Parental Perceptions Regarding

Urban Outdoor Child-Friendly Spaces

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
October, 2024

Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing a 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

The thesis/project titled "Parental Perceptions Regarding Urban Outdoor Child-Friendly Spaces" submitted by Sumaiya Arzoo, ID: 22255015 of FALL, 2022 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master's of Science in Early Childhood Development on October, 2024.

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Ethics Statement

Title of Thesis Topic: Parental Perceptions Regarding Urban Outdoor Child-Friendly Spaces
Student name: Sumaiya Arzoo

1. Source of population: Parents (mothers and fathers) having children of 3-8 years living Dhaka City
2. Does the study involve (yes, or no)

a)   Physical risk to the subjects (no)
b)   Social risk (no)
c)   Psychological risk to subjects (no)
d)   discomfort to subjects (no)
e)   Invasion of privacy (no)

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

a)   Nature and purpose of the study (yes)
b)   Procedures to be followed (yes)
c)   Physical risk (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 (no)
c)   Will precautions be taken to protect anonymity of subjects? (yes)

5. Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee:

a)   Proposal (yes)
b)   Consent Form (yes)
c)   Questionnaire or interview schedule (yes)

Ethical Review Committee:
Authorized by:
(chair/co-chair/other)   _____

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<u>Abstract</u>

Urbanization in Dhaka has significantly limited children's opportunities for outdoor play, raising concerns about their holistic development. This study explores the perceptions of parents regarding urban outdoor child-friendly spaces and their role in children's physical, social, and cognitive growth. Through in-depth interviews with parents of children aged 3-8 years, the research highlights barriers such as safety concerns, lack of accessible spaces, and environmental factors that hinder outdoor activities. Findings suggest that parents prioritize safety, hygiene, and the incorporation of natural elements in outdoor environments. Moreover, they express a willingness to participate in community-driven initiatives to create and maintain child-friendly spaces. The study underscores the need for policymakers and urban planners to address these concerns by integrating child-friendly designs into urban development plans, fostering a healthier and more inclusive environment for children. This research contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable urban planning and child-friendly cities in the context of Dhaka.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to myself, for persevering through every challenge, for the late nights, the hard work, and the determination to see it through. May this be a reminder of my strength and commitment to my goals.

<u>Acknowledgement</u>

Completing this thesis has been a significant milestone in my academic journey, and I am profoundly grateful for the support I have received along the way. Each person mentioned here has contributed to this accomplishment, whether through guidance, encouragement, or shared knowledge.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis supervisor, **Riffat Jahan Nahreen**, for her invaluable guidance, feedback, and continuous support. Her expertise and mentorship have been crucial in shaping this research and refining my understanding of this field.

Secondly, I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to all our faculty members who have been incredibly encouraging, understanding and supportive in my times of despair.

A special note of appreciation goes to my batchmates and colleagues who have been a constant source of support and camaraderie. Coming from a completely technical and different background of study, I encountered many challenges in understanding the course material and assignments. Their patience and generosity in sharing their knowledge have been instrumental in this journey of my progress.

I am grateful to all the participants in my research who graciously shared their valuable time and perspectives during the times of distress of the student protest in Dhaka 2024. This thesis would not have been possible without their openness and incredible ideas.

Finally, I am forever indebted to my parents and Almighty to have come this far in life.

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Chapter I: Introduction & Background

Bangladesh, a country brimming with vibrancy and diversity, is seeing unprecedented urban growth. Although urbanization delivers opportunities and advancement, it also presents difficulties, particularly with regard to our children's standard of living. There are less and fewer areas left for our children to play, learn, and socialize as cityscapes grow and change. Urban outdoor child-friendly spaces are not only physical locations; they are dynamic environments designed to cater to the holistic development of children, ensuring their right to a safe, inclusive, and stimulating urban experience. American psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917–2005) concentrated his career on studying childhood development and his basic concept was that a child is a creation of their surroundings as much as their biology. Highlighting the value of the social contexts in which children grow up, Bronfenbrenner believed that the dissolution of the family was the primary factor behind the rising rates of alienation, indifference, rebellion, delinquency, and violence among young people in America (Encyclopedia et al., 2020). His "Ecological Systems Theory" keeps a child in the center who is surrounded by factors in concentric circles keeping the family in the immediate circle to the child called the microsystem. That is why, the aim of this proposal is to find out and discuss how parents perceive the importance of the creation and improvement of Child-Friendly Spaces in Dhaka.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Child-friendly outdoor areas provide a complete setting that fosters children's development in all areas—physical, emotional, social, and cognitive—laying the groundwork for happy, healthy lives. According to research, parents believe that outdoor activities are good for their children's health, social, and physical-motor development (Jidovtseff et al., 2022) but they do agree that

children no longer have as many opportunities to play as they once did, especially those who live in urban areas (Lyu et al., 2023). So, what is refraining the parents from letting their children go outside and explore their world? One of the most often mentioned causes of parental anxiety is neighborhood safety, which is also the primary reason for restricting children' outdoor play and independent movement. Parents have expressed concerns about traffic, strangers, accidents or injuries, as well as antisocial behavior or bullying from other children (Loebach et al., 2021). According to a paper from the U.K. on "parental concerns about children's safety and the changing nature of childhood", majority of parents expressed dissatisfaction regarding the amount and accessibility of public play areas that are available in their neighborhood whereas, the findings in that study indicated that parental concerns about their children's safety and the evolving character of childhood have a greater impact on children's access to recreational activities than does the amount of play facilities provided by the public (Valentine & McKendrck, 1997). Also, in a round table discussion between Save the Children Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) in 2016, it was presented that urban advancements often disregard the unique requirements, vulnerabilities, and possibilities that children have. It sought to investigate how governments, local stakeholders, planners, NGOs/INGOs, and the corporate sector might work together in an efficient manner to support the development of inclusive and sustainable cities that prioritize the needs and viewpoints of children. As parents are the primary decision makers for their children, it is very important to understand their viewpoints about their preferences and challenges in raising children in an urban context.

1.2 Purpose of the study

This study seeks to identify the parents' expectations, opinions, thoughts, attitudes and beliefs regarding the outdoor child-friendly spaces in an urban context and find how these issues can be addressed to develop more inclusive and accessible outdoor spaces for both children and families. It is important to find out how parents perceive the capabilities of their children as rightful citizens and take part in voicing their wants and needs to build a more inclusive nation. Parental perceptions can become effective advocacy tools in obtaining funds and resources that inspire safety, resilience, well-being and connected to nature initiatives for children. Practitioners may gain the support and funding of appropriate stakeholders and decision-makers by emphasizing the value of outdoor areas, playgrounds, safe walking routes, and other amenities that make the functionality of a space/ place child-friendly.

1.3 Significance and Justification of the study

Child-friendly outdoor spaces go much beyond what is commonly thought of as a playground (Mahmud, 2022). The natural surroundings provide a wide range of sensory stimulation, which makes them essential for early childhood development. As a result, the statement by Elliott (2010) "contact with nature outdoors is as important for health and wellbeing as are daily food and sleep for children" (Ernst, 2017, p. 62) says that the physical, psychological, cognitive, and sensory benefits support early childhood development. However, the number of parks and playgrounds in Dhaka is drastically declining, with the majority no longer serving as locations for children to play or to enjoy outdoor leisure. Additionally, a significant proportion of the city's homeless children are unable to use these play spaces. Children who are primarily denied outdoor activities are girls in our country (Mahmud, 2022). Even in western contexts, mixed

results are found on the relationships between gender and playing outdoors. Research has shown that because parents are more concerned about their children's safety and cultural norms, male children are often granted more flexibility in terms of the types of games they may play and the distances they can travel (Loebach et al., 2021). As young children's accessibility to the outdoors is highly reliant on adult supervision and what a child is allowed to do is likely determined by the perceptions of their parents (Kadury-Slezak et al., 2023), researching parental perceptions might encourage community engagement and participation in the creation of outdoor child-friendly spaces. Beyond the obvious impact of parents' gatekeeping function, there are several hypotheses that are relevant to parents' influence on children's play in natural environments. According to Reed's (1996) joint attention theory, children initially pay attention to aspects of their environment that other people are observing. Building on these experiences, children then start to manage their own attention by making points in their environment or posing inquiries about it (Ernst, 2017). Parents' participation in decision-making may promote a sense of responsibility and ownership over these areas, which will contribute to satisfaction and community togetherness. Studying how parents view these areas will also help us understand how families utilize them and how it may affect children's socialization, physical activity, and overall well-being. Moreover, findings from this research can influence practices and policies pertaining to child-friendly programs and urban development. Policymakers and practitioners may establish more successful measures to encourage outdoor activities and foster supportive environments for families by taking into account the preferences and concerns of parents.

1.4 Research Questions

- What is the perception of parents on child-friendly spaces?

- How do parents perceive the importance of outdoor child-friendly spaces in an urban context?

1.5 Operational Definition

Child-friendly space: According to the 2008 handbook for the staff of Save the Children, Child Friendly Spaces can assist in setting up or sustaining routine, comfortable activities that provide a nurturing atmosphere in which children can use their innate resilience. By engaging in socializing activities within such spaces, children acquire new constructive coping mechanisms and complete some of the fundamental learning tasks of childhood. In this study, child-friendly spaces will refer to spaces designed by keeping in mind the scale, proportions, safety and usability of a child which may or may not have a facilitator to guide children. These spaces can regularly host meaningful activities to keep children engaged in educational and recreational ventures.

Outdoors: Any area outside of a building or other structure that is normally exposed to the sky will be referred to as an outdoor space in this study. These places may be found in both natural and artificial environments, and they can differ greatly in terms of size, design, and purpose. They can be used for socializing, leisure, relaxation, and aesthetic delight.

Parents: In this study, biologically related fathers or mothers, or legal guardians of children, will be considered as parents.

Community: According to Wikipedia, a community is a social unit (a collection of living things) that shares a location, norms, culture, religion, values, practices, or identity, among other socially relevant characteristics. Communities can exist in a specific physical location (such as a country, village, town, or neighborhood) or virtually through communication platforms. In this study, the community will consist of parents, neighbors, children and their primary caregivers.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Policies and initiatives for inclusive settings can be guided by an understanding of parental perception on outdoor child-friendly spaces. This chapter of literature review tries to explore the variables impacting parental attitudes and actions by synthesizing multidisciplinary research and discussions. In the fields of policy making, architecture, urban planning, environmental design, public health, and education, it tries to highlight themes, gaps, and potential research opportunities.

2.1 Children and Urbanism

"A city is the place of availabilities. It is the place where a small boy, as he walks through it, may see something that will tell him what he wants to do his whole life." – Louis Kahn, Architect
According to a study by Islam, Moore, and Cosco (2016), it was found that specifically having access to nearby open spaces could increase a child's average outdoor time on weekdays by over 23 minutes. However, land-grabbers are impending threats. These days, it is evident that a child growing up in an urban area is severely hindered by the absence of play areas. Children tend to watch TV, devices or play video games to pass their free time, which contributes to their obesity and causes other health problems. The playgrounds for children are becoming more and more challenging to preserve in a commercial world. According to an article of "The Business Standard" news portal titled "Dhaka lacks 795 playgrounds to meet standard: Study" which was published on 31st August 2023, there is a deficiency of 795 playgrounds in our densely populated capital, Dhaka, and a shortage of 541 in Chattogram to meet the urban planning standards. The current deficit stands at 37 in Rajshahi, 65 in Khulna, 40 in Sylhet, and 45 in Barishal, according to a research conducted by the Institute for Planning and Development (IPD).

At present, almost 50% of children worldwide live in urban areas. This figure is expected to increase to more than 70% by 2050 (Bustamante et al., 2018). A child spends just 20 percent of his or her awake hours in a classroom (Irv Katz et al., 2023). In order to make the most of the "other 80 percent of time" to improve the learning that occurs in schools, Playful Learning Landscapes (PLL) is an American initiative with networks around the globe that seeks to convert ordinary locations into enjoyable, stimulating learning environments that bring education into the public domain, like- adding hopscotch games or puzzles to benches of the bus stops, adding simple signage (which says "where does the milk come from") on the way to supermarkets to promote caregiver-child conversations, putting life-size board games in public arenas to engage children in math and science activities and so and so (Irv Katz et al., 2023).

2.2 Children and community involvement

Children's opportunities for outdoor play outside homes, schools and childcare centers have significantly decreased. This way, children can be thought of as absent members of the community. The right of children to participate is fundamental to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) policy and is often taken into account in Western nations (Waller et al., 2010) which is not a practice in the scenario of Bangladesh.

"Socially just, intergenerational urban spaces should not only accommodate children and adolescents, but engage them as participants in the planning and design of welcoming spaces" (Derr et al., 2013, p. 482). Discussions about the poor quality of playgrounds in the U.S. have also sparked interest in involving children in their design. Researchers and advocates like Hart, Gröning, and Sanoff in the 1980s highlighted the importance of considering children's input in shaping playgrounds to better meet their needs and preferences. This aligns with universal

human rights, particularly those outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which emphasizes Protection, Provision, and Participation. Children are recognized as citizens with human rights, but their access to civil rights remains limited. Efforts like children's councils and the "City of Children" network, initiated by Francesco Tonucci, aim to enhance children's participation in urban life and advocate for their needs (Freutel, 2010).

Co-creation between children, parents/caregivers, and the larger community should be incorporated into child-friendly urban planning. If the engagements are enjoyable, imaginative, and age-appropriate, then the co-creation procedures ought to maximize the community initiatives and involvement results. A community must accommodate children at every developmental stage in order to be considered child-friendly as children's perceptions and experiences of their surroundings shift as they grow. A shift in scale is one of the approach's key components. Children's early experiences are small-scale, and their domain is mostly shaped by their demand for close proximity to their parents or caretakers. Later, the emphasis transitions to socializing, moving around, and exploring the surrounding environment, as well as playing and wandering about more independently on neighborhood streets (Wright et al., 2017).

Though we usually don't see such initiatives in BD, at least one project started working on it called the "Child-Friendly Spaces in Dhaka" project, part of the UN-Habitat Global Public Space Programme which launched in 2012, aimed to enhance public spaces worldwide. In Dhaka, the initiative was a collaboration between Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), Work for Better Bangladesh Trust (WBBT), and UN-Habitat to develop child-friendly urban spaces. A key innovation was the active involvement of local communities, especially children, women, and youth, in the design and development process. By using the computer game Minecraft, residents were able to visualize, debate, and propose solutions for improving their surroundings.

Participatory design workshops were held in Dhaka's Rayer Bazar and Mirpur neighborhoods, fostering collaboration between community members, local authorities, and urban planners. These workshops generated 134 proposals, which were validated and prioritized by the community for implementation. This collective approach also instilled a sense of ownership and responsibility among participants, extending to the long-term management and maintenance of the improved spaces. The project successfully transformed six child-friendly spaces, benefiting underserved neighborhoods. Post-implementation, significant increases in usage were observed, particularly among girls, women and toddlers. Inspired by the success, DNCC allocated $240,000 for further improvements and replication of similar projects. The initiative also developed a management guide for community-led oversight and contributed to policy recommendations on "child-friendly cities" for Dhaka's Five Year Plan (UN-Habitat, 2020).

2.3 Parental views and their involvement in making a space child-friendly

The decrease in children's playtime can be attributed to various factors, with the growing dominance of digital media being a significant influence. For instance, research suggests that children with access to televisions, computers, or gaming consoles in their homes tend to have lower levels of physical activity. Additionally, the lack of availability, accessibility, and quality of outdoor play even more limits children's opportunities to engage in play. In the research paper "Mommy, Can I Play Outside? How Urban Design Influences Parental Attitudes on Play" from 2023, it is mentioned that parents from diverse locations, including Greece, Wuhan, China, and Dhaka-Bangladesh, have expressed concerns that their cities do not provide adequate play infrastructure. While building such infrastructure is a necessary step, it alone is not sufficient to enhance play opportunities. Studies indicate that parents from different socioeconomic

backgrounds engage with urban environments in distinct ways, with lower socioeconomic status parents utilizing these facilities less frequently than the higher socioeconomic status parents due to limited knowledge. This knowledge gap is likely related to parental beliefs about play, which significantly influence playground usage. Parents who view play as beneficial for their child's development are more likely to engage in play with their children. Furthermore, when parents observe or participate in play, they are more likely to recognize its developmental benefits. The interactions among parents also foster a sense of community and safety, making them more comfortable allowing their children to play. Therefore, urban design should take into account not only children as users but also their parents and guardians (Lyu et al., 2023).

Parents worry about a number of things, such as traffic, the possibility of kidnapping, the presence of those with bad intentions, and possible injuries. Furthermore, restrictions on exploring the outdoors are frequently the consequence of parents' lack of time to spend with their children. Parents may also take displeasure at their children's dirty clothes or wetness from outside play. Moreover, adults mostly participate in one kind of outdoor activity due to space constraints: field trips, which usually involve visits to museums, scientific centers, and other such locations (Mart, 2021). If parents take active participatory roles in managing and maintaining child-friendly outdoor spaces in the community, they might feel a sense of relief and increased confidence in the operations and safety measures concerning their children. Also, respected, well-maintained, and clean public areas are crucial for fostering a feeling of ownership. Additionally, co-creation may foster ownership of the interventions and operation while fostering the social capital needed for ongoing maintenance, which can reduce the burden of management responsibilities (Wright et al., 2017). As parental perceptions will vary based on different factors such as cultural background, socioeconomic status, and geographic context,

even practitioners can come up with solutions and interventions unique to the context that are specifically culturally sensitive, equitable, and responsive to the needs of different communities by analyzing these diverse variables.

The article "Child-Friendly, Active, Healthy Neighborhoods: Physical Characteristics and Children's Time Outdoors" noted a positive correlation between parents' perceptions of neighborhood safety and the availability of adjacent open spaces, which facilitates parental monitoring. However, even when controlling for parental perceptions, the presence of nearby open spaces remained a distinct factor in promoting children's outdoor activities, highlighting its independent role in child development (Islam et al., 2016)

2.4 Policy on outdoor child-friendly spaces

According to the 2024 article "Planning child-friendly cities– what is the responsibility of local authorities?" published on the website of *Child in the City*, an independent not-for-profit foundation based in the Netherlands, local authorities should design child-friendly cities by creating safe, accessible public spaces that encourage play, learning, and socializing. This includes developing parks and playgrounds that meet the diverse needs of children. Engaging the children, youth and their families in urban planning through community workshops and participatory initiatives ensures that they can express their needs, preferences, and hopes for their neighborhoods. Prioritizing equity and social justice in these plans helps address systemic inequalities affecting marginalized and vulnerable children, ensuring they have equal access to play opportunities. (Weedy, 2024)

The guidance report, jointly published by UN-Habitat and UNICEF, highlights the Child Rights-Based Approach, emphasizing that urban laws, policies, plans, and strategies must be

grounded in children's fundamental rights.This approach is based on the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and mandates that government officials, urban planners, and other stakeholders respect, protect, and uphold children's rights. It ensures that children are informed of their rights and are provided opportunities to participate in decision-making processes that impact their lives. The approach also incorporates six general principles: the best interests of the child, children's participation, non-discrimination, survival and development, gender equity, and inclusion of children with disabilities. These principles can ensure that children's specific needs are integrated into urban planning, making cities safer, more inclusive, and sustainable for all, especially vulnerable children. (Kvashuk, 2023)

According to the National Children Policy 2011 by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, optimal development and growth for children must be guaranteed through the provision of essential standard services, like- encompassing rights related to education, health, nutrition, safety, recreation, and others, are offered without discrimination based on age, gender, religion, occupation, social status, regional origin, or ethnic identity. Although people talk about children's rights, there are very few metropolitan areas designated for playgrounds for children let alone having child-friendly roads or other amenities, which is concerning. Architect Iqbal Habib, who is the Joint Secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA), drew attention to an increasing tendency in which mega-projects are given priority without a thorough evaluation of their applicability to urban demands. He underlined that systemic changes are avoided in favor of project implementation. He pointed out that activists and lower-level officials working in road excavation projects provide the governing party's operating funds. As such, city corporations are unwilling to deal with these problems even when they have the answers. He also voiced worry about the threat that environmental deterioration poses and emphasized the necessity of

increasing green areas in order to ensure our existence as a species; emphasizing on how crucial it is to build cities that support children's wellbeing.

In a consultation organized by the Institute for Planning and Development (IPD), Save the Children, and Bhumijo, experts from different fields highlighted the need for child-friendly zones in Dhaka's slums to provide recreational spaces for marginalized children. They discussed how creating these zones could reduce crime and foster development in the children. Experts advocated for nature-based, low-cost designs, developed with community participation and government support. They emphasized that child-friendly spaces are essential to achieving sustainable urban development and called for the inclusion of marginalized children in recreational planning efforts.

Chapter III: Methodology

This chapter will provide a compact overview of the study's context and limitations, detailing the geographical and demographic constraints on participant selection to the readers.

3.1 Research Approach/ Design

This research was conducted in a qualitative approach to understand the parental perception regarding urban outdoor child-friendly spaces of Dhaka city. The views of the study subjects are the most important factor, and in order to truly comprehend reality, it is essential to accurately record their perceptions. In qualitative research, rather than being imposed by the researcher, the significance is found in the meaning as experienced or understood by the participants (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005). In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) were the method for data collection; parents elaborated on their thoughts, emotions, and reasons using IDIs, which provide rich venues to go beyond basic "yes" or "no" responses and offer insightful information.

3.2 Research Site

The study was conducted in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Due to rapid urbanization in Dhaka and the increasing employment and busy schedule of family members, children are experiencing limited opportunities for outdoor activities. As Dhaka's population grows and urban spaces become more crowded, the challenges faced by families in providing children with access to outdoor play and recreational spaces make it a relevant location for understanding the impact of urbanization on children's physical activity.

3.3 Research Participants

The study population was a middle-income generating group of parents (both mothers and fathers) of children aged 3 to 8 years (preschoolers and above) who live in different areas of Dhaka city. Parents of children aged 3 to 8 were chosen as this age cohort requires close parental supervision and has growing energy levels and a natural inclination toward physical activity and social interaction that child-friendly outdoor spaces can offer. All of the participants were between 30 to 41 years of age. Among the 8 parents, 7 participants were mothers and 1 participant was a father. The parents were all university graduates to ensure that they engage with and respond to the topic and questions effectively in both English and Bengali languages.

3.4 Participant selection procedure

For this study, eight participants residing in Dhaka city were selected through purposive sampling. This selection method was chosen to enable the researcher to gather detailed, context-specific insights from a targeted group of parents. Purposive sampling involves selecting particular cases based on their typicality or specific characteristics, allowing researchers to tailor the sample to their particular needs (Cohen et al., 2018). This approach aims to identify "knowledgeable individuals," in this instance, university graduated parents who are presumed to possess in-depth knowledge due to their experience, expertise, or professional roles. Such a strategy ensures that the information collected is directly relevant to the study's objectives.

By focusing on parents with specific educational backgrounds, the study aims to gain a deeper understanding of how they perceive the significance of child-friendly outdoor spaces within the urban environment of Dhaka city. This targeted sampling enhances the richness and diversity of the findings, contributing valuable insights into this important issue. The sample size was

intentionally kept small to ensure that the researcher could effectively manage and conduct in-depth interviews with each participant, facilitating a thorough exploration of their perspectives.

3.5 Data Collection Method and Procedure

The only data collection tool for this study will be the In-Depth Interview (IDI) guidelines. After preparing the questionnaire, 2 persons were interviewed and academic specialists reviewed the conversations and analyzed the questionnaire in order to make it more refined, making it the final instrument for conducting IDIs. The IDI consisted of open-ended questions throughout the guide. Parents were interviewed to gather insights into their expectations, perceptions, beliefs, and opinions regarding outdoor child-friendly spaces of the urban context. Written consent was obtained from each participant before conducting the interview to ensure ethical standards are upheld. The research purpose and interview process was explained to each participant before proceeding. During the in-depth interviews (IDIs), participants' responses were recorded using phone recorders.

3.6 Data Management and Analysis

The content analysis approach was applied in this investigation. Steps followed for data management and analysis are:

- Data transcription and organization: Recordings and notes taken during the IDIs were utilized to organize and transcribe the data. The in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted in both Bangla and English, based on the participants' preferences. All spoken words were transcribed into written text to produce a coherent written transcript. After a

thorough screening process, the transcriptions were annotated, compiled into a unified document, and digitally archived for preservation.

- Data familiarization: The process of reviewing and revisiting the transcripts were undertaken to ensure a thorough comprehension of the concepts conveyed in the responses.

- Coding: Once the data was thoroughly reviewed and understood, the next phase was to entail systematically assigning labels or codes to different sections of the text, capturing pertinent themes in an organized manner.

- Findings and developing themes: When the raw data was coded and examined, themes emerged. These subjects offered an examination of the main ideas and conclusions drawn from the experiences of the participants.

3.7 Ethical Issues

Participants were invited to partake in the In-Depth Interview (IDI) after obtaining their written consent, ensuring that their information will be used solely for research purposes and that no personal details will be disclosed to any third parties. Those who willingly agreed to participate were included in the study. Additionally, participants were provided with comprehensive details about the research, including the study's context, purpose, objectives, rationale for their selection, and the researcher's background, if requested. Participants who chose not to participate or opt out of answering specific questions had their preferences respected, and things they did not want to be mentioned were excluded from the study accordingly. In instances where case studies are referenced in discussions, code numbers or pseudonyms were used to maintain confidentiality.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the study is that it focused exclusively on urban areas, collecting data solely from parents living in Dhaka city. Due to political unrest in the city, interviews were conducted using a mixed approach- with some taking place in person and others conducted via phone calls. As some interviews were conducted over phone calls, non-verbal cues, such as body language and facial expressions, which are often crucial for interpreting responses, could not be observed. As direct call recording was unavailable, participants had to record and send their responses, resulting in audio files with only their answers. The absence of recorded questions made it challenging to fully interpret some responses during analysis.

Chapter IV: Results/Findings & Discussion

4.1 <u>Results/ Findings:</u>

This chapter presents the findings from in-depth interviews conducted with eight parents of children aged 3 to 8 years to explore their perceptions of urban outdoor child-friendly spaces. The findings are organized into five key themes, each reflecting the core insights derived from the interviews. These themes provide a comprehensive understanding of parental attitudes and expectations surrounding urban outdoor child-friendly spaces, as well as the broader social and environmental factors that shape their opinions.

Theme 1: Distinction Between Playgrounds and Child-Friendly Spaces

This theme explores how parents distinguish between conventional playgrounds and spaces that they consider genuinely child-friendly. While playgrounds are generally open spaces with basic recreational equipment, child-friendly spaces are recognized as environments purposefully designed with young children in mind. Parents perceive these spaces as more inclusive of various activities beyond physical play, offering elements tailored to meet safety, developmental needs, and age-appropriate designs.

<u>Playgrounds vs Child-friendly spaces</u>

All eight participants clearly differentiated between playgrounds and child-friendly spaces. While most of them agreed that playgrounds can be a component of a child-friendly space, they emphasized that a true child-friendly space is more intentionally designed for younger children.

A mother of a 7 year old said there can be other types of spaces that are child-friendly, for example a library or book corner where children can read books.

Another mother of a 6 year old highlighted the differences in design and purpose, emphasizing that playgrounds are often general spaces for various age groups, whereas child-friendly spaces are more tailored. She noted that these general-purpose areas often lack the protective design and features required for small children, who need spaces where safety and age-appropriate structures are prioritized. According to her, child-friendly spaces provide enhanced safety and intentional designs that consider the specific physical and emotional needs of young children, making them distinct from traditional playgrounds.

Another parent broadened the definition of child-friendly spaces, viewing them as environments that cater to more than just play, but to the full range of activities in a child's daily life-

"I don't think that a playground and child-friendly space are the same thing. Playing, sleeping or eating are parts of the daily experience, the playground is just part of that one activity (playing). Child friendly space is the child's world, it encompasses the environments a child grows up in which includes a variety of the activities a child goes through daily." (IDI#1, 06.08.2024)

Safety and Age-Appropriate Design in Child-Friendly Spaces

Safety emerged as a key factor for parents when discussing the design of child-friendly spaces, especially when they shared concerns about mixed-age playgrounds. Parents expressed that when playgrounds serve children of various age groups, younger children face increased risks due to the more intense, sometimes rougher play of older children. One parent voiced her concerns about this issue by sharing that children cannot freely explore and play when older children

engage in activities like cricket in the same space, which can pose physical risks to the younger ones. In another interview, one of the mothers mentioned-

"Taking the concept, there can be outdoor activities like bungee jumping or slides that are designed in a way that is not harmful. For example, there is a playzone in Chef's table courtside which although crowded has rides that are safe. Even when children run around a lot, the chance of getting hurt is less as the flooring is made child-safe. For children who are smaller, spaces like these are appropriate but for older children, places like basecamp are suitable." (IDI#7, 28.08.2024)

Theme 2: Perceptions and Importance of outdoor Child-Friendly Spaces

This theme delves into parents' visions for ideal child-friendly outdoor spaces and the perceived value these spaces hold in supporting children's physical, cognitive, and social development. Parents collectively expressed the need for outdoor spaces that go beyond mere play areas, envisioning environments that are safe, hygienic, and aesthetically pleasing, with various interactive and natural elements. These spaces are viewed as essential for the holistic development of children, providing opportunities for fresh air, movement, and interaction with natural elements that contribute to well-rounded growth.

Envisioning the urban outdoor child-friendly space

When asked to describe their ideal outdoor child-friendly spaces, all participants emphasized safety, open layouts, and greenery as essential features. Parents want spaces where children can freely move around without barriers, with one mother noting that safety and hygiene are her top priorities. She added that play elements should be innovative and engaging, as children tend to lose interest in repetitive activities, citing her child's experience at Babuland, a local play area, as

an example of waning engagement over time. For her, attractive, vibrant, and child-safe materials are essential in keeping the spaces both secure and stimulating.

Another parent emphasized on the importance of vibrant colors and interactive features that encourage prolonged engagement. She also noted that safety should be considered across all facilities, and the need for including amenities such as washrooms and food areas. Some of the parents felt that shaded spaces and cooling areas, like the presence of water bodies or automated sprinkler zones, are essential for children to rest after play. These aspects make the space suitable for children's comfort and enjoyment, supporting extended outdoor activity.

A more naturalistic approach was highlighted by another participant who described an eco-friendly playground "What I envision is a greenzone type of playground, where all children can come and play together instead of the plasticky type of playgrounds." She also adds- "There would be beautiful spaces, for example, spaces like a bamboo resort enlivened with children playing. That would be wonderful." (IDI#8, 29.08.2024)

<u>Importance of outdoor child-friendly spaces</u>

Several participants stressed on the significance of outdoor child-friendly spaces in supporting children's physical and mental development. One parent pointed out the health benefits, particularly in terms of exposure to natural elements-

"So if a child growing up does not sufficiently get vitamin D, it can hamper their development, even the mental development. Kids who tend to stay indoors all the time are also more likely to get sick so we need kids to have access to vitamin D, a sufficient amount of it. They need to be able to go outside, play, and touch dirt as this is also important. The more we touch dirt, the less we will be infected by sicknesses. It is an important concept in microbiology that 'dirt is our

friend'. We need to have the kids experience the natural environment as this is the only way their bodies will adjust to the future when they will need to go out everyday." (IDI#4, 13.08.2024)

Another participant focused on the holistic developmental benefits, mentioning that while indoor activities and toys can entertain children, they are not enough to support the mental and physical milestones that outdoor play promotes. She emphasized that without regular access to outdoor spaces, children risk missing out on fundamental stages of development, which may impact their well-being in the long term.

On the contrary, one parent offered a slightly different perspective, suggesting that the setting, whether indoors or outdoors, is less important than the quality of play opportunities available. He felt that safety, comfort, and companionship are the primary motivators for children to engage in play, so any space that can provide these elements is beneficial. For him, creating favorable play conditions, whether in indoor or outdoor settings, is what truly matters, as children are more likely to thrive where they feel secure and supported.

Theme 3: Barriers to Access and Usage Patterns

This theme examines the various obstacles parents face when trying to provide their children with access to outdoor, child-friendly spaces. Despite parents' recognition of the benefits of outdoor play, they encounter numerous barriers that affect how often they can take their children outside. Physical, environmental, health, and lifestyle constraints all play significant roles in determining the frequency and quality of outdoor activities. Parents described challenges related to safety, accessibility, and the environmental upkeep of these spaces, with some expressing frustration over limitations that restrict their children from freely exploring the outdoors.

Physical and environmental barriers

The parents shared that they all try to take their children to the outdoors and the frequency with which they visit outdoor spaces is often influenced by several barriers, including concerns about distance, and accessibility. Many parents highlighted these challenges as limiting factors in their ability to take their children to such spaces more frequently. Additionally, safety, economic, geographic, and lifestyle factors play a significant role in determining access to child-friendly outdoor areas, with some families facing greater difficulties due to living in underserved or distant neighborhoods, lacking adequate transportation, or experiencing concerns about the safety and upkeep of local spaces.

One of the parents shared "From my childhood experience, when I used to play outside, I used to cycle in the neighborhood. So all day I used to be excited for the moment I would go out and play or cycle. But the children today do not have that excitement, as they do not have the experience of playing outdoors. For example there is construction going on or the neighborhood is not safe. The other children in the building also do not go out so I don't send him to go alone either." (IDI#8, 29.08.2024)

Health and lifestyle constraints

Lifestyle constraints such as time limitations, parental work schedules, and family routines further restrict outdoor activities. Many parents described struggling to balance busy schedules with opportunities for outdoor play, with some only able to bring their children downstairs for brief, supervised play sessions. Due to these barriers, most participants mentioned that they take their children to the rooftops as a convenient alternative, providing at least some outdoor exposure. While rooftops may not offer the same benefits as dedicated outdoor play areas, they

serve as a compromise for families who cannot access child-friendly outdoor spaces more frequently.

Health and environmental issues are also major big concerns of the parents. One of the parents shared a different kind of challenge when asked about the frequency of visiting the outdoors with her child. She answered- " I do take my child outdoors, but not often. This is because my child is very allergic to dust like me. So we go out around once or twice a month." (IDI#6, 27.08.2024)

Theme 4: Role of Government and Urban Planning

This theme highlights parents' perspectives on the role of government and urban planners in creating child-friendly urban environments. Parents expressed a strong need for government intervention and policy development to support the inclusion of accessible and safe outdoor play areas for children across neighborhoods. They emphasized the importance of proactive urban planning to maximize the utility of public spaces and to dedicate areas specifically designed for children's developmental needs. These insights reflect parents' expectations of governmental responsibility to improve and sustain recreational spaces, aligning with a broader vision of a child-friendly urban landscape.

Government Responsibility and Policy Development

Parents offered their valuable insights and expectations on how the government and policymakers can develop solutions that adopt a more child-friendly approach to urban environments. Like many others, one of the participants thinks that the government should make some strict rules so that every area has a children's dedicated park or a playzone. The parks should have enough space for the children and the play. She stressed that these spaces should be safe, well-maintained, and designed with input from childcare specialists to ensure that the

equipment aligns with developmental needs. According to her, such parks should be accessible to all and free of charge, reducing economic barriers that may prevent some families from enjoying these amenities. Another participant emphasized the need for the government to allocate more space for parks in large residential areas, citing the example of Bashundhara, a well-developed locality with ample space but insufficient recreational areas for children. She noted that the few parks available in the area become overcrowded, limiting children's enjoyment and freedom of movement. This overcrowding issue, she argued, could be addressed through more intentional park planning and space allocation.

Additionally, some of the parents discussed the need for policies that ensure affordability and accessibility regarding the ticketing system- " I think an outdoor space should be free of charge firstly. I need to take my child out to play at least once a week but it's not free. Sure, there could be some indoor parks that take charges. But we do need at bare minimum a park, or a place to run around freely…" (IDI#4, 13.08.2024)

Urban Planning and Utilization of Space

Parents also shared specific ideas about how urban planners could enhance children's access to outdoor play areas. Several participants suggested that unutilized spaces in the city could be repurposed for child-friendly spaces, especially in areas with limited outdoor options. One mother suggested that school playgrounds, which are often unused outside of school hours, could be made accessible to local children, providing safe play areas without the need for additional land. She noted that play is frequently undervalued and dismissed as a "waste of time," but argued that urban planning should prioritize it as essential for children's development.

In another interview, a participant proposed that urban planners should identify and repurpose older, underutilized buildings for redevelopment, converting them into child-friendly spaces that benefit the entire community. She suggested that these redevelopment efforts could be supported by government ownership of unused land, allowing for affordable public space creation.

One of the participants recommended that urban planners adopt a zoning approach to ensure that every area has a designated child-friendly space. He said- "Urban planners should allocate spaces that are compulsory for creating these child-friendly spaces. Urban planners should use a ratio to calculate the area of child friendly spaces needed within an area." He further adds- "Urban planners should ensure every zone has the required space for the children whether it is one large space or divided into two. The urban planners need to work with the complex density of Dhaka city, to figure out the minimum area that needs to be there." (IDI#2, 07.08.2024)

Theme 5: Community and Parental Involvement

This theme highlights the significance of community and parental involvement in the development and maintenance of child-friendly spaces. Parents expressed a strong desire to participate in initiatives aimed at creating and sustaining outdoor play areas, showing a willingness to contribute to the design, upkeep, and supervision of these spaces. Many see community-driven approaches as essential for ensuring the longevity and accessibility of such spaces, as well as fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility among local families. Their insights emphasize that community collaboration, volunteerism, and active parental involvement can significantly enhance the quality and safety of children's play environments.

Collaborative Community Design and Advocacy

All of the interviewees expressed a willingness to participate in initiatives to create outdoor child-friendly spaces in their communities or residential areas. Most of them said that they would like to contribute by sharing their ideas and opinions on the design and features of these spaces. One participant, who is an architect, expanded on the concept of community architecture as a potential solution stressing on the importance of collaboration between community members and experts. He stated that community architecture should not involve simply paying people for their input; rather, it should encourage active participation and shared decision-making among residents of the community. He emphasized the value of the planning phase over the implementation stage, suggesting that involving community members in early discussions ensures that the space will meet the communities needs and expectations. He further added that expert input and volunteer assistance should be sought primarily during the construction phase.

Some of the participants talked about other ways they could get involved, such as raising awareness in the neighborhood or developing campaign strategies; one of the parents mentioned- "In our community, there are a lot of young children (8 -16 year-olds) and they go down to play; however the community field is often not clean or the grass is overgrown. The present committee does not take note of these issues. From my overseas friends, I have heard that the community parks are cleaned by the community people themselves. My view is that children can be involved in cleaning activity, given the safety and security in the cleaning process. So I would propose involving children into these activities to keep them active instead of just giving everything readily to them. I would participate in awareness raising activities to bring these changes." (IDI#7, 28.08.2024)

<u>Parental Volunteering and Supervision Initiatives</u>

Many participants mentioned their eagerness to volunteer by taking turns supervising neighborhood children during designated play hours. One of the parent's ideas emphasized the importance of building familiarity and a gradual sense of independence in children, starting from within a familiar, secure setting and slowly moving towards broader outdoor environments. She noted that community-based play not only enhances children's social skills but also strengthens neighborhood bonds, promoting a collective responsibility for child-friendly spaces.

"I feel like I must go myself and talk to other parents to fix a time to take their children down to play. It can also start with smaller things. As I have a child, my house is already child-friendly. So my sister feels assured to send her child to my house as it is childproof and my child is there to accompany her. It can also be that the house can become a gathering space for children. Whether it is a group of four or five. If they come, then this group of children can play together. Afterwards, slowly this activity can also be taken to the rooftop. And slowly, this can be taken outside of the building premise. A lot of things can happen. It is only a matter of taking the steps." (IDI#8, 29.08.2024)

4.2 <u>Discussions:</u>

This section aims to evaluate insights from the literature review to highlight how the present findings align with or diverge from existing research. By doing so, I want to establish a deeper understanding of how urban environments either facilitate or hinder the creation and utilization of outdoor child-friendly spaces, as well as the role parents perceive these spaces play in their children's well-being and social development. This discussion will ultimately contribute to a broader conversation on the necessity and future planning of child-friendly urban areas.

In discussing my findings from the in-depth interviews with parents regarding urban outdoor child-friendly spaces, it is essential to connect their perceptions to the broader context of policy and urban planning, particularly in light of the National Children Policy 2011 by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. This policy emphasizes the importance of guaranteeing children's optimal growth through services like recreation, safety, and health without discrimination (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 2011). However, the findings from the interviews reveal a gap between policy ideals and the practical availability of such spaces in urban environments. For example, parents consistently highlighted safety as a primary concern, with many stating that playgrounds are not always designed with younger children in mind. Similarly, parents' concerns about the lack of well-maintained, accessible open spaces align with the broader issue of city corporations avoiding long-term solutions in favor of short-term projects. These challenges reflect issues raised by the joint secretary of BAPA, who emphasized that urban planners often neglect green spaces for children, despite policy acknowledgment of children's rights to safe and accessible recreation areas. It is evident that, while policies are aimed at child development, the actual urban landscape frequently fails to support these goals, leading to concerns about environmental degradation and insufficient space for child-friendly areas. Parents' insights provide critical feedback on the need for more thoughtful urban planning that ensures children's well-being through the creation of safe, engaging, and accessible outdoor spaces.

The in-depth interviews with parents also reveal significant concerns about the lack of accessible and safe outdoor child-friendly spaces, a sentiment that directly resonates with broader issues discussed in the literature on urbanism and children's play spaces. According to the report cited in The Business Standard, Dhaka alone has a deficit of 795 playgrounds, which indicates that the

urban environment is failing to meet the recreational needs of its children (The Business Standard, 2023). This scarcity of playgrounds in dense urban areas contributes to a range of health and developmental issues among children, as mentioned by parents in the study, who expressed concerns about the lack of safe outdoor spaces leading to increased screen time, reduced physical activity, and childhood depression. Parents also shared that their children often stay indoors due to parental concerns over safety and lack of space, which aligns with the broader trend highlighted by urban planners that playgrounds are increasingly difficult to preserve in a commercialized, land-scarce world. This absence of outdoor play opportunities results in children spending excessive time on screens, contributing to health problems like obesity—a reality reflecting the systemic failure to provide adequate child-friendly spaces in urban planning. Furthermore, initiatives like Playful Learning Landscapes (PLL), which aim to transform everyday public spaces into interactive learning environments, serve as a contrast to the current urban conditions discussed by parents in my findings (Irv Katz et al., 2023). PLL initiatives highlight how integrating playful and educational elements into public spaces can benefit children, an approach similar to what most of the parents in this study also desired. Parents emphasized the need for innovative, engaging, and safe designs where children could explore, play, and learn- features that are sorely lacking in many of Dhaka's urban areas.

The discussions from the interviews align with several of the concerns highlighted in the literature about parental anxieties and restrictions related to children's outdoor activities. Parents who were interviewed for the research expressed notable concerns regarding safety in urban outdoor spaces, which mirrors the literature's mention of traffic, individuals with harmful intentions, accidents or injuries, as well as antisocial behavior or bullying from other children (Loebach et al., 2021). For instance, parents in the interviews pointed out that the current

playgrounds often host mixed-age group children, raising concerns about the physical safety of younger children when older, more physically active children dominate these spaces by playing rough and tough games like cricket and football. Some of them also mentioned concerns about the presence of drug users, especially in less regulated areas, which adds another layer of worry regarding playground accessibility and safety. Additionally, the lack of well-maintained and designated child-friendly spaces forces parents to restrict their children's outdoor play. Similar to the literature's observations, some parents in the interviews indicated that their time constraints and concerns about children getting physically affected hampered their willingness to take children outside frequently (Mart, 2021). However, the parents also expressed a willingness to take active roles in the creation and management of outdoor child-friendly spaces, much like the literature's discussion on co-creation and community involvement. Several parents voiced ideas about working within the communities by exploring what a child-friendly space looks like in their opinion (Derr et al., 2013). Some parents also expressed a strong interest in organizing with others to advocate for this cause and raise awareness within the community, aiming to foster a child-friendly mindset and ensure its success within their community or neighborhood. This reflects the importance of fostering parental involvement in the management and maintenance of such spaces.

As noted in this research, parents expressed concerns about the scarcity of outdoor child-friendly spaces, resulting in their children spending more time indoors or engaging in limited outdoor activities. This reflects the broader issue mentioned in the literature, where children have become "absent members" of the community due to a lack of spaces that accommodate and engage them outside of structured environments like schools and childcare centers (Waller et al., 2010). In Western countries, the right of children to participate in urban planning and community life is

often emphasized through Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) policies. However, this practice is largely absent in Bangladesh, as seen from the findings, where parents expressed frustration over the lack of dedicated spaces and inadequate urban planning for child-friendly environments in the vicinity. This disconnect highlights a notable deficiency in considering children's needs in urban design processes.

Through the interviews, it was seen that there is a potential for community involvement in advocating and improving such spaces, resonating with the idea of co-creation mentioned in the literature studies of this paper about the "Child-Friendly Spaces in Dhaka" project, which was a part of the UN-Habitat Global Public Space Programme (UN-Habitat, 2020). Parents expressed willingness to collaborate with other community members to create safer, more engaging solutions for their children. If communities get involved in the co-creation of urban spaces for children, it fosters a stronger sense of belonging and ownership over these spaces. Moreover, the literature section emphasizes that children should be accommodated at every developmental stage, allowing them to transition from close proximity to caregivers in their early years to more independent exploration as they grow older (Wright et al., 2017). The findings align with what one of the parents mentioned for involving children in the process of making and maintaining to give them a chance to grow ownership and take charge of their community.

In summary, the findings from the parental interviews emphasize the need for an urgent shift in urban planning approaches in Bangladesh to include children's and parental needs in creating child-friendly outdoor spaces. Rethinking urban planning policies in Bangladesh can ensure that children are not deprived of essential outdoor recreational spaces, as this directly impacts their physical health and cognitive development at various stages of their growth.

4.3 <u>Conclusion:</u>

Parents have articulated clear concerns regarding the scarcity, accessibility, and safety of outdoor child-friendly spaces, highlighting a systemic failure in urban planning policies that neglects the needs of children. The interviews revealed a gap where the theoretical framework of child rights and recreation does not translate into practical, safe, and engaging environments for children to play and develop. This disparity not only affects children's physical health and mental well-being but also contributes to a broader societal issue where children are becoming increasingly disconnected from their communities.

Furthermore, the insights gathered from parents demonstrate a willingness for involvement in the creation and maintenance of outdoor child-friendly spaces within the community or neighborhood. By actively participating in the planning processes, parents can ensure that their diverse needs and cultural contexts are considered, leading to more effective and meaningful solutions, ultimately benefiting children's social development and well-being.

To truly support the needs of children in urban settings, it is imperative for policymakers and urban planners to adopt a more inclusive and responsive approach. This includes not only recognizing children as integral members of the community but also actively involving parents and caregivers in the design and maintenance of such outdoor spaces. The path forward must involve a collective commitment to rethink and reshape urban landscapes, ensuring that they serve the needs of future generations.

4.4 <u>Recommendations:</u>

In light of the findings from the parental interviews and the insights gathered from the literature, it is crucial to address the urgent need for improved outdoor child-friendly spaces in urban environments. To achieve meaningful progress, collaboration among various stakeholders, including policymakers, parents, and Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners, is essential. Each group plays a vital role in shaping a supportive landscape that prioritizes children's health, safety, and well-being. The following recommendations aim to provide actionable steps that can help create and sustain environments where children can thrive, engage, and explore freely.

A. Policymakers and Urban Planners:

- Integrate the creation and maintenance of outdoor child-friendly spaces into urban planning frameworks. This includes conducting comprehensive assessments of existing facilities and identifying gaps in availability and safety.

- Actively involve parents, children, and local communities in the planning and design processes, through workshops and forums, to gather insights and preferences on what constitutes a safe and engaging play space.

- Establish regular maintenance strategies for existing playgrounds and parks to ensure they remain safe and accessible. Implement safety standards tailored to different age groups, particularly for mixed-age play environments.

B. Parents:

- Advocate for Child-Friendly Spaces by engaging with local authorities and urban planners to voice concerns and suggestions.

- Collaborate with other parents and stakeholders and get involved in community initiatives focused on designing and improving outdoor spaces.

- Encourage Outdoor Play by organizing community events or playdates in local parks. This can help normalize outdoor activities and reinforce the importance of physical play in children's development.

C. Early Childhood Development (ECD) Practitioners/Researchers:

- Conduct studies to explore the impacts of outdoor play on children's health and development, particularly in urban settings. This can provide valuable data to support advocacy for better child-friendly spaces.

- Share successful models of outdoor play environments from other contexts with local stakeholders. Highlight innovative design concepts that prioritize safety, accessibility, and engagement for children of all ages.

- Organize workshops for parents and community members on the importance of outdoor play and how to utilize available spaces effectively. Educate them on creating safe play environments and recognizing the developmental benefits of outdoor activities.

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A.1 IDI Guidelines (English)

Demographic information of Participants:

Name of Participant:
Age of Participant:
Educational Qualification:
Number of Child/ren:
Age of Child/ren:
Area of Residence:

1. Can you share some of your fond childhood memories of interactions and activities in the outdoor spaces?

2. How would you describe the term "child-friendly space"?

3. What features are essential for a space to be considered child-friendly in your opinion?

4. Are playgrounds and child-friendly spaces the same things? Why do you think so?

5. Is it important for children to have access to outdoor open spaces? Please explain.

6. Do you take your child/ren out to outdoor spaces? If yes, how often? If not, why?

7. Are there any barriers (e.g., distance, safety concerns) that prevent you from accessing these spaces more frequently? Please elaborate.

8. How do you envision an urban outdoor child-friendly space?

9. What role do you think the local government and policymakers can play to improve the availability and quality of these spaces?

10. How do you think urban planners can contribute to integrating child-friendly spaces in our cities?

11. If there is a need or a policy to involve the parents and community to create and maintain neighborhood child-friendly spaces, are you willing to participate? If yes, in what capacity?

12. How do you think other families or members in your community may get involved in such projects?

A.2 IDI Guidelines (Bangla)

<u>অংশগ্রহণকারীদের জনসংখ্যাতাত্ত্বিক তথ্য:</u>

অংশগ্রহণকারীর নাম:

অংশগ্রহণকারীর বয়স:

শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা:

শিশুর সংখ্যা:

শিশুর বয়স:

বাসস্থানের এলাকা:

১. আপনি কি আপনার শৈশবের বহিরঙ্গনের ক্রিয়াকলাপের অভিজ্ঞতার কিছু মধুর স্মৃতি শেয়ার করতে পারেন?

২. আপনি "শিশু-বান্ধব স্থান" শব্দটি কিভাবে বর্ণনা করবেন?

৩. আপনার মতে, একটি স্থানের শিশু-বান্ধব হতে কি কি বৈশিষ্ট্য অপরিহার্য?

৪. প্লে-গ্রাউন্ড এবং শিশু-বান্ধব স্থান কি একই জিনিস? আপনি কেন তাই মনে করেন?

৫. শিশুদের জন্য বাইরের খোলা জায়গাগুলিতে প্রবেশাধিকার থাকা কি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ? আপনার উত্তর ব্যাখ্যা করুন।

৬. আপনি কি আপনার শিশুদের বাহিরে নিয়ে যান? যদি উত্তর হ্যাঁ হয়, তাহলে কত ঘনঘন? যদি উত্তর না হয়, তাহলে কেন?

৭. এই জায়গাগুলিতে আপনার আরও ঘনঘন প্রবেশে কোনো বাধা (যেমন- দূরত্ব, নিরাপত্তা) রয়েছে কি? এই বিষয়ে বিস্তারিত বলুন।

৮. আপনি কিভাবে একটি শহরে বহিরঙ্গন শিশু-বান্ধব স্থান কল্পনা করেন?

৯. স্থানীয় সরকার এবং নীতিনির্ধারকরা এই স্থানগুলির প্রাপ্যতা এবং গুণগত মান উন্নত করার জন্য কি ভূমিকা নিতে পারেন?

১০. আপনার মতে, নগর পরিকল্পনাকারীরা আমাদের শহরে শিশু-বান্ধব স্থানগুলি একীভূত করার জন্য কি ভাবে অবদান রাখতে পারে?

১১. আশেপাশের শিশু-বান্ধব জায়গা তৈরি এবং বজায় রাখার জন্য অভিভাবকদের এবং কমিউনিটিকে জড়িত করার প্রয়োজন বা নীতি থাকলে, আপনি কি অংশগ্রহণ করতে ইচ্ছুক? যদি উত্তর হ্যাঁ হয়, কিভাবে?

১২. আপনার মতে, অন্য পরিবারগুলি বা আপনার সম্প্রদায়ের সদস্যরা এমন প্রকল্পগুলিতে কীভাবে জড়িত হতে পারে?

1. **Can you share some of your fond memories of interactions and activities in the outdoor spaces?**

"I was raised within a community and the best time spent during my childhood was in the late afternoon playing badminton with the neighbor's children or roaming around with cousins when they came to visit. The lifestyle was different from this generation and there used to be lots of playing fields within the neighborhood. I grew up playing. My brother is five years older than me. He used to play sports like cricket or football, and I used to participate along with him." Upon asking more about her community, she shares, " I used to live in Dhanmondi. My mother was a principal of a school and we used to live in a community which consisted mainly of teachers. The residential quarter consisted of 4-5 buildings that were identical to each other with playing fields in front. It was somewhat similar to a government colony."

2. **How would you describe the term "child-friendly space"?**

To me, child-friendly spaces mean "freedom". A child may not be fully aware of regulating their actions and spontaneously act upon their curiosity so a child friendly space is one that prevents the child from getting hurt while they can freely express their spontaneity. To me, a child friendly space is where a child is able to act as their natural selves without any limits while ensuring they are safe.

3. **What features are essential for a space to be considered child-friendly in your opinion?**

The surrounding environment is a big feature that determines whether a space is child friendly. This includes the outdoor-indoors correlation. A child may grow up indoors for the majority but, for example, whether there is a playing field nearby or whether there is a good terrace space for the child to participate in gardening in the late afternoon is a good indicator for a child-friendly space. I believe that greenery has now become an essential part of a lifestyle and it is very important to be surrounded by plants. I personally love greenery and that greenery provides many other supports other than providing oxygen for the environment, such as it mentally uplifts us or visually enhances an environment etc. If a child grows up surrounded by greenery, whether in a balcony, terrace or playground, it helps a lot in their development.

<center>**Appendix C (Consent form)**</center>

Title of the Thesis Proposal: Parental perceptions regarding urban outdoor child-friendly spaces

Researcher: Sumaiya Arzoo

Purpose of the research

I am conducting this research as a part of my Master's Degree requirement from the Institute of Educational Development (IED) - BRAC University. The aim of this research is to understand parental perceptions regarding urban outdoor child-friendly spaces.

Expectations from you

If you agree, you will be expected to share your expectations, opinions, thoughts, attitudes and beliefs regarding the outdoor child-friendly spaces in an urban context and find how these issues can be addressed to develop more inclusive and accessible outdoor spaces for both children and families. The interview may take 20 to 30 minutes, depending upon your response. Your answers will be voice recorded.

Risks and benefits

There is no risk to you for participating in this study; directly or indirectly parents, children, policy makers may be benefited in the future.

Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality

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

Future use of information

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

maintenance of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of information identifying participants in any way.

Right not to participate and withdraw

Your participation in the study is voluntary, and you are the sole authority to decide for and against your participation in this study. Refusal to take part in the study will involve no penalty. If you agree to my proposal of participating in my study, please indicate that by putting your signature in the specified space below-

_____   _____

Name of the Parent: **Name of the Researcher:**

_____   _____

Signature of the Parent: **Signature of the Researcher:**

Thank you very much for your cooperation. For any further query, you may contact me. My contact no is 01715023325, or you can email at sumaiya.arzoo@bracu.ac.bd