. They can be very close to the children while checking their studies and eating together at night. And on holidays a father can go out with his family and children. No matter how busy a mother is, whether she is a working woman or a housewife. Between works, he must spend time with his children. During the holidays, both parents can go out with their families and children.” (IDI#05, 12/03/2024)*

One of the participants shared that,

“I think this challenge can be overcome in several ways. For example, my husband is out for work most of the time. So can't give time to kids. But when he comes home and meets all the family, he can try to give a little more time to the children. During free time or holidays, he can spend some time with the children or take them outside to play or for a walk. In this case, the child will be able to mix with his father very easily and can easily exchange thoughts with each other. Even when I am busy with household chores, if I give some time to the child in between my work and keep him happy by playing with him, talking to him. Then I think there will be no negative impact on my child. And if we both husband and wife put in some effort and don't let the children know our tiredness, then he will be able to come closer to us very

easily and our attachment to each other with the child will be much closer.” (IDI#01, 26/02/2024)

Another participant from FGD mentioned that,

“I think, to overcome this challenge, a little more time should be taken out for the children anyway. And since I am a teacher, I can take my child to school sometimes, give time. And when I am not at home, I can ask my husband to spend some time with my children instead of me, talk with them, and make them sleep, eat and bathe. Still as much as possible father can try to fill this gap. I think husband and wife can overcome this challenge together.” (FGD, Participant#01, 04/03/2024)

Suggestions on Increasing Father’s Involvement

All the participants from IDIs and FGDs expressed their opinion about how fathers’ involvement in child development can be increased. Most of the fathers and mothers are job holder, most of them agreed on the fact that they are not involved enough with their children for achieving age appropriate development in every domain. One of the participants narrated that, *“Some programs or seminars can be organized to promote the importance of father’s involvement in child development, and then it will be very helpful for fathers’ to get attention.” (IDI#03, 09/03/2024)*

Few participants mentioned that they will be more involved if they get more time and opportunities. One participant said,

“There are many things a father and mother can do to increase father involvement in child development. In addition to the mother, the father also needs a lot in the development of the child. Just as a mother holds a child, so when the child's father comes home after a busy day, the father takes the child in his arms with a smile, but the child is very happy. The child's self-confidence grows, he does well in education in future life, he becomes an ideal citizen, he

becomes self-reliant, he grows courage, he learns to adapt to the external environment. In addition to mother's love, care and affection, a father's care, and love are very important for a child's future success. A father's love and affection plays a very important role in the mental development of a child. The contribution of both parents to a child's bright future is undeniable. So no matter how busy the father is, he should spend time with the child thinking about his future life.”(IDI#06, 17/03/2024)

One participants mentioned that, talking with the child, reading story books, walking in the park and spend time with the child are the ways to be more involved with the child.

Another respondent expressed that,

“For example, if the child spends more time with his father and if the father gives more time to his child, the relationship between them becomes much easier. And it will have a positive impact in the future. In this case, the child will always be ahead in studies, sports, or conducting music, dancing, poetry recitation, religious education. And the child will always try to do something good. Many times it is seen that the child does not get along with his father easily, he is afraid of his father; this attitude should be removed from the child. In this case, if the father is with him during feeding, bathing, playing or sleeping, a better bonding is formed between the father and the child. And to increase the involvement of the father with the child, the father can often feed his children, give him a bath, and sometimes take him outside for a walk. By doing these things, the father-child relationship will be much easier and their involvement will be stronger.”(IDI#01, 26/02/2024)

Another participant explained that, *“Every father should spend time with his children and family before going to work, after coming home from work, and at night dinner time. The father can take the children for outings on his days off. Then the father will have a close relationship with the child.” (FGD#03, 04/03/2024)*

In IDIs one of the participants said that. He is involved in every activity and task with his child, taking him to the playground to play, jump, run and other activities. Another participant explained that he takes care of every single activity of the hidden child even though some tasks may not be so important. He also added that she does not get angry when his child asks questions with an inquisitive mind. He tried to stay connected with his child and spoke quickly on the phone even though he was very busy with his work.

It can be summarized from the above findings that fathers face various challenges in engaging in child development. Most participants shared that time allocations can increase their engagement. The results of the study showed that parents have good knowledge about child development, different perspectives and fathers' involvement. Consequently, fathers of nuclear families are more engaged in child development than the fathers of extended families.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that fathers have been practicing various activities for children's' holistic (physical, language, cognitive and socio-emotional) development. As per the findings, fathers face different types of difficulties, such as shortage of time, financial crisis, jobless situation, mental instability in child development. Finally, it can be said that, programs and seminars on fathers' involvement would be very helpful to increase fathers' involvement in child development.

Discussion:

This section presents the interpretation of the results obtained during the study and analyzes the research evidence with reference to existing literature. It consists of three categories, namely understanding, practices and parenting challenges related to fathers' involvement in child development for 0-3 years-old-children. The aim of the study was to explore parents' perceptions on fathers' involvement in child development for 0 to 3 years old children. Through in-depth interviews and group discussions data were collected. Data were collected

based on the objectives of the study and questions and analysis were organized based on the findings of IDIs and FGDs. The demographic profile of the study showed that all fathers were well educated and belonged to middle income group and middle aged. Current research results shows that, most parents have an understanding of child development but not in organized process and they don't have enough time to engage with children because of their job and other responsibilities.

Parental Understandings about Fathers' Involvement in Early Childhood Development

Research findings revealed that parents have different ideas, thoughts and opinions about early childhood development of their children. Data were collected through focus group discussions and in-depth interviews and the results obtained from the collected data show that most of the parents understanding that child care and development is a duty against children for their nurturing and development. They defined early childhood development in various ways but there was little deviation in their perception and according to them, early childhood development means the holistic development of a child consisting of all form of physical, mental and social development which starts from birth. So, for a zero to three years old child, the early childhood development will be physical, emotional and social development and it is very important. Turns out, most fathers express that, for a better future of their children early childhood development is very helpful. If physical and mental milestones are developed properly in early years, then the child will be able to play his accurate role in his future life. In this study, according to most of the parents if the children get good behavior and good stimulation from his family, parents and surroundings, then the child will be able to face all the challenges in his later life. They mentioned that giving attention and spending time with children are also a part of child development. Similar findings have been found in a study on fathers' involvement in Florida, Fogarty and Evans (2009) narrated that children need to stay

their parents' attention and love; positive attention helps them to achieve more success and healthy life.

From the findings of the group discussions and in-depth-interviews regarding the parental understanding of fatherhood, most fathers and mothers agreed that it is an essential duty and responsibility for a man or father that begins from the birth of their child continues throughout life. Similarly, it was observed in a study (Sabur, 2019) stating that fatherhood is an identity for men all around the globe. Although, few participants in in-depth-interviews defined that fatherhood is a big challenge. Similar data emerged from a study conducted in Australia that is fatherhood is a challenge for new fathers, and it is a time for changes of many things (St John et al., 2005).

From interviews also found information that fathers expressed that children share a secure attachment with their father. Similar findings have been found in a study from (Pleck, 2007) that father' positive attachment supports children's developmental outcomes.

On the other hand, few participants' of fathers are perceived to be less involved in child care and upbringing due to economic stability, professional pressure, family environment, and cultural norms are the factors behind the less involvement of fathers in child development. On the other hand, research evidence focused that in the traditional view of fathers as breadwinners, fathers are responsible for their earnings first involved livelihoods and then children in many areas (Lamb, 2004).

Data collected from group discussions and IDIs revealed that fathers' involvement in childcare is essential for children's overall development. Most of them recognize that fathers should lend a hand to mothers in childcare and development. Similar research evidence is reflected in a study that states men with a more gender egalitarian mindset are relatively more involved in child care development (Crespi & Ruspini, 2015)

Practices Regarding Fathers' Involvement in Child Development

Most of the fathers admitted that feeding the baby, helping with toileting, daily activities help the baby's development the right way. It has been found that fathers can engage themselves with their children in different ways like walking, running, speaking with correct pronunciation, reading story books, singing, playing in free time and finally helping children with daily activities. Inadequate nutrition knowledge and feeding practices among caregivers causes lasting malnutrition problem in young children (Inayati et al., 2012).

Most fathers agreed that providing emotional and mental support and spending quality time is important for a child's development. Playing with children, talking to them, telling stories, reading story books aloud, walking outside and enjoying the scenery are very helpful for overall development of children. Play is essential for parents to fully engage with their children early on contributes to development and children's cognitive, socioeconomic, and physical well-being (Ginsberg, 2007).

In the study it was found that, most of the parents try to give extra attention about nutritious food in their children's early years such as fruits, egg, milk, green vegetables, protein, and minerals and try to avoid the outside food and fast food. In this study fathers mentioned that, both parents must work together to meet the child's physical and emotional nutritional needs. Parents try to maintain a balance diet from the very beginning of their children's life so that necessary nutrition demand of the child will be fulfilled accordingly. They also said important thing is that to ensure proper nutrition every parent should remind that same food should not provide every day menu and should change the menu according to the child's test. Self-efficacy and self-esteem increase in a child after the child learns self-regulation proper skills but difficulties in self-regulation impair children's well-being including aggression

control and social behavior. Thus, self-regulation is an important predictor positive development of children (Houtakangas and Kumpulainen, 2021).

Every parent especially father should observe child behavior first, what a child likes to say, what a child likes to do or how a child likes to say or do and how a child can done better after that father should guide them to do things in a proper way. Another respondent express that speaks with the child and listen them very carefully what they want to say and consider them as an individual character according to the child's behavior.

In this study participants acknowledged that, to develop the social skills they allow their children to interact with everyone, play with their cousin and other children of their age, exchange their thoughts and views with their friends, families and neighbors and participate different types of family programs and take the child outside at different playgrounds.

Moreover, the findings of the study disclosed that most of the fathers participated in daily activities in having lunch or dinner together, playing games with toys, read story books aloud and helping children to sleep at night. Findings from the collected data demonstrated that most of the fathers are doing different kinds of cognitive activities that are not mobile centric such as, playing with Blocks, Abacas, Wooden Letters/Numbers, Lego or crafting to support children's cognitive skills. In addition, they mentioned that fathers' engagement helps children develop cognitive and literacy skills. Similar searches have also been found in another study: children whose fathers were satisfied with contributing to their children's higher cognitive skills (Rolle et al., 2019).

According to the results of interviews and group discussions, most of the participants revealed that they try to talk with their children, recite rhymes and tell stories at bedtime for language development. Besides, a few of them talked much with their children and answered their every question and read story books aloud to develop language competency. Similar

evidence has been shown in a recent study that found that parents tell stories and recite rhymes for support children's language development (Khatun, 2020).

From the group discussion it was found that most of the fathers did not practice activities to support social development of children. In contrast, some participants did less activity for children's social development. Similar scenario found from interviews where participants mentioned supporting children social activities were inadequate. And most of the parents stated that they could not manage time to spend with their children due to economic stability, professional pressure, family environment, and cultural norms.

Challenges Faced by Fathers in Regard to their Involvement in Child Development

The interviews' data and findings highlighted the fact that sometimes most of the fathers could not get enough time to involve in child care and development because of economic stability, professional pressure, family environment, traditional views and cultural norms. It is well established in our society that mothers are the primary caregivers and are being cared for associated only with mothers. From the group discussion similar findings were found that both father and mother also stated same opinion regarding this issue.

The data collected and the results obtained from the interviews indicate that where few participants mentioned fathers' mindset needs to be changed regarding their involvement in child development. Similar views were also revealed from group discussion that a father's mindset or attitude may be a factor in fathers' low involvement with child caring and development.

Results of group discussions and in-depth interviews reveals that most of the participants expressed that lack of money, job loss and fathers suffered from stress and depression due to work pressure, which led to shortages involvement in child development.

A recent study recommends that programs on fatherhood and extended fatherhood programs need to be implemented (Akter, 2019). Similar findings were found from group discussions and interviews in this study.

The findings of the group discussions and in-depth-interviews reveal that father of nuclear families can get enough time to involve with their child's overall holistic development but father of extended families could not manage time to get involve with their child's development due to some family duties and responsibilities.

In summary, the above discussions are about the involvement of fathers in child care, their practices for overall growth of children and development, comparison of fathers' involvement in nuclear and extended families, and challenges faced by fathers. Most notably, participants give some opinions on increasing fathers' involvement in child care and parenting practices related to child development.

Conclusion

The importance of fathers' involvement in child care and early childhood development cannot be ignored to endure children's better future and overall well-being. Most of the people are aware of the importance of father's involvement child development. However, Fathers face various social, cultural and economic barriers in Bangladesh that kept them away from involvement in their child development. Unfortunately, there is not enough research to address the importance of fathers' involvement and perception. It is a matter of great concern to explore how fathers are engaged in child development. The objective of this comprehensive study was to reveal the insights and requirements of fathers' involvement in child care for children's overall development and well-being. Father emphasizes good parenting by how parents spend time, how they deal with their child's problems, how and when other caregivers engage with the child in a positive environment for the child's age-

appropriate development. Proper early childhood development determines a child's future and if behaviors, norms, and physical and emotional milestones are not properly developed in the early years, the child will not perform well in the future.

This study shows that although grandparents and other caregivers have a role to play in development but father and mother play an important role. In this study, it was found that, most of the fathers could not get enough time to involve with their child for achieving age appropriate development in every domain.

Nowadays fathers are more involved in children's food, education, and health and age suitable growth. They are participating in school events, helping with homework. Taking their children to doctor's appointments and engaging in fun activities with them. There are still many social and cultural barriers such as traditional gender roles, lack of awareness of benefits involving fathers, and economic constraints prevents fathers from playing a more effective role in children's well-being.

In this study, it was found that how a father should deal with a pregnant mother and what a father should know about child's developmental milestones and surrounding environment. Parents should spend quality time as much as they can, though parents remain busy with their office work. The study suggests that, fathers' involvement helps children to develop their language development, physical development, cognitive development and socio-emotional development. Now days, father's involvement in child care and child development are increasing day by day. Fathers' involvement in child development is essential for children's mental health and well-being.

The study suggests that, fathers' are willing to get involved in their children's development and they also understand the importance of getting their involvement.

However, according to the findings, most of the fathers could not get enough time to involve with their child for achieving age appropriate development in every domain.

However, father's involvement in child care and development are increasing day by day. They are trying to mitigate the challenges in many ways. Fathers try to spend time with children in between work. They try to spend time with their children before going to work, and after coming home from work and mostly at dinner time. Because, fathers know that dinner time is the best time to bond with each other. In this study, economic stability, professional pressure, family environment, and cultural norms are the factors behind the less involvement of fathers in child development.

Recommendations:

This study expects to explore the current status of fathers' involvement in child development for 0-3-years old children. It concludes with recommendations based on the overall findings to encourage fathers to become more involved in child development. The following recommendations are:

- More studies can be done with a large number of populations considering various economic groups on parental perceptions on father's involvement in 0-3 year's old child development.
- Same study can be done in both in rural and urban areas with large number of participants on how fathers can be more engaged in child development in different setting.
- There are limited programs and training on ECD knowledge and practices at community level. So the nation has to reach out in the changing context for further activities, training and programs can be undertaken at higher destinations to promote the importance of ECD.

- Policies should be formulated on fatherhood and fathers' involvement in child development that could help fathers to realize the importance of their involvement in child development.
- In urban and rural area different type of parenting program like workshop, training can be executed by NGO or GO. And also working and non-working parents must be participating in this type of activities.
- Programs need to be organized on fathers' involvement in child caring and rearing practices across the country; fathers must be included in parenting programs along with mothers.
- Public awareness about the importance of fathers' involvement in child caring and rearing practice should be created using different media, such as social, print, and electronic media.
- Government can also take initiative to start paternity leave in Bangladesh following the other countries because father-child relation actually starts after the birth.
- It is high time to take initiative by the government and policy makers to increase the number of play grounds and parks in the urban and rural area.
- Through training, take part in ECD programs, participate in workshops and seminar regarding child care and development, the significance of father's practices and involvement in early years' children's development may accelerate and those programs will be conducted both by the government and by the private organizations (NGOs and MNCs).

References:

- Akter, S. (2019). Fathers' Involvement for children's Development & Well-being in Early Years. Parental Perspectives. BRAC Institute of Educational Development.
- Aldous, J., & Mulligan, G. M. (2002). Fathers' child care and children's behavior problems: A longitudinal study. *Journal of family issues*, 23, 624-647.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X02023005003>
- Allen, S., & Daly, K.J. (2007). The effects of father involvement. An Updated Research Summary of the Evidence, 603, 1-27.
- Britannica, (2023), Perception, Retrieved from:
<https://www.britannica.com/editor/TheEditors-of-Encyclopaedia-Britannica/4419>
- B Air. The Importance of Dads. Retrieved from: <https://eu.boba.com/pages/the-importance-of-dads>
- Cambridge Dictionary, What is Fatherhood? Retrieved from:<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fatherhood>
- Cambridge University Press, (10 October, 2022). Father's level of involvement in childcare activities and its association with the diet quality of children in Northern Ghana. Retrieved from: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/public-health-nutrition/article/fathers-level-of-involvement-in-childcare-activities-and-its-association-with-the-diet-quality-of-children-in-northern-ghana/8788B4B5FF5B3379F61CD4804A8E320B>
- Chakma, S. (2010), Perception and Practices of Fatherhood among Urban Fathers in Bangladesh. Retrieved from: <https://writingbros.com/essay-examples/exploring-fathers-involvement-in-global-context/>
- Cher Murphy, (November 18, 2021). 5 Ways Kids are Impacted When Dad's Not Involved. Retrieved from: <https://www.justluxe.com/community/5-ways-kids-are-impacted-whendads-not-involved-a-1972771.php>
- Crespi, I., & Ruspini, E. (October, 2015), Transition to fatherhood: New perspectives in the

global context of changing men's identities. *International Review of Sociology* 25(3):1-6.

DOI:[10.1080/03906701.2015.1078529](https://doi.org/10.1080/03906701.2015.1078529).

Children's Bureau of Southern California. (May 12, 2023), A Father's Impact on Child Development. Retrieved from: <https://www.all4kids.org/news/blog/a-fathers-impact-on-child-development/>

Chowdhury , K. Q., Fareha, S., Islam, and Obaydollah. A.K.M. (2018). Fathers Perception and Role in Language Development of the Pre-primary Children of Urban area. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325205950_FATHERS'_PERCEPTION_AND_ROLE_IN_LANGUAGE_DEVELOPMENT_OF_THE_PRE-PRIMARY_CHILDREN_OF_URBAN_AREA

Crespi, I., & Ruspini, E. (2015), Transition of fatherhood: new perspectives in the global context of changing men's identities. *International review of sociology*, 25, 353-358 Retrieved from: <https://www.tandfonline.com>

Dr. Sara Mclean, August 2020. *Understanding Child Development: Ages 0-3 Years*. Retrieved from: <https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/understanding-child-development-ages-0-3-years/>

Emerging Minds, (2020), Retrieved from: <https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/fathers-mental-health-and-parenting-implications-for-promoting-childrens-mental-health/>

Edubirdie.com. (February 18, 2022), Fathers' Involvement in Global and Bangladesh Context. Retrieved February 11, 2024 from: <https://edubirdie.com/examples/fathers-involvement-in-global-and-bangladesh-context/>

Fahmida T., & Jena H., (September, 2014). Childrearing, Motherhood and Fatherhood in Bangladeshi Culture, *Parenting Across Cultures*. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299774570_Childrearing_Motherhood_and_Fatherhood_in_Bangladeshi_Culture

Fatherhood.gov, Father Involvement in Education. Retrieved from: <https://www.fatherhood.gov/for-dads/father-involvement-education>

Flippin, M., & Crais, E.R. (2011). The need for more effective father involvement in early autism intervention: A systematic review and recommendations. *Journal of early intervention*, 33, 24-50. Retrieved from: <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1177/1053815111400415>

Fogarty, K and Garret D, Evans. (2005). Being an Involved Father: What Does it Mean? Retrieved from: <https://ufdcimages.uflib.ufl.edu/IR/00/00/33/64/00001/HE14100.pdf>

Fogarty, K., & Evans, G. D. (2009). The hidden benefits of being an involved father. EDIS MaryJo Rapini (June 15, 2023). 4 reasons why dads are essential in their child's life. Retrieved from: <https://www.fox26houston.com/morning-show/4-reasons-why-dads-are-essential-in-their-childs-life>

Ginsburg, K.R. (2007). The importance of play in promoting healthy child development and maintaining strong parent-child bonds. Retrieved from: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17200287/>

Gromada, A., Richardson, D., & Rees, G.(2020). Childcare in a global crisis: the impact of COVID-19 on work and family life. Retrieved from: https://unicef.at/fileadmin/media/News/Pressemeldungen/2020/UNICEF_Childcare_in_a_global_crisis_FINAL.pdf

Haider, S. J. (2003). Secondary Analysis of Sub-Sample (Fathers) on Early Childhood Development Study. Based on Baseline Survey of Caregivers' KAP on Early Childhood Development in Bangladesh, UNICEF. Retrieved from: https://ecd-bangladesh.net/document/research/Baseline_Survey_of_CaregiversKAP_on_ECD.pdf

Hautakangas, M., and Kumpulainen, K., Uusitalo, L.(2021) Children developing self regulation skills in a Kids' Skills intervention programme in Finnish Early Childhood Education and Care. Retrieved from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03004430.2021.1918125>

Inayati and others. (2012). Improved nutrition knowledge and practice through intensive nutrition education: A study among caregivers of mildly wasted children on Nias Island, Indonesia. Retrieved from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/156482651203300205>

Ishii-Kuntz, M. (2013), Work Environment and Japanese Fathers' Involvement in Child Care. Retrieved from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0192513x12462363?journalCode=jfia>

Jessica Ball and Wahedi, M.O.K. (September, 2010), Exploring Fatherhood in Bangladesh. Childhood Education 86(6), DOI:[10.1080/00094056.2010.10523171](https://doi.org/10.1080/00094056.2010.10523171)

J Kevin Nugent, (January 31, 2024). The Development of children and Adolescents: An Applied Perspectives. <https://www.amazon.com.au/Development-Children-Adolescents-Applied-Perspective/dp/0470405406>

J Choi, Kim K. H., Capaldi M. D., (June 14, 2021). Long-Term Effects of Father Involvement in Childhood on Their Son's Physiological Stress Regulation System in Adulthood. doi: [10.1002/dev.22152](https://doi.org/10.1002/dev.22152)

Jennifer E. (2021). *The Importance of Fathers for Child Development, How Fathers Contribute to Children's Well-being*. Retrieved from: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/parenting-and-culture/202106/the-importance-fathers-child-development>

Jerrold Brown, (Minnesota Psychological Association.org). *Father-Absent Homes: Implications for Criminal Justice and Mental Health Professionals*. Retrieved from: https://www.mnpsych.org/index.php?option=com_dailyplanetblog&view=entry&year=2014&month=08&day=03&id=54%3Afather-absent-homes-implications-for-criminal-justice-and-mental-health-professionals&Itemid=186

Khatun, M. (2020). Parents' Perception about Parenting Knowledge on Child Development in Early years. Dhaka: BRAC Institute of Educational Development.

Kid Central tn.com, Involved Fathers Provide Key Benefits to Kids. Retrieved from: <https://www.kidcentraltn.com/support/full-family-support/involved-fathers-provide-key-benefits-to-kids.html>

Kid Sense Child Development, What is Child Development. Retrieved from: <https://childdevelopment.com.au/areas-of-concern/what-is-child-development/>

Kevin S, (2020). Bronfenbrenner's Microsystem Theory, Definition & Examples. Retrieved from: <https://study.com/learn/lesson/bronfenbrenner-microsystem-theory-examples.html>

Khatun, M. (2020). Parents' Perception about Parenting Knowledge on Child Development in Early Years. BRAC Institute of Educational Development.

Kreyenfeld, M., & Zinn, S. (2021). Coronavirus and care: How the corona virus crisis affected fathers' involvement in Germany. *Demographic Research*, 44, 99-124.

DOI: [10.4054/DemRes.2021.44.4](https://doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2021.44.4)

Kylie A. Rymanowicz, Kevin S. Zoromski, (2020). Retrieved from:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/psychology/microsystem>

Lamb, M.E. (2020). The history of research on father involvement: An overview. Retrieved

from: <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780203708347-4/history-research-father-involvement-overview-michael-lamb>

Lamb, M. E., & Tamis-LeMonda, C. S. (2004). The role of the father. The role of the father in child development. The role of the father. The role of the father in child development,

L Busetto, Wick W., & Christoph G., (2020), How to use and assess qualitative research

methods. Retrieved from:

<https://neurorespract.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s42466-020-00059->

McMunn, A., Martin, P., Kelly, Y., & Sacker, A. (2017), Fathers' involvement: Correlates

and consequences for child socio-emotional behavior in the United Kingdom. *Journal of Family Issues*, 38(8), 1109–1131. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X15622415>

Mareia A (2021). Fathers. Childcare and COVID-19.

Marsiglio, W., Day, R.D., & Lamb, M. E. (2000), P. 276. *Being an Involved Father: What*

Does It Mean? Retrieved from:

<https://ufdcimages.uflib.ufl.edu/IR/00/00/33/64/00001/HE14100.pdf>

MB Nierengarten, (June 12, 2019). Vol- 36 Retrieved from:

<https://www.contemporarypediatrics.com/view/fathers-influence-development-and-well-being-children>

Munirah Jahan, (Jun 11, 2021), Paternity leave, gender roles and legislation.

Retrieved from: <https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/paternity-leave-gender-roles-and-legislation>

Motherhood Center.com, (10 November, 2023), The Role Of a Dad In Child Development.

Retrieved from: <https://www.motherhoodcenter.com/role-of-a-dad-in-child-> :

- Nair, Sapna., Shivani, C., Nandhini, S., Arvind, B. R., Rathish, S. (2020). Father Involvement in Early Childhood Care: Insights from a MEL System in a Behavior Change Intervention among Rural Indian Parents. Retrieved from: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2020.00516/full> (S Nair, 2020)
- Nair, Sapna; Sinha, H; Holding, P; (19 December, 2023) Integrating father involvement into early childhood initiatives delivered at scale: key considerations. Retrieved from: doi: [10.3389/fpubh.2023.1193974](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1193974)
- Network.Com.BD. Paternity leave in Bangladesh, Retrieved from: <https://www.network.com.bd/resources/human-resource-immigration/paternity-leave-in-bangladesh/>
- O'connell, M. (1993) Where's Papa? Fathers' Role in Child Care. Population Trends and Public Policy. Retrieved from: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED365434>
- Patrick, S. W., Henkhaus, L. E., Zickafoose, J. S., Lovell, K., Halvorson, A., Loch, S., & Davis, M. M. (2020). Well-being of parents and children during the COVID-19 pandemic: a national survey.
- Pediatrics Associates of Franklin, (2023). The Importance of a Father in a child's Life. Retrieved from: <https://www.pediatricsoffranklin.com/resources-and-education/pediatric-care/the-importance-of-a-father-in-a-childslife/#:~:text=Fathers%20like%20mothers%20are%20pillars,security%20both%20physical%20and%20emotional>
- Pinker, S. (21 September, 2023) The Long-Term benefits of Hands-On Fathering. Retrieved from: <https://www.wsj.com/health/wellness/the-long-term-benefits-of-hands-on-fathering-cd3e8cb2>
- Pleck, J. H. (2007). Why could father involvement benefit children? Theoretical perspectives. Applied development science,
- Prothom Alo.Com,BD, (2023). Paternity leave, gender roles and legislation. Retrieved from: <https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/paternity-leave-gender-roles-and-legislation>
- Rainforest Learning Centre Inc, (2023). The power of father involvement in early childhood development. Retrieved from: <https://rainforestlearningcentre.ca/power-father-involvement-early-childhood-development/>

- Rollè, L., Gullotta, G., Trombetta, T., Curti, L., Gerino, E., Brustia, P., & Caldarera, A. M. (2019). Father involvement and cognitive development in early and middle childhood: a systematic review. *Frontiers in psychology*, 10, 2405.
- Sabur, A. (2019). Performing fatherhood in Bangladesh: Changing roles, responsibilities, and involvement of older and younger fathers. *Masculinities: A Journal of Identity and Culture*.
- S. Coltrane. (2012). Fatherhood: International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/psychology/fatherhood>
- S Tenny., Janelle M. Brannan., Grace D. Brannan. (September 18, 2022). Qualitative Study. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470395/>
- Senin, M.A., & Halim, H. (2021), The Administrator, Teachers, and Parents' Involvement in Preschool during Movement Control Order, Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1296716.pdf>
- Sonali, K., & Sunita, M. (2013). Assesment of Father's Involvement in Child Care Development. *IOSR Journal of Dental and Medical Sciences*, 7, 39-41. Retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/4833137/Assesment_of_Fathers_Involvement_in_Child_Care_Development.
- St John, W., Cameron, C., & McVeigh, C. (2005). Meeting the challenge of new fatherhood during the early weeks. *ournal of Obstetric, Gynecologic, & Neonatal Nursing*, 34, no. 2, 180-189.
- Sullivan, O., Billari, F. C., & Altintas, E. (2014). Fathers' changing contributions to child care & domestic work in every low-fertility countries: The effect of education. *Journal of family issues*, 35, 1048-1065. DOI: [10.1177/0192513X14522241](https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X14522241)
- Tarsuslu, B., Sahin, A., Durat, G., & Arikan, D. (2021). An analysis of parents' perceived stress and the parent-child relationship during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Bangladesh Journal of Medical Science*, 97-107. Retrieved from: DOI: [10.3329/bjms.v20i5.55402](https://doi.org/10.3329/bjms.v20i5.55402)
- Tekin, A. K. (2012). Father involvement in early childhood education, Retrieved from:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265379566_Father_Involvement_in_Early_Childhood_Education

The Daily Star, (February 7, 2023) Retrieved from:

<https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/lets-popularise-paternity-leave-3240611>

Urban Light Ministries.org; The Long-term Consequences of Growing up without a Father, Retrieved from: <https://urbanlight.org/growing-up-without-a-father/>

University of Wisconsin-Madison. (February, 2020). Involved Fathers Play An Important Role In Children's Lives. Fast Focus Research/Policy Brief No. 45-2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.irp.wisc.edu/resource/involved-fathers-play-an-important-role-in-childrens-lives/>

verywell mind, (2023).What is Perception. Retrieved from:

<https://www.verywellmind.com/perception-and-the-perceptual-process-2795839>

Wang S., & Chen L. (December, 2023). Father Involvement in centre-based early childhood programs: A systematic review. Children and Youth Services Review 157(1): 107407S DOI: [10.1016/j.chilyouth.2023.107407](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2023.107407)

WHO Guideline, 5 March, 2020. Retrieved from:

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/97892400020986>

Wilson, K.R., & Prior, M.R. (2011). Father involvement and child well-being. Journal of Paediatrics and child health 47(7):405-7. DOI: [10.1111/j.1440-1754.2010.01770.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1440-1754.2010.01770.x)

Z. Hossain, (2013) Fathers in Muslim families in Bangladesh and Malaysia, In D. W. Shwalb, B. J. Shwalb, & M. E. Lamb (Eds.), *Fathers in cultural context* (pp. 97–121). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group. Retrieved from: <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2012-25940-005>

Zero to Three. (2016). The Daddy Factor: The Crucial Impact of Fathers on Young

Children's Development. Retrieved from: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/the-daddy-factor-how-fathers-support-development/>

Appendix-A:

In-Depth-Interview (IDI) Guideline (English)

Topic: Exploring Parental Perception on Fathers' Involvement in Child Development for 0-3 Years Old Children

Participants Demographic Information:

Date/time started:	Date/time completed:
Father's/Mother's Name:	Age:
Sex (Male/Female):	
Child's Name:	Age:
Sex (Male/Female):	
Occupation:	Educational Qualification:
Location:	Phone No:
Monthly Income:	
Type of Family: a) Nuclear family, b) Extended family	
Number of Children:	Children's Age:
Number of children goes to preschool:	

Appendix-B: English Questionnaire: In-Depth-Interview (IDI)

1. What do you mean by early childhood development? How does the child's early childhood development play an important role in his/her future life?
2. Who do you think plays the most important role in the early childhood development of a 0-3-year-old child?
3. What is your understanding regarding the importance of father's involvement in child development?
4. What does the word 'fatherhood' mean to you?
5. How do you /your husband spend time with your child (in play, going for walks, sleeping, feeding, etc?)

Probe: How do you think this has affected your child physically/mentally?

6. Does father involvement in child care and child development vary between nuclear families and extended families?

Probe: If yes, how?

7. How do you/your husband manage your/his childcare habits/practices?
8. How do you/your husband engage yourself/himself to support your child's development?

Probe: a. Physical development (Nutrition)?

b. Cognitive development?

c. Language development?

d. Socio-emotional development?

9. What challenges have you/your husband faces in regard to your/his involvement in child development?

10. How can these challenges be overcome?

11. What is your suggestion about increasing father's involvement in child development?

Guideline for Group Discussion

Preliminary Questions:

- a) **How are you all?**
- b) **How is everyone at your home?**

FGD Questions:

1. What do you mean by early childhood development?
2. What is your understanding regarding the importance of father's involvement in Child Development?
3. How does father involvement in child care and child development vary between nuclear families and extended families?
4. How do you/your husband engage yourself/himself to support your child development?

Probe: a. Physical development (Nutrition)

b. Cognitive development

c. Language development

d. Socio-emotional development?
5. What challenges have you/your husband faced in regard to your/his involvement in child development?
6. How can these challenges be overcome?
7. What is your suggestion about increasing father's involvement in child development?

Appendix-C: Bangla Questionnaire

IDI:

1. শিশুর প্রারম্ভিক বিকাশ বলতে আপনি কি বুঝেন? শিশুর প্রারম্ভিক বিকাশ কিভাবে তার ভবিষ্যৎ জীবনে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করে?
2. আপনার মতে, ০-৩ বছরের শিশুর প্রারম্ভিক বিকাশে কে কে সবচেয়ে বেশি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করে?
3. শিশুর বিকাশে পিতার অংশগ্রহণের গুরুত্ব সম্পর্কে আপনার মতামত কী?
4. পিতৃত্ব বলতে আপনি কি বুঝেন?
5. আপনি/আপনার স্বামী কিভাবে আপনার সন্তানের সাথে সময় কাটান (খেলাতে, হাঁটতে যাওয়া, ঘুমানো, খাওয়ানো ইত্যাদি)?

প্রব: আপনি কিভাবে মনে করেন এটি আপনার সন্তানকে শারীরিক/মানসিকভাবে প্রভাবিত করেছে?

6. শিশু যত্ন এবং শিশু বিকাশে পিতার সম্পৃক্ততা কি ছোট পরিবার এবং বড় পরিবারগুলোতে পরিবর্তিত হয়?

প্রব: যদি হ্যাঁ, কিভাবে?

7. কিভাবে আপনি/আপনার স্বামী আপনার/তার শিশু যত্নের অভ্যাস/অভ্যাসগুলি পরিচালনা করেন?
8. কিভাবে আপনি/আপনার স্বামী আপনার সন্তানের বিকাশে সহায়তা করার জন্য আপনার নিজেকে/আপনার স্বামী নিজেকে নিযুক্ত করেন?

প্রব: ক. শারীরিক বিকাশ (পুষ্টি),

খ. জ্ঞানীয় বিকাশ,

গ. ভাষায় বিকাশ এবং

ঘ. সামাজিক আবেগিক বিকাশ

9. সন্তানের বিকাশে আপনার/তার সম্পৃক্ততার ক্ষেত্রে আপনি/আপনার স্বামী কোন চ্যালেঞ্জের সম্মুখীন হয়েছেন?
10. কিভাবে এই চ্যালেঞ্জ অতিক্রম করা যেতে পারে?
11. সন্তানের বিকাশে বাবার সম্পৃক্ততা বাড়ানোর বিষয়ে আপনার পরামর্শ কী?

FGD:

1. শিশুর প্রারম্ভিক বিকাশ বলতে আপনি কি বুঝেন?
2. শিশুর বিকাশে পিতার অংশগ্রহণের গুরুত্ব সম্পর্কে আপনার মতামত কী?
3. ছোট পরিবার এবং বর্ধিত পরিবারের মধ্যে শিশু যত্ন এবং শিশু বিকাশে পিতার সম্পৃক্ততা কীভাবে পরিবর্তিত হয়?
4. কিভাবে আপনি/আপনার স্বামী আপনার সন্তানের বিকাশে সহায়তা করার জন্য আপনার নিজেকে/আপনার স্বামী নিজেকে নিযুক্ত করেন?
প্রব: ক. শারীরিক বিকাশ (পুষ্টি),
খ. জ্ঞানীয় বিকাশ,
গ. ভাষায় বিকাশ এবং
ঘ. সামাজিক আবেগিক বিকাশ
5. সন্তানের বিকাশে আপনার/তার সম্পৃক্ততার ক্ষেত্রে আপনি/আপনার স্বামী কোন চ্যালেঞ্জের সম্মুখীন হয়েছেন?
6. কিভাবে এই চ্যালেঞ্জ অতিক্রম করা যেতে পারে?
7. সন্তানের বিকাশে বাবার সম্পৃক্ততা বাড়ানোর বিষয়ে আপনার পরামর্শ কী?

Appendix-D: Consent Form for Parents

Research Title: Exploring Parental Perception on Fathers' Involvement in Child Development for 0-3 Years Old Children

I am Rahima Akter, MS (Masters of Science) student of BRAC Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University. As a part of my academic necessities, I am conducting this research to explore parental perception of fathers' involvement in child development of 0-3 year old children. As parents of children aged 0-3 years, you are cordially invited for an interview to share your understanding, experiences, knowledge, practices and challenges regarding father involvement in child development.

If you agree to take part, you will be expected to share your views, knowledge, practices and experiences of father involvement in Early Childhood Development. The duration of the interview will be between 40 to 60 minutes. The interview will happen at your house and be audio recorded.

All your personal information shared by you will be kept severely secret. The collected information will be used only for study purposes.

Your participation in the study is voluntary, and you are the sole authority to decide whether you wish to participate in this study or not. If you agree to participate in my research, please indicate by placing your signature or your left thumb impression in the space provided below.

Thank you very much for your kind cooperation.

Signature of Investigator

Date:

Signature of Participant

Date: