

**THE KNOWLEDGE OF MARMA PARENTS IN CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS
AREA ON THE ROLE OF PLAY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT
AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS CHILDREN'S PLAY PRACTICES.**



**A Thesis presented to the Thesis Committee,
Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University**

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Ethical Approval Form

Date: _____

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Title of Thesis Topic: The knowledge of Marma parents in Chittagong Hill Tracts area on the role of play in early childhood development and their contributions towards children's play practices

1. Source of population

2. Does the study involve (yes or no)

1. physical risk to the subjects
1. social risk
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3. Will subjects be clearly informed about (yes or no)

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1. From study participants
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1. Proposal
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3. Questionnaire or interview schedule

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The Research Checklist indicates:

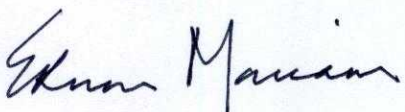
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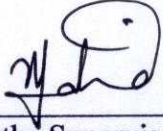
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Approval from the supervisor

In my judgment the thesis and the candidate meet recognised scholarly standards for the degree and are therefore ready to submit his/her thesis to the Thesis Committee.



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MSc in Early Childhood Development

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Dedicated To

My father who gave me a lot of opportunity to play in my childhood

Executive Summary

The present study was carried out to identify the knowledge of Marma parents on the role of play in early childhood development, and their contributions in children's play practices. In addition, Marma children's play practices were also identified to get a comprehensive picture on Marma parents' influence on their children's play.

Descriptive survey method was used in this study. Interviews and observations were used in collecting data. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the samples of the study. Interview sample consists of 20 Marma (10 fathers and 10 mothers) parents. The sample was drawn from rural and urban areas of Khagrachari hill district from parents who had 3 to 5 year old children. Observation sample consists of children of 10 families selected from the main sample of parents. Children from both urban and rural areas of Khagrachari hill district were included in the sample.

Parents were interviewed using the parent questionnaire to collect information in relation to the parent's knowledge about children's play. Observation checklist was used to gather information on Marma children's play practices and the contributions parents made for their children's play practices. Data was analyzed by using quantitative and qualitative method.

The findings revealed that Marma parents had the knowledge of the role of play in children's physical and cognitive development. Further, their attitude towards children's play was positive. They are aware about the benefit of children's play. It was also identified that the knowledge Marma parents had was generated through experience rather than education.

Regarding Marma children's play practices it was found that children played activities that are played by children in Bangladesh as well as all over the world. The study did not find play practices specific to Marma community. The study also found gender stereo type play practices and out door play including rough and tumble play popular among Marma children.

The study found that most of the Marma parents contributed towards children's play positively. They preferred children to play rather than getting help from them in their work. They bought toys and taught them play activities. Observations found most of the parents did not participate when children played. They were not aware of play based learning.

The findings of this study are invaluable in designing parental awareness raising programmes that promote play based learning. There is an intervention programme implemented in Hill Tracts area where Marma community lives and the knowledge from this study will help the government and NGO programme implementers to design their interventions effectively for the children. The information provided in the present study is important in early childhood development and play based learning. This information is also important from the anthropological perspective.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	viii
Glossary	xii
Chapter 1:	INTRODUCTION.....1
1.1	Introduction.....1
1.2	Background.....2
1.3	Literature Review.....3
1.3.1	<i>Philosophical and theoretical underpinning of play...4</i>
1.3.2	<i>Parents influence on play..... 6</i>
1.4	Significance.....7
1.5	Operational Definitions.....7
1.6	Research Questions.....8
1.7	Objectives.....9
Chapter 2:	METHODOLOGY.....10
2.1	Introduction.....10
2.2	Setting.....10
2.3	Samples of the Study.....10
2.4	Sampling Technique.....11
2.5	Sample Size.....11
2.5.1	<i>Size of the sample selected for interviews.....11</i>
2.5.2	<i>Size of the sub sample selected for observations.....12</i>
2.6	Measures.....13
2.7	Procedures.....13
2.8	Data Collection.....14
2.9	Data Analysis.....14

Chapter 3:	FINDINGS.....	15
3.1	Demographic Details of the Sample.....	15
3.2	Marma Parents Knowledge on the Role of Play in Child Development.....	16
3.3	Marma Children's Play Practices.....	22
3.4	Parents Contributions towards Marma Children's Play.....	26
Chapter 4:	DISCUSSION.....	31
4.1	Marma Parents Knowledge on the Role of Play in Children's Development.....	31
4.2	Marma Children's Play Practices.....	32
4.3	Parents Contributions towards Marma Children's Play Play.....	35
	Limitations.....	37
Chapter 5:	CONCLUSIONS.....	38
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	42
	 REFFRENCES.....	 44
	 Appedix- 1 : Parents Consent Form (English).....	 51
	Appendix-2 : Parents Consent Form (Bangla).....	52
	Appendix-3: Parents Questionnaire (English).....	53
	Appendix-4: Observation Check-list (English)....	56
	Appendix-5: Parents Questionnaire (Bengali).....	58
	Appendix-6: Observation Check-list (Bengali)....	61

GLOSSARY

BRACU	BRAC University
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts
DVD	Drive of Video Disk
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECDRC	Early Childhood Development Resource Center
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
H.S.C	Higher Secondary Certificate
ICDP	Integrated Community Development Project
IED	Institute of Education Development
Marma	One of the Ethnic Minority groups of Bangladesh
MSc	Master of Science
NGO	Non Government Organisation
Para	Small village
Paracenter	A child center based in the Para
S.S.C	Secondary School Certificate
TV	Television
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

CHAPTER 1

1.1. Introduction

This study attempts to identify the knowledge of Marma parents on the role of play in early childhood development and their contributions towards their children's play practices. In addition, Marma children's play practices were also identified to get a comprehensive picture on Marma parents' influence on their children's play.

There are many different and often contradictory explanations of the nature and value of play. For example, adults' attitudes towards children's play vary: some ignore it, as a waste of time; some curb play as something dangerous or subversive, while others consider it as a learning or socialisation mechanism. It is a well known fact that children's exposure to play is influenced by their parent's attitudes and the parent's attitudes are influenced by their culture and knowledge.

In the modern world many children are deprived of play experiences both at home and in their education world, not because of sickness, but often because of busy schedule, hectic highly structured home, pre-school and school lives and high parental expectations for their children's academic achievement (Sham, 2009). Play is very often abandoned and replaced by programmed activities, going to clubs, watching TV, DVD and computer games.

Play is so important for optimal child development that it has been recognised by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as a right (General Comments No.7, CRC 2006). Play is essential to child development since it contributes to cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and youth. Play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. Play is also important to healthy brain development. It is through play that children at a very early age engage and interact in the world around them. Play allows children to create and explore a world they can master, conquering their fears while practicing adult roles, sometimes in conjunction with other children or adult caregivers. As they master their

world, play helps children to develop new competencies that lead to enhanced confidence and the resiliency they need to face future challenges.

1.2. Background

There are thirteen ethnic minority groups existing in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) with their own and different cultures, values and practices in Bangladesh. Marma people are the second highest among the ethnic groups in terms of population in CHT area. According to 1991 census out of 590,000 tribal people -the Marma were 142,334 which are now about 250,000 (Dewan, 2011). Like other ethnic minority groups in this country Marma children struggle to learn the national language Bangla which is the second language for them. As a result they struggle in the school. Therefore, having the opportunity to learn Bangla language in the early years through informal interaction and play is very important. Additionally due to geographic and political situation minority groups living in the Hill Tracts are in disadvantage in terms of health and economic development (ADB, 2001; Durmnian, 2007).

In spite of the fact that there are ample space and opportunities for Marma children to play in contrast to urban children, whether these opportunities are being used in the educational and socio-emotional development of young children in CHT through play is questionable. It is a well known fact that in the early year's children's play has an immense role to ensure holistic development. But a little is known about the contributions of Marma parents towards play which could be used as a tool to overcome many problems they face related to their children's development. A recent phenomenon is that parents especially with higher educational level are more likely to focus on children's academic performance than play. It is worth researching to know whether Marma community with its rich resources which promotes play, also considers play as ineffective in learning and development.

In Bangladesh there are few government and non government initiatives focused on the development of the Marma community of CHT. Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP) is a joint venture of the Government of Bangladesh and UNICEF launched in 1980 in

CHT area. Through operating “para center” in the community level ICDP is contributing for the development of the children of CHT through introducing play based learning. However, the coverage of this project is about 50% of Marma children (Gosh & Alam, 2011). Rest of the children is not under the coverage of this intervention. Although some NGOs are operating programmes for preschool children on a very limited scale, they are not specifically operating for Marma children.

On the other hand, lack of survey information or statistical data on children’s development and learning through play is available in Bangladesh. It is not even known whether parents provide them opportunity to play or not. There is also lack of data on parent’s perceptions towards play in different location and different community. In this context, the researcher felt it is imperative to identify the knowledge of Marma parents on the role of play in early childhood development and their contributions towards children’s play practices.

1.3. Literature Review

According to Sluss, (2004) play is voluntary and requires active involvement. Furthermore, play is symbolic, and free of external rules. “Play focuses on action rather than outcomes and playing is pleasurable”. As such, play includes multi characteristics and activities that are influenced by culture and environment. As a result there are cultural variation of parental perceptions and practices in different communities across the world. Culture creates a powerful influence not only on the amount, type and content of play but also person, age, gender to identify normative patterns or essential components.

Richer (1990) states that play practices embody several features. First, play practices are the child’s first experience of groups in which the participation is voluntary. Second, play practices are characterised by relations of equality which means power changes can happen. Third, because they embody peer relations the beliefs, and values underlying play practices are reinforced throughout a person’s life. In this sense, it could be surmised that children’s play practices should be taken seriously by adults to make use of these characteristics for the betterment of their children.

Play may look different in other cultures, but all children play (Edwards, 2000; Sutton-Smith, 1997). However, there may be variations according to culture, race or even the class they belong. For example, in African American community when five year old girl's jumping double Dutch, and in a middle-class white community, the same aged children may be riding bikes. It is found that the children use the themes and materials from their own communities, but the underlining content and gross motor exercise is the common element (Bowman, 2004, p.128). In addition, cultural variation occurs in the amount of time children spend on different types of play. The American pattern of father-son rough housing is rare in New Delhi, perhaps because of the importance of family cooperation throughout the life cycle in India (Roopnarine, Hossain, Gil, & Brophy, 1994. cited in Bowman, 2004, p.129). Through play, Aboriginal children embark on a journey of learning and growing that takes them through time and space as they take on various rules, including people, animals and symbols (Johns, 2001, p.60). The lifestyle of Aboriginal people in Canada, including differences in diet and decreased physical activity levels, may partially explain the rapid rise in health care problems (Coble and Rhodes, 2006; Retnakaran et. al., 2005).

“Developing through play” has become a well known slogan in early childhood education and development. Through literature review it was found that there is no standard definition of play. Different theorists and researchers have defined play differently. Play is hard to define, and its functions are not always apparent. According to (Haight & Black, 2001) play is a mix of physical, emotional, social, and cognitive components that require coordination among neural structures and behavioral systems.

1.3.1. Philosophical and theoretical underpinning of play

Historically, the idea of child development through play is based on research and observation by many philosophers, psychologist and educators. The role of play was first acknowledged in print more than 2,000 years ago. Plato (427-347 BC) was one of the first philosophers to discuss play. He stated,

“...the future builder must play at building....and those who have the care of their education should provide them when young with mimic tools”

(Iscariotes & Hinitz, 2002, p. 10).

As Friedrich Froebel (1887, pp.54-55) states,

“Play is the purest; most spiritual activity of man....It gives joy, freedom, contentment, inner and outer rest, peace with the world. Play is the highest phase of child development...”

Psychoanalytic theorists (Freud, 1959 & Erikson, 1950) viewed play as “pleasurable” (as cited in Sluss, 2004, p.52). Play contributes knowledge and intelligence through the complementary process of assimilation and accommodation (Jean Piaget, 1962). He viewed play as a way to construct knowledge and a reflection of intelligence. Vygotsky (1932-1978), a socio-cultural theorist emphasised the influences of social and environmental interactions during play. Interacting with more skilled partners, the child can be taught to reach the upper limit of the zone of proximal development. Vygotsky (1978a, 1978b) claimed that play serves as the primary context for cognitive development. According to Vygotsky (1978a, p.138) “*Play is the source of development and creates the zone of proximal development.*”

Play is important for the holistic development that contributes children to be active adults in the society. Research shows that play allows children to use their creativity while developing their physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. Play provides opportunities for children to gain real experiences and use those experiences to organise concepts that enable them to better understand the real world (Bodrova & Leong, 1996). Play is important for healthy brain development. The availability of play activities affects not only development but also the size of the brain (Begley 1997; Nash 1997; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Neuroscientists and play scholars have found that high quality play quickly increases neural connections at a significant rate during play in early childhood (Angier, 1992). As they master their world, play helps children to develop new competencies that lead to enhanced confidence and the resiliency to face future challenges.

Piaget (1951) regarded play as an adaptive behavior that facilitates children's thinking and cognition. By engaging in different types of play, children practice and consolidate skills, such as eye-hand coordination and sensory-motor skills. Each type of play is essential to cognitive development at different stages of childhood (Saracho & Spodek, 1995). According to Reed and Brown (2000), although adults may provide the space and objects with their children's play, during play children practice their power to self-direct, self-organise, exert self-control, and negotiate with others. Even when engaged in rough-and-tumble play, if it was a mutual decision, children involved demonstrate self-control (Bergen & Fromberg, 2009). Studies have found the positive effects of play on children's physical development including muscle development, coordination, and obesity prevention (Council on Physical Education for Children, 2001; Marcon, 2003) Zigler & Bishop-Joshep, (2004).

1.3.2. Parents influence on play

Usually parents are the first to interact with their children. They help children to develop their personalities, creativities and behaviors (Md-Yunus, 2007). As primary caregiver parent's knowledge on the role of play and their play practices influence children's learning and development. Studies showed that when parents do not understand the importance of play, their role in play with their children become almost interfering factor rather than an interactive one (Levenstein & O'Hara, 1993; Oksal, 2005). In the context of play, children are receptive to parental suggestions, and they play in the more sophisticated manner when their caregivers join them (O'Reily & Bornstein, 1993).

Kelly and others (2008) state those mothers' play-learning beliefs are likely to influence the way they structure their children's early learning experiences. On the other hand, Shariff (2009) opines due to variations in knowledge, understanding and cultural diversity, parents hold different perceptions of play. A study conducted by Badzis (2003) in Malaysia found that only a few considered play as a suitable way of children's learning.

On the contrary, a study conducted with black parents who brought children for play therapy found that parents know the value of play in child development although they did not

definition the current study sample has been selected from the parents of children between three to five years.

Child development

Child Development is defined as the process of change in which the child comes to master more and more complex levels such as: moving, thinking, feeling, and interacting with people and objects in the environment (Evans and others 2000). According to Myres (1995) physical growth and mental and emotional growth are important in child development. The operational definition derived from these definitions in this study for child development is the child's physical, socio-emotional, cognitive and language development which helps him/her to master more complex levels as explained by Evans and others (2000).

Play Practices

According to Oxford Dictionary play is to engage in activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than practical purpose. Play is an integral part of early childhood development and preschool years are called play years by many scholars (Berger, 2000). Richer (1990) states that play practices can be conceived as a set of practices carried out among age –similar peers. In this study play practices has been defined as a set of practices carried out among three to five year old Marma children for enjoyment and recreation rather than practical purposes.

1.6. Research Questions

The current study will try to find out the answers to the following questions:

1. Do Marma parents know about the role of play in child language and other development?
2. What are the play practices of Marma children?
3. Do Marma parents contribute positively in the play practices of their children?

1.7. Objectives

To find out the answers of the questions above, the current study has the following objectives:

1. To identify whether Marma parents know about the role of play in children's language and other development.
2. To identify the play practices of Marma children.
3. To identify the contributions of Marma parents towards their children's play practices.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

2.1. Introduction

This is a cross-sectional study to identify the knowledge of Marma Parents and their contributions towards 3 to 5 year old children's play in CHT. The study tried to explore fathers' and mothers' knowledge and contributions individually. In order to avoid any biasness and ensure authentic findings, samples were selected from both urban and rural communities. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used for the study.

2.2. Setting

The study was conducted in three sub-districts of khagrachari hill district where Marma people live. The sub-districts were Khagrachari sadar, Ramgarh and Manikchari. From these three sub-districts six villages (para) were chosen- Master para, Pankhaiya para, Apurna Chowdhury para and Ganja para from Khagrachari sadar sub-district; Paiyundong para from Ramgarh sub-district; and Lafraaung Karbari para from Manikchari sub-district. The justification for selecting six villages from three sub-districts were to have the actual picture of Marma parents' knowledge and contributions to 3 to 5 year children's play living in different situations of rural and urban areas.

2.3. Sample of the study

All the parents of the children between 3-5 years living in the three sub-districts were the population of the study. The sample for interviews and the sub sample for observations were selected from this population. The sample consisted of Marma parents from different areas of khagrachari hill district and of different background who have 3 to 5 year of children. The sub sample was drawn from the interview sample for observations to identify Marma

parents' contributions to their children's play and the play practices of the children. The sub sample consisted of both Marma parents and children.

2.4. Sampling Technique

Stratified purposive sampling technique was used in this study. Parents of mentally retarded or disable children were excluded since disability of children can cause differences in the parents' behaviors towards play.

There are three districts in the Hill Tracts. From these three districts, Khagrachari district was chosen using convenient sampling. In Khagrachari district some of the places Marma people are the highest population among other communities and also Khagrachari is researcher's working area of his job. There are eight sub-districts in the district of Khagrachari and from these eight districts three sub-districts (Khagrachari, Ramgarh, and Manikchari) where a majority of Marma community lives were purposively chosen.

As a project organizer of Integrated Community Development project, the researcher had the names and addresses of the Marma families living in the districts of Khagrachari. Families who had children between 3 to 5 years and who expressed their willingness to participate in the interviews were selected from these addresses to identify knowledge of Marma parents in relation to play practices of their children.

The sub sample for observations was selected from the above sample.

2.5. Sample Size

2.5.1. Size of the sample selected for interviews

The total number of subjects in the sample was 20 parents. The sample consisted of males or females who willingly agreed to respond to the interview. Availability of children between 3 to 5 years and the willingness to participate in the interview were the key factors that were considered while selecting the sample.

The sample is indicated in the following table:

Table 2.1- Subjects in the Interview Sample by Gender

Sub-district	Male	Female	Total
Kagachari Sadar (Urban)	03	09	12
Ramgarh(Rural)	04	0	04
Manikchari(Rural)	03	01	04
Total	10	10	20

2.5.2. Size of the sub sample selected for observations

Sub sample for observations consisted of ten families were selected from the sample of parents who were selected for interviews. One family from each sub-district in the rural areas and eight families from the urban areas were included in the sub sample. Both males and females in the rural areas were working in the fields daily and the researcher found it was not possible for them to stay one day or even a half a day in their homes without disturbing their routine tasks. Therefore, researcher managed to draw only two families from the rural areas.

Sub sample selected for observations are depicted in the following table:

Table 2.2 - Subjects in the Observation Sample

Sub-district	Families	Percentage
Khagrachari(urban)	08	80
Ramgarh(rural)	01	10
Manikchari(rural)	01	10
Total	10	100

2.6. Measures

Two different instruments were used to collect data in this study-

1. A self developed questionnaire was used to take interview to know about the knowledge of parents from the two groups of parents (father and mother). The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part included the demographic details (serial no.1-8) and the second part consisted of twelve close ended questions about the parent's knowledge of play in child development (serial no. 9-20). The questions were formulated to identify parents' knowledge on child's language, physical, socio emotional and cognitive development. Parents' responses were rated on a three point scale i.e. Yes, Cannot say, No.

2. An observation checklist was prepared to observe parents' contributions to their children's play and the play practices of children. The observation schedule consists of three parts. The first part deals with the demographic details, the second part identifies children's play practices and the third part identifies parents' contributions towards children's play practices. Both the questionnaire and the observation checklists were validated by taking experts opinion and by field testing before the data collection. Both the instruments were field tested before data collection (Appendix – 3, 4, 5 & 6).

2.7. Procedures

After preparing questionnaire and observation checklist parents were selected from Khagrachari sadar, Ramgarh and Manikchari through direct communication. Bengali is the second language of Marma people. For the sake of ensuring better understanding and communication, the researcher received support from a 20 year old Marma person. Firstly, he was trained with both the instruments and study issue was discussed for his understanding. He helped in explaining issues in their own language when required to do so throughout the whole data collection process. Before the data collection, consent form was filled the parents. Consent form was prepared in Bengali language. As shown in Appendix-1 & 2.

2.8. Data Collection

Parents were interviewed using the parent's questionnaire to collect information in relation to the parent's knowledge about children's play. Observation checklist was used to gather information on the contributions of parents to their children's play practices. Informal discussions were also conducted with the parents as well as children while observing the children's play practices. Information from these discussions was compared with that of the information gathered through the observations.

2.9. Data Analysis

Data collected through interviews and observations were analysed using quantitative as well as qualitative methods. Data were coded and frequencies and percentages were used in analysing parents' responses to the interview questionnaire as well as observed behavior of children and parents.

CHAPTER 3

FINDINGS

Findings related to Marma parents knowledge on the role of play in child development and the contributions of Marma parents towards their children's play are presented in this chapter. Marma parents' knowledge on the role of play was identified through interviews conducted with a sample of parents drawn from Khagrachari sadar, Ramgarh and Manikchari sub-districts. Findings of these interviews are presented below

3.1. Demographic Details of the Sample

Table: 3.1-Parents Demographic Details by Gender, Education and Area

Area	Gender		Education qualification								Total
			HSC and Above		Grade VIII-SSC		Grade V-VII		No schooling		
	Male	Female	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Urban	03	09	01	01	0	05	02	02	0	01	12
Rural	07	01	0	0	01	0	04	0	02	01	08
Total	10	10	01	01	01	05	06	02	02	02	20

According to the table above there are equal number (10) of males and females in sample. Moreover, both urban and rural areas are represented by twelve and eight parents respectively. From the total sample only one father and one mother has education qualification of HSC. Both of them are from the urban sector. One father in the rural sample has studied up to grade eight while the other has studied up to grade seven. From the four parents drawn from the sub district of Manikchari, three had no schooling. The findings reveal that urban sector parents in the sample are relatively more educated than their rural counterparts.

Table: 3.2-Parents Demographic Details by Occupation

Area	Occupation										Total
	Service		Business		Agriculture		House maker		Others		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Urban	01	01	01	01	0	01	0	07	01	0	13
Rural	02	0	0	0	04	0	0	0	01	0	07
Total	03	01	01	01	04	01	0	07	02	0	20

According to this table urban mothers are mostly involved in house making as housewives than rural mothers in their occupation. Only one sample from rural mother is engaged in farming. Very few numbers of urban mothers are involved in service or business. In contrary, rural fathers are mostly involved in the occupation of agriculture farming and urban fathers are involved in various occupations.

3.2. Marma Parents Knowledge on the Role of Play in Child Development

An attempt was made to identify Marma Parents Knowledge on the role of play in children's Physical (health, gross and fine motor), socio emotional, cognitive and language development. The following tables (Table 3.3 – 3.14) present their knowledge on the role of play in child development.

Table: 3.3- Responses to Play Makes the Child Healthy

Area	Yes		No		Cannot say		Total
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	
Urban	02	08	01	01	0	0	12
Rural	06	01	0	0	01	0	08
Total	08	09	01	01	01	0	20

According to the table above 17 parents have the knowledge that play makes children healthy. Only two parents (one father and one mother) have responded negatively while one father could not give a definite answer. From the parents who live in urban areas 90% know that play contributes to the good health of children. Therefore, it could be found that a

majority of parents know that play makes their child healthy irrespective of gender, education and location they live.

Table 3.4-Responses to Play Develops Children's Large Muscles

Area	Yes		No		Cannot say		Total
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	
Urban	02	08	01	0	0	01	12
Rural	07	01	0	0	0	0	08
Total	09	09	01	0	0	01	20

A majority of (90%) fathers in the sample know that play contributes in the development of large muscles and gross motor abilities. On the other hand, a majority of mothers (90%) also know that play develops large muscles of children. However, one father was unaware of this contribution while one mother could not give a definite answer. It is noteworthy that these two respondents belonged to urban areas. All the parents in the rural areas know that play helps large muscle development. Accordingly, it can be said that most of the fathers and mothers have the knowledge that play helps their children's large muscles or gross motor development irrespective of gender, education level and location (rural or urban) they live.

Table: 3.5- Responses to Play Develops Children's Small Muscles

Area	Yes		No		Cannot say		Total
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	
Urban	02	08	01	0	0	01	12
Rural	07	0	0	0	0	01	08
Total	09	08	01	0	0	02	20

The results show a similar pattern of responses depicted in the previous table (3.3). As the table indicates 90% of fathers know that play helps children's small muscle development. However, unlike the data in the table 3.3 the percentage (80%) of mothers who know the influence of play on small muscle development is less. Two mothers were unable to give a definite answer. Two respondents (a father and mother) who could not give a definite answer lived in the urban area and their education level was Grade 5. Only mother who did not give a specific response lives in the rural area. Education wise she belongs to the 'No schooling' category. However, there are parents in the education category of 'no schooling' who know that play develops small muscles of children. In general the findings show that a majority of parents have the knowledge on the role of play in small muscle development.

Table: 3.6- Responses to Play Helps Children to Control Aggressiveness

Area	Yes		No		Cannot say		Total
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	
Urban	02	05	0	0	01	04	12
Rural	01	0	01	0	05	01	08
Total	03	05	01	0	06	05	20

As the table above shows there are three fathers and five mothers who know that play helps children to control aggressive feelings and deeds. However, 50% of the sample has responded by saying they either 'no' or 'cannot say'. Most of the respondents who know that play helps to control aggressiveness are living in the urban sector. The educational level of fathers who know the role of play in controlling aggressiveness varies from Grade 5 to HSC while the educational level of mothers varies from no schooling to HSC. It is interesting to note one mother who responded in the category of 'Cannot say' has the educational qualification of HSC. According to these data it could be found that 50% of the respondents were not aware that play can control aggressiveness regardless of their gender, education and location.

Table: 3.7- Responses to Pay Helps Children to Respect Leadership

Area	Yes		No		Cannot say		Total
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	
Urban	02	01	01	0	0	08	12
Rural	0	0	01	0	06	01	08
Total	02	01	02	0	06	09	20

The table above shows that two mothers and one father know that play helps children to respect leadership. They belong to the urban sector and their education level varies from HSC to no schooling. Among the rest of the parents nine mothers and six fathers responded by saying "cannot say". Only two mothers have responded by saying 'No' to this question. It is evident from the data above that from all the rural parents a majority cannot say whether play helps children to respect leadership. Therefore, it can be said that a majority of respondent/parents were not aware that play helps children to develop respect towards leadership irrespective of gender, and educational level.

Table: 3.8- Responses to Play Helps Children to Develop a Good Relationship with Parents

Area	Yes		No		Cannot say		Total
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	
Urban	02	08	01	01	0	0	12
Rural	06	01	0	0	01	0	07
Total	08	09	01	01	01	0	20

As data in the table above depicts a majority of the sample (eight fathers and nine mothers) have knowledge of the role of play in the development of a good relationship with parents. Their educational level varies from no schooling to HSC. However, there is one father and one mother who does not think that play contributes in the development of relationships with parents. From the total sample 15% of subjects either do not think play as a way of strengthening relationships or cannot say 'yes' or 'no' to the question. Their educational level varies from grade 5-8. Thus it can be said that parents are aware of the role of play in promoting relationships regardless of gender, educational level and location.

Table: 3.9- Responses to Play Helps Children to Learn Obey Authority

Area	Yes		No		Cannot say		Total
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	
Urban	01	03	01	0	01	06	12
Rural	0	0	03	01	04	0	08
Total	01	03	04	01	05	06	20

From the total sample 80% (16) have responded by saying either 'no' or 'cannot say'. Only 20% (one father and three mothers) have responded positively by saying 'yes' to this question. Their educational level varies from 'no schooling' to 'HSC' and they belong to the urban sector. The findings reveal that the parents in the rural sector were not aware that children learn to obey the rules of play. Their educational level varies from 'No schooling' to 'SSC'. According to data above it is evident that those who have HSC qualifications know that play helps to learn obedience.

Table: 3.10- Responses to Play Helps Children to Use Problem Solving

Area	Yes		No		Cannot say		Total
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	
Urban	01	05	01	01	01	03	12
Rural	07	01	0	0	0	0	08
Total	08	06	01	01	01	03	20

As the table above shows that 70% (fourteen) of the total sample know that play helps children to use problem solving. However, 10% (two) think that play will not help in using problem solving method while 20% (four) cannot say either 'yes' or 'no' to it. Parents of both urban and rural sectors have responded by saying 'yes' to this question and their educational level varies from 'HSC' to 'No schooling'. Therefore it can be said that a majority of the parents were aware of that play helps to develop problem solving ability of children regardless of their gender, education and location.

Table: 3.11- Responses to Whether Play Helps Children to Learn Numbers

Area	Yes		No		Cannot say		Total
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	
Urban	02	09	0	0	01	0	12
Rural	07	01	0	0	0	0	08
Total	09	10	0	0	01	0	20

Out of the total sample, all but one father know that play helps children to learn numbers, it is noteworthy that he is the only subject in sample that could not give a clear answer. He has studied up to grade 5. However, other parents who have the same education level have responded by saying 'yes' to the question. Accordingly, it could be said that a majority (95%) of the parents were aware that play helps children to learn numbers irrespective of their gender, education and location.

Table: 3.12- Responses to Play Helps Children to Learn Counting

Sub District	Yes		No		Cannot say		Total
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	
Urban	02	09	0	0	01	0	12
Rural	07	01	0	0	0	0	08
Total	09	10	0	0	01	0	20

The pattern of responses in the table above is similar to the responses pattern demonstrated in the previous table. Same majority (95%) has said 'yes' to the question of whether play helps children to learn counting. The fact that counting and number have a relationship and that may have influenced in getting same responses. Therefore, it is found that a majority of parents were aware that play helps children to learn counting regardless of their gender, education and location.

Table: 3.13- Responses to Play Helps Children to Learn Writing

Area	Yes		No		Cannot say		Total
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	
Urban	01	05	0	01	02	03	12
Rural	02	0	02	01	03	0	08
Total	03	05	02	02	05	03	20

According to the table above only eight subjects from the total sample know that play contributes in the development of writing skills. A majority seem to be unaware that the development of fine motor abilities contributes in learning to write although they know that play helps small muscle development (see Table 3.5). This is more evident among fathers than mothers. Only three fathers (30%) know that play helps in learning to write. But five (50%) mothers know that play contributes towards learning to write. These mothers are living in the urban areas. Education level of these mothers varies from HSC to 'no schooling'. The findings reveal that a majority do not know the contributions of play in the language development and the connection between small muscle development and writing.

Table: 3.14- Responses to Play Helps Children to Develop Speech

Area	Yes		No		Cannot say		Total
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	
Urban	02	09	0	0	01	0	12
Rural	02	01	0	0	05	0	08
Total	04	10	0	0	06	0	20

The table above reveals that 60% (six out of ten) of the father sample and 30% (six out of twenty) either do not know that play develops speech skills or cannot answer definitely to the question. The education level of the father who responded by saying 'cannot say' is living in the urban area and his education level was grade 5. The educational level of the fathers in the same response category varied from 'no schooling' to grade 8. In contrast, all the mothers

(100%) know that play helps children to develop speech skills. It is noteworthy that no one has responded by saying 'No' to the question. It shows the lack of awareness in a majority of fathers of the role played by games and other play activities in the development of language.

3.3. Marma Children's Play Practices

Identifying Marma children's play practices was the second objective of this study. This objective was achieved through observations conducted with a sub sample of parents drawn from the main sample.

Observations were conducted when children were at home and during their play time. In addition to observations, informal discussions were also carried out with parents to find out their children's play practices. Following table presents demographic details of the sub sample.

Table: 3.15- Demographic Details of the Sub Sample

Sub-District	Area	Number of parents		Total	Number of children		Total	Number of children with siblings
		Male	Female		Male	Female		
Khagrachari	Urban	03	05	08	06	02	08	06
Ramgarh	Rural	01	0	01	0	01	01	01
Maniakchari	Rural	01	0	01	0	01	01	01
Total		05	05	10	06	04	10	08

The researcher observed eight households in the District. Three fathers and five mothers were present in the houses of this district at the time of observations. From the children of 3 to 5 years six were boys and two were girls. In the two households in Ramgarh and Maniakchari Districts only fathers were present at the time of observations. Each household had a girl child between the ages of 3 to 5 years. From the eight children in Khagrachari district six had siblings and all the children in the rural areas also had siblings.

Table: 3.16- Children's Favourite Play Activities/Games

Area	Favourite play activity	Gender		Total	Percentage
		Male	Female		
Urban	Football	02	0	02	20
	Cricket	03	0	03	30
	Cooking	01	02	03	30
Rural	Rough & tumble play	0	01	01	10
	Cooking	0	01	01	10
Total		06	04	10	100

According to the table above Cricket (30%) and cooking (30%+10%) are the favorite play activities/games for a majority of children. Cricket seems to be popular among urban children while cooking is popular among both urban and rural children especially among girls. Football is also popular (20%) among urban male children. Rough and tumble play such as running, chasing and even rolling on the ground have been the favorite play of one female child living in the rural sector.

Table: 3.17- Children's Preference between Playing alone and Playing with Friends and Siblings

Area	Number of children who Prefer to play alone	Percentage	Needs friends or siblings to play	Percentage
Urban	02	20	06	60
Rural	0	0	02	20
Total	02	20	08	80

Data related to item numbers 10 and 11 of the Observation Schedule is presented in the table above. According to these data only two children (boys) in the Khagrachari sub district of urban sector preferred to play alone. Researcher observed one child playing alone with a ball and the parents of the other child do not encourage playing with friends. He was seen running and rolling on the ground alone. Discussion with parents revealed that they think these children are too small to play with others. They also think playing with others would create problems. The researcher found rather than child's preference parents' intervention had made them play alone. The observations also revealed that a majority of children had more than one friend or sibling to play with them. These friends and siblings were very close to the child. It was noteworthy that rural children played with friends.

Table: 3.18- Imitating Adults when Playing

Area	Imitated adult role	Gender		Total	Percentage
		Male	Female		
Urban	Father, mother, policemen, thief, car driver, daughter	05	02	07	70
Rural	Mother Cook	0	02	02	10
Total		05	04	09	90

During the observations, the researcher found 90% of children were imitating adults. In the sub district of Khagrachari both boys and girls imitated father and mother when playing cooking and bathing the doll. They also played the role of bus conductor. The researcher also found some children imitating policeman and thief when playing police-thief game. The researcher could not observe children imitating adults in one place in the urban area of the sub district of Khagrachari. However, discussions with parents of the male child revealed that they are unaware whether the child imitates adults or not.

Children living in rural areas imitated adults (mother and cook) when playing. These children were girls. The findings show that except for one male child (out of six) all the children imitated adults, and father and mother were the adult roles most of them imitated.

Table: 3.19- Uses Symbols to Represent Real things

Area	Male child	Examples
Urban		
1. Male	05	Paper for money, stick as a gun, bamboo stick as a knife, box as a car, paper bag to put money collected from commuters.
2. Female	02	Sand for rice
Rural		
1. Female	02	Sand for rice

The table above represents what the researcher observed as well as what the parents said. Children used sticks for guns and steering wheels, bamboo sticks for knives when playing

police-thief game, and paper bags to represent bags carried by bus conductors to keep money and paper for money. Girls used sand for rice and cooking. Their imagination sand represented rice. Both these children are living in urban area. All the children in rural areas (girls) also used sand for rice. Discussions with parents also revealed that except for one child all the children (90%) played with imaginative materials to represent the real things. The mother of the child has not seen that the child playing with materials to represent real things.

Table: 3.20- Most of the Time Children Played Indoor/ Outdoor

Area	Outdoor play	Percentage	Indoor play	Percentage
Urban	07	70	01	10
Rural	02	20	0	0
Total	09	90	01	10

During the observations the researcher found that a majority of children playing outside their homes and fields. Discussions with parents also revealed that both boys and girls like to play outdoor activities. However, one child who lived in the urban area always played inside. He did not have siblings or friends to play with. The researcher found that the child wanted to be near his parents and parents were also very protective towards the child.

Table: 3.21- Children Enjoy Rough and Tumble Play

Area	Number of children	Percentage
Urban	07	70
Rural	02	20
Total	09	90

Data gathered from the discussions with parents and researchers, observation revealed that a majority (70%) of children enjoy rough and tumble play. The researcher found two boys and one girl enjoying chasing, fighting, jumping, falling and rolling on the grounds when observing them. It was interesting to note a girl child in the rural sector enjoyed rough and tumble play as much as boys. However, discussions with parents revealed that parents do not like rough and tumble play.

Table: 3.22- Engaging in Building Models

Area	Number of children	Percentage
Urban	05	50
Rural	01	10
Total	06	60

During observations the researcher found two boys and one girl engaged in the playing with mud, water and sand. A boy in Khagrachari sub-district built a house with mud. Another boy in the same district built a mountain. The researcher also observed the girl building a hearth. Discussions with parents revealed the other (four) children too built various things such as caves, ponds etc. Parents of three children said they did not encourage children to play by building things from water, sand and mud because they thought children would become dirty and it is also unhygienic to play with such things.

3.4. Parents' Contributions towards Marma Children's Play

The researcher's observations in relation to parents' contributions towards children's play (third objective) are presented in this section. Informal discussions with parents also provided researcher to identify parents' contributions.

Following tables (3.23- 3.30) present the findings of the parents contributions towards children's play.

Table: 3.23- Types of Toys Children Played With

Area	Gender	Number of toys	Type of Toy
Urban	1. Male	06	Foot ball, Cricket bat, Tennis ball, toy car, toy gun, building blocks, toy cooking utensils, Badminton racket, puzzles
	2. Female	02	Toy cooking utensils, building blocks, dolls
Rural	1. Female	02	Doll, marbles, toy cooking utensils

All the houses in all three districts had some sort of play materials. It is evident from the data above that the children in the urban sector, played football, cricket and badminton. They also played with toy guns. It was interesting to note that one male child had toy cooking utensils to play with. Puzzles were available only in one household of a male child. In the same districts all the female children (two) had toy cooking utensils and dolls. One female child also had building blocks to play with. However, no female child had cricket bats or cars.

In rural areas all the children in the sample (two) played with toy cooking utensils and dolls. These children are females. One household had marbles and another household had a ball. It is also noteworthy that these children had neither cars nor cricket bats to play with. Findings of the observations show that a majority of toys indicate a distinct between what males and females play.

Table: 3.24- Toys Made by Parents

Area	Number of toys made by parents		Total	Percentage
	Father	Mother		
Urban	01	01	02	20
Rural	0	0	0	0
Total	01	01	02	20

The table above indicates only two parents in the urban sector have made toys for their children. The researcher found one father had made a cricket bat with wood for his son and another mother had made a toy cooker (hearth) with clay for her daughter. However, no toys made by parents were found in the two households in the rural sector. Data in the above table show that a majority (80%) of parents have not made any toys for children.

Table: 3.25- Selection of Toys based on Educational Value

Area	Number of parents	Total	Percentage
Urban	02	02	20
Rural	0	0	0
Total	02	02	20

It was difficult to observe directly whether the parents thought about the educational value of toys when selecting them. Two mothers have bought building blocks and puzzles and said

these toys helped children's learning. These mothers live in the urban area. Discussions with other parents revealed that a majority was not aware or did not consider the educational value when selecting toys.

Table: 3.26- Parents' Participation in Children's Play

Area	Number		Total	Percentage
	Father	Mother		
Urban	01	03	04	40
Rural	01	0	01	10
Total	02	03	05	50

The table above reveals that 50% of the total parent sample participates when children play. These parents were found to be directly involved in their children's play. Discussions with the parents who were not observed directly participating in children's play activities revealed that they contributed indirectly to their children's play activities by talking, responding by giving toys when needed and observing children playing while engaging in their routine household chores.

Table: 3.27- Freedom to Play with Other Children

Area	Number of children that has freedom to play	Total	Percentage
Urban	07	07	70
Rural	02	02	20
Total	09	09	90

As the table above shows a majority of parents (90%) allow children to play with children outside their families. During the observations the researcher also found that these parents allow their children to play with other children without any interference. The only child who did not have the freedom to play with others belonged to urban sector. This child is a boy. His mother's argument was that children start quarrelling when allowed to play with others.

Table: 3.28- Parents' Preference between Allowing Children to Play and Getting Help from Them

Area	Preferred Play	Percentage
Urban	05	50
Rural	02	20
Total	07	70

From the total sample 70% of parents prefer their children to play rather than getting help from them. All these parents stated that children enjoy playing and play makes them really happy. One father living in urban area said that child is not mature enough to help and since the child is happy when playing he prefers him to play. The parents who responded by saying they prefer their children to help them belonged to the urban sector. They had various reasons to justify their preference. Economic benefit, skill development, the child enjoys helping are the reasons they stated. They expressed that by helping parents child would learn to be more capable to shoulder responsibilities in the future.

Table: 3.29- Parents Encouragement towards Play

Area	Number of parents who encouraged children	Percentage
Urban	05	50
Rural	02	20
Total	07	70

The table above indicates that 70% of parents encourage children to play. The researcher observed that when children ask permission to play these parents grant it without any hesitation. In two cases the researcher observed that parents pushed children to join others to play. Discussions with the 30% who did not encourage children to play revealed that they think play will affect children's education as well as their routine work negatively.

Table: 3.30-Play Activities Taught by Parents

Area	Newly Created Play	%	Commonly played Activities	%	Grand Total	%
Urban	03	30	05	50	08	80
Rural	0	0	02	20	02	20
Total	03	30	07	70	10	100

The table above shows data collected through informal discussions with parents since the researcher did not observe any parent teaching play activities or games. These discussions revealed that all the parents have taught some kind of a play activity to their children. It was interesting to note that even the parents who did not encourage play claimed that they taught games to their children. The observations revealed that a majority of children played traditional games. The informal discussions revealed that a majority of parents teach traditional play to their children. Only one father and two mothers said that they taught new games name seed's play, leaf's play and hear & fly for their children. However, there was no evidence to prove this through observations. Their children were actually playing the traditional plays which are almost similar to our national culture.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The objectives of this study were to identify the Marma parent's knowledge on the role of play in children's language and other domain's development, to identify the play practices of Marma children and parents contributions towards play practices of their children. Findings of the study will be discussed under each objective in this Chapter.

4.1. Marma Parents Knowledge on the Role of Play in Children's Development

Interviews with parents revealed that a majority of parents are knowledgeable about the role of play in children's health, large muscle and small muscle development (Tables 3.3-3.5). Play enhances physical health by building active, healthy bodies. As clinical reports of American Academy of Pediatrics state play may be an and exceptional way to increase physical activity level (Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness and Council on School Health, 2006) and obesity can be prevented through physical activities initiated in the early childhood, (Campbell and Hesketh, 2007). Parents know through experience that play helps children's physical development.

In terms of socio-emotional development there were four questions to identify Marma parent's knowledge on the role of play in children's socio-emotional development. Most of the parents knew that play helped to develop good relations with parents. As Milteer and Ginsburg (2012) state, play is essential in developing social and emotional ties and it helps to build bonds with the family. This study found parents knowing this fact and those mothers were more aware of it than fathers (Table 3.8).

However, parents were not aware of the role of play in aspects such as control of aggressiveness, respect for leadership and learning to obey authority (3.6, 3.7 and 3.9 respectively). Children learn to respect leadership and rules through play. They learn to obey authority through play. Vygotskey (1933) states, "*if the child imagines herself to be the*

mother and the doll a child, so she must obey the rules of maternal behavior.” Although Marma children played such games parents seem to unaware of its influence on socio emotional development.

A majority of parents know play promotes cognitive tasks such as problem solving (Table 3.10). They also know that children learn number concepts (Table 3.11) and counting (3.12). Research findings indicate that informal social play promotes more effective cooperation and problem solving (Ramani, 2006). Children were engaged in informal play during the observations and parents were speaking through experience in relation to the cognitive tasks such as problem solving and counting.

In relation to children’s language development, a majority of parents do not know play helps children to learn writing or develop children’s pre writing skills (Tables 3.13). The findings also show that a majority of parents are not aware about the correlation between fine motor skills and writing. Research shows that parents are more likely to see play is beneficial to social development more than intellectual and language development. (DYG Inc.) Mothers were found to be more aware than fathers regarding the role of play in the development of language skills (Tables 3.13 and 3.14). Rural fathers were found to be less aware than urban fathers in the development of language skills.

4.2. Marma Children’s Play Practices

It was expected that in the Marma community there might be some different play activities which is not available in the other community of the country. But during observations the researcher found that children play traditional play activities which are almost similar to Bangladesh national culture. They were not found to play any games or activities specific to Marma culture. Although not specific to their own culture it was identified that most of these practices were handed down to them by parents (table 3.30).

Favorite play activities were cricket and badminton for a majority of boys and cooking for a majority of girls. Rough and tumble play was the favorite play activity of a girl while

cooking was the favorite play activity of a boy. However, in most cases boys played male stereo type games such as football and cricket. It was found that children especially boys (table 3.16 and 3.19) chose to play according to their gender which is also similar to the national condition. Similar trend could be seen in an earlier research conducted in USA (Cherney, 2003) where boys played with male stereo type toys for half of the time allocated while girls did not play predominantly with female stereotype toys.

Most of the children preferred to play with siblings or friends. This is a healthy sign since peer play is considered a central aspect of childhood play which begins in the childhood and continues throughout the life span (Simon & Daub, 1993). Play is also an avenue where children learn social norms (Tanta and others, 2005) and except for one instance (Table 3.17) Marma children had the opportunity to play with other children.

Marma children imitated adults while playing and they imitated mostly their parents. According to Social Learning Theory imitating adults influence in personality development and children learn aggressiveness by imitating aggressive models (Bandura 1963). In this study children imitated both aggressive roles such as policeman and thief (Table 3.18) as well as behaviours of parents. The researcher did not observe any encouragement or discouragement from the part of parents for these roles. Parents did not show their knowledge of its influence on personality development.

When children play they reshape and assimilate material from the external world, enabling them to form internal representations of reality (Sund, 2001). This was evident in Marma children too (Table 3.19). However, the researcher found urban children were engaged in fantasy play such as police-thief, driving cars, being a bus conductor (Table 3.18) while rural children did cooking. Urban children used symbolisation such as paper to symbolise money. Since rural children were girls and their limited exposure to outside world may have restricted their symbolisation to what they witness daily i.e. cooking and fantasy play.

Outdoor play is important in a child's development. Through freely chosen outdoor play activities, children learn skills such as social competence, problem solving, creative thinking,

and safety skills necessary for adult life (Clements, 2004). Most of the children in the sample were found to be playing outside. As the Marma people live in different clusters in a big and open space they have sufficient outdoor spaces for children to play both in urban and in rural settings. Therefore, outdoor play was natural to them rather a choice. However, in spite of the facilities children had for outdoor play the researcher found one child playing indoors. Informal discussion with the mother revealed that it was not because the child prefers to be near the mother and the mother too encourages it. In general, the study found Marma children had plenty of opportunities to run, jump, climb and enjoy the environment through outdoor play.

The study revealed a majority of Marma children were engaged in rough and tumble play which is universal and dates back to twelfth century (Jarvis 2007). The researcher observed that there was no distinct between boys and girls in relation to this play practice. In fact, rough and tumble play was the favorite play of a rural girl (Table 3.16). In contrast, a previous research conducted by Jarvis (2006) found only few girls engaged in rough and tumble play. Spacious outdoor environments always provide opportunities for children to engage in rough and tumble play. Since Marma children have spacious outdoor environments children have the opportunity to engage in rough and tumble play regardless of their gender.

Children often play building models. This is a play practice they learn from early stages. They use building blocks or natural materials found from the environment to entertain themselves. Building is not only an entertainment but also helps children to develop their motor abilities, creativity and imagination. Observations of Marma children found that a majority was engaged in building models (Table 3.22) using natural materials such as sand, wood and mud. However, some parents (three) seem to think that playing with sand and mud is unhealthy. These children did not even have building blocks to play with. It shows that value of building is not understood by these parents. On the other hand, there is no evidence to conclude that parents of children who built models had the knowledge that building blocks develop fine motor abilities as well as creativity and imagination.

4.3. Parents Contributions towards Marma Children's' Play

Parents' contributions towards children's play show whether parents have a proper understanding of the value of play. Therefore, the researcher observed Marma parents contributions to their children's play practices.

Toys contribute children to develop coordination, balance, and creativity. Therefore, toys can be considered as tools of play that promote child development. Toys can be bought or made at home. After analysing observations of the present study (Table 3.24) it was found that all the children had toys but very few of them were made by their parents. Most of the toys were bought from market or fair. It was also found that the parents bought gender stereotype toys for their children since all the female children had cooking utensils and dolls as toys.

It was difficult to observe directly if the parents thought about the educational value of toys when they bought toys for their children. Therefore, the researcher tried to identify this aspect through discussion with the parents. It was found that actually they did not think about the benefit of toys in terms of children's development and learning. Rather they considered the attractiveness of the toys. On the other hand, toys such as balls, bats and cooking utensils were given since children enjoy playing with them.

When parents play with children they can help them to solve problems, test out ideas, explore their imagination and develop vocabulary (Webster-Stratton, 1990). However, the present study found (Table 3.26) a very few parents were engaged in play. Rest of the parents were contributing indirectly to their children's play such as they were talking, responding, giving toys when needed and observing children play activity simultaneously with their household chores. The researcher observed that the main purpose of this positive behavior towards children is to keep them happy. They were not aware of positive outcome of participating in children's play.

A majority of Marma children had opportunities and freedom to play with other children or siblings (Table 3.27). During observations it was also found that they did not interfere with children's playing. This is a positive aspect since it promotes children's social development. The only mother who responded negatively said that children quarrel when they play with

others. It was evident that parents were aware about the benefits of playing with others. The children also preferred to play with friends or peers than alone.

The observations found that Marma Parents were aware about the joy of playing. Therefore, they preferred children to play rather than getting help from them in their work (Table 3.28). They granted permission without hesitation when children requested to play. The parents who preferred their children to help them revealed that they thought it encourages the child to stay close to them. Moreover, there are economic benefits of helping parents and shaping child's future. These parents said through helping parents the child will learn to be more capable to handle their future responsibilities. They were not aware that play contributes in many pro social behaviors such as accepting age appropriate responsibilities.

A survey conducted by Cohen (1999) found that although parents know the benefits of play, nearly three fourth (72%) of parents believe early academic learning is important and over half strongly believe that academic success is essential for life success. Cohen (1999) further states that parents make decisions that sacrifice play in the hopes of academic success for their children. On the contrary, the present study found only 30% of parents (table 3.29) believe that play will affect children's education negatively. They stated that allowing children to play will be harmful for children's academic curriculum and daily routine. During observations, the researcher found that most of the parents allowed children to play according to their interest.

It is natural for parents to teach what they played as children to their own children. A majority of Marma parents have done the same. Only a very few (Table 3.30) has taught their children new games. (One parent taught a new game with leaves and the other with some seeds). This finding can be considered as contradictory to Table 3.26 which shows only 50% of the sample participated in children's play. However, parents may have taught children games at some point as they have claimed although they have not participated in games frequently.

In general, the present study revealed that Marma parents know the role of play in some aspects of child development. These data as well as data related to Marma children's play practices (group play activities, traditional play and gender stereo type play practices) and Marma parents contributions to their play practices (buying gender stereo type toys, a majority not participating in play etc.) show that Marma parents' knowledge on the role of play in the development of children is generated from experience rather than scientific or learned.

Limitations

Though it was a very small study conducted for Master of Science in Early Childhood Development Degree every step of conducting research has been consciously followed. But it has also some limitations which are given below:

- Small number of sample (N20 & N10) was taken in the study.
- From three districts of CHT only one district was taken.
- The Marma people are living around different areas of CHT. So, it would have been more authentic if the three districts of CHT could be covered in this study. However, due to limited timeline of the study for fulfillment of MSc in Child development one district was taken.
- From the children in the early childhood only 3 to 5 year old children and their parents were selected for the sample to conduct observations and interviews respectively.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

In spite of the limitations mentioned in the previous chapter, the findings of the present study generate many important insights into Marma parents' knowledge on the role of play in children's development, Marma children's play practices, and how they contribute to these play practices.

The present study identified that Marma parents are knowledgeable about role of play in children's physical and cognitive development. Their attitude towards children's play was positive. However, they are not aware of the role of play in children's holistic development. This information reveals that the knowledge they have on the role of play is generated from experience. Parents witness children grow up healthily, and become capable in many physical skills through play. They see children solve problems when they play. Further, counting and numbers can be seen as a part of activities children play. However, the role of play in socio emotional and language development is not that evident unless a person is educated about it. The fact that Marma parent have not identified the relationship between fine motor skills and writing suggest they do not have an understanding of the integrated nature of development.

Marma children's play practices were universal and national rather than specific to Marma community. They played universal and national play practices such as cricket, police thief. Although there were exceptions such as one boy's favourite play activity was cooking and one girl's favorite play activity rough and tumble play, most of the others were engaged in gender stereotype play practices like many children all over the world.

The study also revealed that a majority of Marma children imitated limited adult roles (mother father, thief, policeman, and driver) and used imagination and symbols when playing. They need more exposure to more different roles in addition to what they played, to develop their personality. According to findings most of the Marma children were engaged

in outdoor play. This could be expected since they had fields and spacious compounds which contributed to outdoor play. On the other hand, that may be the reason that a majority of Marma children enjoyed rough and tumble play. It can be concluded that the opportunities Marma children have it is no surprise that rough and tumble play is popular especially among boys. Most of the Marma children played with friends and siblings. They had opportunities since they live as a close community and they had exposure to both Marma and Bengali children.

Although most of the Marma parents contributed towards their children's play by providing toys and giving them the freedom to play, it can be concluded that a majority were not aware of play based learning. Therefore, they did not consider the education value when selecting toys for their children. Moreover, they were not even aware of the importance of participating in children's play activities.

Finally, it can be concluded that findings of this study urges the need to emphasise play based learning at home especially "play as a source of language and socio-emotional development" in designing parenting programmes by GoB and NGO initiatives.

The study also recommends the following measures to be taken to improve the knowledge of Marma parents for the benefit of Marma children.

- Marma parents need to be educated on how to support children to acquire skills related to development and learning through play. They can be educated on how to select appropriate toys, use the outdoor space they have in plenty, and participate in children's play activities. They need guidance on how to interact with children with the objective of developing children's speech. It has been found that children who are living and playing with Bengali community children are able to speak both Marma and Bengali simultaneously and can cope with the school environment easily (literature).

- Marma parents need to understand the integrated, interdependent nature of the dimensions of child development. The study found they do not see any link between the development of fine motor skills and writing skills.
- The present study found gender stereotype play materials and play practices. Parental awareness raising programmes should consider this fact when designing programmes for parents. On the other hand, the study reveals rough and tumble play is popular among Marma children. Parents should know about advantages and disadvantages of rough and tumble play and the influence of play in personality development.
- Children in developed countries are exposed to play based developmental education. Many education systems such as Reggio Emilia uses play based learning approach. Play based learning enhances children's imagination, and creativity. Although parents encourage children to play they do need a better understanding of this concept to make useful contributions.
- Findings of this study are valuable in preschool teacher training programmes. Teachers can be made aware of the home environments of Marma children. Together teachers and parents can make use of play as a tool of learning many language and other skills.
- More emphasis should be given in the development policies for children's play. Where there are possibilities, Marma children should be encouraged to mix and play with children of Bangla speaking and as well as other communities. This would enhance their Bangla language speaking and understanding ability and would promote peaceful coexistence. This should be included in ECD policy, National Plan of Action for children of Bangladesh and in child law etc.
- Findings based on a small sample like this are not sufficient for generalisation. Therefore, further in depth studies are needed to understand parents' perspectives

on play. This is the first initiative based on which further studies can be conducted on a bigger frame.

- The study did not attempt to identify any association between Marma parent's education and their knowledge or contributions towards their children's play practices. Neither did it attempt to find these associations area-wise (urban and rural) or gender-wise. Further research can be conducted with a bigger sample to identify these associations in order to take appropriate measures in parental awareness rising programmes.

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Parent's Consent Form

A research initiative in your area has been taken as part of Master's course in **Early Childhood Development** from the **Institute of Educational Development (IED), BRAC University**. The title of the research is- "The knowledge of Marma parents in Chittagong Hill Tracts area on the role of play in early childhood development and their contributions towards children's play practices". The aim of this research is to explore the Marma parent's knowledge, practices and contributions for their 3 to 5 year old children's play.

For this study we will request you to give me some time as you will be asked some questions and you and your child will be observed for some period during your child play time.

We will maintain your privacy and confidentiality about your information. Your child and your family members' name will not be written on any of the materials, and only the researcher will have access to your information. The research will not benefit you personally. The information you provide will however, have significant contribution in improving children's play practices and may benefit you in the long run.

Your participation is totally voluntary, and you may change your mind and withdraw at any time before and during the study. We will not pay or give any facilities for this participation.

If you want to take part and/or allow your child to participate in this research, please sign the form below.

Name of the participant-----

Yours Sincerely,

Signature:-----

Signature:-----

Address :-----

Name :A T M shoeb choudhury
MSc in ECD, IED, Brac University.

সম্মতিপত্র

ব্র্যাক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের শিক্ষা উন্নয়ন ইনষ্টিটিউট হতে পরিচালিত শিশুর প্রারম্ভিক বিকাশ বিষয়ে মাস্টার্স কোর্সের অংশ হিসেবে আপনার এলাকায় একটি গবেষণা কাজের উদ্যোগ নেয়া হয়েছে। গবেষণার বিষয় হচ্ছে - শিশুর প্রারম্ভিক বিকাশে খেলার ভূমিকা সম্পর্কে পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম এলাকায় মারমা পিতা-মাতাদের জ্ঞান ও শিশুর খেলার ক্ষেত্রে তাদের অবদান।

এই গবেষণা কাজের জন্য আমরা আপনার কিছু সময়ে চেয়ে নিচ্ছি। যেখানে আপনাকে কিছু প্রশ্ন করা হবে এবং আপনাকে ও আপনার শিশুকে তার খেলার সময়ে পর্যবেক্ষন করা হবে।

আপনার প্রদত্ত তথ্যের বিষয়ে গোপনীয়তা রক্ষার জন্য কোথাও আপনার বা আপনার পরিবারের সদস্যদের নাম লেখা হবে না। শুধুমাত্র গবেষকের এই তথ্য ব্যবহারের অধিকার থাকবে। এই গবেষণা আপনার ব্যক্তিগত উপকারে না আসলেও আপনার দেয়া তথ্য শিশুদের খেলা অনুশীলনে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা রাখবে এবং পরিনামে আপনিও উপকৃত হবেন।

আপনার অংশ নেয়া সম্পূর্ণরূপে স্বেচ্ছাসেবামূলক বিধায় যেকোন সময় আপনার মত পরিবর্তন করতে পারবেন এবং তথ্য সংগ্রহ ও বিশ্লেষণ চলাকালীন নিজেকে গবেষণা থেকে সরিয়ে নিতে পারবেন। এই কাজে অংশ নেয়ার জন্য আপনাকে কোন প্রকার আর্থিক বা অন্যকোন সুবিধাদি প্রদান করা হবে না।

যদি আপনি এই গবেষণা কাজে অংশ নিতে চান এবং আপনার শিশুর অংশ নেয়ার ব্যাপারে অনুমতি দেন তবে অনুগ্রহ করে সম্মতি পত্রে স্বাক্ষর করুন।

অংশ গ্রহণকারীর নাম : -----

স্বাক্ষর : -----

স্বাক্ষর : -----

ঠিকানা : -----

নামঃ এ টি এম শোয়েব চৌধুরী

এমএসসি ইন ইসিডি, আইইডি, ব্র্যাক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

Parent Interview Questionnaire

The Knowledge of Marma Parents in Chittagong Hill Tracts Area on the Role of Play in Early Childhood Development and their contributions towards Children’s Play Practices.

Part I: Demographic Details

- 1. Child’s Name (or ID)
- 2. Age:
- 3. Date of birth.....
- 4. Father’s name.....
- 5. Mother’s name
- 6. Address:
 - Para..... Union.....
 - Sub-district..... District.....

7. Educational qualification:

Father/Mother

HSC and above	<input type="checkbox"/>
Between grade 8-SSC	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grade 5-8	<input type="checkbox"/>
No schooling	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Occupation:

Father

Service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farming	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daily labor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Mother

House maker	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farming	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daily labor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part II: Knowledge about role of play in child development

9. Do you think play will make your child to healthy
- Yes
Cannot say
No
10. Do you think play will help your child to develop his large muscles
- Yes
Cannot say
No
11. Do you think play will help your child to develop his small muscles
- Yes
Cannot say
No
12. Do you think play will help your child to control aggressive feelings
- Yes
Cannot say
No
13. Do you think play will help your child to respect leadership
- Yes
Cannot say
No
14. Do you think if you play with your child s/he will develop a good relationship with you
- Yes
Cannot say
No
15. Do you think play will help your child to learn obedience by obeying the rules of play
- Yes
Cannot say
No
16. Do you think play will help your child to learn to give solutions to problems
- Yes
Cannot say
No
17. Do you think play will help your child to learn numbers
- Yes
Cannot say
No

18. Do you think play will help your child to learn counting

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cannot say	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. Do you think play will help your child to learn writing

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cannot say	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

20. Do you think play will help your child to develop his/her speech

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cannot say	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Observation Checklist

Marma Parents Contributions towards Play and Play Practices of their Children

Part I: Demographic Details

1. Child's Name (or ID)
2. Age:
3. Date of birth.....
4. Father's name.....
5. Mother's name
6. Address:
 - Para.....Union.....
 - Sub-district.....District.....

Part II: Marma Children's Play Practices

Observed play practices	Yes	No	Comments
7. Child's favorite playing activity			
8. Child prefers to play alone			
9. Child need friends/siblings to play with			
10. Imitate adults when playing			
11. Child plays with materials to represent real things			
12. Most of the time child played indoor /outdoor			
13. Child enjoys rough and tumble play			
14. Child plays by building models from sand, wood, mud etc			

Part III: Marma Parents Contributions towards Play

Observed Contributions	Yes	No	Comments
15. Child has toys			
16. Parent have made toys for children			
17. Parents consider educational value when selecting toys			
18. Parents Participate when child/children plays/play			
19. Allows the child to play with other children			
20. Prefers children to play rather than getting help from them			
21. Parents encourage children to play by giving time and showing their happiness when seeing him playing			
22. Teaches Play activities to children			

পিতা-মাতার জন্য প্রশ্ন পত্র

শিশুর প্রারম্ভিক বিকাশে খেলার ভূমিকা সম্পর্কে পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম অঞ্চলের মারমা পিতা-মাতাদের জ্ঞান ও শিশুদের খেলার ক্ষেত্রে তাদের অবদানঃ

১ম পর্বঃ জনমিতির বিবরণী

১. শিশুর নাম বা আইডি নং :
২. বয়স :
৩. জন্ম তারিখ :
৪. পিতার নাম :
৫. মাতার নাম :
৬. ঠিকানা : পাড়া.....ইউনিয়ন.....
উপজেলা.....জেলা.....

৭. শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা :

পিতা/মাতা :এইচ.এস.সি এবং তদুর্ধ্ব

এইচ.এস.সি

অষ্টম শ্রেণী - এস.এস.সি

৫ম - ৮ম শ্রেণী

স্কুলে যান নাই

৮. পেশা :

পিতা :চাকুরী

ব্যবসা

কৃষি

দিন মজুর

অন্যান্য

মাতা :গৃহস্থলী কাজ

চাকুরী

কৃষি

দিন মজুর

অন্যান্য

৯. আপনি কি মনে করেন খেলা আপনার শিশুকে স্বাস্থ্যবান করবে?

হ্যাঁ

বলতে পারিনা

না

১০. আপনি কি মনে করেন খেলা আপনার শিশুর বড় পেশী বৃদ্ধিতে সাহায্য করবে?

হ্যাঁ

বলতে পারিনা

না

১১. আপনি কি মনে করেন খেলা আপনার শিশুর ছোট পেশী বৃদ্ধিতে সাহায্য করবে?

হ্যাঁ

বলতে পারিনা

না

১২. আপনি কি মনে করেন খেলা আপনার শিশুর আক্রমণাত্মক মনোভাব নিয়ন্ত্রণ করতে সাহায্য করবে?

হ্যাঁ

বলতে পারিনা

না

১৩. আপনি কি মনে করেন খেলা আপনার শিশুকে নেতৃত্ব সম্পর্কে সাহায্য করবে?

হ্যাঁ

বলতে পারিনা

না

১৪. আপনি কি মনে করেন যদি আপনি আপনার শিশুর সাথে খেলেন তাহলে তার সাথে আপনার সুসম্পর্ক গড়ে ওঠবে?

হ্যাঁ

বলতে পারিনা

না

১৫. আপনি কি মনে করেন খেলার নিয়ম মেনে চলার মাধ্যমে আপনার শিশু আনুগত্য শিখবে?

হ্যাঁ

বলতে পারিনা

না

১৬. আপনি কি মনে করেন খেলার মাধ্যমে আপনার শিশু সমস্যার সমাধান দিতে শিখবে?

হ্যাঁ

বলতে পারিনা

না

১৭. আপনি কি মনে করেন খেলা আপনার শিশুকে সংখ্যা শিখতে সাহায্য করবে?

হ্যাঁ

বলতে পারিনা

না

১৮. আপনি কি মনে করেন খেলা আপনার শিশুকে গুনতে শিখতে সাহায্য করবে?

হ্যাঁ

বলতে পারিনা

না

১৯. আপনি কি মনে করেন খেলা আপনার শিশুর লিখা শিখতে সাহায্য করবে?

হ্যাঁ

বলতে পারিনা

না

২০. আপনি কি মনে করেন খেলা আপনার শিশুকে ভাষাগত বিকাশে সাহায্য করবে?

হ্যাঁ

বলতে পারিনা

না

পর্যবেক্ষন চেকলিস্ট

শিশুদের খেলা অনুশীলনের ক্ষেত্রে মারমা পিতা-মাতাদের অবদানঃ

১ম পর্বঃ জনমিতির বিবরণী

১. শিশুর নাম বা আইডি নং :
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৬. ঠিকানা : পাড়া.....ইউনিয়ন.....
উপজেলাজেলা

২য় পর্বঃ মারমা শিশুদের খেলা অনুশীলন

খেলা অনুশীলন পর্যবেক্ষন	হ্যাঁ	না	মন্তব্য
৭. শিশুর পছন্দের খেলাধুলা ।			
৮. শিশু একা খেলাকে অগ্রাধিকার দেয় ।			
৯. শিশুর খেলার জন্য বন্ধু/সহোদর প্রয়োজন?			
১০. শিশু খেলার সময় বড়দের অনুকরণ করে ।			
১১. শিশু বাস্তব জিনিস বুঝানোর জন্য উপকরণ ব্যবহার করে খেলে ।			
১২. অধিকাংশ সময় শিশু ঘরের ভিতরে/বাইরে খেলেছে ।			
১৩. শিশু রুক্ষ এবং ডিগবাজি খেলা পছন্দ করে?			
১৪. শিশু বালি, কাঠ, কাদামাটি ইত্যাদির মাধ্যমে নমুনা সমূহ তৈরি করে খেলে ।			

৩য় পর্ব : খেলা অনুশীলনে মারমা পিতা-মাতার অবদান

পিতা-মাতার অবদান পর্যবেক্ষন	হ্যাঁ	না	মন্তব্য
১৫. শিশুর খেলনা আছে ।			
১৬. পিতা-মাতা শিশুর জন্য খেলনা বানিয়েছেন ।			
১৭. শিশুর খেলনা নির্বাচন করার সময় এটা শিশুর শেখার জন্য উপকারে আসবে কি-না তা বিবেচনা করেন ।			
১৮. শিশু/শিশুদের খেলার সময় পিতা-মাতা শিশুর সাথে অংশ নেন ।			
১৯. শিশুকে অন্য শিশুরদের সাথে খেলার সুযোগ দেন ।			
২০. শিশুরদের কাছে সাহায্য পাওয়ার চেয়ে শিশুকে খেলতে অগ্রাধিকার দেন ।			
২১. পিতা-মাতা শিশুকে তার পছন্দমত সময় খেলতে উৎসাহিত করেন এবং তাকে খেলতে দেখলে খুশী হন ।			
২২. শিশুকে খেলাধুলা শিখান ।			