

THE SCENARIO OF “PARENTS INVOLVEMENT” IN GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN LALBAG

By

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A thesis submitted to the BRAC Institute of Educational Development in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education in Educational Leadership & School Improvement

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my original work while completing my 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 that 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:

The study was conducted with three headteachers, six assistant teachers and 36 guardians of three government primary schools under Lalbagh station in Dhaka district. Headteachers and assistant teachers were interviewed and focus group discussions were held with parents. I also observed three "mother's meetings" of these three schools.

The names of the schools involved in this study and the names of the participants are not mentioned anywhere in this research. Nothing was said or mentioned that could reveal the identity of the school or any of the participants.

Consent was taken in advance with all of the nine people interviewed in this study. Consent was taken from everyone before the "Mother's meeting" during observation. Participants in the "Mother's meeting" took part in a "Focus Group Discussion", which was primarily voluntary participation.

All data in this study are stored in both softcopy and hard copy. Except for reasonable cause and/or formal procedure, will not be shared with anyone in any way.

Abstract

The role of a parent in raising and educating a child is immense. And teacher plays a key role in his formal education. Therefore, both parents and teachers play an important role in its overall development. So a balanced relationship between the teacher and the guardian is needed between these two groups. And the school authority has a vital role to play to ensure parent's participation in school-related activities. Many researchers validate this parents-teachers relationship. There has not been much research in our country on the scenario of parental involvement in a government primary school. The study was conducted to find out how parents in Lalbagh Educational Thana, are involved with government primary schools. This study focuses on Epstein's (1987, 1992) Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence. This is a qualitative research. The study was conducted with information from the interview of three headteachers, six asst. teachers and focus group discussion with 36 parents of three government primary schools. There "mother's meetings" were also observed silently in those three schools. All the participants were agreed that parent's involvement is necessary for the growth and development of child and school. And they also mentioned that the frequency and quality of communication need to increase. The headteachers and asst. teachers assured that they have a guideline for parent's involvement and they try to maintain this. But, parents mentioned that the communication is mostly about the exams and fees or fundraising. Parents have limited scope to express their opinion, they just come to hear the announcement. In addition, only influential parents can be involved in SMC and PTA. Parents also showed their concern regarding the frequency of Home visits that teachers are supposed to make regularly. However, teachers have claimed that the relationship with parents is increasing. Especially teachers and parents are communicating with each other on mobile phones. Hopefully the better this relationship is, the more parents will be involved in schoolwork, the more effective role it will play in the growth of the children.

Keywords: Govt. Primary School in Lalbag; Parents Involvement in Primary School; Mother's meeting; parent's involvement in CMC; teacher's community visit; Challenges in parental involvement in primary schools

Dedication

I am dedicating this study to my beloved parents for their conditioning love and support in my life.

Acknowledgement

This project would not have been possible without the support of many people. Many thanks to my thesis supervisor, Muhammed Mamunur Rashid, Lecturer, BRAC Institute of Educational Development, for his valuable suggestions and feedback. Also thanks to my committee members, who offered me guidance and support.

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Table of Contents

Declaration.....	ii
Approval	iii
Ethics Statement:	iv
Abstract.....	v
Dedication	vi
List of Acronyms	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction and Background	1
1.2 Problem Statement:.....	2
1.3 Research Topic & Title:.....	2
1.5 Research Question:	2
1.6 Purpose of the Study:	3
1.7 Significant of the Study:	3
1.8 Rationality of this study:	3
Chapter 2 Literature Review and Conceptual Framework	5
2.2 Parent's and Teacher's Relation for a child's Growth and Development:.....	5
2.3 Definition of parents.....	6
2.4 Benefit of Parent's Involvement:	6
2.5 Challenges of Parent's Involvement:.....	6

2.6 Role of Schools for parental involvement:	7
2.7 Condition of Govt. Primary Schools in case of Parental involvement in a similar context:	7
2.7 Condition of Govt. Primary Schools in case of Parental involvement in Bangladesh ..	8
2.8 Conceptual Framework:	8
Chapter 3 Methodology	10
3.1 Research Approach	10
3.2 Research Site:	10
3.3 Research Participants	11
3.4 Sampling Procedure:	12
3.5 Data Collection Method:	12
3.5.1 Focus Group Discussion (FGD):	12
3.5.2 Interview:	13
3.5.3 Observation:	13
3.6 Role of a Researcher:	14
3.7 Data Analysis:	15
3.8 Ethical Issues & Concerns:	15
3.9 Credibility and Rigor:	15
3.10 Limitation of this Study:	16
Chapter 4 Results	17

4.2 Participation in SMC and PTA:	17
4.3: Teacher community visit	18
4.4 Other ways of communication:	19
4.5 Findings from “Parent’s meeting” observation:	20
4.6 Challenges:	23
Chapter 5 Discussion and Conclusion.....	25
5.2 Conclusion:	27
5.3 Recommendations	27
Reference:	29
Appendices: 1 - Mother’s Meeting Observation Checklist:	32
Appendices: 2 Interview Questions:.....	33
Appendices: 3 FGD Guideline:	35

List of Acronyms

GoB	Government of Bangladesh
Govt.	Government
SMC	School Management Committee
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
DPE	Directorate of Primary Education
Asst.	Assistant
Q&A	Question and Answer
TR	Teacher's Representative

Chapter 1

Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction:

Schools, teachers, and parents play an important role in the overall growth and development of the child. Parents are the child's first educator and teacher is the second and both have a huge parents-teachers relationship. Research has confirmed that Parents have a huge role in the children's behavior and their achievement (Erika, Harris, & Jorgianne, 2008) and teachers have a great impact on their students' academic performance and life-long success (Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff, 2014).

Many researchers wanted to find out how school and parents both work together for the betterment of a child's development. A study was conducted in primary schools belongs to low-income societies in Los Angeles and it showed a positive relationship between parents' involvement in schools and student's achievement, especially in classroom participation, attendance, and homework (Bonnie, Jose, Perry, & Howard, 1992). A study was conducted in middle-school students in the United States and suggested that, if parents are involved in school related activities like classroom visit, interactions with teachers, and this actually help parent's knowledge around curriculum and enhance their social capital, also help the parents to increase the effectiveness of home involvement (Hill & Taylor, 2004). So in the teaching-learning process, we can't ignore the role of parents and they are the two key vital stakeholders for a child's growth.

The discussion above clearly indicates that, for the proper development of a child, parents, teachers, and schools need to work together. In the schools of our country, parents are involved in various school activities in different ways. The government has also given various instructions to the schools to involve the parents in various school activities in many ways. This study mainly highlights how the parents of Lalbagh educational zone in Dhaka city are involved with the Govt primary schools, what initiatives are being taken by the school authorities, and whether there are any challenges.

1.2 Problem Statement:

According to Bangladesh Primary Education Annual Sector Performance Report (ASPR-2019), there are around 17,338,100 students enrolled in Primary schools of Bangladesh. There are 38,916 Govt primary schools, 236,318 teachers in these schools, and around 8932612 students are enrolled (DPE, 2019). Education in these schools is free and there are several initiatives like stipend programs, mid-day meals to address the most vulnerable group in our country. If parents are encouraged to involve in school related activity and they are provided with proper information, regardless of their educational background, even parents from marginalized community in developing countries can make a significant contribution to their children's school achievement (Islam, 2007). In our country, the Government has also taken steps to bridge between teachers and parents. According to Islam (2017), the Government of Bangladesh initiates a few steps through mothers' meetings, Guardians' representatives in SMC, mandatory Community visits, and participation in Parents Teachers Association (PTA). But there is less evidence to know the effectiveness.

In this study, the key point will be to find out the current scenario of parents' involvement in underprivileged Govt. Primary School in Lalbag.

1.3 Research Topic & Title:

There are several factors, work in the development and progress of a child. Different institutions and characters play different roles in the process of a child's development and academic improvement. The role of teachers and parents has a huge impact on a child's development and it has been highlighted previously. In different schools in different countries of the world, parents are involved in different activities with the school in many ways. They work together for the overall development of the child. This study is aimed at highlighting how parents in government primary schools in urban areas in Lalbag, Dhaka are involved in various school activities. The title of this study is - **“The scenario of “Parents Involvement” in Government Primary schools in Lalbag”**.

1.5 Research Question:

The key question for this study is given below:

1. What is the current scenario of Parents' involvement in Govt Primary Schools in Lalbag?
2. How parents are participating in different activities in school? What challenges do parents and schools face to involve in school activities?
3. How effective their participation is?

1.6 Purpose of the Study:

Every Government Primary School has a fixed outline to involve the parents with the teaching-learning process. Monthly mothers' meetings, Community visits, parents representatives in SMC are major formal ways to engage parents in a Government Primary School. According to my study, there is only a little evidence to show the degree of parent's involvement in a government primary school. The main purpose of the study is to find out the current scenario of parents' involvement, and their challenges to involve in a government primary school.

1.7 Significant of the Study:

The significance of the study is given below:

- ☐ Evidence will be generated about how parents are getting involved in a government primary school.
- ☐ This study will help policymakers, academics, educators, and government officials to understand the current scenario of parents' involvement and take interventions.
- ☐ These findings of the study will help these three schools and some other schools with a similar setup to build a better relationship with parents.
- ☐ This study will lead to a future research

1.8 Rationality of this study:

Now if we consider our context, a large number of our student is the first-generation learner. The educational background of the parents and their reality in developing countries is different, as a huge number of children are first-generation students and their parents sometimes find it difficult to track their children's education and school related activity (Banerjee & Duflo, 2006). And we don't have much evidence on it. According to Stanikzai (2013), Partnership between family and

school is helpful to enhance student's learning and experience. Developed countries like the United States and European countries have plenty of research on it, but unfortunately, there is a lack of evidence on parental involvement in children's learning in the context of the South Asian country. This study is to generate evidence around it.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Role of Parents’ and teachers’ for a child’s development and growth:

School is an institution for a child to learn. But the learning process starts before schooling from home. Parents play the most important role for a child to learn. Parents are the first teacher to their child before starting school and their influence remain constant on their children’s learning throughout their learning and beyond. In a research, it is mentioned that “Families play a very vital role in their children’s development specially in the field of their children’s social and emotional development as well as their cognitive growth from birth through adolescence. Their involvement is also very crucial of children's school success” (Weiss et al, 2009). Later on, a child enters into formal schooling and the teacher becomes another agent of their learning. The role of parents is also very much there. Both of the stakeholders play their roles. As the two most important participants in the overall development of children, teachers and parents need to be aware of the importance of parents participating in children’s learning (Stanikzai, 2013)

2.2 Parent’s and Teacher’s Relation for a child’s Growth and Development:

Many researchers tried to draw the line between parents’ and teachers’ relationships. Research showed that “Parent’s teacher’s relationship is a must to ensure child’s development and education in school is only a part of education, where parents are closely involved in 85% of education outside of school" (Munn, 1993). Regardless of the level of education, parents from disadvantaged backgrounds in developing countries can also make a significant contribution to their children’s school performance if parents receive appropriate information and proper direction (Islam, 2017). The most important form of participation is what parents do at home through supervision, support and advocacy. Parents can get involved in their children’s education and give their children a chance to succeed (NEA, 2020)

2.3 Definition of parents

Definition of parents is also important. According to Skaliotis, (2009), Many schools of thought prefer “Guardians” then “parents” due to some complex relationship of the child. Parental involvement can be defined in various ways. In this study, parental involvement includes parenting interest, support to their child’s education and participation at home, helping them complete their studies, providing advice and encouragement, and communicating with teachers for the purpose of their child’s study and their involvement in school related activities. Reay (2002) pointed out that when teachers and schools use the term "parents", there are no restrictions on the parents they invite: this leaves room for the father's participation. The increasing use of the term "guardian" takes into account the ever-changing and often complex family relationships that have always existed but were often not recognized in the past. One of the major finding from Burke & Ed, (2004) was, “though parents mean both father and mother, mothers’ participation is far greater than fathers. It is due to the availability and social distribution of work. Parents with higher levels of education have higher rates of involvement in their children’s schools”(Child Trends, 2013).

2.4 Benefit of Parent’s Involvement:

Many schools of thought define the benefit of involving parents differently. Gomes (2015) pointed out three major outputs of parent involvement. They are- “first, parent’s involvement helps students to perform better academically and improve their cognitive development. Secondly, they build up their socialization skills and finally develop the coping behavior of a student. He also mentions that parents' participation in children's formal schooling plays an important role in children's social functions. A relation was established for early adolescents, where parents’ participation at school (e.g. contact with teachers and school attendance) and at home (e.g. assist in study at home, discuss with children about school related activities at home) (Gomes, 2015).

2.5 Challenges of Parent’s Involvement:

Involving parents is very challenging work to do. Parents who believe that their role is only to get children to school, which then takes over responsibility for their education, will not be willing to be actively involved in either school-based or home-based parental involvement (Garry Hornby, 2011). Some couldn’t do it because of their busy schedule. Parents can also perceive the school as presenting obstacles in the form of lack of encouragement, not informing parents of what they can

do, and having too little scope for fitting around busy working and family lives. (Russell and Granville, 2005).

2.6 Role of Schools for parental involvement:

Nowadays all the stakeholders started addressing the issue. One of the findings from Stanikzai, (2013), a lot of teachers think that it will be effective to have a policy that institutes parent-teacher quarterly meetings for parent's awareness of their children's activity, building the bridge between parents and teacher.

So, teachers should step forward to build the relationship. The building of trust and a close relationship between the school and the home led to effective communication, and this allowed for both parties to communicate difficult as well as positive messages. (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011)

2.7 Condition of Govt. Primary Schools in case of Parental involvement in a similar context:

Research in South Africa has shown that many low-income parents to be less interested or involved in their children's education and have low home-school communication (Idgemohan, Van Wyk, & Van Staden, 2005). Research in Nigeria with 30 public schools also indicates that the level of parents' involvement in the area of curriculum, educational materials, and administration in primary school education is low and Parents display a lukewarm attitude towards the meeting of PTA (Olowe, Kutelu, & Kayode, 2013).

A study was conducted in Zimbabwe with teachers and school heads. The School heads mention that the attendance of parents in general meetings to crucial governing body elections is very poor and the only problem-oriented communication is the norms (Thembinkosi, 2013). One research mention that, the common tendency among schools is to communicate with the home only when a behavioral or learning problem arises and to neglect to communicate good news about learners' achievements (Dietz, 1997). In a study in Ghana, Parents described their role in school support and school involvement primarily as paying school fees (Wolf, 2020). Another research revealed that empowering parents to participate in decision-making in school could entail conflict between teachers and parents, and in some cases, teachers may even feel that such collaboration undermines their professional status (Sanders & Epstein, 2005).

2.7 Condition of Govt. Primary Schools in case of Parental involvement in Bangladesh

Now if we consider our context, a large number of our student is the first-generation learner. The educational reality in developing countries is completely different, because many children are first-generation students, and their parents are often unable to understand the school activities and situation (Banerjee & Duflo, 2006). And we don't have much evidence on it. According to Stanikzai, R(2013), the partnership between family and school is helpful to enhance student's learning and experience. Developed countries like the United States and European countries have plenty of research on it, but unfortunately, there is a very limited evidence on parental involvement in school related activities and their children's learning in the context of the South Asian country.

Our Government initiates a few steps. Monthly mother meetings, community visits are a few of them. There is not much evidence, of how efficient they are. Involving parents in their children's education through monthly parent-teacher meetings has a significant positive impact on the children's school results (Islam, 2017).

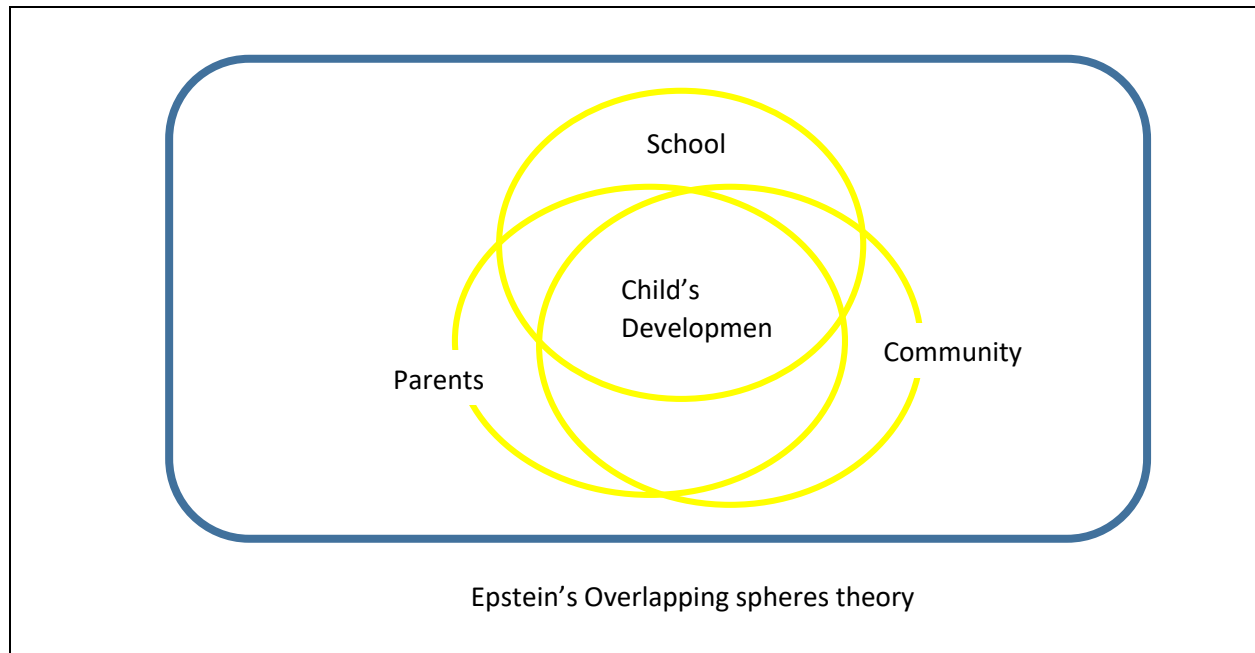
2.8 Conceptual Framework:

A conceptual framework is a system of concepts, expectations, assumptions, theories and beliefs that supports and guide research (Robson, 2011). Conceptual frameworks provide a model for relationships between variables that may or may not imply a particular theoretical perspective, to describe a phenomenon (Berman, 2013).

Many researchers have shown a correlation between family and school and found out that, family and school relationship influence children's growth and development. Epstein's (1987, 1992) "*Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence*" portrayed how families, schools, and the community are interconnected for the development and growth of a child and can work together for the socialization of the child. This theory acknowledged the separate role of family, school and community for a child's growth. But there are some common role to play and he introduced the idea of spheres. Epstein introduced the term "partnerships" to connect schools, families, and communities share responsibilities for children through overlapping spheres of influence.

To explain and describe the mutual relationship and connections of family, school and community, Epstein's (1987, 1992) theory of overlapping spheres of influence involved educational, psychological and sociological perspectives.

In this theory, family, school, and local community they are represented as spheres and the overlap of the spheres represent the partnership or mutual relationship between these three parties for the development of a child's growth.



Epstein's (1987, 1992) theory pointed that school authorities should be open to more stakeholders (specially parents), and the authorities should be cooperate with the stakeholders and willing to share the responsibility of student's achievement, learning with families and communities (Auerbach, 2012). Constantino (2003) mentioned this system as "family-friendly" schools. The primary aim of these partnerships focuses on student's development and their educational achievement. It also aims for a healthy communication with home and school, that can enables schools to became a more welcoming to the families. Epstein's theory is also useful to create and maintain a shared responsibilities among Schools, Family and Community and can also enable a policy dialog to improve the quality of family partnership (Price-Mitchell, 2009).

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter gives an overview of the design for the study, methodology, tool, and approaches that have been used to conduct the study. This chapter also describes the sampling methodology, types of data, and data collection methods to achieve the objectives of the study.

3.1 Research Approach

Buckley and Chiang (1976) define research methodology as “a strategy or architectural design by which the researcher maps out an approach to problem-finding or problem-solving”. This study is mainly to find out the real scenario of parent’s involvement and its effectiveness in a Government Primary School. And in this study “Qualitative Approach” is used.

Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. (Creswell, 2009)

3.2 Research Site:

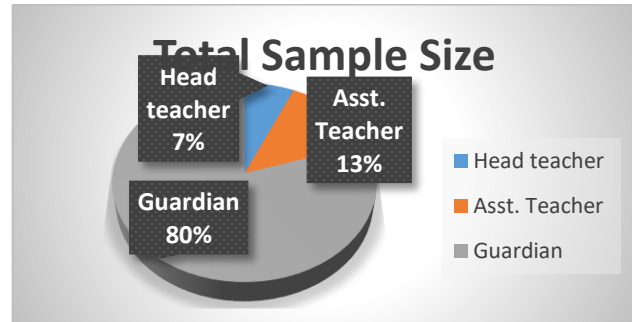
For this study, I have worked with three government primary schools of Lalbagh Educational Thana. One of the three schools has about 2000 students and 16 teachers. Located very close to the Buriganga embankment. Another school has about 600 students and 6 teachers. The other school has about 1000 students and 11 teachers.

The socio-economic background of the students of all the three schools is almost the same and most of the students are from lower to lower-middle-class families. So I think the teachers and guardians of this school are relevant for my study.

3.3 Research Participants

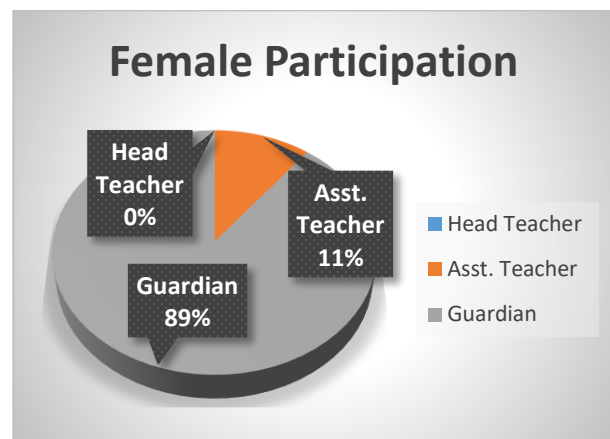
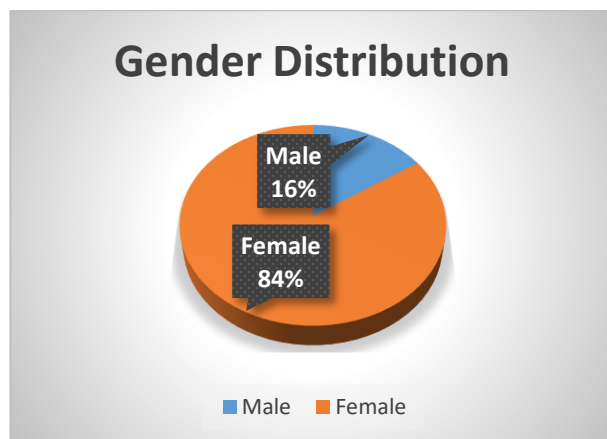
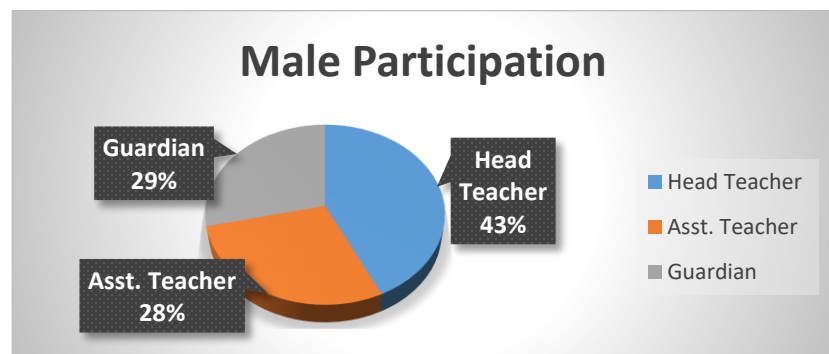
In this study, data is collected from three different schools. A total of 45 people participated in this study.

Out of these 45 people, 3 of them were Headteachers of these three Govt. Primary Schools, 6 of them were Asst. teacher of these three schools. The rest of them are guardians. Each school, Headteacher, two asst. teachers, and 12 guardians participated in this study.



Guardians were selected anonymously from the participants of the Parents' meeting.

Out of these 45 participants, 7 were male participants, and the rest 38 were female. The FGD was conducted with the participants of "Mother's Meeting", 34 of them were female.



From 7 male participants, three of them are Headteachers, Two of them asst. teachers and two male participants were guardians. Of 38 female participants, 34 of them were guardians, only four of them were asst. teachers.

3.4 Sampling Procedure:

I wanted to collect data from marginalized Govt. Primary School. As such, I selected three similar schools in the Lalbagh area with the similar socio-economic condition of their catchment area.

In these schools, I planned to collect data from two types of participants and they are the main stakeholders of my study. One of these two types of participants in the group of teachers of those schools. This teacher group again has two subgroups. Headteacher and assistant teacher. The headteachers of these three schools have been interviewed. Among the other assistant teachers, two assistant teachers from each school were interviewed based on their interests and availability.

The other group is the guardian of the school. On the day of the parents' meeting, FGD was randomly done with the parents in every school.

3.5 Data Collection Method:

In this Government Primary School, parent's involvement mainly occurs through monthly mother meetings mainly conducted by Head Teacher and some irregular interviews or small group meetings mainly called by the subject teacher or class teacher. There is a post for parents' representatives in SMC. And there is a format of community visits, which is mandatory for every Government Primary School teacher.

To explore the parent's involvement, the data collection will be based on a qualitative approach. Mainly three processes are going to follow to collect information.

3.5.1 Focus Group Discussion (FGD): A focus group discussion (FGD) is a good way to gather together people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest. The strength of FGD relies on allowing the participants to agree or disagree with each other so that it provides an insight into how a group thinks about an issue, about the range of opinion and ideas, and the inconsistencies and variation that exists in a particular community in terms of beliefs and their experiences and practices.(Mary Marczak & Meg Sewell, 2010).

This study aims to conduct three focus group discussions with the parents.

The reason for choosing Focus group discussion is to bring out the information from different stakeholders and their opinion. In Focus group discussion, participants will have their points and experience. Combining them, I can get an overall picture of the current scenario.

The purpose of the study is to find the real scenario and effectiveness of parent's involvement in a Government Primary School. By these four focus group discussions, we can plot the scenario from both angles. We can have the thoughts from an authority perspective and can also have the thoughts and scenarios from the parent's point of view. So, it would be much easier to portrait the whole picture

3.5.2 Interview: Interviews can be defined as a qualitative research technique that involves “conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation” (Boyce, C. & Neale, 2006).

This study, intended to conduct several in-depth interviews, one with the Head Teacher, One with Government Higher Official (depends on availability and willingness), and a few with teachers of that school.

There are mainly three types of interview questions. I intend to confine the questions to semi-structured to open-ended questions.

The reason for selecting this method is to achieve more in-depth ideas and knowledge. Sometimes people are reluctant to speak in front of others. But in the interview, they can open up and can share more authentic data. Also, the interview is an important tool to achieve in-depth data.

The purpose of the study is to find the real scenario and effectiveness of parent's involvement in a Government Primary School. The interview could a very effective tool to find out the actual scenario in the school. And also the perception of the Head Teacher and the decision-makers can be achieved by this method.

3.5.3 Observation: Observation is a way of gathering data by watching behavior, events, or noting physical characteristics in their natural setting (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008).

In this study, the main intention is to observe the “mother's meeting” silently and collect the data. The reason behind this is, as it is a structured way to involve parents, especially mothers, so this

could be a huge source of data. How the authority conducts the meeting and how the participant participates in the event can be an authentic data source.

As my purpose is to portray the real scenario, observe an event like this will help me a lot to know and understand the real scenario.

Here are the data collection tools, given below:

Description of activities	Number of activities & time needed	Persons involved	Location
Interviews	9 (Around 45 minutes)	6 assistant teacher 3 Head Teacher	Lalbag, Dhaka
Focus Group Discussion	3 (Around 1 hour)	12 parents in 3 schools (each time)	Lalbag, Dhaka
Observation	3 (around one hour each time)	Parents and Teachers	Lalbag, Dhaka

3.6 Role of a Researcher:

I was a non-conventional teacher for two years in one of those three schools and also worked with the community. But in this study, I was mindful of it and tried to absorb the findings from a researcher's point of view. I have to spend two days in each school for data collection. The findings from the interview and FGD were mainly participants' reflection-based and there wasn't any scope to manipulate these findings. But my background as a teacher helped to rapport building and I think the asst. teachers shared their experience more elaborately. In the case of the "Mother's Meeting" observation, I was just a silent observer and most of the parents didn't even know I was there while participating in the meeting. I was silent and just observe the activity.

3.7 Data Analysis:

In this study, all of my data was qualitative data, though there were only a few quantitative data in the Observation rubric.

I prepared the data collection tools in a way that, I can easily categorize the data from my findings. After the interview and FGD, I categorized the data, and based on the category, I interpreted it. There are charts, I created, based on their response.

In the observation rubric, there was scope to rate an event to find out how effective or ineffective it was. I also prepared charts from the rating of events and interpreted them based on the narrative.

3.8 Ethical Issues & Concerns:

I mentioned earlier that, I was a non-conventional teacher in one of those three schools for two years. So I already had a lot of information in my mind about the community, I had ideas about community engagement. However, as a researcher, I have tried to re-explore the facts besides all the preconceived notions. In most cases, it seems that the participants' statements are aligned with my experience. Also in some cases, I got new information that was unknown while I was a teacher in one of those schools.

Before this study, I had talked to the headteacher of these schools over the phone. I met them at a school for permission and took their permission. I have taken consent on the phone with everyone before the interview and asked them to sign the consent form before the start of the interview.

The study did not reveal any identifiable information about the schools other than the Geographic Area. Or anything that could identify any participant in the study was not written in this study. As a result, I think I was able to properly protect the confidentiality of all the information from the participants in this study and had full respect for their human rights.

3.9 Credibility and Rigor:

It's more than four years I am working as an educator in the field of Primary Education in Bangladesh which started with working as a non-conventional teacher in one of those schools. Later I worked in Save the Children Bangladesh and currently working in BRAC Education Program. I also have a Masters' in Development Studies apart from this MEd. In my previous

MDS, I have to complete a thesis and my thesis was qualitative research on the Host community in Ukhia.

I think, my professional experience helped me to know and learn about the primary education system in Bangladesh. The course works in this MEd helped me a lot to gain the theoretical knowledge of research. And the previous MDS also help me a lot to gain some practical knowledge to conduct qualitative research.

3.10 Limitation of this Study:

In this study, as a researcher, at some point, I pointed out some of the limitations. Here are some of the major limitations I realized during this study-

- ☐ The sample size is very small compared to the number of Govt Primary Schools in Lalbag.
- ☐ The assumption is the schools in urban setup are mostly identical but with this limited data is not enough to be representative of urban Govt Primary Schools and not possible to generalize. However, the findings of this study will give some idea of parental involvement in primary schools in urban settings. .
- ☐ In Rural contexts, the relationship between teachers and parents may change a lot for various reasons. As this study was not compared with rural settings, the findings of the study may not generalizable for both the urban and rural government primary schools.

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Introduction

After conducting Focus Group Student (FGD) with guardians and a semi-structured interview with assistant teachers and Headteachers, observed “Parents meeting”. With this data tried to find out the scenario of parents' involvement in these three schools.

Here are the key findings are given below:

4.2 Participation in SMC and PTA:

As per GoB's policy, each school has a school management committee (SMC) and parents' teachers' association (PTA) and there is a place for parents in these committees. In SMC, there are five places for guardians. Parents' representatives in the SMC committee are selected mainly through elections for two years. All the parents and teachers are automatically a member of PTA. There is a working committee in PTA where 6 spots are for guardians. In this study, parents, teachers, and headteachers were asked about the participation of parents in their SMC and PTA.

All three headteachers said, they follow the GoB's rules and have parent's representatives in their school's management committee and parents' teachers' association. All three of them said that the SMC and PTA are working well in their schools. They sit for regular meetings. When they were asked about the topic of the meetings, they responded that “They attend all the scheduled meetings, SLIP fund related meetings, and need-based emergency meetings. But they acknowledged that in all cases, equal participation is not guaranteed. Talking about it in more detail, one headmaster said, "The participation largely depends a lot on local politics. If anyone wants to participate in the election, basically they show their interest in these committees for face value and vote bank."

Asst. teachers have said almost similar points. They have also acknowledged local political influence. One teacher said, "These are now political posts. Only those who have local political power come to these posts." Even teachers' participation in PTA is also determined by seniority and involvement with teacher's association. One of them mentioned that “these posts and meetings

are for higher authority and senior members. Junior teachers or teachers with no teacher association-related involvement have a very limited role to play. Sometimes they got the opportunity to know the decisions but they rarely have opportunities to express their opinion.

However, the headmaster and teachers said, there is an opportunity for all parents to come to this committee. In that case, they have to come through elections.

Parents were asked about their participation in SMC and PTA. Almost everyone knows that there is a place for parents in SMC and they are not aware of PTA. There was no PTA committee member, present in those FGD and none of them ever wanted to go to that position. Local politics has also come up to the Guardian's discussion here. Now everyone on the committee is involved in local politics. In one school, the daughter of a current on the committee member passed the fifth grade from the school two years ago and was admitted to another school. But he is still on the committee as guardian's representative and he also assists in various activities of the school. No Guardian has been able to say when the last election took place.

4.3: Teacher community visit

According to the government instructions, every teacher should make regular home visits. Headteachers, assistant teachers, and parents are asked about this home visit.

When the headmaster was asked about the home visit, all the headteachers gave a similar answer. They have official instructions to visit the home and they follow the instructions and ask the asst. teachers to visit the student's home. They also mention that they maintain a register book for the Home visit and everyone says they maintain that register for home visits.

When assistant teachers are asked about home visits, they also gave similar answers. One teacher said, "When I visit student's homes and went to their community, I get to know the community better and understand their conditions better." They all said that this home visit is very important to build a healthy relationship with the community.

But the exact opposite facts have come up from the parents. They all agreed that teachers do not make regular home visits. There was no one there whose home had been visited by a teacher. One parent said, "My child has been in this school for four years. No teacher has come for a home visit. I have not even heard of it."

Conflicting statements regarding this home visit are a very alarming thing. All the teachers agreed on the importance of the home visit and they mention that as per rules they maintain the registrar. But this counter-complaint of the parents is a cause for concern.

4.4 Other ways of communication:

There are other ways to communicate with teachers and parents for various reasons beyond government guidelines. In this study, I wanted to know from the headteachers, asst. teachers, and parents what other ways can be used for communication.

The headmaster said that they communicate with the parents for various activities outside the formal meetings. Especially the use of mobile phones added a new dimension to their communication. Now mobile phones are available to almost everyone and it's comparatively less time-consuming and cheap. One headmaster said, "Having a mobile phone now makes communication much easier. We have the numbers of all the parents, we can easily contact the parents if we want."

The assistant teachers also responded similarly. They said that they can now talk to Guardians on mobile phones whenever they want. Normally they use phone calls to communicate with parents. Occasionally they asked some of the parents to come to school. When asked why you call or ask the parents to come to school, the first reason, five out of six people pointed that, due to an occurrence/ code of conduct. The second reason they mention that result-related issues (mostly due to low grades). So, most of the time, when a student breaks a code of conduct or the test results are bad for any reason, they call the parents or ask them to come to school for a talk. It seems that they don't call parents out of necessity.

In this case, parents also responded similarly. The teacher talks to them on the phone mainly about the code of conduct or the result of any unwanted incident. Apart from this, the guardians said that the teachers rarely call. Parents were asked if they had regular inquiries or called the teacher. In this case, the parents also frankly admit that the call is not given without any reason. One parent said, "When I come to school to drop or pick up my child and I meet with the teachers only then I talk with them about my child's progress." Several parents met the teachers on the way and inquired about the progress of the children's education. I have noticed a reluctance of the parents

to give the phone. A person at FGD said, "I don't call the teacher unless it's necessary. The notice of examination or in case of any payment is confirmed by the phone call."

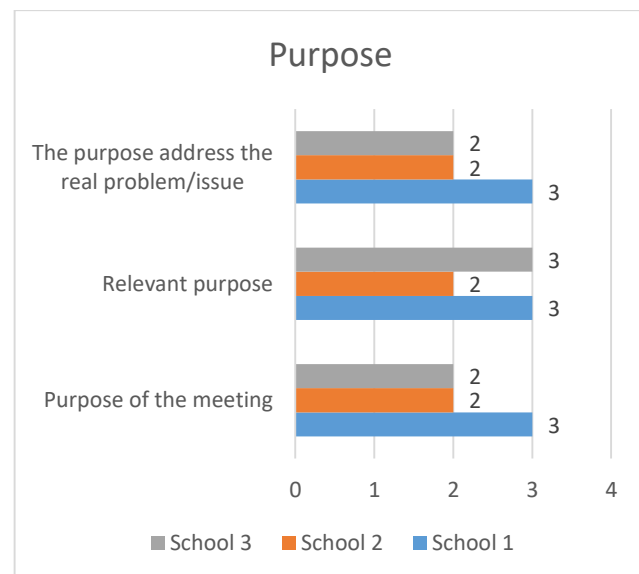
It seems to me that it is much easier to maintain communication through the phone now and communication is increasing now than before. But there are many more opportunities for advancement.

4.5 Findings from “Parent’s meeting” observation:

Parent meetings were observed based on four main areas. Based on these four areas here are findings from the observation of the parent’s meeting is given below:

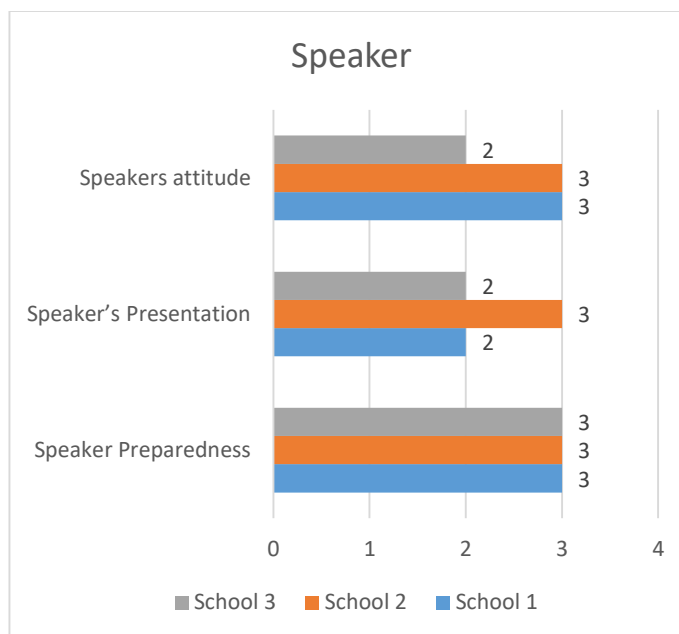
The first area tried to explore is the purpose of the meeting and later divided into three sub-areas. The purpose of the meeting, the purpose is relevant or not and the purpose address the real problem/issue.

Two out of three schools started with announce of the terminal examination date and the amount and deadline of related fees. Announcement of terminal examination could be a good purpose of the meeting. But the main focus was the fees are the deadline of the fees. In one school, the Headteacher shared few Guideline to do better in terminal examination. Later, wanted to explore the condition and attitude of the speaker.



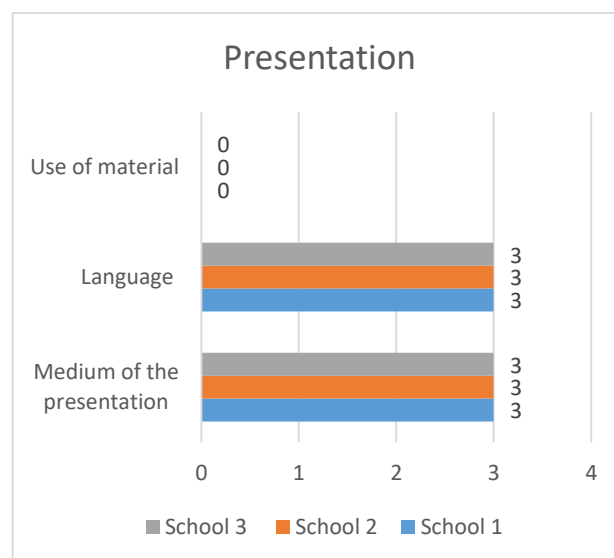
To explore this area, subdivided into three segments, Speaker’s presentation, His/her preparedness, and His/her attitude towards parents.

In one out of three cases, the speaker was the Headteacher, and other two cases it was TR (Teacher's representative). In one out of these two cases Headteacher was present and He was silent throughout the time. All of them prepared short writing and mainly focused on the exam date, amount of fees, and the deadline of the fees. It was more likely to read aloud a notice for the parents and make sure all of them heard the dates and the amounts.



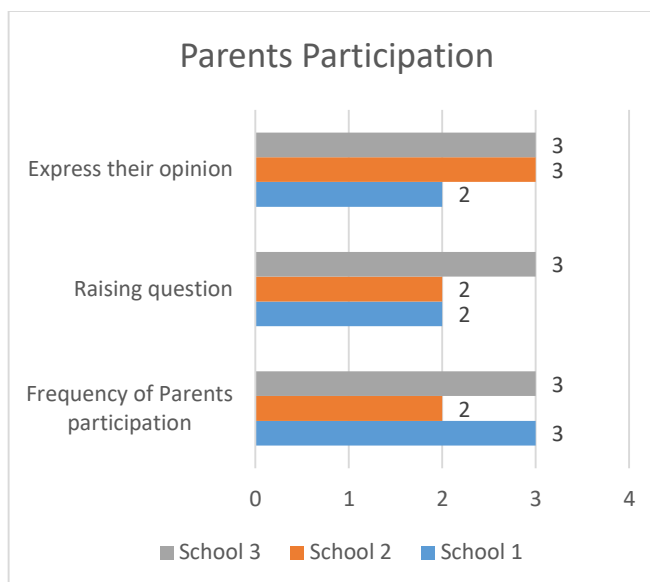
The next area wanted to explore was the presentation and the area was divided into three sub

sections, the medium of the presentation, the language they used, and the use of any supporting material. In all cases, it was in the lecture method. They just kept talking in Bangla and finished their announcement. None of them uses any visual material or any material for anything to present. It was more likely to read aloud a notice for the parents and make sure all of them heard the dates and the amounts.



Parents participation was one of the most interesting areas wanted to explore and it is subdivided into three segments, express their opinion, raising questions, and parents' participation

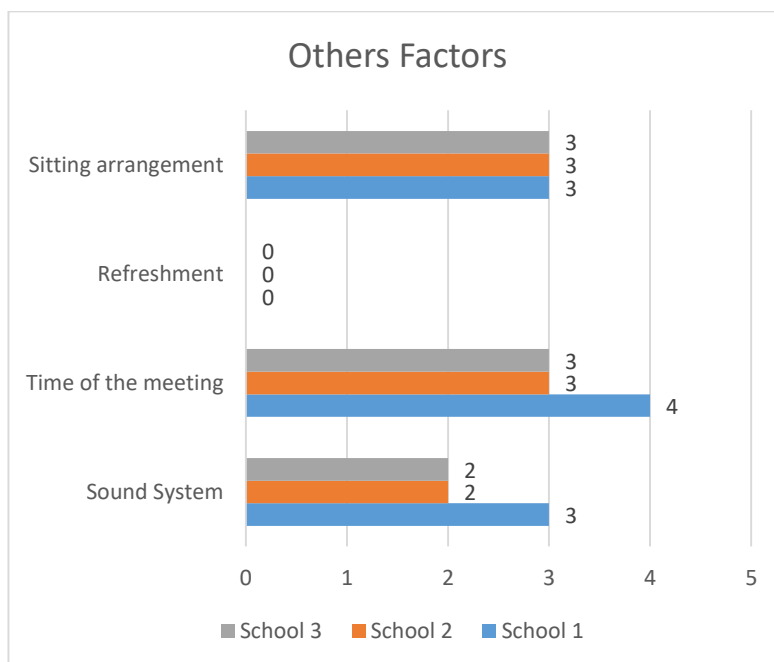
In most of the cases, only a few parents raised questions and it's all about the fees and reconfirmation of the dates. Surprisingly none of the parents asked about any other issues like the teaching-learning process, their son/daughter's progress, etc. The allocated time for the Q&A session was also very little. The authority only took a few questions. And parents didn't seem interested in raising questions.



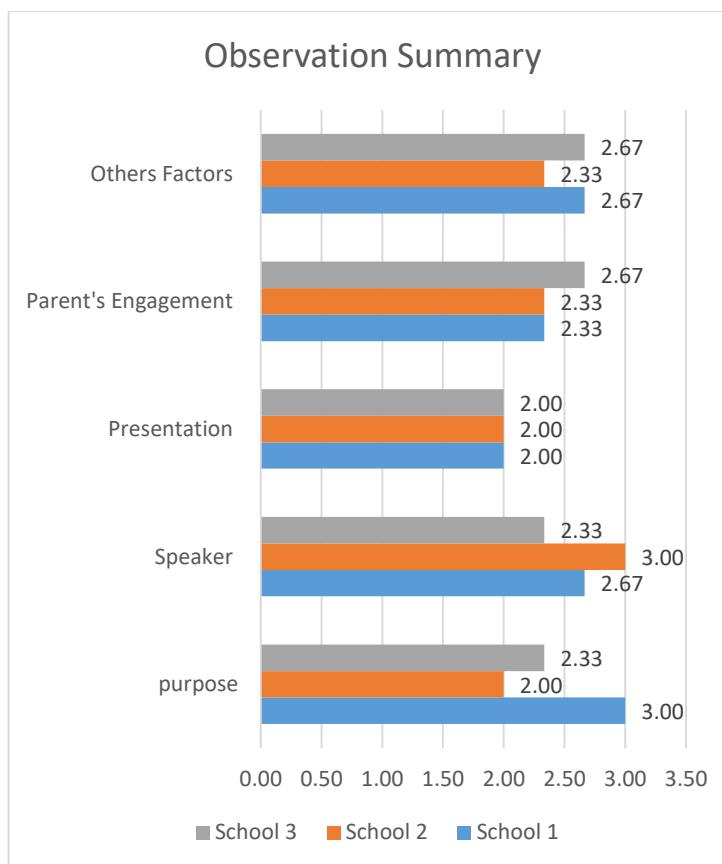
Those were more likely reconfirmations of the announced dates and fees.

Apart from this, tried to find out some other factors like sitting arrangement, refreshment, sound system and time of the meeting.

The sitting arrangement wasn't satisfactory. They used their hall room or large classroom for the meeting. There wasn't a good sound system. Only one case out of three used their sound system, but it was not sufficient. None of them arranges any refreshment for parents. Now if we summarize all these issues the picture is kind of the graph below.



This graph shows a summary of all the areas tried to explore in a “Parent’s meeting”. In two out of three cases, the purpose was around two, out of five. In one school the headteacher talked about the do and don’t to do well in the upcoming examination. The quality of the presentation falls below average and all of them just deliver a speech. No additional material or any visual presentation was absent. The condition of parent’s engagement was also below average. To some extent, it seemed, parents were not so interested in further engagement.



4.6 Challenges:

The findings show that the current scenario of parents' involvement is not healthy and several factors are working here. Throughout the data collection process, several challenges popped up during the interview and FGD that are hindering the opportunity for parents to engage with teachers. Some challenges are observed during data collection and the major challenges are given below:

Parent’s Meeting	➤ It seemed the parent’s meetings have become a form of announcement and validate the fees. Topics like student’s progress, suggestions for improvement, a guideline for a healthy diet are missing here. ➤ Parents were also reluctant to initiate or participate in effective discussions about the progress of their child.
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	➤ The sitting arrangement, sound system, and other facilities have a lot of areas to improve.
Participation in SMC	➤ There are only two positions in the SMC committee for guardians and local politics plays a critical role here.
Home Visit	➤ Though all the teachers agreed that they regularly went for ‘Home Visit’ and a register book is maintained for this purpose, but most of the guardians denied this and most of the parents mentioned that no teacher ever stepped to their house for “Home Visit”
Communicate with teacher	➤ It’s highly unusual teachers call a parent in school without any event. ➤ Most of the parents didn’t communicate with teachers. Few guardians maintain the communication regularly.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion:

The main purpose of this study was to portray the scenario of parental involvement with a government primary school in Lalbag. During data collection, some good practices are coming up from parents and teachers. However, in some cases, teachers and school authorities have highlighted the place for improvement and also pointed out some of their limitations. All the participants agreed that parent's involvement is necessary and need to increase communication.

There were several case study in similar context suggested that involving parents is very challenging work to do. In a study in Zimbabwe, the school heads mention that the attendance of parents in general meetings to crucial governing body elections is very poor and only problem-oriented communication is the norms (Thembinkosi, 2013). This study data also validate this statement. Regardless of the nature of the meeting the mass participation is really low in school meetings. It was observed in "Mother's Meeting." In a school where around 750 students were there in one shift, but in "Mother's meeting" around 50 to 60 guardians were there. The scenario of the other two schools was the same. The headteacher also mentions in the interview that, "the parent's participation in general meeting is really low." From 36 participants in FGD, none of them ever try for SMC or PTA member roles or attended the meetings. The asst. teachers, headteachers, and guardians were agreed that "the communication is mainly problem-oriented from both ends". The teachers call a guardian or ask to come to school only if there is an occurrence or behaviour-related issue or bad result. Dietz (1997) mentions the same phenomena. According to his study, the common tendency among schools is to communicate with the home only when a behavioral or learning problem arises and to neglect to communicate good news about learners' achievements (Dietz, 1997). In the interview, all the asst. teachers confess this issue. The majority of their communication is about result-related or behavioral issues. Children's development and growth are somehow missing in this communication. In a study in Ghana, Parents mentioned that, paying fees are the only way to support school (Wolf, 2020). In this study, it is founded that, this is one of the common issues to parents and school communication. Parents mentioned that the topic of

“Mother’s Meetings” is mainly related to the announcement of fees. In addition, parents also mentioned that the announcement of exam date is also shared in these meetings. The Headteacher and asst. teachers shared some guidelines to do well in exams but at the mother meeting I observed, there were no such guidelines.

The school authorities are not the only responsible person for this low communication. Many researchers pointed out some obstacles from the parent’s side. In a study, Garry (2011) pointed on some issues like lack of encouragement, information, and scope due to busy life schedules. He mentioned that many parents believe that, their role is only to get children to school. Many parents responded a similar way. They are only for getting their children to school and didn’t participate in any school-related activity. When they were asked about SMC or PTA participation, none of 36 guardians ever try for membership or participating in meetings. Some of them gave a blank look hearing about SMC and PTA. In a study in Nigeria, authors mention the same phenomena where school heads mention that parents display a lukewarm attitude towards the meeting of PTA (Olowe, Kutelu, & Kayode, 2013).

In the research, the author pointed out the power dynamics between parents and teachers. Empowering parents to participate in decision-making in school could entail conflict between teachers and parents, and in some cases, teachers may even feel that such collaboration undermines their professional status (Sanders & Epstein, 2005). But in this study so such phenomena were observed or mentioned by any participants. A huge power dynamics popped up between parents regarding the position in SMC and PTA committee. All three Headteachers mention that the parent's role in SMC and PTA committee largely depends on local political power.

Some other challenges came up in this study. The Headteachers mentioned that they have no budget allocated for "mothers’ meeting”. There is no proper sound system or large hall room for the gathering. Again, when a large number of parents come to the meeting, it becomes a major obstacle to the participatory approach of the meeting.

One alarming issue that came up in this study is that most of the parents have directly rejected the teacher's claim on “Home Visit”. The teachers said they visit the community regularly and maintain a register for “Home visits”. But some of the parents said that the teacher never went to the house. But one bright side from data collection was, teachers and parents, are being contacted through mobile phones.

The positive side is that both school authorities and parents are keen to increase parental involvement. The teachers informed that positive instructions were also coming from the government. The way parents are currently involved seems to be very inadequate. I think this situation needs to be improved. And for this, it is essential to work for the goodwill of all parties, and together, they have to work purposefully.

5.2 Conclusion:

The Primary Education of Bangladesh is one of the largest systems in the world. Lalbagh is one of the densely populated areas and most of the Govt. primary schools provide education to lower-middle-income families too poor families. For the growth of the student's teachers and parents have to work together with a proper alignment. This study wanted to portray the scenario of parent's involvement with school and teacher. It seems that the scenario of parent's involvement is not that healthy here. The ecosystem in school is not parent's friendly and in more cases it's selective. Some parents communicate regularly and hold a position in SMC for their local political power or face value or for their student's performance (top scorer's guardian has a face value in schools). But most of the guardians are not involved at all. The lack of interest from both parties is prominent. In the case of "Home Visit" teachers and guardians have conflicting statements and it seemed there is a large grey area around "Home Visit".

Though there are instructions and both of the parties agreed that parent's involvement is necessary for growth both for students and school. But except a few, the majority of them are not working or responding to create a healthy environment so that parents can involve in the school's ecosystem.

5.3 Recommendations

All the recommendations they made during the interviews with the teachers and the FGD with the parents have already been discussed. Here are some recommendations from my experience, literature, academic knowledge, and data collection experience.

1. It is important to stop considering "mother's meeting" as a means of the announcement. This is a very good platform to engage parents. So, school authorities should emphasize it to make it more purposeful and effective. If necessary, special training of teachers can be arranged by GoB to

arrange a meaningful “Mothers’ meeting”. The government can also come up with more explicit rules and regulations on "mothers’ meetings" and monitoring can be done by the authority.

2. It is important to ensure that parents have a balanced representation in the SMC and that everyone has the opportunity to participate equally. Since there is representative participation of the guardians, it is important to select the representatives through fair and impartial elections, giving the committee a fixed term. Here the government can increase its monitoring so that the participation occurs properly.

3. Teachers and guardians have given almost contradictory statements about “Home visits”. Teachers claim they regularly visit homes and maintain registers. But some of the parents claim that the teacher never went to the homes. In this case, it is important to arrange sincerity and accountability of all teachers including the headteacher.

4. Many people have applauded for holding "fathers’ meeting" like "mothers’ meeting". In this case, the fathers can be assembled on holidays at monthly/specific month intervals.

5. Teachers and parents are communicating easily through mobile phones, which is positive for their relationship. It can be good for everyone if you plan communication based on the mobile phone.

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Appendices: 1 - Mother's Meeting Observation Checklist:

Number of Participants:

Speaker/s:

Duration of the meeting:

Scale: 0 = absent, 1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = moderate, 4 = satisfactory, 5 = very satisfactory

Observation:

Main Indicator	Sub Indicator	Score	Comment
purpose	Purpose of the meeting		
	Relevant purpose		
	The purpose address the real problem/issue		
Speaker	Speaker Preparedness		
	Speaker's Presentation		
	Speakers attitude		
Presentation	Medium of the presentation		
	Language		
	Use of material		
Parents Engagement	Parents participation		
	Raising question		
	Express their opinion		
Others Factor	Sound System		
	Time of the meeting		
	Refreshment		
	Sitting arrangement		

Appendices: 2 Interview Questions:

For Head Teacher:

- 1| m`vi, GKRB wk¶K wn¶m¶e QvÎ QvÎx¶`i wk¶vi ¶¶¶Î gv-evev¶Kl we`vj¶qi mv¶\_m¶ú...<sup>3</sup> \_vKv¶K wKfv¶e ¶`¶Lb?
- 2| miKvi ¶_¶K Avm¶j wK wb¶`©k Av¶Q evev gv ¶`i m¶ú...³ Kievi ¶¶¶Î?
- 3| wb¶`©k ev`levq¶bi ¶¶¶Î miKvi ¶_¶K mvnvh` ¶Kgb Ges wKfv¶e ¶c¶q _v¶Kb?
- 4| GmGgwm Ges wcuUqvB KwguU ¶Z ¶h AwffveK Gi RvqMv i¶q¶Q Zv wKfv¶e iw¶Z nq?
- 5| AvcwB AwffveK¶`i ¶hvM`v¶bi ¶¶¶Î ¶Kvb ifc evav ev wecwËi m¶§zLxb wK nb? n¶j Zv wKifc nq?
- 6| AvcwB evav,¶jv `ixKi¶Y wKifc c`¶¶c ¶bb?
- 7| AwffveKiv ¶hb Av¶iv m¶ú...³ n¶Z cv¶i ¶m j¶¶` Avcbvi ¶Kvb c`¶¶c Av¶Q wK?
- 8| Ògv-mgv¶ekÓ Gi ¶¶¶Î Avcbvi cÖ`ÍzwZ Avm¶j wKfv¶e wb¶q _v¶Kb?
- 9| Ògv-mgv¶ekÓ ¶K Av¶iv fv¶jv wKfv¶e Kiv hvq?
- 10| Ò¶nvg wfwRUÓ ¶K AvcwB Kxfv¶e ¶`¶Lb?
- 11| AvcwB Ò¶nvg wfwRUÓ K¶ib Kx bv? Ab`vb` wk¶K¶`i ¶¶¶Î Zv Kxfv¶e Z`viKx K¶ib?
- 12| wk¶K¶`i Rb` Avcbvi wK ¶Kvbifc wb¶`©k ev `z¶ji wbqg Av¶Q wK AwffveK¶`i m¶ú...³ Kievi ¶¶¶Î?
- 13| Avcbvi wbR`^ ¶Kvb g¶Wj ev gZev` wK i¶q¶Q hv ¶_¶K AwffveKiv DcK...Z n¶Z cv¶i?

For Assistant Teachers:

1. Avcbvi QvÎ QvÎxþ`i gvbma§Z wk¶v jvþfi Rb`, wk¶Kþ`i cvkvcwk AwffveþKi fzwgKvþK Avcbw wKfvþe þ`LþQb?
2. Ògv mgvþekÓ wbþq Avcbvi wK gšle`?
3. Ògv mgvþekÓ Gi Rb` wK þKvb aiþbi weþkl AvPiY ev cwieZ©b wK Avcbvi QvÎ QvÎxþ`i gþa` j¶¶ KþiþQb? GKUz D`vniY mþgZ ejþeb|
4. Gi fvþjv w`K ev Lvivc w`K ,þjv GKUz D`vniY w`þq ejþZ cviþeb?
5. Avcbvi wK gþb nq, GUv Kiv DwPr wK bv? GKUz e`vL`v w`þj LzeB DcK...Z nZvg|
6. GB Ògv-mgvþekÓ Gi þKvb msþkvab ev mshþRvb wKQz wK Kiv `iKvi eþj Avcbw gþb Kþib?
7. Ògv mgvþekÓ þZv AvþQB Avcbvþ`i ¯zþj| Òevev-mgvþekÓ ev Ggb wKQz wK þKvb `iKvi gþb Kþib? GKUz e`vL`v Kiþeb|
8. GmGgwm Ges wcuUqvB KwgwU þZ þh AwffveK Gi RvqMv iþqþQ Zv wKfvþe iw¶Z nq? Avcbviv Kxfvþe wcuUqvB þZ AskMÖnY Kþib?
9. Avþiv wKfvþe evev gv iv ¯zþji mvþ_ mæú...³ nþZ cvþi eþj Avcbw gþb Kþib?
10. Òþnvg wfwRUÓ wbþq hw` wKQz ejþZb| g,jZ Kxfvþe KZw`b ci ci Kþi _vþKb?
11. wk¶vþ¶þÎ AwffveKþ`i AskMÖnb wbþq Avcbvi wK þKvb wPšÍv aviv/ gþWj AvþQ? Avcbvi AwfÁZvi AvþjvþK GKUz e`vLv hw` w`þZb|

Appendices: 3 FGD Guideline:

mKjþK AmsL" ab"ev` Rvbvw"Q AvRþK GLvþb Dcw"Z nevi Rb" Ges Avgvþ`i GB KvþR mvnvR" Kivi Rb"| Avgiv AvmþjB AvMÖnx Avcbvþ`i KvQ þ\_þK GUv Rvbvi Rb" þh, GB "czþj wk¶v`vþbi mvþ_ wcZvgvZvi mæú...³Zv Avmþj þKgb|

GB MþeLYvwU Avmþj Avgvþ`i cÖvwZôvwbK covwjLvi GKwU Ask Ges AvRþK Avgbvþ`i nþZ cÖvß DcvË Ges Z_" Avcbvþ`i Ab"gwZ e"vwZZ þKvb KvþRB e"venvi Kiv nþe bv|

Avgiv Avcbvi bvg ev Qwe ev wfwWI Ab" þKv_vl e"venvi Kie bv, hvþZ þKD Avcbvþ`i cieZ©xþZ mbv³ KiþZ cvþi|

AbzgwZ w`þj Avgiv Avcbvþ`i GB Kþ_vck_b þiKW© Kie þhb mKj Z_" mwVK fvþe cvlqv l msi¶Y Kiv hvq| Ges GwU hZ `æZ mæe wWwjU Kþi þdjv nþe|

Avccb þh þKvb mgq mfv"j Z"vM KiþZ cviþeb, Zvi czþiv AwaKvi Avcbvi AvþQ|

GLvþb Avgiv mKþj GKþÎ G welþq AvþjvPbv Kie| Avgvi wK cÖkœ AvþQ hv Awwg Avcbvþ`i ejel þmþ¶þÎ gþZi Awgj nþj Avgiv D"PevP" bv Kþi kvšÍ fvþe wbþRi gZvgZ Rvbvþev| Avgiv mKþjB mKjþK mæsvb þ`wLþq K_v Ges AvPib Kie|

GLb Avgvi cÖ_g cÖkœ nþ"Q,

cÖkœ	DËi	Kþg>U
Ögv-mgvþekÓ wbþq Avcbvþ`i gšÍe" wK?		
Avcbviv þKb Avþmb GB Ögv- mgvþekÓ G AskMÖnb Kþib?		

G ciRŠÍ Ògv- mgv†ekÓ †_†K Avcbv†`i AwfÁZv †Kgb?		
Ògv-mgv†ekÓ Gi †Kvb ms†kvab, ms†hvRb, cwieZ©b wK Pvb Avcbviv?		
Ògv-mgv†ekÓ Qvov Avi wK wK Dcv†q Avcbviv ¯<z†ji mv†_ maú... ³ _v†Kb? GmGgwm Ges wcwUqvB †Z Kxfv†e AskMÖnY K†ib?		
wk¶Kiv Ò†nvg wfwRUÓ Kxfv†e K†i _v†Kb? †nvg wfwR†U Zviv g,jZ Kx e†jb/K†ib?		
Avcbv†`i wbR¯^ †Kvb gZvgZ wK		

AvþQ G czþiv welþq?		

Avcbvþ`i mKjþK AvšlíwiK ab`ev` Avcbvþ`i AskMÖnþYi Rb`| mvgþb Avkv KiwQ GfvþeB
 Avcbvþ`i mbþhwwMZv cvþev|

fvþjv _vKþeb mKþj|