

Exploring Fathers' Perception and Child-Rearing Practices For Children Aged 0–3 Years in Urban Dhaka

By

Siffat Momtaz
Student ID: 23155006

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
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

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

Student's Full Name & Signature:

Siffat Momtaz
Student ID 23155006

Approval

The thesis titled “Exploring Fathers’ Perception and Child-Rearing Practices for Children Aged 0–3 Years in Urban Dhaka” submitted by

Siffat Momtaz, Student ID: 23155006 of SPRING, 2023 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science in Early Childhood Development on 11th September 2025.

Examining Committee:

Supervisor:
(Member)

Riffat Jahan Nahreen
Senior Program Manager and Faculty of Academic Program,
Brac Institute of Educational Development
Brac University

Program Coordinator:
(Member)

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

External Expert Examiner:
(Member)

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

Departmental Head:
(Chair)

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

Ethics Statement

Title of Thesis Topic: Exploring Fathers' Perception and Child-Rearing Practices for Children Aged 0–3 Years in Urban Dhaka

Student name: Siffat Momtaz

1. Source of population

Fathers from urban Dhaka from upper socio-economic status with undergraduate or equivalent degree of education

2. Does the study involve (yes, or no)

- a) Physical risk to the subjects (n)
- b) Social risk (n)
- c) Psychological risk to subjects (n)
- d) discomfort to subjects (n)
- e) Invasion of privacy (n)

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

- a) Nature and purpose of the study (y)
- b) Procedures to be followed (y)
- c) Physical risk (y)
- d) Sensitive questions (y)
- e) Benefits to be derived (y)
- f) Right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study (y)
- g) Confidential handling of data (y)
- h) Compensation and/or treatment where there are risks or privacy is involved (n/a)

4. Will Signed /verbal consent form be required (yes or no)

- a) from study participants (y)
- b) from parents or guardian (n)
- c) Will precautions be taken to protect anonymity of subjects? (y)

5. Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee:

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

Ethical Review Committee:

Authorized by:

(chair/co-chair/other)

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

Abstract

This study explored fathers' perception and involvement in child-rearing practices for children aged 0–3 years in urban Dhaka, focusing on fathers from educated, upper socio-economic backgrounds. Conventionally seen as financial providers, fathers in Bangladesh are beginning to engage more actively in caregiving roles. Qualitative phenomenological approach was used for the study that included in-depth interviews and a focus group with 12 fathers. Results show growing awareness among fathers about early childhood development, including emotional, cognitive, and physical needs. Majority fathers engage through play, emotional bonding, while few reported high participations with active involvement in daily caregiving chores feeding, bathing and bedtime storytelling. Mostly the fathers' mentioned that their involvement is limited to weekend or after-work hours— emphasizing that the parenting ideologies have a positive shift but is still confined with multiple structural limitations which includes restricted work hours, urban infrastructure, societal paradigm, and environment. The findings highlight a strong positive fathers' perception on child development process which is influencing shift in urban parenting dynamics and the need for father-inclusive policies, awareness programs, and child-friendly urban planning to support balanced parenting.

Keywords: Father involvement; child-rearing practices; parenting in urban Dhaka; early childhood development; societal norms

Dedication

This is dedicated to my parents and my husband, who have always encouraged me to chase my dreams and supported me in every high and lows of my life. Furthermore, to all the children who are deprived of parents' love and support while passing through this crucial stage of early childhood. I will whole-heartedly try to utilize my knowledge and capabilities to serve these under-privileged children.

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List of Acronyms

BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
CSE	Computer Science and Engineering
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HEIS	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
IDI	In-Depth Interview
SES	Socioeconomic Status
TFP	The Fatherhood Project
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America

Glossary

Child-rearing Practices

The methods and strategies used by parents or caregivers to raise and nurture children, including feeding, discipline, play, and emotional support.

Early Childhood Development (ECD)

A stage of human development from birth to around 8 years old, focusing on physical, emotional, cognitive, and social growth.

Father Involvement

The participation of fathers in the upbringing of their children through caregiving, bonding, play, discipline, and emotional support.

Parenting in urban Dhaka

Set of practices, responsibilities, and interactions through which fathers, mothers, or caregivers raise their children in the context of Bangladesh's largest metropolitan city.

Societal Norms

Shared beliefs, values, and practices considered acceptable in a society, which often shape behaviors and roles, including parenting expectation

Chapter I: Introduction & Background

Introduction:

Multiple research projects have evidenced that shared-parenting responsibilities induces positive behavior in a child similarly, with low parental involvement the children are prone to face depression and anxiety to face the challenges of life (Frosch et al., 2019; Goodall et al., 2010; Lanjekar et al., 2022). A child's early growth parameters are highly dependent on child-rearing style adhered by the parents. Conventionally, mothers play a dominant role when it comes to child raising practices, while father's activities are limited to financial and educational aids (Nair et al., 2020). We get to witness this common phenomenon especially in the South Asian regions and has been in practice for centuries. This paper aims to study and bring focus on the current scenario of fathers' understanding and practices on child development process in urban Dhaka considering their economic and educational background.

In 2014, Massachusetts General Hospital in USA conducted a non-profit program called "The Fatherhood Project" to understand the father's impact on improving children's mental and physical development by enabling fathers to be more knowledgeable, proactive, and emotionally engaged with their children (The Fatherhood Project at MGH, 2014). The research review highlights that involved and emotionally healthy fathers significantly enhance children's cognitive, emotional, and social development, while simultaneously mitigating the adverse consequences of maternal depression. Their exclusive contributions through play, attachment, and role modeling are critical for long-term mental health and resilience of children (The Fatherhood Project at MGH, 2014).

Dhaka with its varied economic stature hosts a densely populated region with rapidly changing lifestyle (Roy & Sowgat, 2020). The metropolitan Dhaka thriving with the frequent development and the concurrent political turbulence are becoming a continuous struggle to maintain the individual economic balance for the urban city dwellers. Hence, it becomes critical for the fathers to balance their personal and professional life equally, resulting in more focus towards their role as a breadwinner for the family. Despite these challenges, we are beginning to see that family dynamics are changing where fathers' role and child-rearing activities are being redefined focusing on more active participations. However, societal norms and disciplines are deep rooted in our culture which often restricts the father's involvement to monetary aid and strict authoritarian children management with minimal focus on caregiving responsibilities. Mothers are widely recognized to bear the core caregiver responsibilities providing emotional support and catering to basic needs like food, clothing etc. for the children.

Currently in Bangladesh, limited study findings are available where fathers' experience and practice in parenting have been captured, especially considering factors such as literacy level, occupational status, and cultural framework. Hence, this exploration is crucial not only for understanding how gender roles in parenting are being renegotiated but also for informing policies and programs that encourage inclusive, father-centric approaches to early childhood development among the upper class of the economy.

Problem Statement:

The vital value of paternal commitment in children's wellbeing combined with improved growth process are coming at the forefront in the recent studies (Yogman & Eppel, 2021). Studies are considering the consequence of father's involvement from

prenatal through adolescence period, including father's mental and physical health. It has been further found that 21st century fathers are extra concerned about the caregiving of their kids and consider themselves as a strong pillar in upholding a healthier child development process (Yogman & Eppel, 2021).

A study conducted using Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study data to identify why children with single-mother or cohabiting family's performances are inferior to children born into married-couple households (Waldfogel et al., 2011). Researchers have found five key elements in family structure that influences child developmental goals: parental resources, parental psychological fitness, parental bond quality, child nurturing quality, and father involvement. Additionally, researchers have found their own findings like family instability adversely induces inconsistency in child's mental and cognitive developmental progress (Waldfogel et al., 2011).

As per the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019 report in Bangladesh, only 11% fathers of children 2-5 years engaged in four or more activities for supporting their child's responsive care stimulation (BBS, 2019). Majority of the population are living in poverty in Bangladesh and development has been slow and uneven with hasty population growth due to various political and economic reasons (Ball & Wahedi, 2012). It is imperative that child-rearing practices are still following the typical traditional practices like feeding and educating children being the primary focus (Hamadani & Tofail, 2013). The cultural practices often restrict men to participate actively in child-rearing practices and is limited to playing, cuddling, hugging especially among the rural sectors, whereas in the urban sector it is often found to be more emotionally involved (Hamadani & Tofail, 2013). So far, very limited number of studies have been conducted in Bangladesh focusing just on urban fathers, hence the

underlying challenges of fathers are often neglected while designing policies and programs for improving the child development process of the country.

Purpose of the Study:

This initiative was mainly conducted to further shed light and strengthen the literature on the importance of actively increasing awareness and including fathers in the child-rearing practices and the positive outcomes it brings in a child's physiological, psychological, and cognitive developments. It focused on exploring the prevailing perception, beliefs, and attitudes of fathers towards child-rearing practices. Furthermore, the research explored current practices that the fathers are adopting as a caregiver, and the factors that influence their participations. With these contexts, we got a deeper understanding on the gender roles on child-rearing practices in the urban sector of Dhaka City, especially in the upper socio-economic class. Therefore, it is critical to foster programs that improves awareness about the targeted group while exploring different parameters which affects fathers' knowledge, viewpoints, and contribution in parenting within urban Dhaka. The result has been valuable and can benefit to various stakeholders—such as parents, educators, early childhood development (ECD) professionals, and policymakers—in developing effective interventions that support the good interests of both children and families.

Significance of the study:

As it has been cited in here, overall few analyses have been initiated and executed for measuring the length of father's perception, mindfulness, and responsibilities on child-rearing activities. However, this topic has gained academic attention to conduct study on fathers, as multiple studies signify that fathers' participation in care-giving activities enhances a child's mental, physical, and socio-emotional growth (Nair et al., 2020).

Research has shown that dual responsible parenting proves to develop sound physical, intellectual, and emotional development parameter among children (National Academies of Sciences et al., 2016). However, in many cultural contexts, including Bangladesh, fathers have traditionally been sidelined in early childhood care and development, with mothers predominantly responsible for nurturing and caregiving. This is remarkably true in South Asian civilizations, where paternal roles have been fundamentally confined to the breadwinner and authoritarian figure (Alsager et al., 2024). This study, focusing on fathers' perception and involvement in child-rearing practices in urban Dhaka, is thus timely and essential.

Urbanization in Dhaka has steered to hastily shift family structures, where altering financial pressures and cultural practices are largely influencing the responsibilities that fathers play in child development. Despite the growing acknowledgment of fathers' contributions to child development, particularly in areas such as emotional attachment and cognitive stimulus, there is still limited study that explored their active participation in Bangladesh's urban settings. The societal belief and practice that fathers should primarily support the family financially rather than involve in nurturing responsibilities puts challenges to understand the full extent of their potential impact.

Personally, this was an exploration to evaluate the fathers' perception, awareness, and practical experience on child-rearing from high educational background, stable income source and family perceptions. The study was set foot to find the root cause of the fathers' insight and its association with current child rearing practices with their infants and toddlers and how they are supporting in the overall upbringing of their children alongside the maternal care and responsibilities. The study further explored, if changing urban family dynamics is altering the child raising ideologies in the urban households

due to the shift from traditional child upbringing strategies and alternatives (Shafiullah, 2024)

This initiative is valuable in contributing to the academic insight of fatherhood in Bangladesh and inform policy amendments and intermediations of the benefits of addressing father's participation. By addressing the topic of father participation in early child development, the findings of this study play a vital role in reshaping public perceptions and encouraging more stable parenting practices. This could lead to the development of educational and policy programs that promote greater father participation in early childhood development, which is crucial for fostering healthier, and proper child development.

Thus, the justification for this study was rooted to explore the traditional gender roles in parenting and its perception on current urban fathers, highlight the relevance of father involvement in child-rearing, favorably provide evidence that could lead to better child development outcomes in urban Bangladesh.

Research Questions:

1. How do the fathers perceive their involvement in child-rearing practices in urban Dhaka?
2. What child-rearing practices are followed by fathers of children aged 0–3 years in urban Dhaka?

Operational Definition:

In this study, the following terms are defined operationally to clarify their use within the research context:

Father's Perception of Child Development refers to the father's understanding of the various stages and domains of early childhood development (physical, emotional, cognitive), and how his role can influence these stages. This includes awareness gained through personal experience, familial influence, formal education, digital platforms, or other resources. This was assessed based on the qualitative approach with phenomenological design (Creswell & Poth, 2018)

Child-Rearing Practices are defined as the day-to-day caregiving behaviors and emotional involvement demonstrated by parents from infancy to adulthood, such as feeding, storytelling, bathing, disciplining, and engaging in play or spiritual bonding (Touro University Worldwide, 2019)

Active Involvement of fathers in parenting encompasses both qualitative and quantitative aspects of engagement, including the time spent with the child, the nature of activities performed, and the perceived emotional bond. The study considered involvement meaningful if the father was engaged in caregiving, emotional support, or developmental stimulation beyond financial provision (Yoon et al., 2017).

Societal and Cultural Expectations refers to the prevailing social norms and traditional beliefs about gender roles in parenting within the Bangladeshi context. For this study, these were operationalized by capturing participant narratives on perceived social judgment, role stereotypes, and intergenerational norms. (Chowdhury, 2022; Ball, & Wahedi, 2012).

Upper Socioeconomic Status (SES) is operationally defined based on the criteria derived from a study from Fidah and team, identifying fathers with a monthly income of BDT 50,000 or more, residing in urban Dhaka, and having a minimum educational qualification of a bachelor's degree (Fidah et al., 2023). These criteria were used for participant selection in the study's purposive sampling process.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Research has disclosed that children experience substantial progress in developmental pillars when both parents are proactively emotionally and socially involved, leading to stronger parent-child bonds and improved relationships with peers and teachers (Hasegawa, 2023). Early studies in the U.S. and U.K. principally concentrated on mothers, but now there is a rising consciousness toward exploring both parents' perspectives more elaborately, regardless of gender (Edwards et al., 2001).

Through an integrative study review of 246 articles retrieved from Science Direct, PsychINFO, and PubMed using parenting-associated keywords along with “Bangladesh,” and 20 studies published between 2006 and 2018 were chosen for thematic analysis (Jasmine & Nduna, 2021). The thorough review endorsed that majority literature associated “parent” with “mother,” reinforcing the role of mothers as the prime caregivers. Childcare in Bangladesh was principally identified by self-manners, disciplinary methods, feeding, parent–child relationship, and psychosocial stimulus, with inadequate attention on moral growth and emotional attachment. The results exposed uneven and gender-biased discussions, lacking a complete approach. The authors further emphasized the need for more qualitative research to develop a well-rounded and culturally applicable understanding of childrearing practices in the Bangladeshi context (Jasmine & Nduna, 2021)

Hence, to enlighten and ground the study this review has been divided in below four themes to understand the global and Bangladesh perspective on father's perception and practices in child-rearing:

- a) Fathers' understanding & perception of child development and the importance of their role

- b) Impact on children when fathers are involved in child-rearing
- c) Cultural and societal expectations regarding fatherhood
- d) Barriers and challenges faced by fathers in participating in child-rearing

a) Fathers' Understanding & Perception of Child Development and the Importance of Their Role

A South African study evaluated father's awareness on fatherly duties, it primarily aimed on three definite paternal role like family, breadwinner, and governor (Edwards et al., 2001). The study used the standardized interval measure of urbanization to classify the fathers into three groups: urban, transitional, and rural. Findings proved that rural fathers considered that breadwinner is the utmost important responsibility than urban, and transitional fathers, due to stringent tribal authoritative practices considering men as family head and answerable to community and forefathers. This study also reviewed American and British literature on paternity involvement, classifying key matters such as: (a) challenges in finding stable representations of fatherhood; (b) the impact of urban development on changing paternal roles from authoritarian figure to increased caregiving accountabilities toward their offspring; and (c) traditional paternal roles generally defined as protector, breadwinner, and provider of the family. With the passing time, however, fathers' views have evolved—molded by shifting of cultural and urbanization practices and beliefs. Now, fathers' role is embraced as an emotional caregivers, educators, and supportive partners within the family association (Edwards et al., 2001).

A Bangladeshi study conducted with urban parents, proved that father's does acknowledge and are aware about the child raising methods that improves early childhood developmental parameters including emotional well-being among children,

however, in terms of personal experience, fathers only highlighted about devoting some quality time with their young ones (Moin, 2023). Additionally, the paper features that that fathers are beginning to change their perception with the dynamically uplifting cultural practices and economic pressure and firmly believes that their part in child development is no longer limited as an authoritarian breadwinner and decision maker of the family (Moin, 2023). This advancing frame of mind will act as a catalyst to encourage and change the fathers' thought processes as a governor of the family to a more emotionally involved individual in child-rearing practices along with the mothers.

A qualitative approach was used to study both fathers and mothers in Korail slum in Dhaka, to explore the position of fathers and their participation in child development process (Laboni, 2019). The outcome of the study shows that maximum parents are aware about the notion of child growth process and that it includes the children's growing process comprising physical, and cognitive development and are concern about the nutritional intakes of their children. However, in terms of father's part in their offspring's life is limited to caregiving if the wives are working and majority working fathers spend time by playing with the children or does shopping errands near the house by taking them to the shops when they are free. The study also recommends that there are multiple other ways where fathers can be involved like supporting children academically, playing activities with children to enhance their cognitive development etc. by providing proper focus on ECCD policies and programs to enrich the father's involvement (Laboni, 2019).

b) Impact on children when fathers are involved in child-rearing

A study conducted in 2020 by Institute for Research on Poverty in United States, showed that involved fathers during pregnancy and proper partner support reduced

maternal health risks. Institute for Research on Poverty also mentions in 2020 study, that numerous reviews prove that involvement of fathers can be directly associated with higher academic achievement for children, better school readiness, strong verbal and math skills, higher self-esteem, and emotional security and more socially competent than children who does not get father's support and care. The findings mentions that active father's involvement in child development process encourages the child to take risks and become independent while performing physical activities whereas mothers emphasize on avoiding risks and injury (Institute for Research on Poverty, 2020).

A secondary data study explored both qualitative (apparent worth of the father-child relationship) and quantitative (number of activities shared) aspect of fathers' involvement and how each differently relates to behavior issues amongst the preadolescents (Yoon et al., 2017). It also evaluated whether the father's temperament and childhood traumas or adverse experience can be associated with the behavioral changes among the children. The findings implied that the greater contribution of effective time spent by fathers with their offspring lessens a child's social issues significantly both externally plus internally (Yoon et al., 2017).

In 2021, Yoon and team conducted another study on father involvement and child growth among low-income families where they explored the diverse forms of father engagement and their consequences on young children's emotional, social behavioral, and cognitive skills and mindset (Yoon et al., 2021). Employing latent class examination on data from 2,650 fathers who participated in the Supporting Healthy Marriages program, the study discovered four diverse profile of father engagement which includes high positive involvement, engaged but harsh discipline, low cognitive stimulation, and lower involvement. The results revealed that children receiving low cognitive stimulation from fathers exhibited notably more behavior issues and inferior

socio-emotional and cognitive functioning, in contrast to the children in the high positive father involvement group displayed more promising developmental results. The investigation outlines the multidimensional nature of fathering and underscores the importance of both the quality and quantity of paternal engagement in endorsing child well-being, particularly in low socioeconomic statuses (Yoon et al., 2021).

c) Cultural and Societal Expectations Regarding Fatherhood

A paper published by Ozgun and team in Turkey, primarily examined how various cultures perceive different dimensions of fatherhood (Ozgun et al., 2011). It specifically analyzes cultural viewpoints through the lens of mythology and religion and how male and female roles in the household are defined based on the societal practices. The findings indicate that, across cultures, key roles associated with fatherhood include providing, protecting, shaping a child's character, and granting legal recognition or status (Ozgun et al., 2011).

A study in Bangladesh, depicted that urban and rural ways of parental duties varies notably (Hamadani & Tofail, 2013). In most scenarios, fatherly responsibilities are restricted to financial decision maker of the family based on the traditional cultural practices. Mostly fathers are not aware on the growth advantages of early stimulations from the infancy period and hence their active emotional participation is scarce in most household. To highlight that developmental knowledge are one of the primary root causes in 50% of child malnutrition in the country, restricting around 10 million children to reach their developmental goals. Physical punishment and strict authoritarian parenting are widely practiced. Nevertheless, due to the rise in single family concepts and practice, fathers are now more conscious and proactively spends more time with their children and not limited to just playing with their kids in their free

time. The study also mentions that fathers of families where both parents are working are more engaged in child rearing practices (Hamadani & Tofail, 2013).

Exploring fatherhood and their contribution in child development has been recently evolving in our country. It has been emphasized in a study that 75% of the inhabitants are living in the countryside and lives in a joint-family arrangement with their extended families that is controlled by rural communal beliefs and practices in their daily life (Ball & Wahedi, 2012). It is further mentioned in the research paper, that due to rise in nations' developmental progress and the existing unstable political and economic conditions, the family structures and living dependencies are shifting from agriculture to other sources. Additionally, it explicitly mentions that Euro-western child development practices, cultural norms and family dynamic structures are not appropriate standards to observe fatherhood and paternal practices of Bangladesh owing to the unpredictable economic and social customs. However, culturally guided responsibilities, economic conditions and sociopolitical ideologies can help to design appropriate programs that can be extended to study South Asian regions fathering and father involvement techniques in child development process. It will also help to expand Euro-western perceptions and study ideals as culturally design programs will eventually help to achieve child development goals both nationally and internationally (Ball & Wahedi, 2012).

In 2022 as mentioned in Chowdhury's study from Bangladesh, numerous qualitative explorations already done to comprehend the paternal knowledge and contribution in child raising procedures. It has been found that stereotypical traditional practices are leading in Bangladesh where fathers revealed that mothers are naturally equipped on child-rearing responsibilities both expressively and theoretically, while father's role are bounded for finance and broad decisions for the children (Chowdhury, 2022).

d) Barriers and Challenges Faced by Fathers in Participating in Child-Rearing

In Malaysia, a survey study was employed to investigate parent participation (father vs. mother) in 3 distinct dimensions: expressive, instrumental, and mentoring (Han & Jun, 2013). The finding of the study proved that mothers were more engaged in an expressive way during supporting the children emotionally and socially, whereas fathers' role is largely instrumental. The study mentions the key barriers which limits the fathers' involvement in child development process mainly includes traditionally defined gender roles, work management related time constraints and societal expectation places them as a primary bread earner of the family. These cultural and structural challenges restrict paternal involvement, underscoring the need to explore the same social constraints in the context of urban Dhaka setup.

A qualitative study in USA examined thirty fathers belonging to both resident and nonresident group to examine the factors that braced or hindered their involvement in their children's lives (Roberts et al., 2014). Semi-structured interviews were conducted for the data collection process. Later content analysis directed that despite having diverse living provisions, fathers from both groups articulated a robust commitment in maintaining associations with their children. Mainly the fathers were involved in providing security, economic and emotional support, direction in development, serving as admirers for their children, and sharing parenting accountabilities. Major enablers of father involvement included access to childrearing guidance, good relationships with the children's mothers, and backing from extended family and religious foundations. However, nonresident fathers stated more barriers, such as maternal gatekeeping, adverse perceptions about their child-rearing practices, restricted visiting hours tied to child support payments, and monetary hardship. The study concludes the importance of introducing interventions such as co-parenting counseling, belief-based support, and

employment support to benefit fathers encounter the issues they face in fulfilling their parenting roles (Roberts et al., 2014).

The evolution of traditional fathering roles particularly in developing countries, amidst the rapid growth of nuclear dual-earner households, remains sufficiently underexplored (Jesmin & Seward, 2011). A comparison study including a sample of 86 Bangladeshi parents—encompassing 59 mothers and 27 fathers—where fathers' patterns of employment leave and engagement in child-rearing were investigated. An U.S. based study questionnaire (Seward et al., 2006) was used where participants completed self-managed questionnaires channeling to a cross-cultural study comparison. The study investigated three key questions: (1) the amount of paternal leave taken during childbirth in Bangladesh, (2) fathers' involvement in child rearing, and (3) comparing these practices between Bangladesh and U.S. fathers. Furthermore, various paternal involvement in single earning and dual earning families were compared in this study. The results revealed that Bangladeshi fathers takes shorter paternity leaves than their U.S. counterparts. However, in both frameworks, fathers who took leave were more actively involved in childcare practices. The learning from this study also highlighted financial constrictions are major determinant influencing paternity leave in Bangladesh, similar trends have been evident among low-income families in the United States (Jesmin & Seward, 2011).

Chapter III: Methodology

In this segment, study approach, location setting, sampling process, dimension and technique, data collection device and instruments, data collection methods, and data management and analysis have been discussed, specifying the ethical consideration and limitation of the study that have been considered to gather and evaluate the participants in light to the research objective.

Study Approach:

A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing a phenomenological design to examine fathers' knowledge and perceptions through their lived experiences and to understand how they construct meaning within their world. Phenomenological study is particularly suitable for this purpose to understand how individuals makes sense of their personal and social world giving an insight to researchers about the participants subjective experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This approach of study gave a holistic view on father's experiences and how they perceive their role in child rearing, what motivations and obstacles they face and how their decision and behavior get influenced due to their socio-economic conditions. Enrich information with first-hand narratives of father's perceptions and practices on child-rearing was collected to support the root of the study.

Research Site:

The site of this study was urban Dhaka, specifically aiming fathers of children aged 0–3 years, due to the importance of nurturing at this stage in early childhood times. Urban Dhaka, characterized by rapid urbanization and socioeconomic diversity, provides a unique context in which traditional cultural practices and modern parenting ideas

intersect. This setting is crucial for understanding the influence of urbanization and monetary stability on family dynamics while impacting fathers' roles in child-rearing.

Additionally, mainly central Dhaka (participants belonged from locations Mirpur, Gulshan, Dhanmondi, Uttara, Malibagh, Jhigatola) was considered for the study to get a thorough insight on the cultural and societal practices where the shifting of this paradigm was studied and evaluated, considering the other institutional and environmental factors of the city development.

Research Participants:

12 fathers having children of 0-3 years was selected who has a stable earning source, minimum education qualification of under graduation or equivalent degree and monthly earning is BDT 50,000 or above. The rationale behind choosing this segment was because they are exposed to resources and have adequate education with a stable income, hence they are more prone to contribute to the advancement of parenting practices in the urban areas as per the literature gathered (Moin, 2023). Participants were divided in half, 6 fathers were considered for IDI and remaining 6 for the FGD session.

Participant Selection Procedure:

Criterion purposive sampling process was utilized here, where participant selection was done on specific criteria relevant to the research questions and aim of the study (Palinkas et al., 2013). The criteria for selection include:

- Fathers having children aged 0–3 years residing in urban Dhaka.
- As per the study conducted by Fidah and team in 2023, there are no standard socio classification scale for Bangladesh. The study used the 16th published

report of Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HEIS) report median household income, inflation adjustment and using the lower and upper bound of median income range to derive the social class range of Bangladesh for study purpose (Fidah et al., 2023). The result showed low income is below 12,500BDT, middle income is between 12,500-21,000 BDT and upper class is above 21,000. Considering this information, for this study, fathers from upper socioeconomic backgrounds with monthly salary BDT 50,000 or above, and at least graduation or equivalent degree completed was selected.

- Participants who were willing to share their experiences and perspectives regarding their involvement in child-rearing.

Data Collection Methods:

Two distinct data collection method were used like in-depth interviews (IDI) and focus group discussion (FGD). These methods were particularly effective in qualitative research because it allowed flexibility while ensuring that all relevant topics were covered. The sessions followed a proper guideline and was held physically in a mutually comfortable location for the participants and the moderator, such as their homes or at a convenient place mutually agreed with the interviewer. Each interview lasted between 40 to 50 minutes and the FGD was conducted for 80 minutes.

The IDI and FGD guidelines were developed based on the research questions and focused on the following themes:

- Fathers' understanding of child development and the importance of their role in it.
- Fathers' perceptions of how their involvement impacts their child's development.

- The specific ways fathers are involved in child-rearing (e.g., caregiving, emotional support, discipline, education).
- Barriers and challenges faced by fathers in participating in child-rearing (e.g., work commitments, societal norms, lack of knowledge).
- Cultural and societal expectations regarding fatherhood in Bangladesh.

The researcher carefully selected all the participants sticking to the criteria of the sampling procedure and all participants were elaborately briefed about the study and written consent was taken from each of them. For the in-depth interview (IDI) session, a good rapport was initially built by the researcher before the session so that participants can share their thoughts freely during the session without any social awkwardness. The focus group discussion (FGD) participants belonged to similar corporate background and were selected through the researcher's personal contact based on the selection criteria. Their job entitlement varied from senior executive position to head of department/unit. All sessions were recorded with the consent from the participants and the moderator thanked the participants at the end of the session with the concluding speech.

Data Management and Analysis:

Data was transcribed precisely to ensure the accuracy of participants' responses for both IDI and FGD. Short note undertaken during the session by the researchers was added in narrative form. A process of thematic content analysis was employed to comprehensively analyze the data by defining themes based identified patterns (Politz, 2024).

The steps in thematic content analysis included the following:

- Familiarization with the data: Reading through the transcripts and field notes to get a sense of the data.
- Generating initial codes: Breaking down the data into smaller segments and coding them based on their meaning.
- Search for themes: Organizing codes into prospective themes with common codes from all transcripts related to the research target.
- Reviewing themes: Refining the themes by checking them against the dataset and ensuring that the essence of the fathers' experiences is well captured.

Credibility & Rigor

The guideline was reviewed by the supervisor and their feedback was incorporated before it was first piloted on two to three participants who met the sampling criteria but result from the pilot phase were included in the main study. After the feedback from the piloting phase the guidelines were adjusted to effectively conduct the actual data collection sessions, so that the sessions can have a smooth conversational flow following each topic one after the other.

The final data collection sessions were audio-recorded with the written consent from the participants ensuring accuracy in data collection process. Additionally, field notes were taken to capture non-verbal cues and any relevant observations during the interviews or focus group discussion.

Ethics:

A formal written declaration was taken prior to the IDI and FGD from all the participants clearly informing about the purpose of the research, methods, risk, and benefits of the study. All participation was voluntary and documented with the written consent. Data privacy and anonymity of the applicants was strictly adhered to using individual filing methods to store private statistics and knowledges, and overall outcome have been presented in an aggregated manner ensuring the anonymity of individual answers.

Data accessibility was restricted to authorized personnel only. The outcome of the collected data was solely used for this study purpose and not for any other purpose. Findings were repeatedly reviewed responsibly so that no data misinterpretation takes place and accuracy was ensured to the fullest.

Limitations:

This research provided treasured insights putting lights on fathers' roles in child-rearing, however, conducting 2 FGD for the data collection would have provided more concrete insight on the study purpose, due to time constraint and resource manageability the study was limited to one FGD session.

Additionally, deploying the method of observation would have provided a more holistic view of father-child relationship evaluation while they are inhibiting in their regular interactive activity sessions like playing, feeding, outdoor activities etc.

Chapter IV Findings & Discussion

This chapter will illustrate on the findings of the study conducted followed by a thorough discussion section which is based on the themes identified to shed light on the overall outcome of the study.

Findings:

This section will cover the outcome gathered from the in-depth interview and the FGD session. Both the data collection method was conducted physically and accumulated based on themes identified in relevance to the research question. The themes were classified, summarized, and results are as follows:

- 1. Fathers' perception on child development process**
- 2. Paternal participation in child-rearing practices**
- 3. Challenges faced by fathers to be involved actively**
- 4. Fathers' opinions on social and cultural expectations**

Respondents' (Fathers) Demographic Background:

All the respondents reside in central Dhaka and have full time employed jobs. Their age range vary from 30 to 45 years and have minimum education of under graduation from reputed universities in Bangladesh. All the participants have children or child under 3 years of age. Majority of them lives in nuclear families except 3 fathers who reside with their parents in joint family.

Table 1: In-depth Interview Fathers' Demographic Details

Participant #	Educational Background	Age	Family Living Type	# of Child	Child's Gender	Child's Age (years)
1	MBA	36	Joint	2	F, F	4, 2
2	MBA	41	Joint	2	M, F	4, 0.8
3	MBA	36	Nuclear	2	M, F	2.5, 0.4
4	BSc in CSE	30	Nuclear	2	M, F	5, 2
5	BSc in CSE	32	Nuclear	1	F	1.5
6	BBA	35	Nuclear	1	F	1

Table 2: Focus Group Discussion Fathers' Demographic Details:

Participant #	Educational Background	Age	Family Living Type	# of Child	Child's Gender	Child's Age (years)
1	MBA	40	Joint	1	F	3
2	BBA	39	Nuclear	2	M, M	3, 1
3	BBA	34	Nuclear	1	M	2.5
4	BSc in EEE	42	Joint	2	F, F	3, 0.5
5	BSc in CSE	44	Joint	3	M, M, F	7, 3, 0.8
6	MBA	32	Nuclear	1	F	2

Theme # 1: Fathers' perception on child development process

This section covers an insight on how the fathers perceive the overall child development process, and the apparent impact they have on the building blocks of the child's character.

1.1 Fathers' perception on overall child development

In the data collections session for this paper, some of the fathers shared a very elaborate experience on their own fatherhood journey in both in-depth interview and focus group discussions sessions. Majority of the fathers have substantial knowledge about the early childhood developmental parameters for their children. Like, one of the in-depth interview participants mentioned *"For me, it's all about positive improvement — you know, seeing them grow step by step and becoming better at every stage of life"* (IDI#1, 26 Jun 2025), attributing to his conscious observations based on knowledge for each of the child development milestones of his children.

Most of the father's highlights that child development is all about physical, cognitive, and emotional growth of children from very early ages like infancy period. One of the father explicit mentions about the emotional bonding saying, *"Child development for me, mean how they play, and build emotional bonding along with proper physical growth"*. (IDI#3, 27 Jun 2025)

1.2 Perception on the importance of fathers' involvement in child development

Mostly the fathers believe, it is their responsibility to make the child independent and confident as one of them specifies *"I believe making child independent and at the same time assure them that I am here for you, is one of the major roles of a father. Both parents' affection, love is necessary for children."* (IDI#4, 28 Jun 2025)

One father from the focus group discussion session mentions that fathers and mothers have different role to play and specifies accordingly, saying *“A father plays a crucial role in providing emotional security, discipline, and guidance. While mothers are often more nurturing and involved in daily care, fathers can offer a different kind of support like problem-solving, encouraging independence, and being a role model. The roles are complementary, not necessarily different in importance.”* (FGD, 3 Jul 2025)

This has been highlighted by multiple participants that their role is different than mothers, they should act as a mentor for their children and provide love and care differently than mothers so that children can become more confident as adults. Like one respondent mentions *“This is absolutely different, because baby all time staying with mother hence, when s/he got father, they want something different approach with care, love, demand etc...”* (IDI#2, 26 Jun 2025)

1.3 Father’s source of education on child rearing

Mostly, father’s mentioned that they take inspiration from their own fathers’, however due to the increased digital exposure now they have access to readily available online articles and books on parenting. As one of the fathers said *“Mostly from observing my own father, but also through media, parenting articles online, and discussions with friends. I’ve also learned a lot from my wife and her approach to parenting* (IDI#4, 28 Jun 2025)

Theme #2: Paternal Participation in Child-Rearing Practices

This section will focus on how the fathers participate in child rearing practices in their daily life and the impact they have seen in their children due to their involvement.

2.1 Father's daily practices in child-rearing

Majority of the fathers mentioned that they spent time with their children by taking out on weekends, playing with them. Moreover, fathers also shared that they have noticed significant growth in their child's speech and emotional development during their joint activities, like one father mentions during FGD discussion, *"Yes, one day we had played with stones at the park, I noticed that my baby is counting with me."* (FGD, 3 Jul 2025). Another father added to this discussion by saying *"My child tried to perform salah after watching me, which shows that children actively copy what you do or say, and this is the most important point to remember."* (FGD, 3 Jul 2025).

Few of the fathers highlighted that they help with the daily chores as well like feeding the child, putting them to sleep at night with bedtime stories *"Yes, I help with feeding, bathing, changing clothes, and putting my child to sleep when I can."* (FGD, 3 Jul 2025). In one of the IDI session a father also mentions *"As the father of a 16-month-old baby girl, most of our time together is filled with simple joys and playful moments. I usually spend time with her before and after work. Mornings are for cuddles, feeding her breakfast, and singing her favorite rhymes. She loves music, so we often dance around the room or clap along to songs are our special little routine."* (IDI#6, 30 Jun 2025). While another father highlights *"Yes, once I started reading stories to my child every night, they became more curious and started talking more. I saw improvement in their speech and attention."* (IDI#2, 26 Jun 2025)

2.2 Disciplining children

Mostly the fathers mentioned they adopt for a soft approach for disciplining them and does not apply any harsh tonality or physical touch while the children are throwing tantrums or doing any mischievous activities *"As the father of a 16-month-old baby*

girl, I see discipline less as punishment and more as gentle guidance. At this age, she is still learning about boundaries, emotions, and how the world works, so my role is to help her understand those things with patience and consistency.” (IDI#6, 30 Jun 2025)

Theme#3: Challenges faced by fathers to be involved actively

This section will cover the daily challenges the fathers faces while they try to actively engage with their children in regular days.

3.1 Work pressure and time management

Mainly the fathers cited that primarily they face challenges with time constraints to manage work demands and traffic situation in the city. This has become an ultimate barrier to become actively involve with their children on regular basis. Like a father said *“One of the biggest barriers is time. Balancing work responsibilities and family life can be difficult, especially when work hours are long or unpredictable. Sometimes, I feel torn between providing financially and being physically present for my daughter’s daily needs and milestones.” (IDI#2, 26 Jun 2025)*

3.2 Environmental shifts in Dhaka city

Some of the fathers shed light to a broader aspect highlighting that environment in this city is also a challenge and a restriction for their children. The pollution and dense population increase the daily stress level to move around the city and even taking children outdoor for recreational activities. As one father specifies *“The environment in Dhaka city doesn’t help much—it’s crowded and stressful.” (FGD, 3 Jul 2025).*

Theme#4: Fathers' Opinions on Social and Cultural Expectations

Unanimously almost all the fathers acknowledge that to some extent they have faced the challenge to common societal norms that cast them the role of financial providers for the families and caregiving are the primary roles of mothers. One of the fathers said *“Yes, societal norms and cultural expectations influence my involvement in child-rearing. In Bangladesh, traditional views often assign most of the hands-on childcare responsibilities to mothers, while fathers are expected primarily to provide financially and make major decisions. This can sometimes create unspoken pressure to stick to those roles.”* (IDI#5, 28 Jun 2025)

Another father highlights something similar *“Yes, sometimes people say I should focus more on work or that childcare is a mother’s job.”* (IDI#1, 26 Jun 2025)

However, significant number of participants also accredited that these norms are changing, and they can feel the shift as one of them states *“However, this perception is slowly changing, especially in urban and educated families. Today, more fathers are becoming emotionally involved, taking part in daily care, and building stronger bonds with their children from an early age. Fathers are now seen reading bedtime stories, attending school events, and even helping with feeding and diaper changes roles once unthinkable for men a generation ago.”* (IDI#4, 28 Jun 2025)

All the participants believe that urban fathers spend more time with their children because of better awareness and education. While rural fathers are more focused on work and decision making of the family *“Yes, urban fathers tend to be more involved due to exposure to modern parenting ideas and better access to resources. Rural fathers*

often stick to traditional roles due to cultural norms and lack of awareness.” (FGD, 3 Jul 2025).

Overall, the fathers believe that childcare is essential from very young age, and they try to put significant focus on engaging with them in addition to their role as financial earners and facing somewhat the traditional societal barriers from their near ones. However, they feel that there is lack of parenting resources tailored for fathers and that recreational parks, playground and outdoor activities are scarce in urban Dhaka to fully utilize the children’s capabilities.

Discussions:

This section reflects on the qualitative findings in relation to existing literature and provides an interpretation of the experiences and perspectives shared by fathers in the study. The discussion is organized thematically, aligning with the predefined themes used in the findings section.

Theme 1: Fathers’ Perception on Child Development Process

The study reveals that majority of the fathers interviewed possess a fair understanding of the core child developmental parameters—physical, emotional, and cognitive—that determines and shape early childhood. This finding resonates with the observations of a local study (Moin, 2023), who noted a rising awareness among urban Bangladeshi fathers about their evolving roles. Participants frequently used terms like “emotional bonding,” “independence,” and “growth stages,” indicating both conceptual clarity and personal involvement in their children’s development.

Notably, many fathers drew on both intergenerational learning (from their own fathers) and digital resources for parenting knowledge. This blend of traditional and

contemporary information channels suggests a transitional model of fatherhood—one that is becoming more informed and emotionally engaged, supported by global shifts in parenting awareness (Edwards et al., 2001; The Fatherhood Project, 2014).

While most fathers acknowledged the importance of their roles, some still viewed their contribution as supplementary to maternal care. The emotional and educational impact they described aligns with studies highlighting the father's role as a mentor and role model (Yoon et al., 2017).

Theme 2: Paternal Participation in Child-Rearing Practices

Fathers' actual participation in caregiving practices shows a notable shift from the traditional breadwinner role to a more involved co-parent. Many participants discussed activities like feeding, storytelling, playing, and spiritual modeling (e.g., praying together). This supports the findings of (Laboni, 2019), who emphasized the emotional and developmental benefits of shared activities in low-resource settings like Korail slum in Dhaka.

The narratives shared in both IDIs and FGDs suggest that these interactions foster not just bonding but measurable developmental outcomes, such as improved language skills and emotional regulation. Such observations are consistent with international studies, including the 2020 study of Institute for Research on Poverty, which links father involvement with improved school readiness and social skills.

Moreover, the emotional tone used by fathers—highlighting playfulness, affection, and discipline through understanding rather than punishment—demonstrates a growing alignment with modern, emotionally intelligent parenting. This stands in contrast to the authoritarian model that has historically defined fatherhood in South Asian contexts (Hamadani & Tofail, 2013; Chowdhury, 2022). However, some variability remains:

while a few fathers reported being deeply engaged, others suggested their involvement was primarily limited to weekends or post-work hours—reinforcing that the shift, though positive, is still partial and constrained by structural factors.

Theme 3: Challenges faced by fathers to be actively involved

Despite the progressive mindset, fathers continue to face significant structural and societal challenges that limit their ability to be consistently involved in child-rearing. Time scarcity, driven by work demands and Dhaka’s urban congestion, was the most cited barrier. These findings align with categorization of paternal limitations under instrumental constraints and culturally reinforced gender roles (Han & Jun, 2013).

Environmental stressors—like pollution and the lack of safe, accessible recreational spaces—further inhibit the quality and quantity of father-child interactions. This context-specific finding reflects urban design and infrastructural deficits, which are often overlooked in parenting research and interventions.

Interestingly, participants expressed emotional conflict over balancing the dual roles of provider and caregiver. Fathers in this study implicitly called for societal and institutional recognition of their parenting role—one that matches the level of support traditionally extended to mothers.

Theme 4: Fathers’ Opinion on Social and Cultural Expectations

Most participants clearly recognized the enduring impact of traditional gender norms, which continue to portray mothers as primary caregivers and fathers as financial providers. This observation is consistent with findings from literature (Chowdhury 2022; Ball & Wahedi, 2012), who noted similar social barriers among Bangladeshi fathers.

However, there is an emerging resistance to these stereotypes, particularly among educated, urban fathers. Several respondents highlighted how roles are shifting within nuclear families, where hands-on involvement by fathers in child-rearing is becoming more normalized and even appreciated. Statements such as “fathers now read bedtime stories and attend school events” suggest that the performative boundaries of fatherhood are expanding.

Furthermore, the urban-rural divide surfaced as a recurrent theme. Fathers perceived that urban exposure—through education, media, and nuclear family settings—promotes more balanced parental responsibilities. This perception affirms the role of socioeconomic and educational capital in renegotiating gender roles in parenting (Nair et al., 2020; Shafiullah, 2024).

Yet, the persistence of societal judgment—“childcare is a mother’s job,” as cited by some fathers—indicates that normative change is still incomplete. Fathers’ increased participation needs to be matched with societal validation and institutional support.

In total, it has been evident in this study, that urban fathers are aware about the importance of paternal involvement in child rearing activities. the socioeconomic situation of booming nuclear family models and digitalization have been an integral source for this paradigm shift in child development practices. Though majority of the father’s still navigated through the challenge of putting their whole-hearted effort due to manageability of the financial situation, long and stringent work hours, relative and peer pressure considering traditional societal norms and to cope with life threatening urban environment (mainly pollution and urban congestion). Additionally, it has been highlighted that scarcity of resources supporting fathers like parenting programs,

workshops and parent-child friendly outdoor spaces restricts the recreational activities scope for the fathers.

Conclusion:

This study was set to explore the evolving roles and responsibilities of fathers in the child-rearing process for children aged 0–3 years in urban Dhaka, focusing on fathers from literate and financially secured socio-economic backgrounds. The purpose was to examine fathers' understanding of child development, their active involvement in daily caregiving, and the cultural and societal expectations that shape their behavior. Rooted in the broader context of changing family dynamics in Bangladesh, this study contributes to the limited body of research on fatherhood and early childhood development in South Asia. Grounded in global and local literature (The Fatherhood Project at MGH, 2014; Hamadani & Tofail, 2013)—the studies focus how engaged fatherhood supports children's emotional and cognitive growth, and why it is essential to bring fathers into the center of early development discourse.

To attain the study objectives, a qualitative phenomenological approach was employed using in-depth interviews (IDI) and a focus group discussion (FGD) with 12 fathers residing in urban Dhaka. All participants had children aged 0–3 years and were selected through purposive sampling based on specific socio-economic and educational criteria. Thematic content analysis was used to analyze the data, guided by predefined themes such as paternal awareness of child development, participation in caregiving practices, societal restrictions, and cultural perceptions. The methodological framework was grounded in qualitative inquiry design and ensured rich, firsthand narratives about fathers' lived experiences in parenting in reference to the literature (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The findings revealed that most fathers are not only aware of the critical aspects of early childhood development—including emotional, physical, and cognitive growth—but also actively participate in their children's lives through storytelling, play, moral instruction, and some involve regularly in caregiving routines. These behaviors align with previous studies (Moin, 2023; Laboni, 2019), suggesting that urban fathers in Bangladesh are gradually adopting a more emotionally engaged and hands-on parenting style. Nevertheless, significant barriers such as long work hours, limited public infrastructure, and persistent cultural norms continue to constrain fuller participation. Fathers cited a lack of father-specific resources and the enduring pressure to conform to traditional roles as ongoing challenges, reinforcing earlier literature (Chowdhury, 2022; Han & Jun, 2013).

In light of the discussion, it is evident that fatherhood in urban Dhaka is undergoing a meaningful but measured transformation. Fathers are increasingly challenging the stereotype of being mere financial providers and are seeking greater emotional and developmental involvement in their children's lives. However, this shift needs to be supported by institutional frameworks, public awareness campaigns, and inclusive policy reforms that recognize fathers as co-nurturers.

This study not only fills a critical gap in local research but also provides a foundation for future interventions aimed at promoting balanced parenting practices. By acknowledging and empowering fathers, stakeholders in early childhood development—from educators to policymakers—can better support the holistic well-being of children in Bangladesh.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings and discussion, it is recommended that father-centric parenting programs be developed and promoted within urban communities of Bangladesh. These programs should focus on increasing awareness among fathers about early childhood development and equip them with practical skills to engage in caregiving activities. Workshops, media campaigns, and community-based parenting classes specifically targeting fathers can help normalize and reinforce their role beyond financial provision and help fathers to address the age-old traditional belief on parenting techniques. Additionally, incorporating fatherhood modules into existing Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) frameworks will ensure more inclusive and sustainable parenting interventions.

Workplace policies also need to evolve to support paternal involvement. Employers in both public and private sectors should consider implementing or strengthening family-friendly policies, including paternity leave, flexible work hours, and father-supportive workplace cultures. These changes would help fathers balance professional responsibilities with caregiving roles, addressing the time-related constraints cited by many participants. Governmental and non-governmental organizations can work in partnership to advocate for such reforms and offer technical assistance to implement them effectively. Additional emphasis should be put on urban planning and infrastructure development to build child-friendly spaces such as safe parks, libraries, and playgrounds for better child nurturing. Local authorities should prioritize family oriented urban development where shared parenting is encouraged in both indoor and outdoor setup.

This study not only fills a critical gap in local research but also provides a foundation for future interventions aimed at promoting balanced parenting practices. Future research can be expanded by evaluating the fathers from migrant, rural or lower economic background fathers to understand the broader horizon of parenting perception and practices of Bangladesh. By acknowledging and empowering fathers, stakeholders in early childhood development—from educators to policymakers—can better support the holistic well-being of children in Bangladesh. Investing in father-inclusive research and policy will not only strengthen families but also contribute to achieving national and global child development goals.

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Appendix A: Consent Form for Parents

Title of the Thesis Proposal: Exploring Fathers' Perception and Child-Rearing Practice for Children Aged 0–3 Years in Urban Dhaka

Researcher: Siffat Momtaz

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 explore father's knowledge and practices in child rearing in urban Dhaka.

Expectation from you

If you agree, you will be expected to share your perception, views, thoughts, and practices on father's involvement in child rearing practices. This will include your personal views on child-development, child rearing, your regular interaction with your child and some of your practical child rearing practice. The interview/group discussion may take 60 to 90 minutes, depending upon your response.

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

Right not to participate and withdraw

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

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

Name of the Parents:

Name of the Researcher:

Signature of the Parents:

Signature of the Researcher:

Thank you very much for your cooperation. For any further query, please contact me: 01962424722

Appendix B: In-depth Interview (IDI) Guideline

1. Introduction & Background Information

Briefly explain the purpose of the interview and how their responses will contribute to a deeper understanding of fathers' roles in child-rearing in urban Dhaka.

- **Demographic Information:**
 - o Gender: Male (Fathers only)
 - o Age Range: 28 to 45 years
 - o Educational Qualification: Minimum bachelor's degree or equivalent
 - o Employment Status: Full-time employed with a stable income.
 - o Monthly Income: BDT 50,000 or above
 - o Residential Location: Urban Dhaka
 - o Family Structure: Nuclear or extended family
 - o Number of Children: At least one child aged between 0 to 3 years.
- **Confidentiality:** Assure that all information shared will be confidential and used only for research purposes.
- **Informed Consent:** Obtain written consent from the participants to proceed with the interview.

2. Fathers' Understanding of Child Development and the Importance of Their Role

- When you think about child development, what comes to mind?
- In your opinion, what is the role of a father in a child's development? Do you feel this role is different from that of a mother? How so?
- Where did you learn about your role as a father in terms of child development? Was it from your own father, the media, education, or other sources?

3. Fathers' Perceptions of How Their Involvement Impacts Their Child's Development

- In what ways do you think your involvement in child-rearing/upbringing has impacted your child's growth and behavior?
- Can any of you share a time when you saw your child benefit from your involvement in their development? What did you do, and what changes did you notice in them?

4. The Specific Ways Fathers Are Involved in Child-Rearing

- How do you typically spend time with your child?
- How do you contribute to your child's education?
- What is your role in disciplining your child? How do you approach discipline?
- Do you help in managing household chores related to child-rearing, like feeding or bathing?

5. Cultural and Societal Expectations Regarding Fatherhood in Bangladesh

- How do you think society in Bangladesh views the role of a father in a child's upbringing?
- In your opinion, do you see any changes/ differences in terms of fathers' engagement with their children in urban areas than in rural areas? Why or why not?

6. Barriers and Challenges Faced by Fathers in Participating in Child-Rearing

- What challenges or barriers do you face in being actively involved in your child's upbringing?
- Do societal norms or cultural expectations have any effects on your involvement in child-rearing? If yes, how?
- Have you ever encountered judgment or criticism for your involvement or lack of involvement?
- What support do you feel is lacking that would help you in your role as a father?

7. Concluding Thoughts and Recommendations

- Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your experience as a father involved in child-rearing?

IDI Guideline (Bangla)

১. ভূমিকা ও প্রেক্ষাপট

সাক্ষাৎকারের উদ্দেশ্য সংক্ষেপে ব্যাখ্যা করুন এবং কীভাবে তাদের উত্তরগুলো শহরাঞ্চলের ঢাকায় শিশুপালনে পিতার

ভূমিকাকে গভীরভাবে বুঝতে সাহায্য করবে তা তুলে ধরুন।

• জনসংখ্যাগত তথ্য:

- লিঙ্গ: পুরুষ (শুধুমাত্র পিতাগণ)
- বয়সসীমা: ২৮ থেকে ৪৫ বছর
- শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা: ন্যূনতম স্নাতক ডিগ্রি বা সমতুল্য
- পেশাগত অবস্থা: পূর্ণকালীন কর্মরত ও স্থিতিশীল আয়ের উৎস আছে
- মাসিক আয়: ন্যূনতম ৫০,০০০ টাকা বা তার বেশি

- বসবাসের স্থান: ঢাকা শহর
- পারিবারিক কাঠামো: নিউক্লিয়ার বা যৌথ পরিবার
- সন্তানের সংখ্যা: অন্তত একজন ০ থেকে ৩ বছর বয়সী শিশু

• গোপনীয়তা:

তাদের দ্বারা প্রদত্ত সকল তথ্য গোপন রাখা হবে এবং শুধুমাত্র গবেষণার উদ্দেশ্যে ব্যবহার করা হবে বলে আশ্বস্ত করুন।

• অবগত সম্মতি:

সাক্ষাৎকারে এগিয়ে যাওয়ার জন্য অংশগ্রহণকারীদের লিখিত সম্মতি গ্রহণ করুন।

২. শিশুর বিকাশ সম্পর্কে পিতার ধারণা এবং তাঁদের ভূমিকার গুরুত্ব

- আপনি যখন শিশুর বিকাশের কথা ভাবেন, তখন আপনার মনে কী আসে?
- আপনার মতে, একটি শিশুর বিকাশে একজন পিতার কী ভূমিকা থাকা উচিত? এই ভূমিকাটি কি মায়ের ভূমিকা থেকে আলাদা বলে মনে হয়? কেন?
- পিতার ভূমিকা সম্পর্কে আপনি কোথা থেকে শিখেছেন? নিজের পিতা, গণমাধ্যম, শিক্ষা না অন্য কোনো উৎস থেকে?

৩. শিশুর বিকাশে পিতার অংশগ্রহণের প্রভাব সম্পর্কিত ধারণা

- আপনি কীভাবে মনে করেন আপনার শিশুপালনে অংশগ্রহণ তার আচরণ ও বিকাশে প্রভাব ফেলেছে?
- আপনি কি এমন কোনো ঘটনা শেয়ার করতে পারেন, যখন দেখেছেন আপনার অংশগ্রহণে আপনার সন্তানের উপকার হয়েছে? আপনি কী করেছিলেন এবং তাদের মধ্যে কী পরিবর্তন লক্ষ্য করেছিলেন?

৪. শিশুপালনে পিতাদের নির্দিষ্ট ভূমিকা

- আপনি সাধারণত কীভাবে আপনার সন্তানের সঙ্গে সময় কাটান?
- আপনি কীভাবে সন্তানের শিক্ষায় অবদান রাখেন?
- সন্তানের শাসনের ক্ষেত্রে আপনার ভূমিকা কী? আপনি কীভাবে শাসন করেন?

- আপনি কি খাওয়ানো বা গোসল করানো মতো শিশুপালনের গৃহস্থালী কাজে সহায়তা করেন?

৫. বাংলাদেশে পিতৃত্ব নিয়ে সাংস্কৃতিক ও সামাজিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি

- আপনি কী মনে করেন, বাংলাদেশে সমাজ পিতার ভূমিকাকে কীভাবে দেখে?
- আপনার মতে, শহরাঞ্চলের পিতারা কি গ্রামাঞ্চলের তুলনায় সন্তানের সঙ্গে বেশি যুক্ত? কেন মনে হয় বা মনে হয় না?

৬. শিশুপালনে পিতাদের অংশগ্রহণে প্রতিবন্ধকতা ও চ্যালেঞ্জ

- আপনার সন্তানের লালন-পালনে সক্রিয়ভাবে অংশগ্রহণ করতে গেলে আপনি কী ধরনের প্রতিবন্ধকতা বা চ্যালেঞ্জের সম্মুখীন হন?
- সমাজের রীতি বা সাংস্কৃতিক প্রত্যাশা কি আপনার অংশগ্রহণকে প্রভাবিত করে? করে থাকলে কীভাবে?
- কখনো কি আপনি আপনার অংশগ্রহণ বা অনুপস্থিতির জন্য কারও সমালোচনা বা বিচার শুনেছেন?
- আপনার মনে হয় কি, পিতার ভূমিকায় আপনার সহায়তার জন্য কী ধরনের সহযোগিতা দরকার, যা এখন অনুপস্থিত?

৭. সমাপ্তি মন্তব্য ও সুপারিশ

- আপনি কি আপনার পিতার ভূমিকা নিয়ে অভিজ্ঞতার বিষয়ে আর কিছু শেয়ার করতে চান?

Appendix C: Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guideline

1. Introduction

- **Welcome and Introduction:**
 - o Briefly introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the FGD.
 - o State that the discussion will explore fathers' roles and involvement in child-rearing.
- **Consent:**
 - o Obtain written consent from participants for the recording of the session.
- **Ground Rules:**
 - o Encourage open, honest, and respectful communication.
 - o Ensure every participant can speak.
 - o Remind participants that there are no right or wrong answers.
 - o Announce that notes will be taken during the session to record the key information for further study purpose.
- **To begin the discussion and help everyone feel comfortable:**
 - o Let's go around the room and briefly introduce ourselves. Can each of you tell us your name, how many children you have, and their ages?

2. Fathers' Understanding of Child Development and the Importance of Their Role

- When you think about child development, what comes to mind?
- In your opinion, what is the role of a father in a child's development? Do you feel this role is different from that of a mother? How so?
- Where did you learn about your role as a father in terms of child development? Was it from your own father, the media, education, or other sources?

3. Fathers' Perceptions of How Their Involvement Impacts Their Child's Development

- In what ways do you think your involvement in child-rearing/upbringing has impacted your child's growth and behavior?
- Can any of you share a time when you saw your child benefit from your involvement in their development? What did you do, and what changes did you notice in them?

4. Specific Ways Fathers Are Involved in Child-Rearing

- What are the main activities or tasks you handle in raising your children? For example, do you help with feeding, bathing, emotional support, or discipline?
- How do you approach discipline in your household? Do you believe fathers should play a significant role in discipline, or should it be left to mothers?

5. Cultural and Societal Expectations Regarding Fatherhood in Bangladesh

- In Bangladesh, how do you think society expects fathers to be involved in their children's upbringing? Are there specific roles that are considered 'appropriate' for fathers?
- Do you feel that fathers are expected to do things in a particular way? Is there pressure to conform to certain practices of fatherhood, and how does this affect you?
- How do extended family members or neighbors view your involvement as a father? Do you feel supported or judged for how much you participate in your children's lives?"

6. Barriers and Challenges Faced by Fathers in Participating in Child-Rearing

- How do your work hours and professional commitments affect your ability to engage in child-rearing activities?
- Do you find it challenging to balance work responsibilities with spending quality time with your children? What do you do to ensure you are still involved in their upbringing?
- Do you feel that societal expectations about what fathers should or should not do limit your involvement in your child's life? If so, how?

7. Recommendations and Improvements

- What do you think can be done to make it easier for fathers to play an active role in child-rearing in Dhaka? Are there changes you would recommend in your community or workplace?
- What advice would you give to other fathers who may be struggling to find the time or ways to be more involved in their child's development?"

9. Closing Remarks

Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences or thoughts on fatherhood and child-rearing?"

Thank You and Conclusion

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guideline (Bangla)

১. ভূমিকা

• স্বাগত ও পরিচিতি:

- প্রথমে নিজেকে সংক্ষেপে পরিচয় দিন এবং এই ফোকাস গ্রুপ আলোচনা (FGD)-এর উদ্দেশ্য ব্যাখ্যা করুন।
- জানান যে, এই আলোচনা শহরাঞ্চলে পিতাদের ভূমিকা ও শিশুপালনে অংশগ্রহণ নিয়ে মতামত সংগ্রহের জন্য।

• সম্মতি:

- অংশগ্রহণকারীদের কাছ থেকে সেশনের অডিও রেকর্ডিংয়ের জন্য লিখিত সম্মতি গ্রহণ করুন।

• আলোচনার নীতিমালা:

- অংশগ্রহণকারীদের খোলামেলা, সৎ এবং শ্রদ্ধাশীলভাবে মত প্রকাশে উৎসাহিত করুন।
- নিশ্চিত করুন যেন প্রত্যেকে কথা বলার সুযোগ পান।
- মনে করিয়ে দিন, এখানে সঠিক বা ভুল কোনো উত্তর নেই।
- জানান যে, আলোচনার সময় গুরুত্বপূর্ণ তথ্য নোট আকারে সংরক্ষণ করা হবে গবেষণার উদ্দেশ্যে।

• আলোচনার শুরুতে পরিবেশকে স্বাভাবিক ও আরামদায়ক করতে:

- চলুন আমরা একে একে নিজেদের পরিচয় দিই। আপনার নাম, আপনার সন্তানের সংখ্যা এবং তাদের বয়স বলুন।

২. শিশুর বিকাশ ও পিতার ভূমিকার গুরুত্ব সম্পর্কে পিতার উপলব্ধি

- আপনি যখন শিশুর বিকাশ নিয়ে ভাবেন, তখন আপনার মনে কী আসে?
- আপনার মতে, শিশুর বিকাশে একজন পিতার ভূমিকা কী হওয়া উচিত? এটি কি মায়ের ভূমিকার চেয়ে আলাদা?

যদি হয়, কীভাবে?

- আপনি পিতার ভূমিকা সম্পর্কে কোথা থেকে জেনেছেন? নিজের পিতা, গণমাধ্যম, শিক্ষা, না অন্য কোনো উৎস থেকে?

৩. পিতার অংশগ্রহণে শিশুর বিকাশে প্রভাব সংক্রান্ত ধারণা

- আপনি কীভাবে মনে করেন, শিশুপালনে আপনার অংশগ্রহণ সন্তানের আচরণ ও বিকাশে প্রভাব ফেলেছে?
- এমন কোনো ঘটনা কি মনে আছে, যেখানে আপনার অংশগ্রহণে সন্তানের উন্নতি হয়েছে? আপনি কী করেছিলেন, এবং তার মধ্যে কী পরিবর্তন দেখেছেন?

৪. শিশুপালনে পিতার নির্দিষ্ট ভূমিকা

- আপনার সন্তানের লালন-পালনে আপনি কোন কোন কাজ বা দায়িত্ব পালন করেন? যেমন: খাওয়ানো, গোসল করানো, মানসিক সহায়তা বা শাসন করা?
- আপনি শাসনের বিষয়টি কীভাবে পরিচালনা করেন? আপনি কি মনে করেন, পিতাদের এই দায়িত্বে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা থাকা উচিত, নাকি এটি মায়ের ওপর ছেড়ে দেওয়া উচিত?

৫. বাংলাদেশে পিতৃত্ব নিয়ে সামাজিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক প্রত্যাশা

- বাংলাদেশে সমাজ কীভাবে চায় বা প্রত্যাশা করে পিতারা সন্তানের লালন-পালনে অংশ নিক? পিতাদের জন্য নির্দিষ্ট কিছু ভূমিকা কি ‘উপযুক্ত’ হিসেবে বিবেচিত হয়?
- আপনি কি মনে করেন, পিতাদের কোনো নির্দিষ্ট ধাঁচে চলতে হয়? পিতৃত্ব নিয়ে সমাজের চাপ বা প্রত্যাশা আপনার উপর কীভাবে প্রভাব ফেলে?
- পরিবারের অন্য সদস্য বা প্রতিবেশীরা আপনার পিতারূপে ভূমিকা কীভাবে দেখেন? তারা কি আপনাকে সমর্থন করেন না বিচার করেন?

৬. শিশুপালনে অংশগ্রহণে পিতাদের প্রতিবন্ধকতা ও চ্যালেঞ্জ

- আপনার কর্মঘণ্টা বা পেশাগত দায়িত্ব কি শিশুপালনে অংশগ্রহণকে প্রভাবিত করে?
- কর্মজীবন ও পারিবারিক সময়ের মধ্যে ভারসাম্য রাখা কি আপনার জন্য কঠিন? আপনি কীভাবে নিশ্চিত করেন যে, আপনি সন্তানের বিকাশে যুক্ত আছেন?
- আপনি কি মনে করেন, সমাজে পিতাদের কী করা উচিত বা উচিত নয় – এই রকম দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি আপনার অংশগ্রহণ সীমিত করে? যদি করে, তাহলে কীভাবে?

৭. সুপারিশ ও উন্নয়নের পরামর্শ

- ঢাকায় পিতাদের শিশুপালনে আরও সক্রিয় ভূমিকা রাখার জন্য কী কী করা যেতে পারে বলে আপনি মনে করেন?
আপনি কী ধরনের পরিবর্তন দেখতে চান সমাজ বা কর্মস্থলে?
- যেসব পিতা সন্তানের বিকাশে সময় দিতে বা যুক্ত হতে হিমশিম খাচ্ছেন, তাদের উদ্দেশ্যে আপনি কী পরামর্শ দেবেন?

৮. সমাপ্তি মন্তব্য

আপনার পিতৃত্ব ও শিশুপালনের অভিজ্ঞতা বা ভাবনা নিয়ে আর কিছু শেয়ার করতে চান কি?

ধন্যবাদ এবং সমাপ্তি।

Appendix D: IDI Transcription (Extract)

Date: 26 June 2025 Time: 11:55 AM

Respondent details:

Name: Rahim (Pseudo Name) Respondent 1

Gender and Age: Male, 36 years

Educational Qualification: MBA completed from a renowned private university

Employment Status: Full Time Employee at a Telco Company, Manager

Monthly income: above BDT 1lac

Residential Location: Jhigatola, Dhaka

Family Structure: Joint Family, lives with his parents

Number of Children: 2 (Daughter 1: 4 years, Daughter 2: 1 year)

Interviewer:

Hey, thanks for taking the time to chat with me today, bhaiya! So, just to give you a brief, I am conducting this interview as part of my master's program in early childhood development. This is for thesis paper which is research on exploring father's (having kids from 0 to 3 years) knowledge and participation in child upbringing. First of fall, as mentioned earlier I would like you to read out this consent form and sign it, and as a disclaimer, just letting you know that your personal information will not be disclosed anywhere, and the information provided by you will be solely used for this paper. So, should we begin?

Respondent: Yea, sure but just a heads-up if I am uncomfortable about answering any question, I will skip it

Interviewer: yea sure bhaiya, no worries just stay relaxed and its just some basic questions..... so should we begin

Respondent: yea yea please.... Go ahead

Interviewer: When I say “*child development*”, what’s the first thing that comes to your mind?

You can say anything freely bhaiya, just share your own thoughts and experience

Respondent:

ah....well! For me, it’s all about positive improvement — you know, seeing them grow step by step and becoming better at every stage of life. Every little milestone feels like an achievement, like when they started to roll over on their own, their first teeth growth, their first step.

Interviewer:

That’s lovely to hear bhaiya. So, according to you what is the role of a father in a child’s development? Like do you feel it’s different from the mother’s role?

Respondent:

Hmm... good question. I believe a father’s role is to make the child independent and confident. Of course, mothers play a big role emotionally and physically, but I think fathers are more about guiding the child towards standing on their own feet and making their own decisions.

Interviewer:

Interesting thoughts bhaiya!!!. Where did you learn about your role as a father? Was it from your own father, social media or you like general online reading or something?

Respondent:

I'd say my father was a big influence. I grew up watching him — how he treated us, how he taught us life lessons. But I've also learned from observing others, reading, and honestly, just by being present and figuring things out as I go.

Interviewer:

Wow... ma shaa Allah, love that honesty and eagerness. So, do you feel your involvement has impacted your child's growth and behavior?

Respondent:

Absolutely. I can see how my involvement has a direct effect on their confidence. They're more open with me, more curious about things, and they feel safe knowing I'm there for them.

Appendix E: FGD Transcription (Extract)

Topic: Exploring Fathers' Perception and Child-Rearing Practice for Children Aged 0–3 Years in Urban Dhaka

Date: 3 Jul 2025

Location: Gulshan Dhaka

Moderator: Siffat Momtaz

Participants: 6 Fathers (coded as P1 to P6)

Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Siffat Momtaz, and I will be moderating today's session. I truly appreciate your presence here today. The purpose of this Focus Group Discussion is to better understand fathers' knowledge, roles, and involvement in child-rearing practices for children aged 0 to 3 years, particularly in urban areas like Dhaka.

Before we begin, I would like to inform you that this session will be audio recorded to ensure accuracy in capturing your valuable insights. Please be assured that your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.

Consent: I request each of you to please sign the written consent form before we proceed with the discussion. This gives us permission to record the session.

Let me lay out a few ground rules to ensure a smooth and respectful discussion:

- Please speak openly and honestly. There are no right or wrong answers.
- Let's respect each other's opinions. Only one person should speak at a time.
- Everyone will get a chance to express their thoughts.
- We will also be taking notes throughout the session for research purposes.

To begin, let's go around and briefly introduce ourselves. Please share your name (Pseudonyms), how many children you have, and their ages.

P1: Hello, I'm Tanvir. I have one daughter who is 2 years old.

P2: I'm Mehedi. I have two sons—one is 3 years, the other is just 6 months.

P3: My name is Sajib. I have a daughter who just turned 1.

P4: I'm Rafiqul, father of twin boys—both are 2 years and 8 months.

P5: Hello, I'm Nayeem. I have one child, a boy, 2 years old.

P6: I'm Anis. I have a 1.5-year-old daughter.

Moderator: Thank you, everyone. Let's begin by talking about your understanding of child development in the early years. What do you believe are the most important things for a child aged 0–3?

P1: I think love and attention are key. I try to spend time with my daughter whenever I'm home.

P3: Nutrition is very important. My wife and I focus a lot on food, especially fruits and milk.

Moderator: That's great. What about your involvement in daily activities like feeding, bathing, or putting them to sleep?

P2: I help in bathing sometimes, especially on weekends. My elder son enjoys it when I tell stories.

P5: I usually take him for evening walks. That's our bonding time.

Moderator: Do you feel you are playing a role in their emotional development?

P4: Definitely. I talk to them and try to make them laugh. It builds a connection.

P6: My daughter recognizes my voice. I think just being present matters.

Moderator: What kind of support or barriers do you face in being involved with your children?

P1: Work pressure. I come home late, so time is a big issue.

P3: In our society, fathers are still expected to earn, not change diapers.

P6: But it's changing. I try to challenge those stereotypes.

Moderator: How do you see your role compared to the mother?

P5: Mothers do more, naturally. But I try to balance things when I can.

P2: I see it as a shared responsibility now, not just the mother's job.