

Perceptions of Low-income Working Parents on Childcare in Dhaka City

By

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

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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.

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Ethics Statement

Title of Thesis Topic: Perceptions of Low-income Working Parents on Childcare in Dhaka City

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1. Source of population

Low-income working parents living in Dhaka city

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee:

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

Ethical Review Committee:

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the perceptions of low-income working parents regarding childcare services for children under the age of five in Dhaka City. Despite the rising number of women in the workforce, many low-income families remain excluded from essential, affordable and reliable childcare services, often forcing mothers to leave their jobs or rely on unsafe, informal care arrangements. Through an examination of parental understanding, influencing factors and existing challenges, the study identifies a significant gap between the high demand for childcare and the limited availability of such services in urban slum communities. Findings suggest that while parents increasingly recognize the importance of childcare services, their choices are heavily constrained by service costs, lack of availability, and concerns regarding child safety and caregiver trust. The study emphasizes the urgent need for community-oriented, affordable childcare models for low-income working parents in Dhaka city. These insights contribute to the design of context-specific interventions and inform policy advocacy for early childhood development goals.

Keywords: Childcare services; Low-income working parents; Early Childhood Care; Urban slum communities; Parental perceptions; Dhaka city

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List of Acronyms

ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
WHO	World Health Organization
ECD	Early Childhood Development
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
ILO	International Labour Organization
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
NGO	Non-Government Organization

Chapter I: Introduction & Background

Introduction

‘Childcare’ (also known as day care) refers to arrangements for the care of children by individuals other than parents in various care settings (Huntsman, 2008). Early childhood care is fundamental to children’s developmental outcomes and it also provides valuable support to families with young children (Bennett, 2021). Neuroscientific research highlights the critical importance of early childhood for rapid brain development, as this period lays the foundation for future development, health and well-being (Batcheler, 2023). A strong start in the early years increases the likelihood of positive outcomes later in life, whereas a weak foundation significantly elevates the risk of future challenges (Tickell, 2011).

Substantial evidence indicates that Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) centers have positive effects on children’s developmental outcomes (Rahman et al., 2022). Quality ECCE services can not only enhance children’s development but also support working parents in managing employment and caregiving responsibilities (UNICEF, 2024). The World Health Organization (WHO) provides global, evidence-based recommendations emphasizing the importance of responsive caregiving, early learning, integrated caregiving–nutrition interventions and support for maternal mental health as key components for improving early childhood development (ECD) outcomes (WHO, 2020).

Worldwide, 748 million people aged 15 and above are out of the labor force due to caregiving responsibilities (ILO, 2024). In Bangladesh, the national labor force participation rate was 61.2%, with the largest share of the working-age population residing in urban areas (BBS, 2023). However, limited access to childcare forces many women to leave their jobs, with 18% of urban

mothers with young children quitting employment and 54% identifying childcare as essential for staying in the workforce (ILO, 2024). Among low-income urban mothers, 73% cite childcare constraints as a reason for leaving their jobs (Rahman & Kamra, 2022).

More than 40% of all children below primary-school age (nearly 350 million) need childcare but do not have access globally (World Bank, 2021). In Bangladesh, only 18.9% of children aged 3 to 5 years are enrolled in structured early learning programs (BBS, 2019). Therefore, understanding low-income working parents' perceptions on childcare is critical for improving early developmental outcomes. It is also important for designing support systems that effectively meet the needs of low-income working parents.

Statement of the Problem

Lack of formal childcare options for young children has become a growing global concern, largely influenced by the rising participation of women in the workforce (Behbehani et al., 2024). The global childcare crisis affects millions of children, with more than 35.5 million children under the age of five left at home without adult supervision, particularly in developing countries (Samman et al., 2016). To elaborate, evidence from urban contexts in Africa suggested that women and children in low-income households experience significant physical and emotional strain when mothers lack access to reliable childcare, forcing them to work under constant caregiving demands (Achi et al., 2025).

In the Bangladeshi context, rapid urbanization and the expansion of informal settlements also place young children at increased risk of adversity. Amid high levels of poverty and income inequality, most urban poor households live in precarious socioeconomic conditions with limited access to

healthcare, education and adequate housing (Rahaman et al., 2023). Dhaka, the capital city, exemplifies this challenge, with more than 5,000 slum communities accommodating nearly 40% of its total population (UNICEF, 2015). A baseline study conducted in Dhaka identified several forms of violence and discrimination within the slum communities that are often overlooked or neglected. These conditions hamper children's development and have been found to significantly affect cognitive development across growth stages between 6 and 48 months (Saha & Sultana, 2017).

Adverse living conditions pose serious risks to the physical and mental health of the residents, impacting young children. A growing body of research indicates that children who participate in formal ECCE programs are better prepared for formal schooling, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Bosquet Enlow et al., 2024). When ECCE services are unavailable, children from disadvantaged families are more likely to start school already behind in different developmental domains (UNICEF, 2024). However, despite being located close to formal residential areas, low-income communities remain largely excluded from essential services, including affordable and reliable childcare (Oishy & Adiba, 2025).

The childcare challenge is especially severe for families with very young children, particularly those under the age of three (ILO, 2018). This challenge intensifies when parents engage in paid employment, often within the informal sector. In slum areas, long working hours and the lack of support in childcare leave households, especially women, without adequate childcare options (Das et al., 2018). Besides that, the shortage of formal childcare services limits low-income working mothers' ability to balance employment with the care and protection of their children. Moreover, cultural and societal norms surrounding parental involvement and traditional gender roles continue

to shape attitudes toward childhood development and childcare. These norms may also influence the demand for childcare services and often hinder women's economic empowerment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of low-income working parents of children under five years of age regarding childcare in Dhaka city. Existing literature emphasizes that quality childcare is critical for fostering cognitive, social and emotional development. Besides, evidence from low and middle-income countries indicates that cost-effective childcare models can deliver quality services to low-income families, although approaches vary greatly to fit the constraints and objectives in each context (Currimjee et al., 2022).

It is imperative to generate context-specific insights from low-income communities in Dhaka to address existing evidence gaps regarding childcare needs. There is also a need to design and implement effective, community-oriented daycare interventions within these communities. Moreover, developing effective childcare models requires an understanding of the factors that influence parents' choices of childcare services, as well as the challenges faced by low-income working parents. This study aims to examine parents' understanding of childcare services, their personal experiences and the challenges they encounter in securing care.

Significance of the Study

The UNCRC recognizes Early Childhood Development as fundamental to enabling children to reach their full potential (UNCRC, 1989). Similarly, SDG-4, target 4.2, aims to ensure that by 2030 all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education (UNESCO, 2025). By focusing on low-income working parents' perceptions of childcare services in Dhaka, this study provides insight into childcare practices and needs among

disadvantaged populations, thereby aligning with these international commitments to promote equitable and inclusive early childhood development.

Evidence from prior studies highlights the positive impact of structured early childcare programs on child development. For instance, an intervention study in rural Bangladesh found that children enrolled in a one-year daycare program demonstrated greater improvements in communication, gross motor, personal-social and problem-solving skills compared to children using only playpens (Agarwal et al., 2022). Despite the recognized importance of childcare for child development and parental support, there is limited evidence on effective and sustainable models for expanding childcare services for low-income households in Bangladesh (BIGD, 2023). This emphasizes the need to deepen our understanding of the socio-cultural and economic circumstances of low-income families in Bangladesh and to develop context-specific childcare interventions. Therefore, exploring existing perceptions and experiences can offer valuable insights for drawing preliminary conclusions, informing advocacy for effective models and conducting further research (Currimjee, 2022).

In addition to examining mothers' perceptions, the study also explores fathers' viewpoints on child care. Research shows that fathers' active involvement in childcare positively impacts child's cognitive, physical, social and emotional development (FIRA, 2007). In many Bangladeshi communities, male elders hold decision making authority regarding children's health, education and daily lives while mothers serve as the primary caregivers (Ball & Wahedi, 2021). As caregiving dynamics evolve in urban low-income households, incorporating fathers' perspectives is essential to achieving a comprehensive understanding of family needs and childcare preferences. This study also contributes to filling this gap by capturing the views of both mothers as well as fathers.

Research Questions

The research topic is on low income working parents' perceptions about childcare in Dhaka city.

The study will explore what parents' perceive about child care in low income communities.

Therefore the present research attempted to find answers for the following research questions:

1. What is the understanding of childcare services among low-income working parents of children under five?
2. What factors influence parents' considerations in choosing a childcare service?
3. What challenges do low-income working parents experience regarding childcare?

Operational Definition

Perception: Perception can be understood as individuals' subjective interpretations of their experiences, feelings and perspectives shaped by personal and social contexts (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022).

Day care: Day care refers to facilities that provide supervised care for young children, offering a safe and structured environment where they can learn, play and interact with peers while supporting working parents (World Bank, 2024).

Labor force participation rate: It is a measure of the proportion of a country's working-age population that engages actively in the labour market, either by working (employed) or looking for work and available for work (unemployed). (BBS, 2023)

Informal employment: It refers to the total number of informal jobs, whether carried out in formal sector enterprises, informal sector enterprises, or households (paid domestic workers, goods production for own consumption), during a given reference period (BBS, 2023).

Low income: Households with a monthly income below 12,500 BDT are classified as low-income (Rahman & Hossain, 2023).

Chapter II: Literature Review

Rising Female Employment and Emerging Childcare Needs

In general, taking care of children place much greater demands on women's time and effort, regardless of their participation in paid employment; however, when women participate in paid employment, the time available for caregiving decreases (Samman et al., 2016). Evidence from developing countries shows that childcare responsibilities significantly influence maternal labor market outcomes, including employment type, working hours and income. In contrast, access to affordable and adequate childcare can substantially improve these outcomes, enabling women to participate more fully in paid work while ensuring children's well-being (Halim et al., 2021).

Findings from global and country-level studies highlight the influence of childcare responsibilities on women's participation in the labor market. For example, a study conducted in Guatemala City found that 40% of mothers working informally in urban slums did so because they lacked access to appropriate childcare and therefore needed to care for their children themselves. Similarly, in Bangladesh, 13% of women operating informal enterprises reported family responsibilities as a primary reason for starting their own businesses, compared with only 1% of men, highlighting the gendered nature of care responsibilities and their influence on women's labor market participation (Alfers, 2015).

Female labor force participation in Bangladesh is also rising gradually, reaching 44.2% in 2024 (World Bank, 2024). According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2022), the majority of working women in low-income urban areas are employed in the informal sector, with 96.6% holding jobs that are typically low-paying and lack essential social protections such as maternity leave, nursing breaks or flexible working arrangements. Besides, parental awareness regarding the importance of childcare remains limited in many underprivileged communities (OECD, 2025).

In the slums of Dhaka city, the situation is particularly acute. Twice as many women with a child under five years old work outside the home compared with women in the rest of the city, yet the families have fewer childcare options (Das et al., 2018). For instance, in Korail slum, women are compelled to engage in paid work due to the stress of ensuring basic living conditions, as expenses are high and only one person's income is not sufficient to meet household needs (Aktar, 2024). At the same time, childcare constraints continue to limit labor force participation. A mixed-methods study in low-income Dhaka communities found that 24% of caregivers declined paid work due to childcare constraints, while 84% expressed willingness to use center-based childcare if available (Elsey et al., 2020).

As female labor force participation continues to rise, the demand for formal daycare and early childhood services is increasing accordingly. These findings highlight both the unmet demand for reliable childcare services and the potential for community-oriented interventions to support maternal employment and children's development. In low-income urban communities, evidence suggests that mothers often prefer home-based or informal childcare facilities due to their perceived safety, accessibility and affordability (Aktar, 2024).

Parental Practice and Perceptions on Childcare in Low-income Communities

Children's early development is primarily shaped by the home environment, with consistent care and support from parents or other family members, followed by access to quality early years provision, which significantly influences development by the age of five (Tickell, 2011). As nuclear family structures become more common in urban areas, the traditional extended family support system is weakening (Samman et al., 2016). Moreover, many children are spending their early years in unsafe and unstimulating environments while their parents are at work (Rahman et al., 2022). Weak family and community support systems may limit children's ability to fully enjoy

their childhood and make them more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse (Aparajeyo-Bangladesh, n.d.).

Research suggests that exposure to violence, physical or emotional abuse or chronic neglect during early childhood can lead to toxic stress, which disrupts the development of brain architecture and other organ systems, increasing the lifelong risk of physical and mental health disorders (Nelson et al., 2020). Children living in urban slum or informal settlements face numerous hardships on a daily basis, including hunger, poor access to clean water, education and protection (Saha & Sultana, 2017). They are often exposed to multiple forms of adversity, both environmental and psychosocial. Therefore, the absence of safe spaces, structured play or learning activities may reduce the opportunities for cognitive and socio-emotional development of children.

Overcrowded living conditions, inadequate sanitation, limited access to clean water and unsafe neighborhoods increase children's vulnerability to illness and injury. A cross-sectional study conducted among children living in the urban slums of Dhaka found a high prevalence of childhood injuries. The study reported that children under five years of age were the most vulnerable group, accounting for nearly half of all reported injury cases (49%). The study further identified burns, road traffic accidents and occupational injuries as the leading causes of injury among children (Alamgir et al., 2012).

Parental awareness and knowledge of best childcare practices remain limited among the urban poor, often resulting in risky caregiving at home (Rahman & Kamra, 2022). As a result, risky and informal childcare practices are widespread, with families frequently relying on older siblings, neighbors or untrained caregivers. Limited parental knowledge and engagement in early learning and development further heighten the risk of developmental delays and inadequate stimulation during the critical early years (Hentschel, 2023).

Moreover, parental perceptions toward formal childcare are shaped by prevailing religious and social norms. In some households, structured childcare services are viewed as misaligned with community expectations or perceived to conflict with religious values and gender roles. These socio-cultural influences play a significant role in shaping parents' decisions regarding whether to enroll their children in daycare or continue relying on informal arrangements, as religious beliefs and cultural values often guide parenting practices and decisions about childrearing (Samuel & Changwony, 2019).

Childcare Provision in Urban Low-income Communities

Childcare centers are key providers of ECCE services that can create a safe and secure environment for young children (Dike & Otu, 2024). Broadly, childcare services can be categorized into two types. Home-based care, where childcare is provided within a household setting, and center-based care, which offers group care for children in a dedicated facility such as a preschool or daycare center outside the home (Currimjee, 2022). In recent years, day care centers services have become more than just places where parents leave their children while they work, they also support children's development by providing opportunities to take part in various learning and social activities (Bennett, 2021).

The available day-care services are largely concentrated in middle- and upper-income neighborhoods, leaving low-income urban populations with limited access (Elsey et al., 2020). In Dhaka, concerns about child safety and limited social support make it difficult for parents, especially mothers to use formal childcare facilities (Elsey et al., 2020). Many working mothers have limited mobility and cannot adjust their schedules to match childcare center operating hours (BIGD, 2020). Additionally, many home-based or informal childcare arrangements in Dhaka lack safe, dedicated and child-friendly spaces, further reducing reliable options for working parents.

In this regard, comprehensive service features such as integrated nutrition and health support, play-based learning opportunities and flexible operating hours are essential to ensuring that childcare services are responsive to the needs of low-income families (Rashid & Akkari, 2020). Through quality caregiving, they can support children's cognitive development, early literacy, numeracy and socio-emotional skills which help them progress in education and reduce learning poverty (Devercelli & Beaton-Day, 2020). These features not only improve children's developmental outcomes but also increase parents' confidence in using formal childcare services.

Childcare Policies and Institutional Efforts in Bangladesh

There's a growing awareness and policy initiatives regarding daycare services at a national level. The Government of Bangladesh increasingly recognizes the critical importance of quality childcare for promoting ECD outcomes and supporting female labor force participation. Legislative initiatives, such as the Day Care Act and the Child Daycare Center Bill (2021), demonstrate the government's commitment to expanding childcare services. The Child Daycare Center Bill (2021) states that centers must ensure the necessary services for children, including safety and security, education, recreation and a suitable environment along with required amenities. Any compromise of child safety is considered an offense, with accountability measures in place.

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) is mandated to implement various programs for development of women and children, including child protection and development (MoWCA, 2017). MoWCA with technical support from the ILO, formally launched the "Roadmap for Childcare in Bangladesh" on 24 November 2024 with a long term vision. The roadmap provides a 'whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' approach with a vision to establish an accessible, affordable and quality childcare system with robust governance and regulatory framework (ILO,

2024). These initiatives reflect a growing understanding of the role of formal childcare in both child development and women's economic participation.

Several government-supported and NGO-facilitated initiatives also exist to address childcare gaps. NGOs play a key role in delivering learning opportunities for young children, particularly in low-income urban settings (Samman et al., 2016). Community-oriented daycare programs, often in partnership with local NGOs, aim to provide supportive care for children of working parents in low-income communities. These programs typically provide early learning activities, nutrition, and health support. For example, BRAC's Gender Justice and Diversity (GJD) program has implemented an ECD initiative called 'Snehaloy' in selected slums of Dhaka. Snehaloy is a center where children of low-income working mothers can stay at a minimal cost from morning until evening. The project aims to provide a safe, violence-free environment while promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, ultimately contributing to the reduction of poverty and violence against women and children.

Given limited public resources, many developing countries, including Bangladesh, rely heavily on private provision for ECCE. Non-profit organizations such as SOS Children's Villages Bangladesh, Aastha Daycare Centre and others play a crucial role in providing childcare services for marginalized communities, particularly in urban slums. Aastha Daycare Centers operate multiple locations in Dhaka and adhere closely to the ECD Guidelines. Each center provides care for 25 to 30 children for up to ten hours a day, offering basic instruction in personal hygiene, social skills and ethical values along with two nutritious meals daily (Utsho Bangladesh, n.d.).

However, their coverage remains insufficient to meet the growing childcare demand. Low-income families often face significant challenges in securing safe and developmentally appropriate care due to high service costs, scarcity of centers and a shortage of trusted and trained caregivers.

Overall, inadequate infrastructure, limited regulatory oversight and lack of awareness among parents about the benefits of early childhood education further constrain the establishment and expansion of childcare facilities in underserved areas.

Challenges and Key Factors Influencing Childcare Service Decisions

Each type of childcare service differs in its structure, level of formality and the range of services provided, which can influence parents' preferences when selecting appropriate care for their children (Carlin et al., 2019). Parents' choices of childcare arrangements are shaped by a complex decision-making process that reflects the family's specific needs, available resources and constraints, with low-income families being more likely to rely on informal care (Carlin et al., 2019). Limited access to reliable childcare remains a major constraint for women's employment, particularly in informal settings (Alfers, 2015). As more women enter the workforce, balancing childcare responsibilities with paid employment becomes increasingly challenging, especially for low-income working mothers.

The key aspects of a childcare facility include accessibility, availability, affordability and quality, which are widely recognized as fundamental dimensions influencing childcare utilization and effectiveness (OECD, 2023; UNICEF, 2021; World Bank, 2023). A study conducted in China examined the factors influencing parents' demand for childcare and identified key determinants such as childcare center management, environment and facilities, health care service and educational activities of the centers (Li et al., 2025). The study further suggested that childcare-related organizations should strengthen these aspects to reduce parents' concerns and better meet their childcare needs.

Affordability remains one of the most significant barriers preventing low-income families from accessing formal childcare services (OECD, 2020). To elaborate, in Europe, children under the

age of three from low-income households are one-third less likely to participate in early childhood education and care than those from high-income households. In case of Bangladesh, providing childcare in low-income areas and slums is challenging because the cost and scarcity of land for well-equipped centers are high and generating sustainable revenue to cover these expenses is difficult (Rahman & Kamra, 2022).

Beyond financial constraints, parents also express concerns about the quality and safety of available services (Rashid & Akkari, 2020). A study examining urban childcare in Dhaka city identified significant challenges in both family-based and daycare settings. In family care, the quality of caregiving is often limited due to the reduced availability of grandparents, lack of caregiving skills and insufficient opportunities for child interaction. On the other hand, daycare services face additional challenges, including the absence of appropriate policies, concerns regarding quality, health and safety, affordability constraints and also cultural considerations (Shafiullah, 2024).

While studies have documented the rising participation of women in the urban labor force, little is known about how low-income working mothers with children under five cope with childcare responsibilities. This highlights the need for research exploring the perceptions, experiences, and needs of low-income working parents regarding center-based daycare services. Therefore, understanding the key aspects of childcare services as well as socio-cultural acceptability are crucial in ensuring that childcare centers can effectively reach and support vulnerable urban populations.

Chapter III: Methodology

Research Approach and Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, which involved the systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of comprehensive descriptive data to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest (Gay et al., 2012). A qualitative approach allows the researcher to collect in-depth, context-specific data that reflect participants' views, experiences and perceptions (Gay et al., 2012). Guided by this approach, the study was aimed to develop an in-depth understanding of low-income working parents' perceptions about childcare services.

Two qualitative methods were used for data collection: in-depth interview (IDI) and focus group discussion (FGD). In-depth interview is used to obtain detailed information from a small number of participants, allowing for the exploration of individual experiences and perspectives (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020). Focus group discussion involved guided, in-depth discussions among a small group of participants on a specific topic, facilitated by a moderator (Van Eeuwijk & Angehrn, 2017). Together, these methods were well suited to the objectives of the study, as they facilitate a comprehensive exploration of participants' perceptions, attitudes, lived experiences and social contexts related to childcare.

Research Site

The study was conducted in selected low-income urban neighborhoods of Dhaka city. The areas were Mohanagar, Aftabnagar, Badda and Jatrabari where many parents experience childcare constraints. Selecting multiple locations within poor urban areas provided a more diverse understanding of the research participants.

Research Participants

In total, ten participants were selected for the research study. The majority of participants were working parents, with only one mother reporting that she was not working at the time of the study. The female participants were engaged in a range of informal sector occupations. Several participants worked as domestic helpers, while others were employed as tailors. Besides, one participant worked as a cook and another was employed in the garment sector. All the male participants were engaged in managerial roles at local hotels. This distribution reflects the low-income occupational background of the participants and provides context for understanding their perceptions and experiences regarding childcare.

The average age of mothers was 29 years, whereas the fathers' average age was 33.5 years. The respondents belong to the age group 26 to 35 years. All the participants have at least one children under the age of five. The age distribution of the children was an important factor of this study. The age range of the children was between 14 days to 5 years.

Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who can provide rich and relevant information related to the purpose of the study. Community visits were conducted in several areas of Dhaka City to identify and recruit suitable research participants for the study. Purposive sampling ensures the inclusion of participants who meet specific criteria and can contribute meaningful insights into the research topic (Campbell et al., 2020). The inclusion criteria for participation were as follows: (i) low-income working parents, including mothers and fathers (ii) residence in low-income urban areas of Dhaka City and iii) having at least one children under 5

years old. The inclusion of both mothers and fathers was intended to ensure that perspectives from both parental roles.

Data were collected through four in-depth interviews (IDIs) and one focus group discussion (FGD) consisting of six participants. The IDIs were conducted with two mothers and two fathers separately. The FGD consisted exclusively of female participants and included six working mothers. The FGD were intended to elicit community-level insights regarding childcare service.

Data Collection Tool

An IDI guideline was developed, with semi-structured and open ended questions covering topics such as parents' understanding of child care, current child care practices, challenges and perceptions of day care services. Besides, an FGD guideline were designed to explore group perceptions, shared beliefs and community-level discussions on the benefits and challenges of day care services. Both IDI and FGD were conducted face-to-face in a naturalistic setting to build rapport and ensure cultural and contextual sensitivity.

Data Collection Method and Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained informed consent from all participants. The purpose, procedures, duration and voluntary nature of participation were clearly explained. Participants were invited to take part in either individual interviews or FGD. In-depth interviews were conducted in participants' preferred settings to ensure comfort and privacy. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes (Vaishali, 2025). The focus group discussion was organized in a community space where participants feel comfortable expressing their views. The discussion lasted approximately 90 minutes (Billups, 2012). All sessions were audio-recorded to ensure data

accuracy and the researcher maintained field notes to capture non-verbal expressions, contextual details and reflections that might not be evident in recordings.

Data Management and Analysis

Qualitative data analysis involves examining and summarizing the collected information to generate meaningful interpretations to make sense of the data as a whole (Gay et al., 2012). Following data collection, all audio recordings will be transcribed verbatim and translated into English. Field notes will be expanded into comprehensive narrative accounts. The researcher began with reading and memoing to gain an initial sense of the content. The next step will involve classifying or coding to categorize data into themes. To elaborate, data will be carefully examined and coded inductively, allowing categories and themes to emerge from the participants' narratives. Related codes will then be grouped into broader topics and themes, and recurring patterns and relationships will be identified. Finally, the findings will be interpreted to uncover the meanings and concepts relevant to the study purpose.

Validity & Reliability

In qualitative studies, validity is often described using the terms trustworthiness and understanding, which indicate how accurately the data capture the meaning of the participants' views (Gay et al., 2012). To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, the researcher followed the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, which are widely used to evaluate qualitative research. Credibility was maintained by collecting data through in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs), allowing participants to express their perceptions in detail. Context-relevant statements from participants were included to ensure that the findings accurately reflected their views and experiences. Transferability was ensured by

providing detailed descriptions of the research setting, participants, and data collection process so that readers can determine the applicability of the findings to similar contexts. Dependability was maintained by following a consistent research procedure throughout the study, including the use of the same interview guidelines for all participants. Confirmability was ensured by keeping the findings grounded in the participants' responses, and by avoiding personal bias during data collection and analysis.

Reliability, on the other hand, refers to the consistency of the research process and the degree to which the data consistently measure what they are intended to measure (Gay et al., 2012). Reliability in this study was established by maintaining consistency in data collection and analysis procedures. All interviews and discussions were conducted using the same set of guiding questions, and the responses were recorded and reviewed carefully to ensure accuracy. The researcher also cross-checked the data during transcription and analysis to ensure that the findings consistently represented the participants' perceptions.

Ethical Issues

Ethical approval was obtained from Ethical Review Board of BRAC IED, BRAC University. Informed consent was taken from selected research participants. Participation was entirely voluntary. They received clear information about the study's purpose, procedures, duration, potential risks and benefits, and data-handling arrangements. Researchers must take steps to ensure that participants' right to privacy is not violated (Gay et al., 2012). Confidentiality and anonymity was strictly maintained throughout this study. Additionally, collected data, including recordings and transcripts, were securely stored with restricted access, underscoring the commitment to maintaining the study's integrity.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the study was not being able to include working fathers in the focus group discussion. This was primarily due to their unwillingness to participate, along with their long and inflexible working hours, which made it difficult to coordinate their involvement in scheduled sessions. As a result, the FGD comprised only mothers, and the absence of paternal perspectives may restrict a comprehensive understanding of fathers' perception in childcare practices. Besides, participants were initially hesitant and less spontaneous in their responses. However, they became more open as the sessions progressed.

Chapter IV: Results & Discussion

Findings

This section presents the findings of the study. The results are organized into key themes and sub-themes that emerged during the research process.

Theme 1: Knowledge of Early Childhood Care

In the IDIs, the parents identified several core components of care, including feeding, bathing, maintaining hygiene and providing time to time supervision. All participants, both mothers and fathers, mentioned the role of mothers as primary caregivers. One mother said,

“A child’s care is something they receive from their mother; a mother’s care cannot truly be provided by someone else.” (IDI#1, 22.01.2026)

Also, the IDI participants agreed that providing care is essential for children’s growth and development. One mother responded,

“Yes! Taking care of children is necessary. If providing care to children were not necessary, would children be able to grow up without care?” (IDI#2, 27.01.2026)

In the FGD, the participants shared similar views like the IDI participants. One mother in the FGD remarked,

“Fathers usually go out to work; their role is only to provide money. From the very beginning to the very end, the entire responsibility of taking care of the child is carried out by the mother.” (FGD#3, 19.01.2026)

Theme 2: Parental Perceptions about Childcare Services in Low-income Communities

Knowledge of Childcare or Daycare Services:

All participants in the IDIs, including both mothers and fathers, reported that no daycare centers were available within their community. Majority of the participants described day care as a place where children stay when both parents are working. The fathers tended to provide brief and general responses, typically stating that the centers take care of the children, without elaborating further. One mother from the IDI shared,

“The day care center provides care for children. However, I do not have a clear idea of what actually happens there.”(IDI#2, 27.01.2026)

Another mother said,

“Many children are kept there, when there are too many children, the quality of care decreases.” (IDI#1, 22.01.2026)

Participants in the FGD also described their knowledge of day care centers. According to one participant,

“When parents are unable to care for their children themselves, they place them in a childcare center. In such settings, the care that would normally be provided by parents is instead delivered by caregivers, who take on these responsibilities in exchange for a payment” (FGD#1, 19.01.2026)

Importance of Childcare for Low-income Working Parents

In the IDI, female participants expressed that day care centers are important for low-income families as it helps the working parents to continue their work while keeping the children in the center. In contrast, one of the fathers from the IDI said,

“It is not really needed that much, because there are always people around in the community, and one or another usually keeps an eye on the child.” (IDI #4, 26.01.2026)

Those in the FGD mentioned about the importance of such centers for working mothers. One mother stated,

“Day care should be available because many families are struggling. The husband’s income alone is not enough to cover household expenses. If the wife could work while keeping the child in a safe place, the family could manage the household more smoothly—in other words, they could live more financially stable lives” (FGD #6, 19.01.2026).

Theme 3: Key Factors for Selecting Childcare Services

Availability, Accessibility and Affordability of Childcare Services

All participants in the IDIs reported that they were not aware of any daycare centers in their area. In addition, no daycare centers were reported to be serving low-income families. The primary reason cited was the lack of accessible childcare services. Most of the participants in the IDI said they will use a day care if available nearby and affordable.

Most participants in the FGDs were also not aware of any daycare centers in their area. However, one participant noted,

“There might be a daycare center nearby, which is likely used by working parents with high incomes.” (FGD#1, 19.01.2026)

Regarding affordability, one mother explained,

“Those who are financially well-off can afford it, but we cannot; it would be difficult for us to bear the expense.” (FGD#3, 19.01.2026)

Quality and Safety of Childcare Services

Most of the parents preferred home-based childcare over center-based care. One mother from the IDI expressed concern about the quality of care, stating:

“If there is only one child in the family, we tend to give a little more care, while in a day care, the care might be a bit less—that is natural” (IDI #1, 22.01.2026).

A father emphasized the importance of mother-like care as he said,

“Children should be cared for personally and looked after with the same attention and care as a mother would give.” (IDI#3, 24.01.2026)

During the FGD, most mothers preferred home-based childcare due to its ease of access and indicated that they would be willing to use such services if available. The participants also identified cleanliness, safety and mother-like care as key factors influencing their selection of a daycare center.

Theme 4: Childcare Arrangements and Challenges

Childcare Arrangements and Safety Concerns

Here, all the participants shared their personal experiences as a working parent. Both the IDI mothers said that the grandparents usually take care of the child when they are working. One mother shared,

“I leave my child with the grandparents. My parents also work, so at that time they have to take the child with them to their workplace”. (IDI #1, 22.01.2026).

One father also shared similar kind of practice. He said that his older son usually takes care of the younger son. Another father said,

“My kid stays at home, as we live in a slum, community members are there if any help is needed”. (IDI #4, 26.01.2026).

Mostly parents’ concerns were regarding safety and physical injury. One mother shared,

“If I leave the child alone at home, the child could go somewhere outside and then we might not be able to find her.” (IDI #1, 19.01.2026).

The FGD participants practice various childcare arrangements. Some of the mothers mentioned about using TV and Mobile phones as one said,

“I leave my daughter with a mobile phone. If I give her the phone, she does not go outside. When I come back, I see that she is still watching the mobile”. (FGD #4, 19.01.2026)

Another mother from the FGD shared her concern saying,

“An accident can happen at any time, and there is no guarantee of safety.” (FGD #3, 19.01.2026)

Childcare Challenges of Working Mothers

In IDI, fathers continued their jobs when their children were infants, whereas the mothers were unable to work during that time due to their physical condition after childbirth. The female participants mentioned about mental pressure as one IDI mother stated,

“There is always a kind of pressure in my mind. No matter who I leave the child with, I keep thinking whether the child is actually okay or not.” (IDI #2, 27.01.2026)

A participant from the FGD expressed another mother’s story by saying,

“You see, Mina apa has a 14-day-old baby. She has to work on the machine, look after the baby, and she also has three more children.” (FGD #6, 19.01.2026).

Another mother’s experience was shared by saying,

Rahima used to work, but she could not keep working because of the baby. Later, she left the child with her younger sister to continue work.” (FGD #6, 19.01.2026)

Discussion

This research explored the perceptions of low-income working parents regarding childcare in selected urban communities of Dhaka city. The discussion is organized into four major themes aligned with the study findings.

Theme 1: Knowledge of Early Childhood Care

The findings indicate that parents possess a basic understanding of early childhood care, primarily centered on physical caregiving activities such as feeding, bathing, hygiene and supervision. This reflects a care-oriented rather than development-oriented understanding of early childhood care. While participants acknowledged that care is essential for children's growth, their descriptions did not include elements such as early stimulation and learning opportunities. This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that parental awareness regarding early childhood care and development remains low in disadvantaged communities (Rahman & Kamra, 2022).

Another important finding is the strong gendered perception of caregiving roles, where mothers were viewed as the primary and almost exclusive caregivers. Both IDI and FGD participants consistently reinforced this notion, with fathers being positioned mainly as financial providers. This reflects deeply rooted socio-cultural norms in Bangladesh, where caregiving duties are traditionally assigned to women particularly (Ball & Wahedi, 2021). Such gendered expectations not only shape caregiving practices but also influence women's participation in the labor market.

Theme 2: Parental Perceptions about Childcare Services in low-income community

The study reveals limited knowledge about formal childcare or daycare services. While participants generally understood that daycare centers provide supervision during working hours,

they lacked detailed knowledge regarding service structure, caregiving practices or developmental benefits. However, the study findings also demonstrate that parents generally hold a positive attitude toward the idea of childcare services, particularly in relation to supporting working mothers. Participants acknowledged that access to daycare could enable women to engage in paid work, thereby contributing to family income. This aligns with global evidence showing that availability of childcare services significantly enhances women's labor force participation (Halim et al., 2021).

Despite this positive perception, accessibility to childcare services remains highly limited. Most participants reported that no daycare centers were available in their communities, and none had direct experience using such services. This reflects a critical service gap in low-income urban areas, where childcare facilities are often concentrated in middle- and upper-income neighborhoods (Das et al., 2018). Participants perceived that existing daycare centers, if any, are primarily used by middle- or upper-income families. This perception reinforces the idea that childcare services are not designed to meet the needs of low-income populations, thereby creating a sense of exclusion.

This gap between demand and availability reflects findings from previous studies that indicate a high willingness among low-income parents to utilize childcare services if accessible (Elsey et al., 2020). In this study, mothers in particular emphasized the necessity of childcare services, whereas fathers' responses were relatively less engaged. This difference may reflect gendered experiences, as mothers are more directly affected by childcare responsibilities. Interestingly, one of the father's perception that childcare is "not really needed" because community members can supervise children reflects the informal safety net within low-income communities. While such community-

based support systems play an important role, they are often unreliable and lack structured supervision, raising concerns about child safety and development.

This limited awareness can be linked to the lack of exposure and availability of daycare services in low-income communities, as identified in both the findings and existing literature (Else et al., 2020). Without direct experience or community-level examples, parents' perceptions remain shaped by assumptions rather than informed knowledge. Consequently, this knowledge gap may act as a barrier to the acceptance and utilization of formal childcare services.

Theme 3: Key Factors for Selecting a Daycare Service

Affordability emerged as a significant concern for low-income working parents when deciding whether to use day care services. Even when parents expressed willingness to use childcare services, they emphasized that cost would be a major constraint. This finding is consistent with existing literature identifying affordability as one of the most significant barriers to accessing formal childcare (OECD, 2020). For low-income households, where financial resources are already limited, childcare expenses are often considered unaffordable.

In addition to cost, quality-related factors played a significant role in parental decision-making. Parents emphasized the importance of safety, cleanliness and “mother-like care.” The preference for mother-like care indicates a desire for emotional trust and personalized attention, which parents feel may be lacking in institutional settings. The preference for home-based childcare further reflects concerns about accessibility and trust. Some participants even expressed concerns about overcrowding and quality of care, indicating uncertainty and mistrust toward formal childcare systems.

Parents are more likely to use services that are located within their community, where they feel a sense of familiarity and control. This finding is consistent with studies showing that low-income families prefer childcare options that are geographically and socially accessible (Aktar, 2024). Importantly, the findings also highlight the intersection of structural and socio-cultural factors shaping childcare decisions. Economic constraints, gender norms, lack of services and safety concerns collectively influence how parents manage childcare.

Theme 4: Childcare Arrangements and Challenges

In the absence of formal childcare services, community members usually takes the responsibility for child care in the low income communities. The findings reveal that in the absence of formal childcare services, parents rely heavily on informal childcare arrangements, including grandparents, older siblings, and community members. In some cases, leaving children unattended. These practices reflect adaptive strategies within resource-constrained environments but also expose children to significant risks.

The reliance on older siblings or leaving children alone at home indicates inadequate supervision, which can increase the likelihood of accidents, injuries and unsafe exposure. This aligns with previous studies highlighting high rates of child injury in low-income urban settings due to lack of proper caregiving arrangements (Alamgir et al., 2012). Mothers' concerns about children wandering or facing accidents further reinforce the precarious nature of these arrangements.

Another emerging practice is the use of mobile phones or television, which reflects a coping mechanism among working mothers. While this may help keep children occupied, it raises concerns about reduced social interaction, limited stimulation and potential developmental delays.

As noted in the literature, lack of early stimulation combined with adverse living conditions can negatively affect children's cognitive and socio-emotional development (Engle et al., 2011).

The findings also highlight significant emotional and psychological stress among mothers, who reported constant worry about their children's safety while at work. This mental burden reflects the broader impact of childcare challenges on women's well-being and productivity. The dual responsibility of income generation and caregiving places women under considerable pressure, often forcing them to make difficult trade-offs.

In terms of employment patterns, the findings suggest that childcare constraints influence women's participation in the workforce, pushing them toward informal, flexible or home-based work. For example, mothers with very young infants either stopped working temporarily or engaged in home-based work to manage both responsibilities. One participant from FGD has a children only 14 days old. She was working from home to maintain the financial responsibility. This supports existing evidence that childcare responsibilities limit women's access to stable and formal employment (Alfers, 2015). The low-income populations are predominantly engaged in informal and low-paid occupations, including garment and textile work, domestic service, street vending, waste picking, security services and other forms of casual labour (Rahaman & Nasrin, 2019).

Conclusion

The findings of this study highlights a critical tension between the rising labor force participation of low-income women in Dhaka and the persistent lack of supportive childcare. While parents recognize the need for childcare and express willingness to use formal services, the absence of accessible and affordable options forces them to rely on informal and often unsafe arrangements. The findings emphasize the urgent need for community-based, accessible and affordable childcare services, along with awareness-building initiatives to enhance parents' understanding of early childhood care. Expanding such services has the potential not only to improve child well-being but also to support women's labor force participation, reduce gender inequalities and strengthen household resilience.

This research highlights that the current reliance on informal, often unsupervised care not only disrupts brain development but also exposes young children to heightened risks of injury and neglect. The lack of early stimulation, when combined with poor nutrition and unsafe living conditions, poses significant risks to children's overall development. As highlighted in existing literature, such conditions can adversely affect multiple developmental domains, including emotional regulation, social competence, and school readiness (Engle et al., 2011). Integrating structured childcare services within low-income communities could reduce these vulnerabilities and foster a more supportive developmental environment for young children.

Access to quality childcare services can produce multi-generational benefits by promoting social equity and enhancing women's employment and productivity, as well as improving child development outcomes, family well-being and overall economic growth (Devercelli & Beaton-Day, 2020). So, improved access to reliable childcare services also has important implications for

women's economic participation. For working mothers, the availability of safe and developmentally appropriate daycare can enable sustained engagement in income-generating activities. Evidence suggests that even a one percent increase in female employment in Bangladesh is associated with a 0.65 percent increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Rushidan & Rizwanul, 2013). This highlights the broader macroeconomic significance of childcare provision, positioning it as a key enabler of both household resilience and national economic growth.

Overall, expanding access to quality childcare services is critical for improving child development outcomes and promoting inclusive social and economic progress. Ensuring that children receive adequate care and early learning opportunities will better prepare them to become active and productive citizens in the future (Rahman et al., 2022). At the same time, such interventions contribute to reducing gender inequalities by alleviating the disproportionate caregiving burden on women. In conclusion, bridging the gap between parental demand and the current scarcity of formal childcare in Dhaka's urban settlements is a necessary intervention to ensure that the most vulnerable children receive the foundational support required to become productive citizens in future.

Recommendations

- Promote the development of affordable childcare within low-income communities in Dhaka city. It will help to reduce commuting barriers and improve accessibility.
- Conduct community-led outreach to increase awareness and educate low-income working parents on the long-term developmental benefits of formal Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).
- Greater investment in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is essential, as inadequate investment has been identified as a contributing factor to low learning outcomes in Bangladesh (Bhatta et al., 2020). Strengthening ECD initiatives can help reduce inequalities associated with safety concerns of young children and limited learning opportunities, while generating long-term benefits for children, families, communities and the broader economy.
- Explore public-private partnerships or government subsidies to lower service costs, making quality care financially viable for poor urban communities.
- Further research is recommended to better understand parental preferences, decision-making processes, and patterns of childcare use among low-income families, which can inform the design of more accessible and context-appropriate childcare interventions.

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Appendix A.

Participants Demographic Information (IDI)

No.	Sex	Age	Profession	Children under 5
1	Female	28	Cook	3.5 years
2	Female	26	Domestic Service	4 years
3	Male	32	Works in a local hotel	4 years
4	Male	35	Works in a local hotel	3 years

Participants Demographic Information (FGD)

No.	Sex	Age	Profession	Children(s)	Children under 5
1	Female	33	Tailor (WFH)	4	14 days old
2	Female	31	Domestic Service	1	5 years
3	Female	26	Used to work	2	6 months
4	Female	29	Tailor	2	2.5 years
5	Female	30	Domestic Service	1	5 years
6	Female	29	Garment worker	2	4.5 years

Appendix B

Questionnaire:

In-Depth Interview (IDI):

Theme 1: Knowledge of Early Childhood Care and Childcare Services

1. What do you understand by the term ‘early childhood care’?
2. Do you think providing care is important for young children?
3. What kind of care do young children need? Can you elaborate?
4. What is your understanding of childcare or daycare services?
5. What is the main purpose of a day care center?
6. In your opinion, what happens in a daycare center during a typical day?
7. Do you think childcare centers play a role in children’s growth and development? Please explain.

Theme 2: Parental Perceptions of Childcare Services

8. Do you think daycare services should be available for working parents with young children? Can you elaborate why?
9. In this regard, how can childcare centers support low-income working parents, especially working mothers?
10. Are you aware of any daycare or childcare services for young children in your area? If yes, please describe them
11. Have you ever used a daycare or childcare center for your child? Why or why not?

12. Do you think day care centers are needed in low income communities? Why or why not?
13. What type of environment do you think is important in a childcare center (for example, safety, cleanliness etc.)?
14. What factors do you think are most important for working parents when selecting a day care center?
15. If a daycare facility were available within your own community, would you use it? Why or why not?
16. Do you prefer center based or community based childcare if available? Why?

Theme 3: Childcare Practice, arrangements and Challenges

17. As a working mother/parent, who usually takes care of your child when you are not at home?
18. What types of childcare arrangements are commonly used in your community?
19. When reliable childcare is not available, what risks or safety concerns do you think young children may face?
20. What challenges do you think working parents face in arranging childcare while they are at work?
21. Did you work when the children were very young? Can you share your experience?
22. How did you manage work and childcare when children were very young?
23. How childcare-related challenges did affect your work, income or daily life?

Focus Group Discussion (FGD):

Theme 1: Knowledge of Early Childhood Care and Childcare Services

1. What do you understand by the term ‘early childhood care’?
2. What is your understanding of childcare or daycare services?
3. What is the main purpose of a day care center?

Theme 2: Parental Perceptions of Childcare Services

4. Do you think daycare services should be available for working parents with young children?
Can you elaborate why?
5. In this regard, how can childcare centers support low-income working parents, especially working mothers?
6. Are you aware of any daycare or childcare services for young children in your area? If yes, please describe them
7. Have you ever used a daycare or childcare center for your child? Why or why not?
8. Do you think day care centers are needed in low income communities? Why or why not?
9. What type of environment do you think is important in a childcare center (for example, safety, cleanliness etc.)?
10. What factors do you think are most important for working parents when selecting a day care center?
11. If a daycare facility were available within your own community, would you use it? Why or why not?
12. Do you prefer center based or community based childcare if available? Why?

Theme 3: Childcare Practice, arrangements and Challenges

13. As a working mother/parent, who usually takes care of your child when you are not at home?
14. What types of childcare arrangements are commonly used in your community?
15. When reliable childcare is not available, what risks or safety concerns do you think young children may face?
16. What challenges do you think working parents face in arranging childcare while they are at work?
17. Did you work when the children were very young? Can you share your experience?
18. How did you manage work and childcare when children were very young?
19. How childcare-related challenges did affect your work, income or daily life?

Appendix C

Bangla Questionnaire

In Depth Interview (IDI):

Theme 1: Understanding of Early Childhood Care and Childcare Services

১. শিশুদের প্রারম্ভিক যত্ন বলতে আপনি কী বোঝেন?
২. আপনার কি মনে হয় ছোট শিশুদের জন্য যত্ন প্রদান করা গুরুত্বপূর্ণ? কেন বা কেন নয়?
৩. ছোট শিশুদের কী ধরনের যত্নের প্রয়োজন? দয়া করে বিস্তারিতভাবে বলুন।
৪. শিশু যত্ন বা ডে-কেয়ার সেবা সম্পর্কে আপনার ধারণা কী?
৫. একটি ডে-কেয়ার সেন্টারের প্রধান উদ্দেশ্য কী বলে আপনি মনে করেন?
৬. আপনার মতে, একটি ডে-কেয়ার কেন্দ্রে একটি সাধারণ দিনে কী ঘটে?
৭. আপনার ধারণা অনুযায়ী, শিশু যত্ন কেন্দ্রগুলো কি শিশুদের বৃদ্ধি ও বিকাশে ভূমিকা রাখে? দয়া করে ব্যাখ্যা করুন।

Theme 2: Parental Perspectives on Childcare Services and Choices

৮. আপনার কি মনে হয়, কর্মরত পিতামাতাদের জন্য যাদের ছোট শিশু আছে, তাদের জন্য ডে-কেয়ার সেবা থাকা উচিত? কেন বা কেন নয়, দয়া করে বিস্তারিতভাবে বলুন।
৯. এই প্রসঙ্গে, শিশু যত্ন কেন্দ্রগুলো কিভাবে কম আয়ের কর্মরত পিতামাতা, বিশেষ করে কর্মরত মায়েদের সহায়তা করতে পারে?

১০. আপনার এলাকায় ছোট শিশুদের জন্য কোনো ডে-কেয়ার বা শিশু যত্ন সেবা আছে কি? থাকলে দয়া করে সেগুলো বর্ণনা করুন।

১১. আপনি কি কখনও আপনার সন্তানের জন্য কোনো ডে-কেয়ার বা শিশু যত্ন কেন্দ্র ব্যবহার করেছেন? কেন বা কেন না?

১২. আপনার কি মনে হয়, কম আয়ের কমিউনিটিতে ডে-কেয়ার কেন্দ্রের প্রয়োজন আছে? কেন বা কেন নয়?

১৩. আপনার মতে, একটি শিশু যত্ন কেন্দ্রে কী ধরনের পরিবেশ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ (যেমন নিরাপত্তা, পরিচ্ছন্নতা ইত্যাদি)?

১৪. ডে-কেয়ার কেন্দ্র নির্বাচন করার সময় কর্মরত পিতামাতাদের জন্য কোন বিষয়গুলো সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বলে আপনি মনে করেন?

১৫. যদি আপনার নিজের কমিউনিটিতে একটি ডে-কেয়ার সুবিধা পাওয়া যেত, আপনি কি তা ব্যবহার করতেন? কেন বা কেন নয়?

১৬. আপনি কি সেন্টার-ভিত্তিক না কমিউনিটি-ভিত্তিক শিশু যত্ন পছন্দ করবেন? কেন?

Theme 3: Childcare Practices, Challenges, and Support Needs

১৭. কর্মরত মা/পিতার হিসেবে, যখন আপনি বাড়িতে থাকেন না, তখন সাধারণত কে আপনার সন্তানের যত্ন নেয়?

১৮. আপনার কমিউনিটিতে সাধারণভাবে কোন ধরনের শিশু যত্ন ব্যবস্থা ব্যবহৃত হয়?

১৯. যখন নির্ভরযোগ্য শিশু যত্ন পাওয়া যায় না, তখন আপনি মনে করেন ছোট শিশুরা কোন ধরনের ঝুঁকি বা নিরাপত্তা সংক্রান্ত সমস্যার মুখোমুখি হতে পারে?

২০. কর্মরত পিতামাতারা যখন কাজে থাকেন, তখন শিশু যত্নের ব্যবস্থা করতে কি ধরনের চ্যালেঞ্জের মুখোমুখি হন বলে আপনি মনে করেন?

২১. আপনি কি শিশুরা খুব ছোট থাকাকালীন কাজ করেছেন? আপনার অভিজ্ঞতা শেয়ার করতে পারেন কি?

২২. শিশুরা খুব ছোট থাকাকালীন সময়ে আপনি কিভাবে কাজ এবং শিশু যত্ন পরিচালনা করেছেন?

২৩. শিশু যত্ন সম্পর্কিত চ্যালেঞ্জগুলো আপনার কাজ, আয় বা দৈনন্দিন জীবনে কিভাবে প্রভাব ফেলেছে?

Focus Group Discussion (FGD):

Theme 1: Knowledge of Early Childhood Care and Childcare Services

১. শিশুদের প্রারম্ভিক যত্ন বলতে আপনি কী বোঝেন?

২. শিশু যত্ন বা ডে-কেয়ার সেবা সম্পর্কে আপনার ধারণা কী?

৩. একটি ডে-কেয়ার সেন্টারের প্রধান উদ্দেশ্য কী বলে আপনি মনে করেন?

Theme 2: Parental Perceptions of Childcare Services

৪. আপনার কি মনে হয়, কর্মরত পিতামাতাদের জন্য যাদের ছোট শিশু আছে, তাদের জন্য ডে-কেয়ার সেবা থাকা উচিত? কেন বা কেন

নয়, দয়া করে বিস্তারিতভাবে বলুন।

৫. এই প্রসঙ্গে, শিশু যত্ন কেন্দ্রগুলো কিভাবে কম আয়ের কর্মরত পিতামাতা, বিশেষ করে কর্মরত মায়েদের সহায়তা করতে পারে?

৬. আপনার এলাকায় ছোট শিশুদের জন্য কোনো ডে-কেয়ার বা শিশু যত্ন সেবা আছে কি? থাকলে দয়া করে সেগুলো বর্ণনা করুন।

৭. আপনি কি কখনও আপনার সন্তানের জন্য কোনো ডে-কেয়ার বা শিশু যত্ন কেন্দ্র ব্যবহার করেছেন? কেন বা কেন না?

৮. আপনার কি মনে হয়, কম আয়ের কমিউনিটিতে ডে-কেয়ার কেন্দ্রের প্রয়োজন আছে? কেন বা কেন নয়?

৯. আপনার মতে, একটি শিশু যত্ন কেন্দ্রে কী ধরনের পরিবেশ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ (যেমন নিরাপত্তা, পরিচ্ছন্নতা ইত্যাদি)?

১০. ডে-কেয়ার কেন্দ্র নির্বাচন করার সময় কর্মরত পিতামাতাদের জন্য কোন বিষয়গুলো সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বলে আপনি মনে করেন?

১১. যদি আপনার নিজের কমিউনিটিতে একটি ডে-কেয়ার সুবিধা পাওয়া যেত, আপনি কি তা ব্যবহার করতেন? কেন বা কেন নয়?

১২. আপনি কি সেন্টার-ভিত্তিক না কমিউনিটি-ভিত্তিক শিশু যত্ন পছন্দ করবেন? কেন?

Theme 3: Childcare Practice, arrangements and Challenges

১৩. কর্মরত মা/পিতার হিসেবে, যখন আপনি বাড়িতে থাকেন না, তখন সাধারণত কে আপনার সন্তানের যত্ন নেয়?

১৪. আপনার কমিউনিটিতে সাধারণভাবে কোন ধরনের শিশু যত্ন ব্যবস্থা ব্যবহৃত হয়?

১৫. যখন নির্ভরযোগ্য শিশু যত্ন পাওয়া যায় না, তখন আপনি মনে করেন ছোট শিশুরা কোন ধরনের ঝুঁকি বা নিরাপত্তা সংক্রান্ত সমস্যার

মুখোমুখি হতে পারে?

১৬. কর্মরত পিতামাতারা যখন কাজে থাকেন, তখন শিশু যত্নের ব্যবস্থা করতে কি ধরনের চ্যালেঞ্জের মুখোমুখি হন বলে আপনি মনে

করেন?

১৭. আপনি কি শিশুরা খুব ছোট থাকাকালীন কাজ করেছেন? আপনার অভিজ্ঞতা শেয়ার করতে পারেন কি?

১৮. শিশুরা খুব ছোট থাকাকালীন সময়ে আপনি কিভাবে কাজ এবং শিশু যত্ন পরিচালনা করেছেন?

১৯. শিশু যত্ন সম্পর্কিত চ্যালেঞ্জগুলো আপনার কাজ, আয় বা দৈনন্দিন জীবনে কিভাবে প্রভাব ফেলেছে?

Appendix D

Consent Form

Brac Institute of Educational Development, Brac University

Principal Investigator: Nasrat Ahmed Yousha

Title of the Research: Perceptions of Low-Income Working Parents on Child Care in Dhaka City

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to explore child care from the perspective of low-income working parents of children under five years of age in Dhaka. The study aims to examine parents' understanding of child care services, as well as their views, experiences, and challenges related to early childhood care. Additionally, it seeks to understand the factors influencing parents' choices of child care arrangements.

Role of Research Participants:

By voluntarily participating in this study, you will be asked to share your perceptions about child care. Individual interviews will last approximately 45–60 minutes, and focus group discussions will last approximately 90–120 minutes. Your participation will be based on your oral or written consent.

Risks and Benefits:

There are no foreseeable risks associated with participating in this study. While your child will not directly participate in the research, your contribution may indirectly benefit children in the

future if the findings are considered by policymakers and educators for improving child care services.

Privacy, Anonymity, and Confidentiality:

All information collected from you will be kept strictly confidential. Your identity will not be disclosed in any reports or publications. If you have any questions about the study, you are welcome to contact me at any time at 01676159228.

Future Use of Information:

Some of the information collected may be used for future research. In such cases, any data shared with other researchers will be handled in a way that ensures your privacy, anonymity and confidentiality are fully maintained.

Right Not to Participate and Withdraw:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to refuse participation or withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty. If you agree to participate in this study, please indicate your consent by signing or providing your left thumb impression in the space provided below.

Participant Consent:

I have read and understood the information provided above. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Signature of Investigator: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____