

# Child Day Care Center in Bangladesh: Problems and Prospects

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**Abstract:** *Child day care refers to the care provided for infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and school-aged children either in their own homes, in the home of a relative, other caregivers, or in center-based facilities. In Bangladesh women working rate is increasing with the enhancing of women education. So, it is a burning quest for the working women to secure and educate their baby in a sound way. To meet this demand, they need explicated child day care center to raise the baby. Now the child day care centers are founded, and built up with different contexts but not with the facilities they need, and the problem arises, then. The objective of this study is to find out major problems of existing child day care centers with the future potentiality of success in Bangladesh. From in-depth interviews of 10 working women who have babies, we have found that convenient location of child day care centers is one of the major problems. Findings show that the demand of healthy day care centers is increasing with the increasing of working mothers. It is recommended that the existing daycare centers should enhanced their services with ensuring security for toddlers, hygienic and healthy environment, pre-schooling facilities through trained nannies or employees. The day care centers can furnish their services to fit the necessities of working women.*

**Keywords:** Child daycare center, working women

## 1. Introduction

Day care refers to the care provided for infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and school-aged children, either in their own homes, in the home of a relative or other caregiver, or in a center-based facility. Day care center is normally supervised daytime care for preschool children, the elderly, or those with chronic disabilities, usually provided at a center outside the home. Day care is a specialized program or facility that provides care for handicapped or dependent children or adults as a substitute for or an extension of home care. There are two types of day care: An adult day care center, also commonly known as adult day services, is a non-residential facility specializing in providing activities for elderly and/or handicapped individuals. Most centers operate 10 - 12 hours per day and provide meals, social/recreational outings, and general supervision. Adult daycare centers operate under a social model and/or a health care model (Berenbeim, R. E., 1992). Adult day care includes programs, services, and facilities designed to assist physically or mentally impaired adults remain in their communities. Adult Day Care Centers offer social, recreational and health-related services to individuals in a protective setting who cannot be left alone during the day because of health care and social need, confusion or disability (Shonkoff, J. P., & Philips, D.A.; 2000). Most programs include an individualized plan of care, group exercise, adult education classes and recreation, nutritious meals, and social work services. In addition, these programs make respite for caregivers possible, and provide support groups for participants and caregivers.

Child day care is a place where children, usually, are taken care of people other than their parents for money from the parents. It is specialized program or facility that provides care for children from infants through preschool age, usually

within a group framework, either as a substitute for or an extension of home care. It is caring for and supervising child/children by someone other than the parent or guardian. During the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, parents in the Bangladesh rarely had to face the problems of child-rearing alone because they could usually expect support from their extended families, many of whom lived and worked close by, and mothers or close relative of mothers. Urbanization and changing social conditions in the twentieth century created a need for child care for poor mothers who had to work and child daycare centers were first come to Bangladesh. Such centers generally provided care only for poor children. More affluent mothers rarely worked, and, if they did, they hired nannies to look after their children. With the passes of time, garments sector in Bangladesh are developed and aged or under aged girls are greatly involved with jobs. Moreover, female education rate is increasing day by day and thereby women working rate. The severe scarcity of house maid led to the demand of child day care center. Thus, the physical environment can either contribute to children's development and support staff and parent goals or create a permanent impediment to the operation of a high quality program. Designing a high-quality, developmentally appropriate child care facility is a highly complex task which requires specialized and unique skills. The design and layout of the physical environment, which includes the building, interior finishes, outdoor spaces, selection of equipment and room arrangement has a profound impact on children's learning and behavior and on teachers' abilities to efficiently do their jobs (Smith and Bob, 1991.) Children need age-appropriate physical environments that support and promote child-directed and child-initiated play. The environment must promote and positively support the child's interaction with space, materials and people. Teachers and caregivers also need highly functional, easy-to-use environments. When the

environment supports both and is working for children and adults, it is easier for adults to focus on facilitating each child's play and learning (Smith and Bob, 1991.) Therefore the authors wanted to find out the major problems of existing daycare center with the prospects of child daycare centers in Bangladesh.

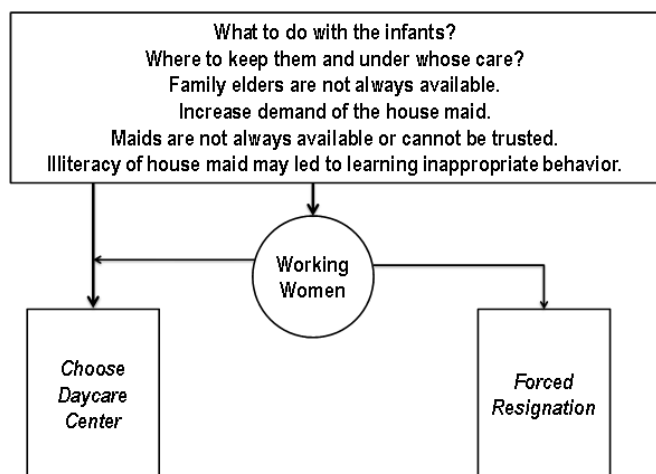
## 2. Objective of the Study

The research objective is to examine present situation and to project prospect of child care center in Bangladesh. In order to achieve the main objective, this research tries to seek the answers from the following research questions:

- What are the present conditions of the child daycare center?
- What are the problems faced by the working mother who put their baby at child daycare centers?
- What will be the demand of child daycare center if all the problems are solved?

### Child Daycare Center and Working Mother (Conceptual Framework)

Women in Bangladesh are far behind than men in outdoor activities. Still, education is spreading among women and many of them are working, including in white-collar jobs. At the same time, many prefer for small families. Joint families are becoming difficult to run in cities. Thus a new situation has emerged: working women becoming mothers with no one else to take care of the babies if they continue with outside jobs. It's good that the maternity leave for working mothers has been extended to three months (BBS, 2009). What the mothers are supposed to do after the 3-month maternity leave. In absence of alternatives, such as day care centers for babies, many others are reluctantly opting for staying home with the babies. However, changes are coming, though slowly. Day care centers, where working mothers can leave their babies on payment, are coming up - both in government and private sectors. From the figure 1, we observe that some factors led to working mothers or women to choose a standard daycare center for the growth and development of their babies otherwise working mothers have last resort to resign from their jobs.



**Figure 1:** A conceptual framework for child daycare center and working mother

Source: Authors (Field observations, 2012)

## 3. Research Methodology

In the study, a qualitative research approach was chosen to address the research questions, and qualitative data were collected and analyzed using interpretative methods. This research seeks to assess and understand the present changing situation in a particular social context. So, this research has selected articles, newsletters, case studies, conference papers as a source of secondary data. To find out the major problems, in-depth interview was taken from 10 working mothers with the convenient of interviews. Interview and group discussion data was mainly collected from working mothers who directly or indirectly connected with the particular center. Observations about the environments and surroundings of the centers were conducted for the purposes of gaining additional data and to provide enough background knowledge about child daycare center. To project the future demand of the child care center a structured question was administered with the following 5 point scale: 1 = Never! I will put my baby at the day care center, 2 = I don't know but I may rethink if we have improved day care center, 3 = hopefully I will put my baby at the day care center, 4 = Yes! I will put my baby at the day care center, and 5 = I already put my baby at the day care center.

## 4. Development of Child Daycare Center in Bangladesh

Child day centers in Dhaka, Bangladesh are focused on poor women's children, not for middle classes women. There is a need for improved child care center. Babies, aged between six months and six years, are usually accepted. But the cost chart may discourage many poor women to stay away from day care centers and depend on other options such as family elders or maids. And also it may discourage many middle class women to stay away because of poor service. There are scarcities of child day care centers. Though the government currently runs 32 day care centers across the country, including seven centers opened in July and Aparajeyo Bangladesh, an NGO, runs 12 day care centers in capital Dhaka (Showing in appendix the list of some daycare centers). But Majority of these centers is only for poor women.

Education is spreading among women and many of them are working, including in white-collar jobs (Showing in appendix table 1: Women in education at a glance). So this is a big problem for working women in our country. Price indicates quality- Costs in the centers differ. At state-run centers, one has to pay 250 takas in admission fees plus 300 takas a month for a baby's 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. stay. At private centers, it takes for an infant 500 to 1,000 takas for half-day and double the amount for a full 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. stay (Field survey, 2012). Under the 1995 labor laws, an organization employing at least 25 women are to set up day care centers for working mothers' babies. The government is considering lowering the number of female employees to 20. Unavailability of child day care within the offices where working above 25 women. Many Women are forced to resign their jobs. If there is no daycare centre available in any woman's neighborhood, a maid servant usually looks after the baby in spite of that working mother. Children may develop new inappropriate behaviors. All kids go through stages in their growth and

social skills that are manifested through new types of activity or actions (For more showing appendix: List of frequent asked questions about child daycare centers). Children under daycare center face problems with severe malnutrition in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Facilities of child day care failed to support quality program for children. The design and layout of the physical environment which includes the building, colors, interior finishes, outdoor spaces, selection of equipment and room arrangement that are unavailable in 98% child day care in Bangladesh (Newsletter, Website, 2011).

In Bangladesh, the number of families with both husband and wife working is now higher than ever before. At present, there are much more working women as the number of educated and ambitious women is growing (Showing appendix: Table 2 Distribution of working women according to educational level). Then, among other reasons, comes the change of lifestyle. However, changes are coming, though slowly. Day care centers, where working mothers can leave their babies on payment, are coming up - both in government and private sectors. According to Bangladesh Labor Force survey 2002-2003, about 10 million women over the age of 15 are engaged in different professions. A significant number of this labor force is working in the garment sector, the country's highest foreign currency earner. Over 90 percent of the garment workers are women. There is a huge prospect for working women in cities. Many of the working women have small children. They have to rely on housemaids to look after their kids while they are away. Therefore, it is necessary to set up adequate number of quality daycare centers both at government and private levels so that women can get to work without concern for their kids. Unfortunately, this matter has got little attention. As per the National Labor Act 2006, there should be a daycare centre for children in an organization where 40 women work. But, few organizations do have any daycare centre. Then again, most of the centers already established at government and private levels are based in capital Dhaka. Although there is a demand for quality daycare centers in other cities and towns, there is no initiative in sight to meet the demand. There are some daycare centers in different cities, including Dhaka, but questions arise when it comes to their standard as most of the centers lack proper environment, trained nurses, cleanliness and adequate rooms. Although a huge number of women are employed in the garment sector, most of the garment factories have no daycare centre. In June 2007, an NGO has conducted a survey on 55 garment factories and found daycare centers only in 15 of them.

The children are not properly taken care of so, parents are getting reluctant to make use of the facilities at these centers. It is clear that working women feel the necessity of daycare centers, but they cannot use them as they hardly find them in their own workplaces. Working women barely feel encouraged to keep their kids in the existing daycare centers and many of them are being compelled to give up their jobs to take care of their children. According to psychologists, a child needs mother's company more than dad for his or her proper mental growth. If there is a daycare centre in one's workplace, it is good for both the child and mother, as the mother gets mental peace for being close to the kid and can be more attentive to her work. This also makes the child

happy. The kids who are taken care of by maids develop various problems. Mental Health Institute, says, "If a child is kept in care of a quality daycare centre instead of a maid, he or she will stay much better both physically and mentally". At this, the child gets the opportunity to grow in a pleasant environment with the kids of his own age and different age groups. Clinical Psychology Department at Dhaka University thinks a daycare centre has been essential for the well-being of mothers and children. If a child is kept in the centre belonging to a mother's workplace, he himself stays well and helps the mom to remain happy too. Emphasizing the importance of having daycare centers in mothers' own workplaces for unhindered mental growth of children, these centers should be made suitable for the children and attention needs to be given to adequate rooms, trained nurses and cleanliness so that the kids stay safe, sound and cheerful. Women Affairs Department dealing with daycare centre activities, says, "Much more emphasis is needed on the daycare centre issue for the progress of working women and the welfare of their kids. Human Rights Implementation Organization, has pointed out establishing daycare centre in every government and private organization will have to be made mandatory for protecting the interests of mothers and children. So, initiatives need to be taken to resolve the problem to make the best use of women's potentials and talents in nation-building activities. Under the 1995 labor laws, an organization employing at least 25 women are to set up day care centers for working mothers' babies.

## 5. Findings

The number of working mothers is increasing step by step crushing thousands of barriers. They feel to have a standard child day care center with expected facilities. From the different sources of literature, we have found at least eight major problems of existing child day care centers in Bangladesh. From table 1, we see that majority of the day care center is established for the poor women who are working in different houses and offices. Besides unavailability of standard child care center, the design and layout of the physical environment which includes the building, colors, interior finishes, outdoor spaces, selection of equipment and room arrangement is unavailable in 98% child day care in Bangladesh (table 3). From in-depth interviews of 10 working women who have babies, we have also found that convenient location of child day care centers is one of the major problems (table 3). We have listed another eight major problems (showing table 3) during the informal discussions with the female working employees who have an experience of existing child day care centers.

**Table 3:** Major Problems of Child day care center in Bangladesh

	<i>Major Problems</i>
Secondary Sources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Majority of day care centers are only for poor women.</li> <li>2. Huge Price differences between private and public day care centers.</li> <li>3. Poor services of day care centers.</li> <li>4. Unavailability of child daycare center within the offices where number of working women above 25.</li> <li>5. Many women are forced to resign their job due to unavailability of child care center.</li> <li>6. Children under day care center face severe malnutrition problems.</li> <li>7. Children may develop new inappropriate behaviors from the maid servants.</li> <li>8. The design and layout of the physical environment which includes the building, colors, interior finishes, outdoor spaces, selection of equipment and room arrangement that are unavailable in 98% child day care in Bangladesh.</li> </ol>
Depth Interviews	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unavailability of daycare centers in mothers' own workplaces.</li> <li>2. Unavailability of daycare center to the nearby office.</li> <li>3. Lack of security for toddlers.</li> <li>4. Lack of hygienic and healthy environment.</li> <li>5. Lack of trained nannies or employees.</li> <li>6. Lack of pre-schooling facilities.</li> <li>7. Lack of appropriate group mate.</li> <li>8. Lack of enough space for playground.</li> </ol>

To project the extensity of demand of child day care center, we administered a question: How much you agree to admit your baby at center provided all the facilities you want? From table 4, it is found that if all the problems are properly checked, none of the working mothers disagree to admit their children to the daycare center. Moreover 60% of the working mothers want to put their baby at the daycare center where they feel secured and comfortable and have healthy and hygienic environment.

**Table 4:** Frequency percentage of degree of agreement to admit child at daycare center

<i>Statements</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Cumulative Percentage</i>
Never! I will put my baby at the day care center.	0%	0%
I don't know but I may rethink if we have improved day care center.	0%	0%
Hopefully! I will put my baby at the day care center.	10%	10%
Yes! I will put my baby at the day care center.	50%	<b>60%</b>
I already put my baby at the day care center.	40%	100%
N=10 (Count)	100%	

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Child daycare center is specialized program or facility that provides care for children from infants through preschool age, usually within a group framework, either as a substitute for or an extension of home care. It is caring for and supervising child/children by someone other than the parent or guardian. The increasing rate of girls' workers at garments, the female education rate (showing appendix :Table 4 and Table 1 for Male and female literacy rate and Women in education: at a glance respectively), the increasing female working rate in white collar jobs, and the scarcity of maid servants all together increase the demand of child daycare centers in Bangladesh. Government should take steps to implement the 1995 labor law on each and every organization. Private and public organizations should also aware or abide by the rules in which working mothers can get flexibilities and facilities to work with the growing happy babies. It is also recommended that the existing daycare center should also improved their services with ensuring security for toddlers, hygienic and healthy environment, pre-schooling facilities through trained nannies or employees.

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11. Will they encourage children to express themselves in creative ways?
  12. Do they encourage good health habits such as washing hands before eating and after using the toilet?
  13. Will they talk to the children and encourage them to express themselves through words?
  14. Do they seem to have enough time to look after each of the children in her/his care?
  15. Do they have previous experience or training in working with children?
  16. Does the child care facility have an up-to-date license, if required?
  17. Do they have a clean and comfortable look?
  18. Do they have enough space indoors and out so all children can move freely and safely?
  19. Do they have enough furniture, playthings and other equipment for all the children in care?
  20. Do they have equipment that is safe and in good repair?
  21. Do they have equipment and materials suitable for the ages of the children in care?
  22. Do they have a safe place to store dangerous items such as medicines, cleaners, poisons, matches, sharp instruments, etc.?
  23. Do they have a safety plan to follow in emergencies?
  24. Do they have enough heat, light and ventilation?
  25. Do they have safe transportation for field trip with seat belts and car seats used?
  26. Do they have a nap or resting area, depending on ages and needs of the children?
  27. Do they have nutritious meals and snacks that meet your preferences about the types of food you want your child to eat?
  28. Do they have enough adults to give attention to all of the children in care?
  29. Are the children able to play quietly and actively indoors and out?
  30. Are the children able to play alone at times and with friends at other times?
  31. Are the children able to follow a schedule that meets their need for routine, but is flexible enough to meet the different needs of each child?
  32. Are the children able to use materials and equipment that help them learn new physical skills, develop muscular control and get exercise?
  33. Are the children able to learn to get along, to share and to respect themselves?
  34. Are the children able to learn about their own and others cultures through art, music, books, songs, games and other activities?
  35. Are the children able to visit nearby places of interest, such as the park, library, fire station or museum?
  36. Are the children able to play with many different toys and equipment that enable them to use their imaginations? (For example: books, musical instruments)
  37. Are the children able to choose their own activities for at least part of the day?
  38. Is there a diaper changing area with a washable surface, and is it sanitized regularly?
  39. Are bottles, nipples and toys kept clean?
  40. Are unused formula and food refrigerated and labeled or discarded when no longer fresh?

## Appendix

### List of frequent asked questions about child day care centers:

1. Will they encourage parents to visit at any time?
2. Do they appear to be warm and friendly?
3. Do they have a sense of humor?
4. Do they seem to be someone with whom you can develop a relaxed, sharing relationship?
5. Do they seem to feel good about herself/himself and the job?
6. Do they have child-rearing attitudes and methods that are similar to your own?
7. Do they understand what children can and want to do at different stages of growth?
8. Do they have the right materials and equipment on hand to help them learn and grow mentally and physically?
9. Will they patiently help children solve their problems?
10. Do they provide activities that encourage children to think things through?

41. Are babies changed promptly when diapers are wet or soiled? +880-2-882-7302; 881-7926 ; Fax: +880-2-988-2386 ; Email: phulki@citechco.net
42. Are babies cleaned thoroughly during diaper changes? 5. Durjoy Child-care Centre, Aparajayo 3/20 humayun road block B Mohammadpur 1207 Tell 88-02-9135969, 88-02-9116613, 88-02-8115798, Durjoy Nari Sangha, Dhaka
43. Is a separate crib, portrait or playpen provided for each infant? 6. Day Care Centre, Bonosree, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1219

**Source: Depth interviews and secondary data (2012)**

**List of the child daycare centers in Bangladesh:**

- SOS Children's Village International in Bangladesh (associated); 1, Shamoli, Mirpur Road' Dhaka - 1207, Tel +88/02/81 14058, +88/02/81 18189; Fax +88/02/81 13217; E-mail: national.officesos-bangladesh.org
- Baby Care Centre, BG Press Office, Tejgaon, Dhaka, Bangladesh, Tel: 9117415
- Day Care Centre, Dr Hasan Ashraf, Clinical Sciences Division, ICDDR,B, ; 68 Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sharani, Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh. Tel: 880-2-88 60523-32/Ext. 2355, 2357; Fax: 880-2-8823116/9885657 ; E-mail : ashrafh@icddrb.org
- Phulki, Suraiya Haque, Executive Director, House A-14, Road 2, Block-L , Banani Dhaka 1213, Bangladesh ; Tel: 8. Love and learn Mohakhali Dhaka Mob: 01715033468, 01731174223
- Jatiya Mahila Sangtha 6<sup>th</sup> floor 145 new baily road Tell 8359941, 8359942
- Wee learn Dhaka (WEE LEARN.DHAKA) House#22 Road#1 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Gulshion-1, Dhaka 1212 Cell: 01612821990, 01911239686
- Pre ceded Child care homes, Sec -11 Mirpur, Tell 9003837, 8011579, 8014807

**Source: field survey and websites (2012)**

**Table 1: Women in Education: At a Glance**

**Primary Level:**

- Bangladesh has already attained gender parity in primary enrollment by 2005.
- The overall annual rate of primary school enrollment between 1990s and 2000 shows relatively high rate for girls as compared to that of boys, 8.46 percent vs 6.48 percent.

**Secondary level**

- The target to achieve gender parity in secondary enrollment was set for 2005. The country reached desired goal by 1999.
- Between 1991 and 2000, the secondary education enrollment for female students depicts sharp increase (34% in1991, 45% in 1995) whereas the enrollment of boy students substantially decreased (from 66% in1991 to 55% in 1995)
- In 2000, girls enrollment surpassed boys (51% for girls and 49% for boys). The similar pattern of enrollment for both sexes could be seen in 2005.
- Enrollment of girls (rural) increased from 46% to 53% (1995-2000), boys declined from 52% to 47% (1995-2000).
- Enrollment of girls (urban) increased from 49% to 52% (1995-2005), boys declined from 51% to 48% (1995-2000).

**Tertiary level**

- The target was set to achieve no later than 2015, only 21% was achieved by 2005.
- During the last ten years, the enrollment of students in tertiary level has increased significantly from 280,516 in 1997 to 621,265 in 2006.
- During (1997 -2005), female enrollment in tertiary level has increased 2.6 times and male 3.6 times.

**Adult level**

- By 2015 equal male-female ratio is supposed to be achieved. In 2005 the ratio was adult male - 58% and adult female - 48%.
- The adult literacy rate (15+) has increased from 35.3% in 1991 to 52% in 2006.
- The literacy rate of 15 years of age and over shows substantial increase with male at 66% to 68% between 2002-2006 and female 43% to 48%.

**Source: Halim (2010) and NARI (2009)**

**Table 2: Distribution of women in employment by their educational levels, Bangladesh DHS 1993, 1996-7, 1999-00, 2004.**

<i>Education</i>		<i>% in Cash Employment</i>
<b>1993</b>	None	16.4
	Primary	12.5
	Secondary	7.9
	Tertiary	25.4
Total		<b>14.4</b>
<b>1996-1997</b>	None	26.1
	Primary	20.5
	Secondary	15.6
	Tertiary	32.4
Total		<b>23.2</b>
<b>1999-2000</b>	None	23.9
	Primary	16.6
	Secondary	13.8
	Tertiary	27.7
Total		<b>19.8</b>
<b>2004</b>	None	25.9
	Primary	17.3
	Secondary	12.9
	Tertiary	22.3
Total		<b>20.0</b>

(Source: BDHS, 2004-secondary level)-secondary level)

**Table 5:** Male and Female Literacy rate

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Both gender (%)</i>	<i>Male (%)</i>	<i>Female (%)</i>
Class I-V	29.56	29.80	28.30
Class VI-VIII	13.29	12.96	13.63
Class IX-X	8.05	7.97	8.12
SSC/equivalent	5.21	5.86	4.54
HSC/ equivalent	3.08	3.81	2.34
Degree/ equivalent	1.55	2.17	0.92

Source: BBS, the Bangladesh Literacy Survey, 2010

### Author Profile

**Profile of Shahidul Islam** is a Lecturer, Department of Marketing, Comilla University, Bangladesh. He worked as a Lecturer in the faculty of Business Administration at Eastern University of Bangladesh. Shahidul received both MBA and BBA degree in Marketing from University of Dhaka. His name has been enlisted for the Dean’s Merit list under the Dean’s Academic Award of the Faculty of Business Studies, University of Dhaka. He got merit scholarships both in SSC and HSC exams in 2000 & 2002 respectively. Shahidul has a passion for teaching and is greatly concerned about student learning and welfare.

**Nasreen Anwar Khan** is an Assistant Professor, working at Asian University of Bangladesh under School of Business Department. She passed her BBA and MBA (in Management) from Chittagong University. In both BBA and MBA degree she secured overall 2<sup>nd</sup> position. She got Govt. Scholarship in HSC examination. Now she devoted herself for research in new field.