

**FATHER INVOLVEMENT IN PRE-PRIMARY CHILDREN'S
LEARNING: A PERCEPTION STUDY IN GOVERNMENT
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

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

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Ethics Statement

Title of Thesis Topic: Father Involvement in Pre-primary Children's Learning: A Perception Study in Government Primary School

Student name: Mohammed Norul Basher

1. Source of population

Fathers whose children, aged 5+ years, were enrolled in the 5+ pre-primary class of the selected two government primary schools.

2. Does the study involve

- 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

- 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

- 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

This study examines fathers' perception regarding their involvement in children's pre-primary learning in government primary schools of Bangladesh. The study emphasizes the significant relationship between father involvement and children's academic achievement. Data were gathered using qualitative methods, specifically through interviews and focus group discussions. The results were categorized into four themes: fathers' perceptions of involvement, practices adopted by fathers to help children's learning, challenges to involvement, and fathers' increased participation in institutional activities.

The findings indicate that although fathers acknowledge the advantages of their involvement, they encounter considerable obstacles, such as financial constraints, cultural expectations, familial support, and insufficient institutional initiatives. Many fathers engage in informal, play-based learning methods like storytelling and educational games but struggle to balance professional commitments with their involvement in children's learning. They often rely on their spouses for information and support in this regard. The study recommends for raising awareness and implementing community initiatives to foster father involvement that ensures shared parenting and community support for fathers. It emphasizes school initiatives, like regular meetings and father-focused activities. The study also recommends for a cultural shift and institutional support. These strategies can create an inclusive environment, enhancing fathers' roles in children's pre-primary learning. It is hoped that the findings of this study will play a significant role in improving the quality of pre-primary education in the government primary schools in Bangladesh.

Keywords:

Perception; Fathers' Involvement; Pre-primary Learning; Parent

Dedication

I dedicate this study to a cherished mentor who inspired and encouraged me throughout this journey, whose deepest desire is to see me thrive, succeed, and be happy.

Acknowledgement

The completion of this study would not have been possible without the contribution and assistance of numerous individuals, whose names may not all be mentioned here. Their heartfelt contributions, though unspoken, are deeply appreciated and gratefully acknowledged.

I would like to appreciate the participants, whose participation shapes the very heart of this study. Their authentic patience and receptiveness during our discussions were commendable, and their considered comments have been important in obtaining the insights that informed my study. This study would not have been completed without their invaluable efforts.

I wish to convey my heartfelt appreciation to my distinguished supervisor, Ferdousi Khanam, Senior Lecturer at BRAC Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University. Her expertise, consistent guidance, generous dedication of time, and motivation helped me bring this study into success.

I am grateful to the esteemed authorities of BRAC Institute of Educational Development and the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) for their incessant support. The financial, academic and administrative assistance I received from these organizations has been inestimable.

I offer my heartfelt thanks to my esteemed instructors and beloved batchmates of ECD Batch-17, whose untiring support and sincere cooperation have been an endless source of strength throughout the ECD course.

My heartfelt thanks go to my wife Hasna Pervin and my two sons- Khaleed Rafee and Tariq Zubin for their assistance, boundless co-operation, encouragement, moral support and love.

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List of Acronyms

ECD	Early Childhood Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IDI	In-Depth Interview
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Education Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

Chapter I: Introduction & Background

Introduction

The learning period of children at the pre-primary level plays a crucial role in a child's academic development. It is the foundation for children's future academic success and personal development. (Berlinski et. al., 2009; UNESCO, 2023). In recent years, parental engagement in children's learning has emphasized the academic achievement and overall development of children (McWayne, 2013; Goodall & Montgomery, 2023). However, in the context of children's learning and parental involvement, so far studies have mainly focused on mother involvement. In recent days, research on fathers' positive influence over children's early learning, particularly at the pre-primary level, is gaining ground (Sarkadi et al., 2008; Cabrera et al., 2018). In this backdrop, it is important to explore how fathers perceive their role during their children's learning at the pre-primary level. Government primary schools and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) operated schools provide pre-primary education for 4+ and 5+ children in Bangladesh. The majority of pre-primary children in Bangladesh receive their education from government primary schools. These schools play an important role in laying the foundation for the academic, psychomotor, and socio-emotional development of young children, as they enroll a significant number of them. Realizing the importance of pre-primary education, the government of Bangladesh has been implementing mandatory one-year pre-primary education since 2015. Moreover, the two-year pre-primary education was introduced by the government in 2023 in about 3214 government primary schools throughout the country on a pilot basis. In addition to these schools, about 5000 government primary schools will introduce 4+, i.e., two-years pre-primary education in 2025. (M. Rahman, personal communication, October 17, 2024). Nataša et. al. (2022) conducted a meta-

analysis of nine studies to assess the possible impacts of fathers' involvement on children's learning success. They found a positive correlation between fathers' involvement in their children's learning and children's academic performance. The result confirmed that fathers' involvement plays a key role in enhancing student achievement. Understanding the father's involvement in the learning journey of young children is important for various reasons. Most importantly, there is a need to understand the extent of fathers' knowledge and involvement in their children's early learning, as well as their current practices. There should be insight into the factors that facilitate or impede fathers' participation, such as societal norms, cultural beliefs, and practices in the context of the government primary school system. Furthermore, it is essential to identify potential intervention and improvement areas that can increase father involvement in early childhood learning, hence optimizing the advantages for children's comprehensive development.

Statement of the Problem

The involvement of fathers in their children's learning is regarded as an essential factor. It enhances the cognitive growth and learning abilities of children. Certain studies affirm that father involvement yields beneficial effects. A strong correlation exists between higher IQ levels and enhanced learning capabilities in children. Father involvement positively influences children's health and resilience (Garcia, 2022; Lansford, n.d.). Lack of father involvement has several negative effects on children, including decreased physical health, delayed social-emotional growth, strained relationships with extended family, and increased financial instability (Dads Resource Centre, 2021). According to a study by Nord et al. (2001), children with higher father involvement have a higher chance of getting excellent academic results, while less father involvement results in lower grades. Emotional and behavioral problems

among children may increase due to a lack of father involvement during their growing period. Children with less interaction with their father generally have a greater risk of experiencing anxiety, depression, and behavioral difficulties. A child who gets emotional backing and direction from fathers becomes more confident, and they have the greater ability to manage their emotions. The involvement of fathers has a beneficial impact on the social abilities of children. The absence of this involvement can impede the growth of important social abilities (Cabrera et al., 2014; Lamb, 2004). Jia et al. (2012) pointed out that children with an active father's involvement show improved social abilities and are more adept at creating positive relationships. On the other hand, children without this involvement might face difficulties in social interactions and relationships with peers. Traditionally, fathers in Bangladesh have played nominal roles in their children's learning due to reluctance and a lack of awareness regarding the significance of childhood learning. Sikder and Banu (2018) observed that among Bangladeshi fathers there is a significant lack of awareness regarding early care, support, and stimulation that potentially affects the formative years of children and leads to delays in children's cognitive, language, and social development. A father's role as a financial provider surpasses other responsibilities. Their responsibilities in children's learning are often overlooked. According to Hossain and Atencio (2017), in urban settings, mothers are typically responsible for managing the day-to-day responsibilities of schooling; however, fathers act as decision-makers in case of their children's learning. Fathers face multiple obstacles that keep them away from active involvement in their children's learning. Traditional gender roles often label fathers as financial providers, thereby releasing them from other important responsibilities such as active involvement in their children's learning. Moreover, long working hours and the need for a steady income limit their time and

ability to engage in their children's learning endeavors. The education levels of fathers, their ages, and their financial status all affect fathers' involvement in childhood learning. Older and more educated fathers, especially those with higher education, are more likely to be involved in their children's learning pursuits. This pattern highlights the importance of specific strategies to promote father engagement from every social and economic level (Share-Net Bangladesh, 2021). The role of fathers in the learning of pre-primary children is explored by extensive research, but there remains a conspicuous gap in comprehending the specific dynamics of father involvement and their awareness of children learning at the pre-primary level, specifically in the setting of government primary schools in Bangladesh. Bangladesh, with its unique cultural, societal, and educational landscape, presents unique challenges and opportunities for comprehending fathers' perception, practices and influencing factors regarding their involvement in the learning of pre-primary children.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate and comprehend fathers' perceptions of their involvement in their children's learning activities at the pre-primary level, particularly within the framework of Bangladesh government primary schools. This study aims to investigate how fathers view and understand their role in their children's learning endeavors. This entails investigating their viewpoints, perspectives, and understanding regarding the effect of their involvement in their children's pre-primary learning. Furthermore, this study intends to identify and record the different activities and strategies that fathers practice to support their children's learning. In this context, the word "support" denotes the formal and informal learning support that fathers offer their children, encompassing assistance with homework and involvement in

educational play and reading activities. This study seeks to examine the factors that affect father involvement. The influencing factors include personal factors, family background, socio-economic conditions, and cultural influences that either inspire or discourage fathers from active involvement. By realizing these objectives, this study intends to find out how fathers play roles in their children's pre-primary learning in the context of government primary schools. It aims to provide information that could direct educational policies and programs targeted at increasing father involvement, which could improve children's learning outcomes.

Significance of the Study

This study is of enormous importance, especially in the context of Bangladeshi government primary schools. In the Bangladeshi communities, fathers' involvement in the pre-primary learning of their children is often limited by traditional gender roles. As the government primary school plays a major role in providing pre-primary education, there is a need to know the status of fathers' involvement in the children's pre-primary learning. In this context, there is a significant gap in comprehending the role of fathers. For the growth of a child's cognitive development and socio-emotional development, the pre-primary phase of learning is considered a foundational stage. However, many studies have largely focused on maternal roles without considering the importance of fathers' roles and their perspectives (Cabrera et al., 2018; Sarkadi et al., 2008). This research gap needs to be addressed for a better understanding of father involvement in pre-primary learning. The findings of the study will provide significant insights into fathers' involvement and perception regarding their children's pre-primary learning. These findings can be utilized for designing programs that will facilitate and encourage fathers' involvement in pre-primary learning. It will ensure both mother and father's active engagement in their children's learning journey. This

study insight will help to allocate resources and develop a support system that will address the specific needs and challenges faced by fathers in performing their roles. Further, the findings of the study will help to develop a community culture that appreciates and recognizes the importance of father's involvement in pre-primary learning. The result of the study could have the potential to influence policy decisions by raising awareness among decision-makers regarding fathers' involvement in pre-primary learning, which may make it easier to enact policies on fathers' active participation in this regard. Moreover, the study's findings would encourage the integration of father involvement strategies into teacher training and professional development programs; thus, the educators will be equipped to support and encourage father involvement effectively. By providing new insights into the dynamics of father participation in pre-primary learning within the context of government primary schools in Bangladesh, this study will address the current knowledge gap. The study will shed light on the specific cultural, social, and economic factors that will influence paternal involvement in this situation. The results of this study will improve Early Childhood Development (ECD) by offering suggestions for encouraging fathers' involvement through data support. This study aims to create a caring learning environment that will improve children's learning and prepare them for future academic accomplishment. This study will enable fathers to play an increasingly active and informed role in pre-primary learning. The ultimate goal of the study is to optimize children's early learning experiences, thereby enhancing the foundation for their holistic future development.

Research Questions

This study intends to find out the answers to the following research questions:

RQ 1: What are fathers' understandings about their involvement in the learning of pre-primary children in government primary schools?

RQ 2: What practices do fathers engage in to support their children's learning?

RQ 3: What factors influence father involvement in children's pre-primary learning?

Operational Definition

Father: Generally, the phrase 'Father' is used to address a male parent who typically plays a significant role in the developmental, physiological and emotional growth of a child often shares responsibilities in caregiving, discipline, and socialization (Lamb, 2010). In this study, 'Father' represents the male parent of a pre-primary learner aged 5+ years attending a government primary school.

Learning: According to Merriam et.al. (2007) learning is a continuous life long process by which a person acquires and improves knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors through both conscious reflective thoughts and unintentional absorption from his/her interactions with the environment and experiences. In this study, learning means the holistic process by which children learn knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that serve as the basis for their academic and personal development.

Perception: Perception entails detecting stimuli in the surroundings and consciously evaluating the gathered information in order to respond appropriately. It is a sensory experience that is important for survival (Cherry, 2020). This study defines "perception" as the fathers' understanding and awareness of their role in their children's learning and development.

Pre-primary children: According to the National Children Policy of Bangladesh 2011, pre-primary children are referred to as those who are aged 3-5 years. The policy mentioned providing pre-primary education for this age group of children (MOWCA, 2011). For this study, pre-primary children are considered as those children are aged 5+ years who are enrolled in government-run primary schools in order to receive pre-primary education.

Government Primary School: Government primary schools are publicly financed educational institutions in Bangladesh. These institutions offer elementary education to learners aged 6 to 10, in addition to pre-primary education for children aged 4 and 5 years or younger.

Chapter II: Literature Review

This section explores relevant literature sources and presents an overview of existing literature, aiming at finding the research gaps. This literature review is focused on the importance of father involvement in early childhood learning, factors influencing father involvement in early childhood learning, and father involvement in early childhood learning in the case of the global context and Bangladesh context.

Importance of Father Involvement in Early Childhood Learning

Substantial data indicates that parental involvement is fundamental to early childhood learning and positively influences children's intellectual, social, and emotional growth (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Recent studies have highlighted the distinctive and significant roles that fathers play in their children's educational experiences, especially during the critical pre-primary years (Sarkadi et al., 2008; Kong & Yasmin, 2022). Fathers play an important role in shaping their children's learning and development from infancy to

early childhood (Cabrera et al., 2000; Liu et al., 2023). Their involvement ranges from reading bedtime stories and engaging in imaginative play to offering emotional support and encouragement (Marsiglio et al., 2000). Although cultural biases and expectations often demote fathers to the nonessential in child-rearing, studies have found that a father's involvement benefits children's cognitive development, language acquisition, and school readiness (Sarkadi et al., 2008). Early childhood learning sets the foundation for future academic success, which is significantly determined by the father's contribution to their children's learning during the age of development (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004). Fathers can establish a supportive atmosphere at home, therefore enhance and supplement teachers' endeavors that can foster a comprehensive approach to the learning of preschoolers.

Factors Influencing Father Involvement in Early Childhood Learning

Teachers and school administrators are essential constituents of the educational community. They are expected to support parental engagement. According to research, educators' perspectives of father engagement may differ depending on their educational, ideological, and cultural backgrounds (Coley & Hernandez, 2006). Emerging data indicates that the quality of the parent-teacher relationship affects parents' efforts to engage in their children's academic performance; subsequently, that leads to enhanced academic accomplishment (Hughes & Kwok, 2007). According to some researchers, parental involvement at home, which includes having conversations with the children about their school experiences and the discussions about the worth of studying, is the direct cause of children's excellent academic results (Ingram et al., 2007). Although parental fathers' involvement is deemed important, there may be misunderstandings regarding its extent. Parents frequently perceive parental involvement merely as aiding their children with homework. Besides, parents can

actively participate in the learning activities conducted at school. They may monitor children, support the teacher, and engage in the school's decision-making process (Carlisle et al., 2005). Certain educators may contend that paternal involvement is advantageous for children's cognitive and socio-emotional development, perceiving fathers as equal to mothers and essential participants in children's learning during the pre-primary phase (Lamb, 2004). Nevertheless, certain individuals might possess beliefs or biases that marginalize fathers, particularly those from varied or atypical family structures (Ispa et al., 2004; Rollè et al., 2019). Fathers may have differing ideas about their roles and responsibilities in their children's learning. Cultural practices, community standards, and personal views all influence the father's perception of school-related activities (Cabrera et al., 2018). While some fathers can actively participate in their children's education by attending parent-teacher meetings, volunteering in classrooms, and attending school events, others face obstacles or may not participate due to systemic issues or cultural barriers (Green et al., 2007).

Pre-primary education becomes more effective when parents and the community participate in preschool activities. When schools, parents, families, and communities collaborate to support learning, learners tend to get higher grades, attend school more frequently, stay in school longer, and enroll in higher-level programs (NEA, 2008).

Contextual and cultural factors have huge impacts on the fathers' involvement in children's learning. Some cultures impose traditional gender roles that require fathers to play a less active role in their children's learning, although mothers are often expected to be the main person responsible for school affairs (Pleck, 2010; Cabrera et al., 2021). Social class, racial and ethnic identity, as well as community norms, differ as to how fathers are perceived and valued in schools (Gutman & McLoyd, 2000).

The organizational culture and climate in primary schools can influence the fathers'

perceptions about participation. Schools that appreciate and encourage father involvement, give fathers the chance to be involved in the decision-making process, and offer culturally responsive programs are better placed to achieve positive father engagement (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Cabrera et al., 2021).

Despite the growing acknowledgment of the significance of paternal involvement in child development and the increasing readiness of contemporary fathers to engage in their children's learning, obstacles to father-involving processes need to be removed (Cabrera & Peters, 2000). Some researchers have classified these problems. Firstly, fathers continue to endure gender preconceptions imposed by their social environment. For example, they are frequently regarded as "disciplinarians" (Cowan & Pruett, 2009) or simply viewed as financial or material providers (Cabrera & Peters, 2000). Regrettably, this financial stereotype is perpetuated by governmental policies, corrupt family laws, and is further endorsed by the media. Secondly, governmental child support initiatives and punitive regulations that distance fathers from their children limit the formation of a closer psychological bond and hinder father involvement (Cabrera & Peters, 2000). The third obstacle to father involvement originates from social science studies. For decades, early patriarchal influences in society considered father involvement as an inferior and feminine duty, and that was transferred to women. Subsequently, stringent feminist pressures portrayed fathers as exploitative figures who should be excluded from the family and distanced from their children. Unfortunately, social science research has seldom examined father involvement in children's learning. Additionally, family agencies and educational institutions are perceived as another obstacle to father engagement. The physical environment is exclusively created for women, featuring advertising, magazines, wall art, paintings, flowers, and decorations, which collectively create an

excessively feminine atmosphere (Cowan & Pruett, 2009). In addition to the adverse physical surroundings affecting father involvement, the social structure of schools has also been feminized. Most early childhood programs and environments are largely operated by female caregivers and employees. Home visitors from family organizations and educational institutions request to converse with the mother regarding their child, disregarding fathers (Cowan & Pruett, 2009).

Father Involvement in Early Childhood Learning: Global Context

A substantial amount of empirical research has examined the influence of paternal involvement on children's academic success and learning, highlighting several dimensions of father involvement in early childhood learning. Many research findings suggest that children who have father involvement in their pre-primary learning tend to have better grades (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004). On the other hand, Sarkadi et al. (2008) study found that fathers' conscious involvement in children's early learning activities is positively correlated with their cognitive and socio-emotional development. The longitudinal study of Cabrera et al. (2000) shows that fathers' involvement in their children's learning has a positive effect on children's academic achievement, which continues over time.

Additionally, the influence of fatherhood does not end at academic matters; it encompasses the holistic aspect of child development. Marsiglio et al. (2000) investigated the significance of fathers in enhancing their children's social skills, problem-solving capabilities, and self-regulation, which are vital characteristics for academic achievement. The various aspects of father involvement can positively influence children's learning experiences. Supporting children with homework, engaging in reading activities, and supplying educational resources are deemed the most effective methods for enhancing their academic achievement (Flouri &

Buchanan, 2004; Froyen et al., 2013). The father's involvement in children's educational activities, including attending parent-teacher conferences and engaging in school events, enhances children's school attachment and fosters a positive attitude towards learning (Hill & Tyson, 2009). The collaboration between parents and teachers is crucial for advancing children's learning. Research indicates that fathers' involvement in collaborative relationships with teachers enhances communication. This partnership facilitates collaborative decision-making and alignment between home and school. As a result, children's academic and socio-emotional development boosts (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Numerous initiatives designed to enhance paternal engagement with children have been subjected to thorough assessment, especially within low-income minority populations. A study by Cowan et al. (2009) examined 289 couples from primarily low-income Mexican American and European American households. These families were randomly assigned to one of three conditions and observed for 18 months: 16-week sessions for fathers, 16-week sessions for couples, or a single informational meeting. Compared to families in the low-dose control condition, intervention families exhibited beneficial outcomes in fathers' involvement with their children, the quality of couple relationships, and children's behavioral issues. However, participants in couples' groups exhibited more consistent and prolonged favorable effects compared to those in fathers-only groups.

Father Involvement in Early Childhood Learning: Bangladesh Context

Prior studies in Bangladesh have shown the importance of father involvement in childcare and its possible implications for the well-being of children. Fathers who participate in childcare tasks, including meal planning and feeding, enhance their children's nutritional health and promote a wider range of development (Hossain &

Tareque, 2015). Research demonstrates that father involvement extends beyond nutrition. It positively impacts various facets of a child's development and promote overall growth (Rahman & Jesmin, 2017). Research in urban Bangladesh indicates that fathers significantly influence children's cognitive and socioemotional development, especially in language skills, academic performance, emotional intelligence, and resilience (Rahman & Haque, 2020; Khan & Karim, 2019). Nonetheless, hurdles remain, such as occupational stress and family expectations limiting fathers' involvement (Hossain & Islam, 2021).

The main objective of pre-primary learning is to create a stimulating yet safeguarded environment that facilitates the holistic development of children. The Government of Bangladesh has acknowledged the significance of early childhood learning and has made efforts to expand the scope of pre-primary education countrywide (Kabir & Howlader, 2019). Pre-primary education is often structured to promote the learning of children aged 3 to 5 years. It emphasizes the enhancement of children's cognitive, social, and physical skills through activities and play-based learning (UNESCO, 2021). In Bangladesh, enrollment rates at the pre-primary level in government institutions have improved over the years. However, there exist some problems of inadequate infrastructure, lack of resources, and disparities in access, especially in rural and unprivileged areas (Kabir & Howlader, 2019, UNICEF, 2022). The present condition of fathers as participants in pre-primary education in Bangladesh illustrates a range of involvement among socio-economic and cultural groups. Some fathers may be actively involved in their children's pre-primary learning by supporting their learning at home, attending school events, and engaging with teachers, while others can be less involved because of reasons like work commitments, normal male roles, and lack of awareness about the importance of early childhood education (Kabir &

Howlader, 2019; UNICEF, 2022). Studies have shown that socioeconomic status, level of education, and cultural beliefs are related to the extent of a father's influence on early childhood learning (Berlinski & Schady, 2015). Moreover, access to quality pre-primary education services has disparities that worsen the fathers' ability to engage with their children's learning experiences, specifically in marginalized communities (Kabir & Howlader, 2019; Bhatta et. al., 2020).

In Bangladesh, social and economic constraints, cultural norms, and institutional barriers inhibit fathers' participation in their children's pre-primary learning. Occupational obligations, extended working hours, and financial pressures may impede fathers' involvement in their children's pre-primary academic endeavors (Kabir & Howlader, 2019; Rahman et al., 2019). Besides these facts, traditional gender roles and societal expectations also prohibit fathers from actively engaging in their children's learning, particularly in conservative societies (Islam & Rahman, 2021). Institutional barriers also contribute to the fathers' disengagement in their children's pre-primary learning. On the other hand, some promoters, such as supportive school policies, community programs, and awareness-raising campaigns, can improve fathers' involvement and create an environment that appreciates fathers' contributions (Kabir & Howlader, 2019).

The Research Gaps

Although a significant number of studies have been done on the topic of parental involvement in their children's early childhood learning, with a focus primarily on the roles played by mothers. There remains a clear gap in understanding regarding the particular dynamics of father involvement, especially when it comes to pre-primary learning in Bangladeshi government primary schools. The current literature insufficiently explores fathers' perceptions, actions, attitudes, and beliefs regarding

their role in children's pre-primary learning. Limited research has been undertaken to examine paternal involvement in early childhood education within the unique cultural, socioeconomic, and educational context of Bangladesh. Although international studies provide significant insights, these studies fall short of reflecting the particular obstacles and opportunities of fathers' involvement in children's pre-primary learning.

Chapter III: Methodology

Research Approach

The study follows a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research methods involve gathering, analyzing, and interpreting narrative and visual data to gain insights into a topic of interest (Gay, 1999). For this study, qualitative methods are used to explore the perceptions, practices, experiences, behaviors, and influencing factors of the fathers' involvement in their children's pre-primary learning within the specified context. Two prominent methods of quantitative study were employed to conduct this study. The qualitative data were obtained through focus group discussions (FGD) and in-depth interviews (IDI). Focus groups were expected to get the answers to the research questions, and the in-depth interviews were expected to get deeper insight from the participants in this regard.

Research Site

The Participants of this study were selected from the jurisdiction of government primary schools that are situated in the Dhaka Metropolitan Area. The rationale for selecting the research sites was the availability and accessibility of multiple government primary schools in the urban setting. Proximity parents' residences was one of the major factors in selecting the study site. Two primary schools in the Dhaka

Metropolitan City area were selected for this study. One of the two schools is Hossain Mohammad Ershad Government Primary School. The school is located in the Khilgaon area of Dhaka North City Corporation. This school has 5+ and 4+ pre-primary classes. Two pre-primary-trained teachers conducted the class activities. There are about forty students in each class. The other primary school is located in the Shantibagh area of Shahjahanpur Police Station in Dhaka South City Corporation. The name of the school is Shantibagh Government Primary School. 5+ pre-primary class programs are conducted in this school. Two pre-primary teachers conducted the class activities. The 5+ pre-primary class comprised about 40 learners.

Research Participants

Since the study explored the perception of fathers regarding their involvement in their children pre-primary learning, therefore, the Participants were the fathers whose children, aged 5+ years, were enrolled in the 5+ pre-primary class of the selected two government primary schools.

Participants Selection Procedure

The study employed purposive sampling to select participants who can provide vivid and diverse perspectives on father awareness and involvement in their children's learning. The fathers who gave their consent to participate voluntarily were considered the participants of this study.

Data Collection Tool

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and In-Depth Interview (IDI) guidelines are used for the collection of data.

Data Collection Method

Data was collected using Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and In-depth Interviews (IDI) guidelines. Two focus group discussions, each comprising six participants, and four in-depth interviews were conducted for collecting qualitative data. Data was collected in-person for FGDs and in-depth interviews. At first, the researcher established a good rapport with the participants, and they were explained the process of FGD and IDI. The participant's permissions were obtained to record their conversation. Along with the recorded conversation, detailed notes were taken. The duration of FGDs and IDIs was approximately forty-five minutes.

Data Analysis

The present study employed a thematic analytic approach to analyze the qualitative data. A popular technique in qualitative research for finding, examining, and summarizing patterns (themes) in data is thematic analysis. The first stage was to become thoroughly immersed in the data by reading the transcripts of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) several times. This helped in developing a thorough comprehension of the data by highlighting initial concepts and potential codes (Creswell, 2013). After familiarization with data, coding of data was done. To do this, data segments that were pertinent to the research questions were identified and coded. The codes were grouped into possible themes. In this step, the codes were analyzed and categorized into broad themes. The generated themes were reviewed to ensure they authentically reflect data. This involve verifying the coherence between the themes and the coded extract. Themes were refined, split, or merged. After the finalization of themes, these were defined and named. In this step, an analysis of each theme was written in detail, along with an explanation of the

narrative each theme conveyed and how the theme fitted into the larger picture of the study as a whole (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Validity of the Research Tools

The FGD and IDI guidelines were reviewed by experts, and a pilot test was conducted to ensure the validity of the tools. The language and phrasing were designed in such a way that questions were culturally appropriate and avoided ambiguity or leading questions that could result in biased responses.

Ethical Issues

Ethical considerations served as guiding principles throughout all stages of the research procedure on fathers' perception and involvement in children's learning at the pre-primary level in government primary schools. All participants were provided consent prior to their participation in the study. Participants received comprehensive information regarding the research's objective, procedures, and advantages, enabling them to make voluntary and informed decisions about their involvement. The researcher assured participants the freedom to quit from the study at any moment without consequence. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained to safeguard the privacy of participants' personal information. Measures were taken to protect sensitive data, including the use of pseudonyms or identities to anonymize participants' comments in interview transcripts. Access to the data was restricted to authorized persons. Stringent measures were implemented to securely store and manage personal information. Furthermore, the researcher demonstrated an awareness of the cultural norms and practices present in the Bangladeshi context throughout participant interactions. This included adapting interview and discussion techniques to conform to local norms and honoring participants' beliefs and traditions. The research activities were executed in a culturally sensitive and respectful manner.

Limitation of the Study

The study had a few limitations. The participants were selected only from the Dhaka Metropolitan area. All of the participants were working individual therefore, it was difficult to convene all the participants at the same time to participate in the FGDs.

Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion

There are two sections in this chapter. The first section ‘Findings,’ presents the data collected through two qualitative tools i.e., in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The second section, ‘Discussion’ presents discussion of analyzed data in the light of literature and the researcher’s reflection. This section is concluded with a conclusion and recommendations based on the results and details discussion of the obtained data, codes, and themes.

Findings

This section presents the results of the study that reflect the primary qualitative data collected from the participants. The findings revolve around the research objectives of this study, which assess perceptions of fathers' involvement in the learning of their pre-primary children.

Demographic Information

The study had 16 participants in total. Twelve participants participated in focus group discussions (FGDs), with six individuals in each group. In-depth interview was conducted with four participants. The ages of the participants range from 27 to 45 years. The participants were selected from diverse professions. Among the participants, four were private service holders, one was caretaker, one was an autorickshaw driver, two were drivers, one was a security guard, one was a

shopkeeper, one was an interior designer, one was a plumber, and three were small businessmen. The educational qualifications of the participants also varied. Only one respondent had the primary level of education; seven participants had the secondary level, three participants had the higher secondary, and five participants had the graduate level of education. The findings from the collected quantitative data are organized in this section under four main themes. Each theme comprises several subthemes. The findings from FGDs and IDIs are arranged sequentially within each subtheme.

Theme 1: Fathers' Perception of Involvement in Children's Pre-primary Learning

This theme explores fathers' perceptions of their involvement in their children's pre-primary learning. It highlights their awareness about the significance of their roles and the challenges they encounter in balancing their various responsibilities. The findings show that participants recognize the value of being actively involved in their children's learning journeys, and they are aware of the obstacles that limit their participation.

Recognition of Father Involvement

Each participant frequently expresses a sense of having dual responsibilities. They portray themselves as a primary provider of their families and as active participants in their children's pre-primary learning. Many of the participants acknowledge that although they see their primary responsibility as financial providers of their families, they also recognize the value of their involvement in learning activities of their children's learning. Below are some responses from the participants. "*Fathers cannot spend much time; they have to be busy earning a living. Still, it's necessary to keep track of things.*" (IDI#1, 03/08/2024). One of the participants shared, "*Fathers cannot*

spend much time due to earning a living, but they should spend some time in the morning or evening involved in their child's learning. Communication with the school is also important. Playing with the child can offer bonding with father." (IDI#2, 04/08/2024).

During a focus group discussion, one of the participants made the following statement,

"There's many factors with our environments, particularly work environments. Whether we are in jobs or work in different professions, the environment isn't that supportive. After coming home, I want to spend time with my child, but circumstances often don't allow it. There are many reasons for that, but the involvement of fathers is definitely necessary." (FGD#1, 02/08/2024).

These statements represent a typical dilemma: many fathers face obstacles about balancing their professional lives and the desire to be involved in their children's pre-primary learning.

Positive Impact of Fathers' Involvement

All of the participants in the study believe that being involved in their children's learning will help children's holistic development. They recognize the fact that their active involvement can significantly enhance their children's emotional intelligence, social skills, and academic success. This is motivated by their hopes and desires regarding the future of their children. Their aspirations for their children's futures serve as the driving force behind this. *"If a father can spend time with the child, the child can express themselves better. Their aptitude increases,"* expressed a participant. He believes that his engagement has a positive impact on his child's learning. *"The child becomes more expressive and can learn many things easily."*

(IDI#3, 09/08/2024). His observation reveals the fathers' understanding regarding their involvement has a long-term benefit in children's pre-primary learning. Another participants added, *"A father's involvement helps to heighten children's emotional intelligence, movement, expression, courage, etc. For instance, I've observed that when playing and telling stories, children learn very quickly. It improves their self-esteem and motivation."* (IDI#4, 10/08/ 2024). One of the participants during FGD shared that *"I teach them to respect elders, especially through play. I feel that if fathers play with children, they became smarter."* (FGD#2, 08/08/2024). The aforementioned opinions show the direct correlation of fathers' positive perceptions between their involvement and their children's learning.

Shared Responsibility of Both Parents

Most of the participants expressed that mother are the primary care-givers, and the community's cultural norms dictate fathers' roles as financial providers or earners. Societal norms often assign responsibilities for children's learning primarily to mothers, which can exclude fathers and leave them feeling marginalized in this aspect. However, they recognize the importance of both parents in fostering holistic child development. A participant opined, *"This is the norm in our society. Times have changed, and children's learning strategies have also changed; therefore, every family member, especially the father, should spend some time."* (IDI#3, 09/08/2024). One of the participant emphasizes the fathers' roles in children's learning. He stated *"Fathers should supervise their children's learning. Even if it's for 5 or 10 minutes, fathers need to spend time with them, and ask questions like, "What did you do at school today?"* (FGD#1, 02/08/2024). However, some of the participants expressed that mother should bear the responsibilities of children's learning at the pre-primary level. A participant holds the views that

“I feel mothers should take the most of the responsibilities of their children as fathers are busy for earning. Children stay with their mother the most of time of a day. So, a mother knows well, what a child need. What are the traits of a child? It is better, if mothers look after child-rearing activities.” (FGD#2, 08/08/2024).

Theme 2: Fathers’ Practices to Support Pre-primary Children’s Learning

This theme explores the different practices performed by the fathers in order to support their children’s learning. It includes the ways in which they become involved, and the limitations they experience. Participants identified the need to involve themselves in the pre-primary learning of their children; however, there are a number of issues that affect how well they can cope with such practices.

Engagement through Play

Most of the participants opined that they engaged in play-based activities with their children as a primary or main approach to learning. They believed that every child has creative ability, they are able to think critically, and through play, father-child bondages can be developed. *“I play or study with them three or four days a week. I recite poems, tell stories, and play various educational games,”* remarked a participant. *“Whether it's indoor games or outdoor sports, I find them like a thinker and problem solver”* (IDI#3, 09/08/2024). This stresses the value participants place on play as a tool for both enjoyment and learning. Another participant said, *“I play cricket with my kids, teach numbers, teach new words, set up a shop, and teach the names of various items.”* (IDI#1, 03/08/2024). During a focus group discussion, participant 1 provided the following description: *“I play cricket and football with the*

kids, or sometimes I take them to the field with bicycles. I let them ride the bicycle, and we have many toy blocks, right? I tell them to build their building while I build mine, and we see whose is better.” (FGD#1, 02/08/2024). These statements support the notion that play-based informal learning might have an equal impact on learning outcomes as formal educational programs. A few participants said they don’t have time to play or engage in their child’s learning activities due to their professional engagement. A participant shared his perspective, saying *“I want to spend quality time with my child. I want to play with him. It is my desire to know what he is learning. But I have to give more time to my profession, so I don’t have enough time to my child.”* (IDI#4, 10/08/ 2024).

Progress Monitoring

Most participants expressed that they actively participate in keeping an eye on the general wellbeing and academic success of their children. Many acknowledge, nevertheless, that they frequently rely on their partners—especially their children’s mothers—for information and direction in this regard. *“I run a business. I cannot give time in the afternoon or at night. I leave the house a bit late in the morning. In the morning, I help the child learning and check the progress. Sometimes I drop off my child at school.”* stated a participant (IDI#2, 04/08/2024). This reliance underscores a dynamic where fathers feel involved. They realize a division of labor within parenting roles. Another participant said about progress monitoring: *“I check my child’s grades and get informed about how their day went, but I know my wife is more involved in the details of my child’s learning.”* (IDI#3, 09/08/2024). These comments suggest the acknowledgement of the collaborative nature of parenting, where mothers often take the lead in children’s learning.

Limited Institutional Engagement

All of the participants reported that their involvement in school-related events, like parent-teacher conferences, had been overlooked. The participants felt alienated as a result of the school authority's lack of responsiveness toward their participation. The situation diminishes their perceived role in their children's learning. During the FGDs, the participants informed that they know very little about school parent meetings. However, school authorities sometimes called fathers to attend the meetings; they felt that if they could attend the meeting, they would pay more attention to the child's learning. A participant expressed his view like,

“In the meetings, only the children's mothers are present. They talk. However, what I have seen is that the teacher says fathers should also participate in the meeting. I have also been told a couple of times, "Why don't you come more often?" The teacher often invites me to attend the meetings.” (FGD#1, 02/08/2024).

In an In-depth Interview, a participant stated that *“I have not attended in any meetings to date. the child's mother-maintained communication with the school. The school administration may feel free to communicate with mothers”* (IDI#1, 03/08/2024).

Another participant added, *“I am not invited to any meetings, but it would be better if I were invited. However, it seems to me that those meetings are intended for mother”* (IDI#4, 10/08/2024). Their comments underscore the practical challenges that fathers encounter while getting access to the school-related events. That indicating a missed opportunity for fathers interacting with teachers and school authority to enhance their children's learning at the pre-primary level.

Theme 3: Challenges to Involvement

This theme looks into the several aspects of fathers' involvement in their children's pre-primary learning. Recognizing the obstacles is essential to figuring out how to improve father support and involvement in educational settings. Participant's perspectives and behaviors are shaped by a complex interaction of institutional, familial, cultural, and economical factors, as revealed by the discussions from the focus groups (FGDs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs).

Socio-economic Barriers

Many participants acknowledged the economic factors as one of the major hindrances to their active parenting in their children's pre-primary learning. They are often engaged in work and financial responsibilities rather than actively educational responsibility for their children, which limits their availability. *“Due to my profession, I cannot spend time on the child's learning. If my financial situation were better, I could pay more attention to the child's health and nutrition, and I could buy more learning materials.”* shared a participant (IDI#1, 03/08/2024). One of the participants stated, *“I work during specific hours, leaving in the morning and returning at night. I cannot check the learning of the child. Our financial situation is not stable. If it were better, I could be more involved in my child's learning.”* In a focus group a participants described his financial misery as *“There are indeed challenges due to financial circumstances. As I mentioned, the rent situation in Dhaka has become quite dire. We need to work several times harder to pay the rent, which leads to less concern for food compared to rent. Even for a small room in our area, the rent comes to ten thousand takas. For a tiny apartment”* (FGD#2, 08/08/2024). This illustrates how monetary demands can lead to a conflict between one's desire to actively participate in parenting and one's economic obligation. However, some participants didn't agree with this notion. Some of them opined *“The economic capacity of*

someone does not relate to a child's learning. Any parent can help their child to some extent at the pre-primary level if they wish." (FGD#1, 02/08/2024).

Cultural Norms

The way that fathers participate in schooling is greatly influenced by cultural expectations. All of the fathers felt marginalized or unclear about their responsibilities as a result of societal conventions that frequently place mothers in the major roles as care-givers and educators. Majority participants expressed that society expects fathers as a financial provider, and other family jobs are not mandatory for them. *"It seems to me, the school authority or teachers assume that my wife is the only person to take care of everything when it comes to our children's learning,"* stated a participant (IDI#2, 04/08/2024). This is a reflection of the widespread notion that mothers have the primary responsibility for taking care of the learning activities of their children, which affects how fathers view their roles.

Family Support

The presence or absence of family support, especially from the extended family, plays an important role in the involvement of fathers in the learning pursuits of their children. Limited opportunities for cooperative child rearing efforts may detract from fathers' motivation and ability to participate in such endeavors. During the focus group majority of the participants informed they had a single family. There was no other family member to help their children's learning except their wives. Some participants said that their extended family members (mother-in-law, sister, the child's elder brother or sister) helped their children in learning. *"My younger sister sometimes looks after my child's learning. I wish my parents lived with us; they could help my child's learning and make things easier for us"* expressed a father (IDI#3, 09/08/2024). These opinions shed light on how some fathers bear the burden of being

alienated, which becomes an impediment to their being engrossed in the children's pre-primary learning.

Theme 4: Enhanced Involvement in Institutional Initiatives

In this theme, the participants of this study consider some possible ways for increasing the engagement of fathers in their children's pre-primary learning. The findings concerning focus group discussions (FGD) and in-depth interviews (IDI) show a clear willingness by the participants to be more active and acknowledge some obstacles they experience. Different strategies can be employed in both educational institutions and communities in order to create an atmosphere that is more favorable for father involvement.

Institutional Initiatives

All of the fathers expressed desire for schools to take the initiative and encourage their involvement. This includes including fathers in all activities and, organizing programs that specifically encourage fathers to take part in school governance and activities. Most participants agreed that there should be institutional initiatives to engage fathers in the holistic development of the pre-primary children. During an FGD, a participant opined that

“Meetings should be arranged every 2-3 months. That way, I will know what the child is actually doing. Many things are told to mothers; as a father, I am not aware of many issues. If you inform me of any important matter regarding the child, I can understand or stay informed. I can know what the child is doing in school.” (FGD#2, 08/08/2024).

Some participants argued that pre-primary curriculum should be designed in such a way that it ensures fathers' involvement in children's learning. A participant stated,

“I believe that there should be some instructions in the curriculum to embed father involvement. There’s no alternative.” (FGD#1, 02/8/2024). These perspectives underscored the need for institutional initiatives and policy level initiatives in order to spur fathers’ involvement in children’s early learning.

Awareness Campaigns

A key recommendation from the participants was to enhance public awareness on the importance of fathers' involvement in their children's learning. The participants indicated that advertisements and awareness raising programs regarding fathers’ involvement can educate them and it will ensure active participation of fathers.

“If there are campaigns showing how important fathers are to their children’s learning, more fathers would step up. Campaigns can be conducted on TV. Schools can engage fathers more. Opinions can be shared among fathers through social media groups” stated a participant (IDI#4 10/08/2024).

His observation highlighted the potential impacts of awareness raising initiatives and erecting social networks. A participant shared, *“It would be effective if related organizations provided motivation to the fathers through dramas and advertisements on TV. I never really thought about how much my involvement could help my child until I watched a drama about children’s early learning”* (IDI#1, 03/08/2024). This view reflects that tailored information can change the perception and inspire fathers to become more involved in their children's learning journey.

Discussion

The four themes that are explained and elaborated in this section include: fathers’ perception of involvement in children’s pre-primary learning; fathers’ practices to support pre-primary children’s learning; challenges to involvement; and enhanced

involvement in institutional initiatives. These themes collectively shed light on the multifaceted nature of father involvement in pre-primary children's learning. Each theme suggests some limitations and possibilities of fathers' experiences. This discussion synthesizes the findings of the study with the relevant literature to understand the implications of fathers' involvement in pre-primary children's learning.

Theme 1: Fathers' Perception of Involvement in Children's Pre-primary Learning

The participants acknowledge that engaging in their children's learning at the pre-primary level is an important and challenging responsibility. This finding implies that fathers are aware of the need to be active involvement in the learning activities of their children. However, they struggle with the dual expectation of being a financial provider and engaging in their children's learning activities. This is consistent with the literature which acknowledge the changing roles of fathers in modern families in where they are expected to contribute both economically and emotionally (Cabrera et al., 2018). The participants of this study express a clear view that their involvement positively influences their children's cognitive and emotional development. This result is consistent with the research which states that children with actively engaged fathers are socially, emotionally and academically perform better in different dimensions of their life (Lamb, 2010).

However, cultural expectations and traditional gender roles continue to influence how fathers view their participation in pre-primary education. Many fathers still see themselves primarily as financial providers, a perception that is reinforced by societal norms that assign caregiving roles to mothers. The father's perception suggests the need for shifting these norms. This outcome is in agreement with the study conducted

by Katz-Wise et al., (2010). Some studies indicate that when fathers are involved in early education, their children perform better academically and emotionally (Sarkadi et al., 2008). The participants of this study expressed that despite their professional commitments, they are aware of the importance of dedicating time to their children's learning. This underscores the necessity for structural modifications in workplaces that facilitate an improved work-life balance for fathers, enabling them to participate more significantly in their children's learning. However, some participants expressed that mothers should shoulder the majority of the responsibilities, which illustrated the ongoing challenges in changing traditional perceptions about fatherhood. Although participants in this study face significant obstacles to actively involved in their children's pre-primary education, their acknowledgment of its importance suggests a trend toward heightened involvement. Societal support and changes in workplace culture can aid fathers in conquering obstacles, fostering more engaged and cooperative parenting in early education.

Theme 2: Fathers' Practices to Support Pre-Primary Children's Learning

The second theme regarding father's practices underscores on the specific practices that fathers adopt to support their children's learning. The findings reveal that fathers' engagement with their children has increasingly relied on play-based activities. Play, especially when combined with learning activities such as storytelling or problem-solving games, has the dual advantage of bonding and cognitive development (Ginsburg, 2007). The participants of this study supported their children's learning using informal approaches such as games, storytelling, and play-based teaching-learning processes. This finding is consistent with previous studies indicating that

play-based learning is vital for early learning that promote critical thinking, creativity, and social skills (Pyle & Danniels, 2017).

However, fathers also expressed a reliance on their partners to monitor their children's academic success. This division of labor, in which mothers are primarily responsible for school-related matters, reflects conventional parenting responsibilities that still exist (Craig, 2006). Fathers' minimal participation in formal learning activities, such as parent-teacher meetings, indicates a gap in their involvement that could be filled by more inclusive school policies. Studies have demonstrated that fathers' engagement in school-related activities improves children's academic performance (Nord, 2014).

This implies that more efforts should be made to incorporate fathers in school related events.

As fathers used a variety of effective techniques to promote their children's pre-primary learning, their involvement is frequently limited by societal expectations and institutional constraints. Addressing these hurdles, such as encouraging more active father involvement in school events and supporting shared responsibility in home-based learning, may have a good impact on fathers' engagement in their children's pre-primary learning. Schools can adopt a proactive approach and invite fathers to involve in school events; thus, families could benefit from more collaborative dynamics that allow both mother and father to contribute equally to their children's early learning.

Theme 3: Challenges to Involvement

This theme highlights numerous challenges of fathers' involvement in their children's pre-primary learning. Under this theme, socioeconomic constraints surfaced as a significant influencing factor. Many participants expressed that financial misery and

lengthy work hours hindered their ability to allocate time to their children's learning. Although a few participants opined that their economic condition does not have a relation with fathers' involvement in children's early learning. Economic issues are frequently noted as a barrier to fathers' involvement, especially in low-income families where family responsibilities generally take precedence over children's learning (Sheldon, 2002). Previous studies suggested about the importance of family-friendly policies, such as flexible working hours or paid parental leave. If implemented, these initiatives would allow fathers to be more involved in their children's early learning (Hook, 2006).

Cultural norms play an important role in influencing father involvement. Participants of this study acknowledged that they feel marginalized in terms of their children's pre-primary learning because society prioritizes the mother's role in caregiving and educational support. This is consistent with research indicating traditional gender norms frequently limit fathers' engagement in early childhood learning (Daly, 2011). To overcome these cultural obstacles, it is essential to advocate for more equitable parenting approaches that highlight shared responsibility between mothers and fathers (Marsiglio et al., 2000). According to the findings, the absence of familial support was regarded as a problem. The participants reported an absence of extended family networks that were capable of supporting their children's learning. Previous research indicates that extended family members, especially grandparents, significantly influence children's early development by providing supplementary support and resources (Jæger, 2012). These findings underscore the significance of community-based support systems that may provide the fathers actively participate in their children's learning endeavors.

Fathers' involvement in their children's pre-primary learning is hampered by socioeconomic pressures, long-held cultural norms, and a lack of family support. These problems highlight the need for policies and actions that promote a more equitable distribution of parental responsibilities, as well as increased institutional support to motivate father involvement in educational settings. Addressing these obstacles can enable fathers to take a more active role in their children's early learning, which will produce positive results in the case of improving the cognitive and social development of children (Pleck, 2010).

Theme: 4 Enhanced Involvement in Institutional Initiatives

Participants of this study expressed a notion that schools should take a more positive role in encouraging father involvement. They proposed that schools should take initiatives focusing on father involvement, the initiatives may include regular meetings, father-focused activities, and fathers' responsibilities in school governance. Earlier research confirmed this notion that suggested schools may increase father involvement by fostering more accessible environments and allowing fathers to participate in school activities (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). When fathers feel welcome and appreciated at school, they are more likely to engage in their children's learning (Nord, 2014). In addition to school initiative, the participants urge that awareness campaigns could assist in shifting of public perceptions of father involvement in children's learning. Campaigns that emphasize the role of fathers in early childhood learning can help to modify cultural norms and encourage more fathers to actively participate in their children's learning (Clark et al., 2015). According to research, father-focus awareness initiatives that provide them with the information and resources to support their children can greatly enhance father

involvement (Fagan & Iglesias, 1999). The participants suggested designing pre-primary curriculum in such a way that ensures father involvement at the pre-primary learning phase of the children. The findings of this study indicate that both institutional support and cultural change are required to increase fathers' involvement in their children's pre-primary learning. Schools and communities can facilitate an environment that encourages fathers to contribute to their children's early learning by adopting father-focused initiative, thus creating awareness about the value of their engagement.

Conclusion

This study results have revealed significance of fathers' involvement in children's pre-primary education in government primary school contexts. The study has extracted and expressed various aspects of father involvement in their children's pre-primary learning through four themes: fathers' perceptions of involvement, fathers' practices to facilitate learning, challenges to involvement, and enhanced involvement in institutional initiatives.

The participants acknowledge their role in their children's early learning as significant. They expressed that it is toiling them manage financial responsibilities with the necessity of their involvement in their children's early learning activities. Although many parents acknowledge the advantages of engaging in their children's pre-primary learning, societal conventions and conventional gender roles frequently restrict their involvement.

The study revealed that participants employ informal, play-oriented strategies to facilitate their children's learning. The participants relying on mothers for academic oversight revealed persistent gender discrepancies in parental responsibilities,

underscoring the necessity for more equitable distribution of responsibilities.

Socioeconomic circumstances, cultural norms, and insufficient support from extended family members can impede fathers' involvement in their children's pre-primary learning. These challenges suggest that systemic reform is required to encourage increased fathers' involvement in their children learning.

The study shows that proactive institutional initiatives are crucial for increasing father involvement. The participants suggested an intentional curriculum design that ensures fathers' involvement at the pre-primary level. The participants suggested the development of a system that encourages their involvement. They recommend promoting awareness campaigns by respective organizations to change societal conceptions of fathers' roles in early learning.

Recommendations

According to the study's findings and discussions, the following recommendations are being suggested to enhance father involvement in pre-primary children's learning:

1. Programs on shared parenting responsibilities can be initiated by the GOs and NGOs for educating parents. This could include arranging workshops that will teach both parents regarding supporting their children's learning collaboratively. Parents can be informed about the benefits of collaborative participation in their children's learning.
2. Father-focus programs can be undertaken by the government primary schools. The programs could be workshops, informal sessions, and any other programs that ensure accessibility of father in school governance.
3. Community awareness campaigns can be launched to inform the parents and general public about the value of fathers' involvement in the early learning of

children. This campaign should aim to change traditional ideas about gender roles in caregiving.

4. Community support networks can be established so that fathers can work worry-free and be involve in their pre-primary children's learning. Parents should be educated about establishing connections with extended family members or community organizations.
5. Related policies, as well as the curriculum should be reviewed to emphasize fathers' involvement in children's pre-primary learning. For this, initiatives should be taken by respective government organizations (GOs) and non-government organizations (NGOs) to inform policymakers about the importance of fathers' involvement in early childhood learning.
6. Further research on father involvement in early childhood learning can be undertaken and encouraged.

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Appendix 1. In-Depth Interview (IDI) Guideline

Research Title: Father Involvement in Pre-primary Children’s Learning: A Perception Study in Government Primary School

Section A: Demographic Information

Interview Date	
Start time	
End time	
Name of the Respondent	
Age	
Gender	
Educational background	
Occupation	
Child’s Age	
Gender	

Section B: Fathers' Understanding of Involvement in their Children's Pre-primary learning

1. What is your perception about a father's role in a child's learning at the pre-primary level?
2. Do you have any idea about the benefits of your involvement that brings to your child's learning and development? If yes, describe elaborately.
3. Can you provide any specific examples in which you think that your involvement has a positive impact on your child's learning?
4. How fathers can involve in their children’s pre-primary learning? Please express your opinion in this regard.
5. What are your views about the traditional roles of fathers and mothers (father as an earner and mother as a caregiver) in children's learning at the pre-primary level?

Section C: Fathers’ Practices in Supporting their Children’s learning

6. Can you describe some of the activities you engage in to support your child's learning at home?
7. Do you provide attention to your child when he/she needs learning support from you?
8. Does your child feel free to reach out to you in any learning activities?
9. How do you help with your child's homework or learning activities?
10. How often do you play educational games or read to your child?
11. Can you describe some examples of play or activities you do to support your child's learning?
12. Do you attend parent-teacher meetings or school events related to your child's learning?
13. What roles generally do you play in the meetings?

Section D: Factors Influencing Father Involvement

14. Who are the other family members who assist in your child's learning? In what ways do you coordinate with them?
15. How do your working hours and financial status impact your ability to be involved in your child's learning?
16. Are there any challenges specifically that you face due to your socio-economic status, affecting your involvement? Would you please mention these challenges?
17. Are there societal or cultural barriers that you experience while trying to become more engaged in your child's pre-primary learning? What are these barriers?

Section E: Suggestions for Improvement and Final Thoughts

18. What could be done to encourage more father involvement in children's pre-primary learning?
19. Do you have any suggestions for schools or policymakers to facilitate fathers to be more involved in their children's learning at home and school?
20. Is there anything else you would like to share in light of your experiences or thoughts on father involvement in children's pre-primary learning?

In-Depth Interview (IDI) Guideline

Research Title: Father Involvement in Pre-primary Children's Learning: A Perception Study in Government Primary School

সেকশন ক: জনমিতিক তথ্য

ইন্টারভিউর তারিখ	
শুরুর সময়	
শেষের সময়	
উত্তরদাতার নাম	
বয়স	
লিঙ্গ	
শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা	
পেশা	
সন্তানের বয়স	
লিঙ্গ	

সেকশন খ: Fathers' Understanding of Involvement in their Children's Pre-primary learning

১. প্রাক-প্রাথমিক স্তরে সন্তানের শিক্ষার ক্ষেত্রে পিতার ভূমিকা সম্পর্কে আপনার ধারণাগুলো কী?
২. আপনার সন্তানের শেখা ও বিকাশের ক্ষেত্রে আপনার সম্পৃক্ততা আরো বেশি সুবিধা দেয়- এ বিষয়ে আপনার ধারণা আছে কি? যদি থাকে, বিস্তারিত বলুন।
৩. আপনি কি এমন কোন নির্দিষ্ট উদাহরণ দিতে পারেন যেখানে আপনি মনে করেন যে, আপনার সম্পৃক্ততা আপনার সন্তানের শিক্ষার উপর ইতিবাচক প্রভাব ফেলে?
৪. সন্তানদের প্রাক-প্রাথমিক শিক্ষায় একজন বাবা কীভাবে জড়িত থাকতে থাকতে পারে- এ বিষয়ে আপনার মতামত বলুন?
৫. প্রাক-প্রাথমিক স্তরে শিশুদের শিক্ষার ক্ষেত্রে পিতা ও মাতাদের (বাবা একজন উপার্জনকারী এবং মা একজন পরিচর্যাকারী হিসাবে) ঐতিহ্যগত ভূমিকা সম্পর্কে আপনার দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি বলুন?

সেকশন গ: Fathers' Practices in Supporting their Children's learning

৬. বাড়িতে আপনার সন্তানের শেখার সহায়তা করার জন্য আপনি যে কাজগুলো করে থাকেন তার কিছু বর্ণনা করতে পারেন?

৭. আপনার সন্তানের যখন আপনার কাছ থেকে শিখন-সহায়তার প্রয়োজন হয়, তখন আপনি কি তার প্রতি মনোযোগী হন?
৮. শিখন কার্যক্রমের সময় আপনার সন্তান কী নির্দিধায় আপনার কাছে সাহায্যের জন্য আসে?
৯. আপনি আপনার সন্তানের বাড়ির কাজ বা শিখন-কার্যক্রমে কীভাবে সাহায্যে করেন?
১০. কত ঘন ঘন আপনি আপনার সন্তানের সাথে শিক্ষামূলক খেলা খেলেন বা সন্তানের সাথে পড়েন?
১১. সন্তানের শিখন-কার্যক্রমে সহায়তা করতে আপনি করে থাকেন- এমন কিছু খেলা বা কার্যাবলির উদাহরণ বর্ণনা করতে পারেন?
১২. আপনি কি আপনার সন্তানের শেখার সাথে সম্পর্কিত অভিভাবক-শিক্ষক সভা বা বিদ্যালয় কার্যক্রমে যোগ দেন?
১৩. সভায় সাধারণত আপনি কী ভূমিকা পালন করেন?

সেকশন ঘ: Factors Influencing Father Involvement

১৪. পরিবারের অন্য সদস্যদের মধ্যে কারা আপনার সন্তানের শেখার ক্ষেত্রে সহায়তা করে? কোন উপায়ে আপনি তাদের সাথে সমন্বয় করেন?
১৫. আপনার কাজের সময় এবং আর্থিক অবস্থা কীভাবে আপনার সন্তানের শেখার সাথে জড়িত থাকার ক্ষমতাকে প্রভাবিত করে?
১৬. আপনার আর্থ-সামাজিক অবস্থার কারণে আপনার সম্পৃক্ততাকে প্রভাবিত করে এমন কোনো বিশেষ চ্যালেঞ্জ আপনি মোকাবেলা করছেন কী? আপনি কি এই চ্যালেঞ্জগুলির বিষয়ে উল্লেখ করবেন?
১৭. প্রাক-প্রাথমিক স্তরে আপনার সন্তানের শিখন-কার্যক্রমে সম্পৃক্ত হওয়ার সময় আপনি কি কোনো সামাজিক বা সাংস্কৃতিক বাধা অনুভব করেন? এই বাধাগুলি কী কী?

সেকশন ঙ: Suggestions for Improvement and Final Thoughts

১৮. বাচ্চাদের প্রাক-প্রাথমিক শিক্ষায় পিতার অধিক অংশগ্রহণকে উৎসাহিত করার জন্য কী করা যেতে পারে?
১৯. বিদ্যালয় বা নীতিনির্ধারকদের কাছে আপনার কি কোনো পরামর্শ আছে, যাতে বাবারা বাড়িতে এবং বিদ্যালয়ে তাদের বাচ্চাদের শেখার সাথে আরও বেশি জড়িত হতে পারে?
২০. শিশুদের প্রাক-প্রাথমিক শিখনে পিতার সম্পৃক্ততার বিষয়ে আপনার অভিজ্ঞতা বা চিন্তাধারার আলোকে আপনি কি আরো কিছু বলতে চান?

Appendix 2: Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guideline

Research Title: Father Involvement in Pre-primary Children's Learning: A Perception Study in Government Primary School

Introductory Questions

- a. What do you enjoy most about being a parent
- b. What do you find most challenging about parenting?

Questions

1. What do you think regarding the involvement of fathers in their children's pre-primary learning?
2. What are your views about the traditional roles of fathers and mothers (father as an earner and mother as a caregiver) about children's learning at the pre-primary level?
3. Can you elaborate on what specific roles you think fathers should play in their child's pre-primary learning?
4. Can you provide any specific examples in which you think that your involvement has a positive impact on your child's learning?
5. What is your typical daily routine?
6. What activities do you engage in to support your child's learning at home?
7. How often do you play educational games or read to your child? Would you please share some examples of games and activities you use to support your child's learning?
8. Do you attend parent-teacher meetings or school events related to your child's learning? What are the roles you play there?
9. Who are the other family members who assist in your child's learning? In what ways do you coordinate with them?
10. How do your working hours and financial status impact your ability to be involved in your child's learning??
11. Do you face any specific challenges due to your socio-economic status that affect your involvement? Would you please mention these challenges?
12. Are there any societal or cultural barriers that you experience while trying to become more engaged? What are these barriers?
13. What could be done to encourage more father involvement in children's pre-primary learning?
14. Do you have any suggestions for schools or policymakers to facilitate fathers to be more involved in their children's learning at home and school?

15. Do you want to share anything else in the light of your experiences and or thoughts on father involvement in children's pre-primary learning?

বাংলা ভাষন

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guideline

Research Title: Father Involvement in Pre-primary Children's Learning: A Perception Study in Government Primary School

সূচনামূলক প্রশ্ন

ক একজন অভিভাবক হিসেবে কীসে আপনি সবচেয়ে বেশি আনন্দ লাভ করেন?

খ. অভিভাবকত্বের দায়িত্ব পালনে আপনি কোনটি বিষয়গুলো সবচেয়ে চ্যালেঞ্জিং বলে মনে করেন?

প্রশ্ন

1. সন্তানদের প্রাক-প্রাথমিক শিক্ষায় বাবাদের জড়িত থাকার বিষয়ে আপনি কী মনে করেন?
2. প্রাক-প্রাথমিক স্তরে শিশুদের শিক্ষার ক্ষেত্রে পিতা ও মাতাদের (বাবা একজন উপার্জনকারী এবং মা একজন পরিচর্যাকারী হিসাবে) ঐতিহ্যগত ভূমিকা সম্পর্কে আপনার দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি বলুন?
3. আপনার সন্তানের প্রাক-প্রাথমিক শিখন বিষয়ে পিতাদের কী বিশেষ ভূমিকা পালন করা উচিত বলে আপনি মনে করেন, তা বিশদভাবে বলতে পারেন?
4. আপনি কি এমন কোন নির্দিষ্ট উদাহরণ দিতে পারেন, যেখানে আপনি মনে করেন যে আপনার সম্পৃক্ততা আপনার সন্তানের শিখনের উপর ইতিবাচক প্রভাব ফেলে?
5. আপনার সাধারণ দৈনন্দিন রুটিন কি?
6. বাড়িতে আপনার সন্তানের শিখনে সাহায্যে করার জন্য আপনি কী কী করে থাকেন ?
7. কত ঘন ঘন আপনি আপনার সন্তানের সাথে শিক্ষামূলক খেলা খেলেন বা সন্তানের সাথে পড়েন? সন্তানের শিখন-কার্যক্রমে সহায়তা করতে আপনি করে থাকেন- এমন কিছু খেলা বা কার্যাবলির উদাহরণ বর্ণনা করতে পারেন?
8. আপনি কি আপনার সন্তানের শেখার সাথে সম্পর্কিত অভিভাবক-শিক্ষক সভা বা বিদ্যালয় কার্যক্রমে যোগ দেন? সভায় সাধারণত আপনি কী ভূমিকা পালন করেন?
9. পরিবারের অন্য সদস্যদের মধ্যে কারা আপনার সন্তানের শেখার ক্ষেত্রে সহায়তা করে? কোন উপায়ে আপনি তাদের সাথে সমন্বয় করেন?
10. আপনার কাজের সময় এবং আর্থিক অবস্থা কীভাবে আপনার সন্তানের শেখার সাথে জড়িত থাকার ক্ষমতাকে প্রভাবিত করে?
11. আপনার আর্থ-সামাজিক অবস্থার কারণে আপনার সম্পৃক্ততাকে প্রভাবিত করে এমন কোনো বিশেষ চ্যালেঞ্জ আপনি মোকাবেলা করছেন কী? আপনি কি এই চ্যালেঞ্জগুলির বিষয়ে উল্লেখ করবেন?
12. প্রাক-প্রাথমিক স্তরে আপনার সন্তানের শিখন-কার্যক্রমে সম্পৃক্ত হওয়ার সময় আপনি কি কোনো সামাজিক বা সাংস্কৃতিক বাধা অনুভব করেন? এই বাধাগুলি কী কী?

13. বাচ্চাদের প্রাক-প্রাথমিক শিক্ষায় পিতার অধিক অংশগ্রহণকে উৎসাহিত করার জন্য কী করা যেতে পারে?
14. বিদ্যালয় বা নীতিনির্ধারকদের কাছে আপনার কি কোনো পরামর্শ আছে, যাতে বাবারা বাড়িতে এবং বিদ্যালয়ে তাদের বাচ্চাদের শেখার সাথে আরও বেশি জড়িত হতে পারে?
15. শিশুদের প্রাক-প্রাথমিক শিক্ষনে পিতার সম্পৃক্ততার বিষয়ে আপনার অভিজ্ঞতা বা চিন্তাধারার আলোকে আপনি কি আরো কিছু বলবেন?

Appendix-3: Consent Form

Research Title Father Involvement in Pre-primary Children's Learning: A Perception Study in Government Primary School

Researcher: Mohammed Norul Basher

Purpose of the study: I am conducting this research as a part of my Master's Degree requirement from the Institute of Educational Development (IED) - BRAC University. The purpose of this study is to investigate and comprehend fathers' perceptions of their involvement in their children's learning activities at the pre-primary level, particularly within the framework of Bangladesh government primary schools

Expectation from you: If you agree to participate, you will be expected to share your perception on the involvement of your children's pre-primary learning. It will include your understanding, practices, and influencing factors regarding your involvement in your child's pre-primary learning. The FGD/IDI may take 45 to 60 minutes depending on your response. With your permission, the conversation will be recorded to collect qualitative data.

Risks and benefits:

There is no risk to you for participating in this study. Instead, the findings of this study will reveal new information regarding fathers' involvement of pre-primary children's learning that may benefit parents, children, teachers, administrators, and policy makers.

Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality:

All the information collected from you will be kept confidential, and the data will be used anonymously.

Future use of information: The information collected for this study may be kept for future research. In such cases, information and data supplied to other researchers will not conflict with or breach the norms of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of information so that it could identify the participants in any way. In future, I, or other researchers may contact you to know your valuable feedback on this matter.

Right not to participate and withdraw: You can participate in this study voluntarily; and you have authority to withdraw yourself at any point of this study without prior notice. There is no penalty involved for your withdrawal from this study.

If you agree with the proposal of participating in the study, please put your signature in the specified space below.

Name of the participants: _____

Name of the researcher: _____

Signature of the participants: _____

Signature of the researcher: _____

Thank you very much for your kind cooperation. If you have any further query, please feel free to contact me. My contact no is, +8801790884310, or you can email me at norulbasher@yahoo.com.