

# **Exploring Parental Perception About the Importance of Parent- Child Attachment for Child Development in Early Years**

By

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

Brac Institute of Educational Development  
Brac University  
December, 2022

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## **Declaration**

It is hereby declared that

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

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

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## Approval

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## **Ethics Statement**

Title of Thesis Topic: “Exploring Parental Perception About the Importance of Parent- Child Attachment for Child Development in Early Years”

Student name: Ruhita Murshed

1. Source of population: Parents (five mothers and five fathers) those who have children of 2 years to 5 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 (Yes)
  - e) Benefits to be derived (Yes)
  - f) Right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study (Yes)
  - g) Confidential handling of data (Yes)
  - h) Compensation and/or treatment where there are risks or privacy is involved (N/A)
4. Will Signed verbal consent for be required (yes or no)
  - a) from study participants (Yes)
  - b) from parents or guardian (N/A)
  - c) Will precautions be taken to protect anonymity of subjects? (Yes)
5. Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee:
  - a) Proposal (Yes)
  - b) Consent Form (Yes)
  - c) Questionnaire or interview schedule (Yes)

### **Ethical Review Committee:**

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## **Abstract**

Attachment is a relationship bond between young children with their parent or primary caregiver. This relationship develops in early age and it has a long term impact on growth & development. After birth a child starts to communicate with the primary caregiver for their emotional & physical needs (Anna Freund, 2020). Research shows that the quality of parent-child attachment is related to development in early year and later socio-emotional and physical health outcome (Ali. E., 2021). The objective of the study is to know the parents' knowledge about the importance of the parent- child attachment for child development in early years. This qualitative study was conducted in the Agrabad area of Chattogram city among the 10 educated parents (five mother and five father), who have children of 2 to 5 years of age belongs to middle class starting from July to November 2022. Participants were selected using convenient sampling technique. Data was collected using the IDI guideline. All the parents were unknown about the term 'Parent-child attachment'; but they understood the parent-child internal relationship and they explain this relationship in different own language. The finding also showed that all the parents were very much concern about their child's proper development and they know early age is the right time to teach and guide the children. They also highlighted that children imitate and follow parents since very early age as they are intimately related by heart and only place of safety and security. Though the parents don't know, the impact of parent-child relationship on child development. The parent's attitude towards their child explains that secure attachment makes the child an ideal citizen. Findings suggest that awareness program regarding attachment and its importance for child development is required for the parents.

**Keywords:** Parent-child attachment; Early childhood development;

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## **List of Acronyms**

IDI            In Depth Interview

PCA            Parent Child Attachment

UNICEF        United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UNESCO        United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

# Chapter I

## Introduction & Background

Attachment is a reciprocal process by which an emotional connection develops between an infant and his/her primary caregiver. This connection influences the child's physical, neurological, socio-emotional, cognitive and psychological development (Crouch, 2015). This emotional connection becomes the basis for development of trust or mistrust, and shapes the child how he will relate to the world, learn, and form relationships with others throughout life (Crouch, 2015). This time is considered crucial for the development of attachment bonds in the first three years of life, and this bond which is developed in the early years, influences relationships throughout the life span of a child (Crouch, 2015).

Attachment theory focuses on relationship and bonds (particularly long term) between people including those between parent and child (Cherry Kendra, 2022).

The relationship between parent and the children can be regarded as the most important relationship that can experience an individual in his life. Parent-child relationship is specific in nature and it differs from all other kind of relationships (such as family and friends, partners, peers) because of the quality and the degree of intimacy of this relationship (Troll & Fingerman, 1996). It is true that usually parents spend most of the time with their young children over an extended period of time; So, research was done to prove the parent's influence on parent- child relationship and its extent (Popov Leonid M., 2015). Attachment theory, as it emphasizes the importance of caring relationships for normal development of the child; it also suggests that a good nurturing relationship between parent and child shapes future socio-emotional and cognitive development of that child (Popov Leonid M., 2015).

The psychological theory of attachment was first described by John Bowlby, a psychoanalyst who researched the effects of separation between infants and their parents (Cristina, 2018).

The idea of attachment theory was developed in 1950s. John Bowlby, a psychoanalyst described the term “attachment” in the context of infant- parent relationships. Bowlby explored that the behaviors that an infant show to their parent such as screaming, clinging or crying were by nature with the purpose of helping the infant to survive. It was thought that without this type of behavior some infant could be left alone and putting them at risk of danger (Gilmore, 2020). Researcher explored infant’s attachment style, when separated the infants from their caregiver and observing their behavior (Gilmore, 2020).

The attachment style that an infant experience plays a role in the type of relationships they will have in childhood and adulthood.

In early childhood, the emphasis in addition with health and nutrition is more on the mental need of a child, like—socio-emotional, cognitive, linguistic and other intellectual development. It is also obvious that developmental issues are continuously playing increasing role in the society and our day-to-day life. Child’s physical and psychological development is largely influenced by parent- child relationship (Bornstein, 2002). Through appropriate caregiving, exposure with experiences, supporting their needs, parents help achieving their developmental potential. Secure mother- child attachment is also associated with positive outcomes in different domains of child development. Extensive research on human parenting provided the information that quality of caregiving is essential in determining the level of children’s social-emotional as well as cognitive development. [Bornstein & Tamislemonda,1989]. Specifically, sensitive and responsive parenting promotes a secure attachment

relationship (De Wolff & Van Ijzendoorn, 1997; Nievar and Becker, 2008), which is associated with positive outcomes of numerous domains of child development. The quality of parent- child relationship is the integrated result of three sets of factors: parent characteristics, infant characteristics, and context which can influence parenting in a supportive or stressful way (Belsky, 1984).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Bangladesh over the last few decades has made much improvement in developing and implementing programs on health and nutrition for children and achieved the MDG on 2015 and also signed and adopted with UN to ensure the sustainability of this achievement, a new goal, ‘SDG’ with targeted achievement by 2030 (Mollah and Nazmun, 2020). But in child development issues, specifically the mental development and wellbeing of children still remain unaddressed. More than 200 million children under the age of 5 years of developing countries are not fulfilling their developmental potential due to poverty, malnutrition and unstimulating home environment (Lancet, 2007;369:60-70).

The relationship between parents and their children can be regarded as the most important relationship that an individual can experience. It is true that parents spend extended periods of time with their young children; therefore, the parents have influences on their children and there is importance of this influences also (Popov and Ilesanmi, 2015). John Bowlby in 1973 formulated attachment theory by drawing concepts from biology and psychoanalysis. According to his theory, children develop internal representations of relationships as a result of interactions with their primary caregivers (e.g., parents), which they subsequently use in maintaining other relationships (Popov and Ilesanmi 2015). Attachment theory also presumes that parent-

child relationship has long term consequences for shaping a child's psychological functioning. During infancy, parent-child relationship is characterized by high levels of bonding of children with their parents (especially mothers), due to strong emotional and physical ties between a child and his or her parents. The loss of the attachment figure is accompanied by anxiety and grief, which can lead to problems in the child's social and emotional development (Varga, 2011).

When a selected caregiver fails to meet needs for comfort and care during times of distress, then the primary attachment strategy is unable to accomplish the goal of felt-security (Car & Lai, 2018).

From birth, babies and young children are dependent on their adult caregivers, and the attachment which they build in the early years is a critical indicator for childhood development. It also explains a pattern of emotional and behavioral interaction that develops over a period of time, especially when infants express the need for attention, comfort, entertainment, support for security. According to Bowlby's attachment theory, attachment that developed with primary caregivers is the most influential in children's lives. A secure attachment not only fosters positive developmental outcomes overtime, but also influence the quality of future relationship with peers and partners. Disruption or loss of this attachment can affect a child emotionally and psychologically up to adulthood, and have an impact on future relationships (Benoit Dianne, 2004).

Parents play many different roles in the lives of their children, including teachers, playmate, caregiver, disciplinarian, and attachment figure. All of these roles, the role of attachment figure is one of the most important in predicting the child's later social and emotional developmental outcome (Bowlby, 1982). The primary caregivers who are available and responsive to an infant's needs allow the child to develop a sense of security. The infant learns that the caregiver is dependable, which creates a secure base

for the child to explore the world in future. Attachment develops in stages (Rudolf & Peggy's, 1964), where within 7 to 9 month infant form attachment with a single specific person (parent/primary caregiver), by 10 month form multiple attachments. Attachment builds when caregiver simply respond to an infant with a smile, or a cry with a cuddle, or playing. Study found that for attachment it is not necessary to stay together with the infant for long time but thing is, the person who responded most accurately to the baby's need. Infants faces 4 qualities attachments secure, avoidance, resistant, disorganized/insecure. Children with secure attachment are often best equipped to form similarly strong attachments in adulthood, as they have experienced in their early age. Through attachment children increase their independence as a result of possessing confidence, increase interactions and engagement, which is linked to improve early communication. Conversely insecure attachment can badly impact childhood development which will continue up to adulthood.

If the parent child attachment relationship in childhood is disturbed, there is development of physical & psychological illness. Causes of major illness resulting mortality predisposing to substance abuse, temper problems, homelessness, promiscuity, early pregnancy & criminality (Rees Corinne, 2007). Disordered parental attachment can commit children to live with relationship difficulties, behavioral problems, educational failure and poor self-esteem. It is a major root of trans-generational neglect and abuse and frequently underlies mental health problems, drug and alcohol addiction, homelessness and crime (Rees, 2005).

### **Significance of the study.**

In recent years, the contribution of parent-child attachment to children's psychological development and social functioning has received increasing appreciation (Bowlby, 1969, 1973). This contribution is reinforced by other developmental researchers finding

indicating the importance of attachment in psychological and behavioral outcomes as well as social adjustments (Ooi Phaik Yoon et al.,2005). This literature also suggested that, a strong link between the quality of parent-child attachment and outcomes such as aggression, social skills and self-esteem (Kenny et al.,1998; Lyons-Ruth et al.,1997). In order to increase the significance of the attachment theory, more studies that examine the parent- child attachment among ethnically and racially diverse populations are needed according to Ruth- Lyons study.

This small scale of study will examine the parent- child attachment, which primary purpose is to find out their understanding about the parent- child attachment, relation with child development and the consequences of secure attachment. Consistent with results of previous research we can predict that a higher or better quality of parent-child attachment would be associated with lower levels of parent-rated aggression, lower levels of social stress and higher self-esteem (Ooi Phaik Yoon et al., 2006).

In the previous years, people lived in the extended families and mothers were also stayed at home, and there is no question of understanding parent- child interaction separately, and the child development is going on naturally. But now a days families are broken into single one, female employment is increasing, children are facing avoidant and disorganized attachment which in turn lead them to a world of mistrust and developmentally handicapped, the child develop a sense of insecurity, failure to explore the world in future. The organized attachment with infant and parent also predict the child's later social and emotional developmental outcome.

According to Melhuish (2010) mother-child joint activities will affect the cognitive development which is also related to achievement in the school. Therefore, it can be said that the attachment is the main foundation for children's development, particularly cognitive development (Aini et al., 2016). According to Malekpour (2007) positive or

negative attachment that connects between parent-child gives influence the brain structure in children's development. When the attachment connecting between mother-child is good, it makes child's cognitive development better (Aini et al., 2016). So, from above research findings, one can understand the parent- child relationship, it's consequences and what lesson should we kept for our new parents in the upcoming world. Limited researches were done in the field of attachment-interaction relation with child development in our country as well as globally.

## **Purpose of the study.**

Preschool is an ideal time for children to learn specific skills. If at this time the child is not given an opportunity to learn a particular skill, then he will certainly miss to master certain skills that have been first owned by his peers, and he will have less motivation to study a variety of skills when given chance (Aini Saniatu, 2016).

The main purpose of this study is to explore the understanding of Bangladeshi parents about the importance of parent-child attachment for child development in early years. There are other purposes which includes, concepts of parents about the parent-child attachment, knowledge about child development and also their thinking regarding the importance of parent-child attachment for the children's development.

## **Research Questions**

**The study will be conducted to answer the following questions.**

- a. What is the understanding of parents about the parent- child attachment?
- b. What do the parents know about child development in the early years?
- c. What is the understanding of parents about the importance of parent-child attachment for the children's development?

## **Operational Definition.**

**Early years:** Early years or early childhood starts from birth to 5 years, well extended up to 8 years (Participants manual for teacher and medical students for early childhood development, developed by UNICEF). This period of life is very crucial as development of brain and the connections are at the peak at this age of a child. At this stage of life, the children's development depends upon nurturing care, parent's involvement, exposure to experiences and environment.

**Attachment:** Attachment Is the emotional or affectional bond between child and caregiver, typically the mother (Bowlby, 1988). Attachment is one specific and circumscribed aspect of the relationship between a child and caregiver that is involved with making the child safe, secure and protected (Bowlby). Attachment is not 'bonding'. Bonding depends on skin to skin contact during an early critical period. Another difference of attachment from 'bonding' is, attachment is a powerful predictor of a child's later social and emotional developmental outcome. A normally developing child will develop an attachment relationship with any caregiver who provides regular physical and/or emotional care, regardless of the quality of that care (Diane Benoit, 2004). Research has explored an infant's attachment style by separating infants from their caregiver and observing their behavior. In this situation an infant will react in one of four ways (Heather Gilmore, 2020). The 4 attachment style include: 1. Secure attachment—infant become distressed when separated from caregiver but they seek and receive comfort when they reunite with the caregiver. 2. Anxious-resistant attachment- infant become more distressed in comparison to secure attachment, also try to seek comfort from parents may be have more troublesome behaviors as well. 3. Avoidant attachment- infants do not become distressed when separated from their caregiver. They

do not attend to their caregiver or they actively ignore their caregiver when the caregiver returns. 4. Disorganized-disoriented attachment---do not show a predictable pattern of behavior when their parent leaves and returns (Heather Gilmore, 2020).

## **Chapter II**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Parent-child attachment in global context**

Attachment is a complex psychological concept, which originated with the work of John Bowlby, who highlighted the importance of a child's relationship with their primary caregiver (usually mother) in terms of their social, emotional development and their ability to learn. The parent-child relationship is widely considered to be an important context in which children learn about and begin to understand emotions (Dunn & Brown, 1994). Early parent-child relationships include discussion of emotional states, and a number of studies have identified concurrent and longitudinal associations between children's discussions of emotions with parents and their understanding of emotions (Dunn, 1991; Laible, 2004; Laible & Thomson, 2000). According to Bowlby the biological function of the attachment system ensures that infants seek out a stronger, wiser, and protective attachment figure for proximity maintenance and protection, support, care especially during dangerous or difficult situations (Lai and Carr, 2018). Ainsworth & Bell (1972) clearly showed that attachment also provide a secure base for exploration. The impact of the early attachment relationship can be seen in a child's social, emotional, cognitive and language development, school readiness, school success/failure and overall adjustment to school (Otitoju et al, 2020). Children with insecure attachment to their primary care giver experience problems regulating their emotions and behaviors focusing their attention in class, learning, exploring their environment (Stratton and Reid, 2004). O'Connor & McCartney (2007) found that children with the specific insecure attachment patterns of ambivalent and insecure, demonstrated low-level communication and attention skills and had difficulty in tasks in school. Brumariu

(2015) in her longitudinal study showed that, attachment or emotional security is associated with more adopted emotion regulation including less avoidance of discussing negative emotions with mothers, less difficulty in identifying emotions and more adoptive in coping with imagined separations (Gembeck-Zimmer et al., 2015).

Most of the Korean mother practiced long term breast feeding, carried their infants in a fabric sling on their back while doing house-hold activities and sleep together side by side in the same room. This idea of closeness of Children & mother provides an optimum environment for better interaction & attachment among mother-child (Hong, 2012).

Ranson in his study showed that parent-child attachment affects the child development in different developmental domains in the developmental periods. There is evidence that children with secure attachment is more positive in socio-emotional competence, cognitive functioning, physical and mental health, whereas children with insecure attachment are at more risk for negative out comes in these domains (Ranson, 2008).

Early attachment has lifelong implications for personal, social and professional relationships, stress regulation & physical-psychological health. Without attachment, protection of children, prevention of illness, disease in children and their optimal development is not possible (C. A. Rees, 2005).

Parent-child attachment plays an important role in promoting the formation of high-level school bonding, which influences the social adaptation. A study was done among college students of China to explore the relationship between parent-child attachment and social adaptation, and the role at school bonding among 1440 college students. The result indicated that parent-child attachment was positively correlated with social adaptation and school bonding, while school bonding was also correlated with social

adaptation. School bonding played a role in relationship between parent-child attachment and social-adaptation. This research identified that, parent- child attachment had direct influence and school bonding had indirect influence on social adaptation among college students (Yin Haowen et. al., 2021).

Laura E. in his Research established that securely attached children adopted effective emotion regulation strategies within the attachment relationship and are also able to employ adaptive emotion regulation strategies outside the attachment relationship, when the attachment figure is not present. The study also evaluated the association between emotion regulation & attachment relationship which will be benefited in measuring these constructs. (Laura E., 2015).

A study was done among 91 boys, age range 8-12 years in the “SIM” Ministry of Singapore, those who have aggressive behavior and involved with antisocial activity. This Study showed the impact of quality of parent-child attachment on aggression, social stress & self-esteem. The researchers found that the quality of parent-child attachment significantly predicted to the aggression, social stress and self-esteem, higher quality of Parent-child attachment was associated with lower level of aggression, social stress & higher level of self-esteem. The study results also emphasized the importance of parent-child attachment on boys' behavioral and emotional outcomes (Ooi Phaik, 2006).

Adverse childhood Experiences (ACE) that disrupt the attachment relationships between children and the caregiver was shown in a study among 257 children of 3 to 6 years age, in Chicago. Here the authors proved that disrupted parent-child attachment relationship between children and their caregivers are an important risk predictor of child's emotional or behavioral problem (Kristen et. al., 2020).

A study was done in the university of Calgary with the aim of, utilizing the concept of parent - child attachment that is mutually satisfactory relationship between a child & a caregiver that makes the child feel safe, secure & protected (Ali, E. et. al, 2020).

Another study was done on 2015 among fifty-three Portuguese nuclear families, where Parent -child attachment was observed when the child became 3 years old, and emotion regulation was assessed when 5 years old. The study was done to explore the potential influences of both parent-child attachment, in preschool age & the result was positive (Fernandes et. al, 2021).

Numerous studies showed that early child-adult attachment significantly affects a child's socio-emotional and cognitive development; Shiravanian & Michael (2017) propose another research that establishing attachment-based child care which can contribute to a healthy and happy childhood. By synthesizing the literature around the attachment-based interventions in early child care centers, this review provides a conceptualization of attachment-based child care. Based on the results of the empirical studies described above, a child care center that aims to enhance children's secure attachment to their caregivers meets and were successful (Shiravanian & Michael, 2017).

**Parent-child attachment in Bangladesh context:** Bangladesh is a small country with population of 16.52 lac, with male, female, 8.17 lac and 8.33 lac respectively, literacy rate 98.66% (source; current census, Daily 'Prothom Alo', Aug 2022); Due to low literacy rate and ignorance Bangladeshi parents have very little understanding about the attachment relation between parent-child and child development like new arising concepts. Parents have little awareness about early child stimulation and parent-child interaction and child rearing practices are mainly focuses

on ensuring that the children are fed and educated. More than 200 million children under the age of 5 years from developing countries are not fulfilling their developmental potential due to poverty, malnutrition, unstimulating home environment (Lancet 2007;369: 60-70).

A randomized control trial shows that the mother-infant attachment is strongly associated with cognitive, socio-emotional and language development (Yesmin, et al. 2016). Another study on the parenting program shows that the maternal attachment positively correlated with communication, motor function, problem solving and personal-social skills of young children (Yesmin, et al., 2019). Hamadani & Tofail, (2014) showed the gender discrimination in parenting pattern in Bangladesh which have impact on child development. Another study was conducted with 100 children and their parents (either father or mother) by Zafar & Kawser, (2017) to assess the quality of parent-child attachment using the Hudson's parental-child attachment scale (PCAS), which is a popular instrument to justify the reliability and validity of parent- child attachment quality that is very important in socio-emotional developmental outcome of child in early years. (This study adapted this scale for using with Bangla speaking parents and their children). A study was done in the dept. of Clinical psychology, Dhaka University to explore the behavior pattern of parents involved in parent child-relationship (Akhter, 2018).

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Approach and Design**

This study was qualitative and was followed purposive sampling technique to identify the parents to explore the parent's understanding about the importance of parent-child attachment for child development in early ages. The strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide actual information about how people experience the given research topic, identifying the unnoticeable factors of a research issue and also can provide better understanding and interpretation of a complex statement. This research aim was to understand parent's thoughts, feelings, reactions, behaviors and believes towards their young children.

#### **Research Site**

This study was conducted in Agrabad area of Chattogram city.

#### **Research Participants**

The parents who had children of 2 to 5 years' age belongs to middle class family were selected for this study. The educational qualification minimum H.S.C. for the participants and those who were interested to provide actual information willingly, will be included in this study.

#### **Participants Selection Procedure**

Participants were selected purposively, using convenient sampling technique based on-

Following inclusion criteria--

- Parents (Biological) who had child of 2 to 5 years.
- Belonging to middle class socio-economic background.

- Educational background minimum H.S.C. level.
- Parents, who were interested willingly to provide information (face to face).

### **Data Collection Tool**

Data were collected through face to face interview using IDI guideline.

### **Data Collection Method and Procedure**

The Data was collected after receiving clearance from the ethical committee of BRAC University. The researcher conducted in-depth interview (IDI) of the participants willing to participate in the study.

As this is a qualitative study researcher collected data using in-depth interview guideline. The IDI guideline was developed by researcher and approved by supervisor before data collection. Before collection of data IDI Questionnaire was developed according to the guideline. The researcher first conducted interview with 2 parents as 'piloting'; then the researcher started the process of data collection by interviewing the selected participants. According to guideline the question was open-ended to get more descriptive data. The researcher asked the participants for the schedule of interview date and time before taking the interview. It would be taken about 40 to 60 minutes' time for interviewing each parent. The interview was taken face to face.

The researcher introduced herself first, then built rapport. The researcher clearly explained the objective of the study and purpose of data collection. The procedure of collection of data was as follows--

- Participant was asked for consent.
- The researcher built up rapport and explain the objective of the study.

- Took permission for audio record. The participant was ensured about the confidentiality and anonymity of information.
- Asked specific questions according to IDI guideline.
- After completed, the participant was given ‘Thanks’ and ‘Bye’.

Full description of each data was collected, mobile was used to record data. Field notes and journal was also used as document for data.

### **Data Management and Analysis**

In qualitative research, data analysis is an ongoing process throughout the whole research project. Analysis of data begins from the starting of interaction between the researcher and the participant. Among the various techniques of data analysis, one is ‘the content analysis technique’, which is also use in qualitative data analysis. The participants understanding about emotional bonding with socio-emotional-cognitive development was ensured by using the steps of content analysis and the researcher used the following content analysis approach to analyze the data:

**Debriefing & transcription:** After data collection the researcher manually went over all of the collected data, checked the answer sheets, saw if there is any gap. If any information is missing, the researcher collected it as quickly and as efficiently as possible. After that all information were transcribed with proper identification numbers.

**Reading, Memoing and describing:** This step identified a topic framework. This step began during the IDI and described data might be removed whenever required. The researcher took notes in the form of short notes, phrases, thoughts, or concepts to assists in categorization.

**Categorization:** The researcher thoroughly went over all of the collected data several times to see if there was direct connection between the data and the research questions. Next the data was categorized based on the relationship with research questions. Following the categorization of all data the researcher kept the essential categorized data that explained the scenario and organized the dataset into a comprehensible manner. The researcher then analyzed the situation by identifying the appropriate and exact data from each type.

**Coding theme & interpretation:** In this step, the researcher began coding the collected data from IDI. The data themes relevant to the research questions were formed after coding. After synthesizing themes from each decoded data, themes were analyzed and composed to conclude. Reading of every collected data analysis phase was emphasized to create ideas to answer the research questions. The collected data were presented under theme.

### **Validity & Reliability**

The reliability and validity depend upon the credibility of the data collection procedure and its findings without any fault. The researcher took utmost care in this regard. Guideline for IDI was checked and reviewed by BRAC IED faculty experts and the supervisor also. A pilot testing according to the guideline was conducted with exact sample to ensure the reliability. The reliability was also maintained by formulating the guideline clearly and using easy understandable clear language. Appropriate method, technique, ethical issues of data collection was maintained for authenticity and reliability. The researcher translated the IDI questionnaires into Bengali and rechecked by the supervisor for accuracy.

## **Ethical Issues**

Ethical approval for the study was taken from BRAC IED, BRAC University and the authorized committee approved the study formally. Before collection of data the researcher introduced own self then informed oral consent was taken from participant. The participant was informed about the purpose of the research, what was the expectation from the participant including the time schedule required for participation in interview; the participants could be voluntarily or one could withdraw at any time with no negative repercussions. The participants participated voluntarily and all were assured that the collected information from interview would be kept confidential, not disclose publicly and anonymity would be protected so that the participants provide valid and accurate information for supporting the study.

## **Limitations of the Study**

This study will be conducted in targeted frame schedule for completion of Masters' thesis part, maintaining all the steps of research protocol very strictly, in spite there are some limitations which are as follows—

- Age range was selected from 2 to 5 years' children.
- Only IDI technique of data collection procedure was followed.
- Limited number of participants which was not reflected the actual picture.
- Only the city area was targeted.
- Participants from different socio-economic status, education, ethnic group and different culture was not included in this study.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Results/Findings & Discussion.**

#### **Results/Findings**

The analysis of qualitative data through IDI of ten parents (5 mother and 5 father) brought about valuable information regarding parents' ideas and recent thinking of 'attachment', 'child development, 'early age' and relation between parent-child attachment and child development, in early year. The main findings of the researchers from the collected data are summarized below:

#### **Participants Demographic information:**

Among ten participants, 5 mothers age range were between 27 to 46 years; 5 fathers age range were 34 to 38 years. Education level of fathers were, 3 masters and 2 graduate: mothers education level were, 4 masters and 1 HSC. Among fathers, all were service holder and mothers, 2 were home-maker and 3 were service holder. Regarding number of children of participants were, 4 parents have 1 child, 4 parent have 2 children and 2 parent have 3 children. The age range of children were between 2 to 5 years; in gender issue, 5 were male and 5 were female. All the participants lived in the Agrabad area, 2 participants lived in extended family and rest 8 participants were in single family. The findings of IDI were presented under the following themes;

#### **Theme-1: Understanding of parents about the parent-child attachment.**

From the interview it was found, most of the participants first listen to the concept of 'attachment' in relation to 'parent-child attachment' relationship from interviewer; but all of them understand and have the right idea about the parent-child internal relationship which they compared with parent-child attachment. Their explanation and

understanding about parent-child internal relationship is same as attachment relationship. Some of the participants' experiences in this relation can't be explained in words. Almost all participants explain the 'parent-child attachment' as intimate, internal relation, relation of soul, heart, mental or, deep loving relation which is only developed between the parent and child. It was understood that all the participants have the right idea about 'attachment' only the difference is, the terminology is new to them. *One participant described 'the attachment' as 'this is God gifted attraction which could not be established with others.'* (IDI# 3, October 4, 2022).

It is also found that due to the parent-child internal relationship the children are dependent on parents, children follow them, their life becomes miserable, when they are separated from their parents. In this interview it is also evident that children are very much attached to their father, although mothers are taking care of the children for most of the day. Children search for their mothers especially during bedtime and feeding time, during sickness, and any discomfort for ensuring a sense of safety. From the interview another information is found that due to the parent-child attachment children are internally connected to each other, and without visualizing, the children can recognize their parents by listening to the sound of motorbike, doorbell and eye contact. *One parent said, 'my child can recognize me by just hearing the sound of the doorbell and tries to open the door by standing on a table'.* (IDI #2, Sept 29, 2022) while sharing this scenario the father becomes emotional and says that, this relation of heart and soul will never be destroyed.

It is evident that about the early age of a child, when it is important for the development most of the participant have no clear idea of the parent-child attachment relationship. One participant said, *'in high school age and the adolescent age when there is*

*development of a barrier, mental change starts-- the parent-child relation is important, during this Critical period' (IDI #4 October 4,2022).*

All the participants in the interview agreed that attachment relationship helps in child development. Their opinion in this regard is that children imitate their parents. Children learn and practice whatever they observe within their, during their childhood, in their future life. They will not learn anything if there is no intimate relationship with their parents. One participant shared, *'children learn everything from their parents in their day-to-day life as it is the age of learning'*. The participant also said, *'when we lighten the evening lamp (as a part of prayer), my child follows the same thing'* (IDI #1, September 28, 2022).

From the interview it was also found that when parents request something to their child, say- 'do not lie', 'practice healthy behavior', 'obey your elders', children sincerely keep the parents' request and follow them if the parents maintain a loving internal relationship. It is possible to obey all their advice or requests with the love and affection that is only present in a parent-child'.

In the interview it was also found that parent-child attachment relation is different from other relation—the same relation could not be established randomly with other caregivers. Exceptions are possible, but rare. One participant share, *'parent-child attachment with other caregiver needs sincerity'* (IDI #5, October 6,2022).

## **Theme 2: Parents knowledge about the child development.**

From the interview it is evident that most of the participants have different ideas and knowledge about child development. Surprisingly the participants didn't confuse development with growth or height and weight but shared that healthy and nutritious diet is still important for development. Most of the participants thinking is-

development is related to brain, mental health and learning, through observation and moral education of parents and gradual improvement of children day by day according to age through gaining newer skills like—speaking, self-eating, reading. One participant said, '*Development is, become an intelligent according to age; If we teach them positive things their mental development will be good and they will be more intelligent*' (IDI # October 6, 2022).

From the interview it was found that most participants have a vague idea about the age of development of a child. Their thinking is very different about the development of their child in the early years. While interviewing it seems that if the parents had the right idea, they would be more caring and provide more opportunities for the proper development of their child. One participant said, 'the early age of a child is up to 10 years and I would pay key attention during this time as adolescent period starts at that time' (IDI #3, October 4, 2022).

It was observed during the interviews that all the participants agreed that there is a connection between the early age and child development. Most participants said that the early age is the age of learning and they learn everything from their parents which they practice in their everyday life. But sad that most participants do not practices so important parenting style that their children can learn and follow. One participant said that, '*A child's foundation is built during childhood. So proper care and nursing should be taken so that my child will be an ideal citizen*' (IDI #2, September. 29,2022).

Another participant said, '*Me and Allah taught many things to my child at an early age*' (IDI #3, Oct 4, 2022).

From the interview it is understood that for better development of their child, some parents tell stories to their child (but the content of the story is not related to child

development), they read aloud the story books (the content of the books are also not child related), recite rhymes and sing religious songs when they sleep, sit with them at the table with colorful books for the development of interest for reading and writing. A number of participants shared that they go for outings with their child occasionally with the aim of making deep internal relationship. However, the participants have no idea about the importance of outdoor play and making peer relationship. All the participants shared that their children play inside with parents or other siblings, in some cases. One participant shared that, his child lived away from him, in the village, with the mother and grandparents, due to service. He noticed that the child is not happy only with mom except father and the child gradually practicing the local language and different traditional village culture; With the permission of grandparents the father brought the child with her mother to the city and within a short time span there was remarkable change in the child noticed by the parents, which is what they expected. One participant shared, *'I do not practice any odd behavior towards my child which I would not expect with me, and at home we do not practice any antisocial activity with anyone to save my child'* (IDI # 6).

### **Theme 3. Parents' understanding about the importance of parent-child attachment for child development.**

Most participants in the interview agreed that parent-child attachment relationship is linked with child development and one participant shared that it is cent percent. Some participants understand that a child's growth in maturity is influenced by internal relationship with their parents, and the attachment/internal relationship makes the child development complete, satisfactory, up to a desired level. Most of the participants know that parent-child attachment relationship is important, but their explanation is different

in this regard. Some participants think after birth, parent is the secured place of dependency than others; for the mental development of the child the attachment relationship is also important. One participant said, *'when I care for my child, he listens to me and cares for me. This intimate relation helps the child feel love for not only the parents, but for others also'* (IDI #7, October 13, 2022).

The childhood memories experienced in early ages persists in later life and safe parent-child attachment makes the child be self-confident in the future. Another important interview finding reveals that if the parents praise their children for doing good activities the child feels more encouraged to try newer activities.

All the participants disagreed, that parent- child attachment relationship is not necessary for the right development of their child. Their understanding in this regard is different. A few participants shared that if there is no parent-child intimate relation the mental development of the child will be hampered.

All the participants categorized the types of internal/ attachment relationship as 'deep, safe, good, affectionate, balance loving relation which helps the child's better development to their expected level'. One participant said, *'deep, good parent-child attachment protects the child from involvement in antisocial activity'* (IDI #2, September 29, 2022). Another participant shared that, *'if the parent-child attachment relation is not balanced and the relation seems to be blind, which may not play role in child development'* (IDI #6, October, 2022). One participant shared, *'Safe parent-child attachment helps the child to be self-confident in his adult life'* (IDI #8, October 14, 2022).

In the interview, most of the participants shared differently, how the attachment/internal relation play role in the development of their child in their early age. Their believe in

this regard, that their child's memories last up to adulthood and if the parent-child internal relation is deep during childhood, this relation will persist in later life also. One participant shared, *'when we pray, our child also prays, when I get ready for work the child also gets ready for school. In every step the child follows us, this is due to intimate parent-child relation'* (IDI # Oct. 4,2022).

## Discussion

Analysis of the findings of the participants' interview has made the researcher an option, that without visualizing the exact future consequences of parent-child attachment, how the participants explain the relationship according to their practices and understanding. The participant thoughts in this issue made the researcher interested to further study in this field in different socio- economic status & education level, different ethnic group. The finding of this study also includes that the participants vague understanding regarding the PCA relationship, they want to overcome, and gain clear ideas about the issue so that their children become an ideal citizen in future.

### **Theme-1: Understanding of parents about the parent- child attachment.**

From this study, it was found that, all the Participant had an idea about parent-child internal relation which is separate from any other relation. They explained the PCA in different way according to their understanding as the "Attachment" concept is new to them in relation to parent-child intimate or internal relationship. They know, after birth, children are dependent on parents for this relation or blood connection. Small children can first recognize mother then father as they are close & nearest to them. When a child separated from parents, they cries & search mother then father, this is due to Parent child attachment. The participant had no specific age idea about the PCA relationship, but they know this relationship develops after birth up to childhood. Although some

participants live in extended families, but their relationship with their child is different from other family members/caregivers. The participants also observed that their child follow and imitate them only, but no other members in the family; this is due to the PCA relationship. Parents thought, since after birth their child learn everything from parents and the parents also eager to teach their child. Some participants teach their child positive thinking, also try to make them ideal citizen in future through their proper guidance. Participants know very well that childhood is the actual time for learning of a child. So, the parents try to guide their child with all of their effort, making intimate relationship. The participants do not practice any bad habit in their everyday life, so their child can follow or imitate, rather the participants practice such ideal life style which the child can learn from their childhood experience, & practice in their later life. Interestingly the participants did not mention any gender discrimination, fascination for father/mother, only parent (single parent), only issue in regards of PCA relationship. Though Participants have little awareness about the early child stimulation and parent-child interaction, due to various campaign of parenting practices, improvement in ECD field & child psychological sector, they are adopting more beneficial parenting behaviors & PCA styles.

### **Theme-2: Parents knowledge about child development in early years.**

From this study it has been understood that participants have very clear idea about child development. They explain their understanding as acquisition of newer skills day by day, developing age-appropriate activity, acquiring intellectual development at proper age and also mental development through which the child acquires new knowledge and intellect gradually. But surprisingly the participants didn't confuse development with growth/height. But they have Understanding that if the parents are careful about the child's health & nutrition, their child's development will be better. Every Participants,

have shallow idea about the age of a child at which the perfect development occur in the early years. It was understood from the participants thinking, if they had prior knowledge about the developmental age of a child, they would be more careful about their caring and interaction with them;

The Participants understood that, there is a relation between early age & child development but that is their assumption. Because they observe that their child learns newer things day by day and the parents know that this is the age of learning. So, the participants focus this point; if the child learns good habits, practice well behavior which have impact on their later life. Participants try to teach their child all the qualities of an ideal citizen within their knowledge from very early age. Participants share stories with their child, play with them, read books, draw & color pictures to develop interest & skills for reading & writing habits from childhood. Participants thinking is due to the attachment/ intimate relationship child loves parents, follow & obey parent whatever the parent asks. They also think, the early age is the right time to teach the child right things and it is possible if parents praise the child for every good work, whatever they do.

**Theme-3: Parents understanding about the importance of parent-child attachment for the child development.**

It was observed that, all participants know there is a relation between PCA & child development. Participants think that, if there is no intimate relation between Parent-child, the child will not learn anything from parents, and their development will be hampered. Due to this relation, parents teach all good things, good behaviors, manners, positive thinking to their loving child which will not be possible to follow or imitate from others in presence of parents. As, after birth the child first sees the parent, who

meets all the primary requirements of the child, the child also depends upon them as a place of safety & survival and gradually this dependency increases, this relation is explained by few parents as this is natural and the development after birth is also going on as usual. But when the child become preschooler, parents' attention towards their child's development is highlighted, and practice different strategies to increase their developmental potential.

Participants Understand that PCA relationship is very important for the right development of their child. Because, they know due to this relationship the child learns everything from their parent; they follow them, obey them and when parent request them anything, they keep & honor the request.

None of the participants agreed that PCA relationship is not necessary for child development. The participants also understand that if there is no internal relationship between parent-child, the children will not learn anything from their parents & there might be mental health problem in children, which can't be ignored. It was also understood that the parents know, the quality of PCA relationship is essential for proper development of their child and the parents also aware about the type/quality of attachment. According to participants understanding, they describe the quality of "secure attachment"- as deep / blind relationship of soul, which is perfect for better development & future good relationship, not only with parents but also with others, family members and friends. The participants also shared that blind intimate PCA relationship sometimes causing harm to the child's development. The parents understanding is clear that, the PCA relationship has future impact on child's adult life, which the child acquire in their early age from parents. Most of the participants shared, though they have no academic knowledge regarding the importance of PCA and its impact on child development, but they could understand the fact that, due to the god

gifted relationship the child is dependent upon the parents and parents are their place of safety and security. The participants also shared, if the parents are careful about their younger children since their early age, their socio-emotional and cognitive development will be rich and will lead better life in future.

## **Conclusion**

The interview (IDI) conducted with the participants has given the researcher an idea about the understanding of attachment relationship between parent-child and its link with socio-emotional and cognitive development of young children. But the participants have vague understanding that this intimate/internal attachment relation has an impact on later life of their children. If they had previous knowledge regarding the PCA relation and its importance, they would be more careful in the early ages of their child. As because of the early age of a child is overlooked in regards of socio-emotional, cognitive development and parent child attachment relationship and its' impact on a child's future life, due to lack of proper knowledge & information. Maximum parents have an idea that, fulfilling the demand, supplying the needs and arranging better education are the only way to improve the child's future life. This gap is focused, in this study with the aim of expansion of the current knowledge in the field of PCA relationship and its' importance in child's later life.

## **Recommendations**

Bangladesh as a state party of UN convention on Children's Rights obliges to protect children from all sorts of unfavorable environments (article 37) as children are human beings with the rights to dignity and physical integrity. Therefore, we need to implement it in real practice.

There are limited studies in our country that deals with the parent-child attachment relationship. If we can prove the impact of this relationship on children's wellbeing in future, we can create awareness among parents.

- The government should create more awareness about the impact of parent-child attachment on child development, through campaign in different electronic & printing media, poster, 'uthan-baithak', 'path-natak', mick and leaflet distribution.
- Before birth of a child every parent while seeking the antenatal check-up should counsel about the attachment relation with parent & their future child.
- While enrollment for pre-primary education every parent should counselled about the impact of parent-child attachment relationship on their child's development in future.
- As the outside involvement of both father & mother is increasing day by day & the early ages of a child is fully depended upon Secondary caregivers, so it is important to be careful about the quality of attachment relationship with parent & child or caregiver & child.

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## **Appendix A.**

### **Title: Exploring Parental Perception About the Importance of Parent- Child Attachment for Child Development in Early Years**

I am Ruhita Murshed going to conduct a research as a part of my Masters in ECD under BRAC University. You are requested to answer the following questions regarding the idea of parent's perception about the importance of parent-child attachment for child development in early years. All information whatever you provide, will be kept confidential and only be used for research purpose.

#### **Part I: Demographic Information of Participant**

1. Interviewer's Name \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date of view \_\_\_\_\_
3. Mother's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Age \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_
4. Father's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Age \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_
5. Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Age \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

## **Part-2:**

### **Theme -1: understanding of parents about the parent-child attachment.**

1. What do you know about parent child attachment?
2. How do you assess parent – child attachment?
3. In which age of life parent child attachment is important?
4. Is attachment helps in child development? If yes or no, please explain.
5. How attachment helps in child development, please share your opinion.
6. Do you agree in absence of parent; other care giver can play the role of parent-child attachment? Share your opinion.

### **Theme-2: Parents' knowledge about child development in the early years.**

1. What is your understanding about child development? Please explain.
2. In your opinion which age is early years?
3. What is the relation between child development & early years?
4. How do you assess your child's development?
5. Do you practice any special activity for your child's proper development?  
Share your opinion.

### **Theme -3: Understanding of parents about the importance of parents–child attachment for the child development?**

1. What is the relation between parent – child attachment & development. Please share your opinion.
2. Why do you think that parent – child attachment is important? Explain your opinion.

3. Do you think, that for development parent – child attachment is not necessary, share your opinion.
4. What type of attachment is necessary for your child’s development, please explain?
5. Do you know how parent – child attachment helps in child development in early years, share your understanding.

বিষয়: “শিশু-পিতামাতার আবেগীয় সম্পর্ক সম্বন্ধে পিতামাতার ধারণা ও এর সাথে

শিশুর প্রারম্ভিক বিকাশে সম্পর্কের গুরুত্ব”

আমি রুহিতা মোর্শেদ ব্রাক ইউনিভার্সিটি-তে শিশুর প্রারম্ভিক বিকাশ বিষয়ে মাস্টার্স এর অংশ হিসাবে একটি গবেষণা করতে যাচ্ছি। "শিশু-পিতামাতার আবেগীয় সম্পর্ক সম্বন্ধে পিতামাতার ধারণা ও এর সাথে শিশুর প্রারম্ভিক বিকাশে সম্পর্কের গুরুত্ব" এই বিষয়ে কিছু প্রশ্নের উত্তর দিয়ে আমাকে সহযোগিতা করার জন্য অনুরোধ করছি। আপনার ধারণা ও উত্তর গোপনীয় রাখা হবে এবং তা শুধু গবেষণার কাজে সহযোগিতা করবে।

প্রথম ভাগঃ অংশগ্রহনকারীর ব্যক্তিগত তথ্য

১. তথ্য সংগ্রহ কারীর নাম: .....

২. সাক্ষাত গ্রহণের তারিখ: .....

৩. মাতার নাম: .....

বয়স: ..... পেশা: .....

৪. পিতার নাম: .....

বয়স: ..... পেশা: .....

৫. শিশুর নাম: .....

বয়স: ..... লিঙ্গ: .....

**থিম-১: পিতা- মাতা ও শিশুর মধ্যকার আবেগীয় সম্পর্ক বিষয়ে পিতা-মাতার ধারণা।**

- ১) আপনি, পিতা-মাতা ও শিশুর মধ্যকার আবেগীয় সম্পর্ক বলতে কি বুঝেন? ব্যাখ্যা করুন।
- ২) আপনি কীভাবে, শিশু ও পিতা-মাতার আবেগীয় সম্পর্কে ধার্য/ পরিমাপ করেন?
- ৩) শিশুর কোন বয়সে পিতা-মাতার সাথে আবেগীয় সম্পর্ক গুরুত্বপূর্ণ?
- ৪) শিশুর আবেগীয় সম্পর্ক কি তাদের বিকাশে সহায়তা করে? মতামত ব্যাখ্যা করুন।
- ৫) কিভাবে শিশু ও পিতা-মাতার আবেগীয় সম্পর্ক শিশুদের বিকাশে সহায়তা করে। আপনার মতামত ব্যাখ্যা করুন।
- ৬) আপনি কি একমত পিতা-মাতার অবর্তমানে অন্য অভিভাবক শিশু পিতা-মাতার আবেগীয় সম্পর্কে একইভাবে ভূমিকা রাখতে পারে। আপনার মতামত ব্যাখ্যা করুন।

**থিম -২: শিশুর প্রারম্ভিক বয়সে শিশুর বিকাশ সম্পর্কে পিতা-মাতার ধারণা।**

- ১) শিশুর বিকাশ সম্পর্কে আপনার ধারণা কি? ব্যাখ্যা করুন।
- ২) আপনার মতে শিশুর কোন বয়সকে প্রারম্ভিক বয়স বলা হয়?
- ৩) শিশুর বিকাশ এবং প্রারম্ভিক বয়সের মধ্যে যোগসূত্র কী?
- ৪) আপনি কীভাবে আপনার শিশুর বিকাশ পরিমাপ বা অনুমান করেন?
- ৫) আপনার যোগসূত্র শিশুর সঠিক বিকাশের জন্য আপনি কি বিশেষ কোন প্রক্রিয়া পরিচর্যা করেন? আপনার মতামত শেয়ার করুন।

**থিম-৩: পিতা- মাতা ও শিশুর মধ্যকার আবেগীয় সম্পর্ক গুরুত্বপূর্ণ এ সম্পর্কে পিতা মাতার ধারণা**

- ১) পিতা মাতা ও শিশুর আবেগীয় সম্পর্কের সাথে শিশুর বিকাশের যোগসূত্র কি? আপনার মতামত শেয়ার করুন।
- ২) আপনি কেন মনে করেন যে, শিশু ও পিতা-মাতার আবেগীয় সম্পর্ক গুরুত্বপূর্ণ? আপনার মতামত ব্যাখ্যা করুন।

- ৩) আপনি কি মনে করেন যে, শিশুর বিকাশের জন্য, শিশু ও পিতা-মাতার আবেগীয় সম্পর্ক গুরুত্বপূর্ণ নয়? মতামত ব্যাখ্যা করুন।
- ৪) কি ধরনের আবেগীয় সম্পর্ক আপনার শিশুর বিকাশে ভূমিকা রাখতে পারে? আপনার মতামত ব্যাখ্যা করুন।
- ৫) আপনার কি জানা আছে, কিভাবে শিশু ও পিতা-মাতার আবেগীয় সম্পর্ক শিশুর প্রারম্ভিক বিকাশে ভূমিকা রাখতে পারে। আপনার মতামত শেয়ার করুন।