



PARENTING STYLES OF PREGNANT GARMENT WORKERS IN BANGLADESH: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

Without revealing too many details, this qualitative research looks at the parenting issues among pregnant garment workers in Bangladesh. For qualitative data, 40 case studies alongside two focus group discussions were conducted, using structured interviews backed with questionnaires and audio recordings. The sample population included pregnant women aged 17 to 36 with a 60% rate of under secondary education. Of the sample, 52.4% were machine operators with 2 to 7 years of experience, and 75% of them were unskilled. Only 22.5% of them said they could care for their children adequately, and 70% pointed to low income and long working hours as obstacles to parenting. Hazardous living conditions was a frequent challenge, with 92.5% reporting to live in what most would consider dangerous environments. Roughly 77.5% of children's basic needs were not met, and only 22.5% demonstrated respectful behavior which indicates a lack of social and emotional interaction from the limited confined maternal contact. Furthermore, two thirds of children preferred spending time with their peers rather than their mothers. Just over one third of mothers were able to provide a diet adequate to stave off widespread malnutrition. The research underscores the immediate action required to policy changes aimed at the Bangladesh garment industry in regard to working conditions, childcare, and maternal health

Keywords: Parenting Style, Pregnant Garment Workers, & Bangladesh

1. INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is a crucial period for physical and emotional changes that greatly influence the well-being of both the mother and the fetus. Especially in low- and middle-income nations (LMICs) such as Bangladesh, recent studies emphasize that maternal nutrition during gestation remains a vital element in influencing birth weight and survival of newborns (Smith et al., 2022). Deficiencies in specific micronutrients, such as iron, folic acid, and vitamin D, have been linked to heightened risks of anemia, preterm birth, and developmental disorders (Kumar et al., 2023). Mental health during pregnancy has garnered more focus than physical health because of its lasting impact on the development of the fetus. Negative neurobehavioral effects, including emotional dysregulation and cognitive delays in early

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childhood, are associated with prenatal anxiety and depression (Lopez et al. 2021). This is particularly alarming in at-risk populations such as female garment workers, where work-related stress and insufficient social support heighten mental health threats (Rahman & Islam, 2023). In Bangladesh's ready-made garment (RMG) sector, workplace factors significantly influence mothers' emotions. Expectant workers often encounter risks related to their jobs, extended shifts lacking adequate maternity leave, and limited availability of prenatal healthcare (Chowdhury et al., 2022). These conditions complicate pregnancy and hinder a woman's ability to effectively parent (Ahmed et al., 2021). Recent policy assessments advocate for extensive maternity benefits and improved labor protections to tackle these concerns (Nasrin et al., 2023).

The importance of improving maternal health equality is further emphasized by the developmental origins of health and disease (DOHaD) paradigm, which continues to shape our understanding of how the prenatal environment influences long-term health risks for children (Patel et al., 2020). To promote healthier pregnancies and reduce intergenerational health disparities, comprehensive strategies that encompass mental health care, workplace reforms, and nutritional assistance are essential. A fundamental concept in developmental psychology, parenting style refers to the emotional climate and behavioral methods that parents use to nurture their children. It plays a significant role in shaping children's future adjustment and well-being by influencing their social, emotional, and cognitive development. Diana Baumrind's pioneering research in the 1960s, which identified three primary parenting styles - permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian - has significantly contributed to the foundation of modern parenting style research (Baumrind, 1967). Subsequent researchers expanded the widely accepted four-style framework by introducing a fourth style: neglectful or uninvolved parenting (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Baumrind's Parenting Styles

The two main characteristics of parental responsiveness (warmth and support) and demandingness (behavioral control and expectations) were the basis for Baumrind's initial categorization of parenting styles. High responsiveness and high demands are traits of authoritative parenting. In addition to having clear guidelines and expectations, authoritative parents are kind, open, and encouraging. Children brought up in this manner typically succeed academically, have good self-esteem, and are socially adept (Baumrind, 1991). In contrast, authoritarian parenting is characterized by excessive demands and minimal responsiveness. These parents, who frequently place a strong emphasis on compliance and discipline, impose rigid rules with little affection or conversation. Although they may be obedient, children of authoritarian parents frequently display weaker self-regulation, elevated anxiety, and decreased social competence (Baumrind, 1967).

Low demands and strong responsiveness are characteristics of permissive parenting. Although they are loving and indulgent, permissive parents don't set many restrictions or regulations. These kids may be quite self-assured, yet they often have trouble with authority and self-control (Baumrind, 1991).

According to Maccoby and Martin (1983), neglectful parenting also includes being unresponsive and undemanding. Low levels of involvement or supervision from neglectful parents are linked to poor developmental outcomes, such as emotional and behavioral issues.

Theoretical Frameworks Explaining Parenting Styles

In addition to Baumrind's typology, a number of theoretical frameworks provide additional insight into the ways in which parenting practices impact child development: According to attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969), a child's internal working model of relationships is based on the caliber of their early parent-child interactions. Secure attachment, which is linked to improved emotional control and social competence, is fostered by responsive and attentive parenting (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Secure attachments are more likely to result from authoritative parenting and other warm, consistent parenting approaches.

The importance of modeling and observational learning is emphasized by the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977). Children mimic their parents' attitudes, behaviors, and emotional reactions. Positive social development requires a behavioral model and reinforcement, which are provided by parenting approaches that blend warmth with firm boundaries.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory emphasizes how various environmental layers impact child development and parenting. Parental stress, availability, and practices can be influenced by a variety of wider factors, including job conditions, cultural norms, and socioeconomic status.

Cultural and Contextual Variations

Even though Baumrind developed his typology in Western settings, subsequent studies highlight how crucial cultural adaptation is. In many East Asian cultures, for instance, authoritarian parenting has been linked to better child outcomes because of cultural norms that value family unity and respect (Chao, 1994). In contrast, many Western societies consider the authoritative style to be the best. As a result, parenting practices and child outcomes have different cultural connotations. Socioeconomic issues including poverty, parental education, and work demands may have an impact on parenting methods in developing nations like Bangladesh, particularly for vulnerable groups like garment workers (Rahman & Akter, 2020). Financial instability and the strain of hard work might make parents less emotionally available and increase their propensity for authoritarianism or neglect. Extended family networks, however, frequently offer extra assistance that can lessen adverse effects.

Implications for Practice and Policy

Social services, education, and child welfare all benefit from an understanding of parenting styles. By promoting warmth and effective punishment, parenting interventions frequently seek to advance authoritative parenting (Sanders & Mazzucchelli, 2013). Parental stress can be decreased and parenting quality enhanced in work environments by implementing policies that encourage parental leave, flexible scheduling, and mental health resources (Nomaguchi & Johnson, 2016). Given the particular difficulties this vulnerable group encounters, it is imperative to comprehend parenting practices among pregnant Bangladeshi textile workers. In Bangladesh, the apparel industry employs a large number of young, low-income, and uneducated women (Haque, Haque, & Islam, 2020). Pregnancy-related physical and mental health issues may arise for these women since they frequently

work long hours in physically taxing jobs. Prenatal care and postpartum parenting practices can be adversely affected by maternal stress and occupational dangers, which can ultimately affect child development and family well-being (Rahman & Akter, 2020). The emotional, cognitive, and social outcomes of children are greatly influenced by the parenting style (Baumrind, 1991). However, pregnant garment industry workers might not have the time or money to parent well, which raises the possibility of authoritarian or negligent parenting (Rahman & Islam, 2023). These difficulties are further compounded by socioeconomic limitations and the absence of occupational maternity benefits (Nasrin, Islam, & Rahman, 2023). In order to guide focused interventions that assist parenting support, maternal mental health, and policy reforms, research on parenting styles among pregnant garment workers is crucial. In Bangladesh, improving the parenting skills of this population can help end poverty cycles and improve the health of children.

Research Question:

Is there any effect of Parenting Style on Pregnant Garments Workers?

Rationale of the Study

The garment industry is a major contributor to the growth of Bangladesh, a developing nation with a rapidly expanding economy. In order to support their families and the national economy, many women work in a variety of jobs in clothing factories. However, despite their vital role, many women who work in the garment industry face obstacles pertaining to their human rights and basic necessities, particularly when they are pregnant. Inadequate access to necessary maternity benefits, such as appropriate maternity leave, medical allowances, and routine check-ups with a doctor, exacerbates the health issues and challenges that pregnant women workers frequently face. Many pregnant workers do not receive enough help from their employers or the healthcare system, which affects their well-being and their capacity to provide adequate care for their children. In Bangladesh, women who work in the garment industry frequently lose their jobs during pregnancy or childbirth, especially if they quit before giving birth. Because they mainly depend on their meager monthly incomes to support themselves and their families, these women experience a serious financial crisis as a result of their job loss. Such women's parenting styles are greatly impacted by their lack of prenatal support and financial instability. Pregnancy-related stress and the challenges of early motherhood impair their capacity to give their children the proper attention, direction, and emotional support.

Understanding the parenting difficulties faced by expectant female garment workers is therefore crucial. This study is to investigate these issues in order to provide policymakers and planners with information that will aid in the development of interventions that can enhance the health of mothers and children in this susceptible population.

2. OBJECTIVE

2.1. OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the research is to get an understanding of the parenting style of female garments workers. The research also wishes to get an idea of problems and challenges to face

by female garments workers in relation to parenting style issues. Therefore, the research objectives of the study are as follow -

a) To explore the problems of parenting style of pregnant workers in garments industries of Bangladesh.

3. METHOD

The target population of this study is the female workers of the Garments Industries of Bangladesh those who are currently at least 5 months pregnant with having at least one child below the age of 5 years of age. Participants who will identify herself as pregnant for the last five months and also medically diagnosed and having a child less than five years was selected as criteria of selecting a participant.

3.1 Sample and Sampling Technique

A total of 40 female workers were selected as a sample based on the criteria of the sample in which there are 40 female participants were selected from 5 different garments industries from 5 different EPZ areas of Bangladesh, i.e., Dhaka, Ishwardi, Comilla, Mongla and Chittagong. Thus, data were collected in different cluster basis, and Cluster sampling technique was follow for data collection.

3.2 The instruments

“The demographic data” of the respondents were recorded in PIF.

The researcher Morshed, (2017) developed the Personal Information Form (PIF) by reviewing literature review of pregnant garment worker. The PIF was a structured form. This form was designed to collect personal information from the sample.

Pre pilot study

Before going to collect data for the study, a pre-pilot study was conducted (Morshed, 2017) on the pregnant garments workers. Six garments workers were purposively selected as participants for the pre-pilot study. At first, the researcher describes the purpose of the study and then asked them about their parenting style and work place environment. They talked about parenting style to their children during their working period. It's very tough to work during pregnancy period they said so. Almost 14 aspects were found to identify the problem as like as: Childs care during their absence, concentration to work, warmth and affection during absence, with whom during absence, school admission, regular school attendance, school accessories and attires, addressing about health food and environment, disciplined, admiring habit, wishes/demands, participating in plays, views, and opinion to others and fulfill children's needs, etc.

After collected the opinion, researcher met six experts (three Professors and three HR Manager of Garments Industries) requested to check the elements sharing the purpose of the study. They emphasized some items and gave the three stars for best, two for better and

finally one for rest. Finally, the researcher selects the elements on the basis of an expert's best opinion.

Pilot Study

After completing the pre-pilot study researcher (Morshed, 2017) collected the aspects of parenting style of pregnant garments workers and conducted 5 pilot study (A pilot, or feasibility study, is a small experiment designed to test logistics and gather information prior to a larger study, in order to improve the latter's quality and efficiency. It can reveal deficiencies in the design of a proposed experiment or procedure and these can then be addressed before animals, time and resources are expended on large scale studies.) of Pregnant Garment Workers women. The result were found which researcher wanted from the participants.

Validity and Reliability

In a qualitative study, it is easier to measure the reliability of measuring instrument by getting the same results with the same kind of method on the same population. Since the finding of this study is almost similar to the previous study, it can be fair to say that research is reliable and valid.

3.3. Procedure

To collect accurate and reliable data, informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Rapport was built by explaining the purpose and importance of the study in the context of Bangladeshi society. Interviews were conducted at times and locations preferred by participants to ensure comfort and privacy. The research team consisted of the principal investigator and three trained data collectors, all with a minimum of a graduate degree. They received training on research objectives, ethical considerations, and the use of the questionnaire. Participants were provided with a questionnaire along with a Personal Information Form (PIF), which collected demographic details such as age, marital status, income, and family size. Privacy and confidentiality were emphasized throughout the process. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire silently and without discussion. A pre-pilot test was conducted over two days, followed by a full data collection period lasting one month, from September 15 to October 15, 2017.

3.4. The design

A case study design was used for the present study. A case study is a qualitative form of research that is defined by a comprehensive study of a single case or a small number of cases situated in a real-world scenario. This research method is useful for understanding intricate problems in depth using numerous data sources, including interviews, observations, and documents. It is most effective for studying current events in certain contexts, for instance, within particular organizations, communities, or individuals.

4. RESULTS

The results will clearly describe both objectives and served the main purpose of the study.

Lack of Child Care Facilities:

The findings show that among female participants, there was a notable lack of support for child care. Merely 22.5% of parents said they could offer their kids proper daytime care, while over 70% said they couldn't because of a variety of constraints. Only a small percentage said they were unsure or chose not to answer.

“Parul Begum said, if we are able to keep our children in any room which is protected in the industry, it will be very helpful for us, and then we can work without any tension. We can look after our children very easily.”

Hazardous Living Conditions:

The data indicates a stark discrepancy between aspiration and reality, despite the fact that almost all respondents stated a wish to live in dangerous-free surroundings. Just 7.5% could afford housing in safer places, but a solid majority (92.5%) reported living in dangerous conditions. Low-income people continue to confront structural and economic obstacles, which are reflected in this disparity.

Quate of pregnant garments workers about their living places are given below -

“Our inability to adequately pay for living expenses due to our poor income has resulted in our children living in a dangerous area, which is currently a major issue. Our children suffer from a variety of illnesses as a result.”

Inability to Meet Children's Needs:

In Bangladesh, pregnant women who work in the garment industry have a difficult time providing for their unborn children's basic necessities, which has an impact on their mental and emotional health. According to the survey, 77.5% (n = 31) of participants said they were unable to give proper care and resources because of their poor income and lack of assistance, while just 22.5% (n = 9) were able to do so.

Children's Behavioral Development:

The study found that 77.5% (n = 31) of participants said their kids didn't understand the fundamentals of polite behavior. On the other hand, just 22.5% (n = 9) of parents said their kids had learned to show respect for others.

My mother-in-law watches the kids while I'm at work, so when I'm not around, they try to misbehave with other people. My mother-in-law works many jobs during the day, so when she leaves, my father-in-law attempts to take care of my kids, but he is unable to do so effectively. My kids won't be able to learn social skills in that situation. Putul Begum remarked, "This issue also worried me."

Access to Adequate Recreational Time:

The results show that while 32.5% (n = 13) of children did not have enough opportunity for physical play, 67.5% (n = 27) of children had enough time for sports and leisure activities.

Another Pregnant Garments Worker said about her daughter -

She enjoys playing all day long and shows no interest in returning to the house. She spent the entire day playing with her neighbors' kids. She cried earlier, but after a few days she became used to managing her time well.

Inability to Provide Nutritious Food for Children:

The findings show that only 32.5% (n = 13) of participants were able to provide healthy food for their children, while 67.5% (n = 27) reported being unable to do so.

A statement of Hasna Hena is given below –

"I can't afford to buy fish and milk on a daily basis, but I serve him frequently. They suffer from malnutrition as a result of this. Is being a helpless mother also my fate?"

School Attendance and Punctuality:

The majority of participants reported that their children were often reluctant to attend school on time, preferring instead to spend time with their peer groups.

Maternity Leave:

Out of 40 participants, only 13 said their job had a set admission time. All had physical health issues, and none were provided with medical facilities. None of the interviewees mentioned having access to transportation, day care centers, or paid maternity leave. Just 12 individuals said their coworkers had a positive attitude.

About this matter one of the worker's stated which are given below -

Arzoo Begum, a Mirpur garment worker, stated: "My first child, Sapna Akhtar, was born five years ago. I was granted four months of maternity leave because I am a working mother. Nevertheless, my leave will expire in a few days. I'm worried about my baby and wondering how I could leave them home alone at this age. However, it would be preferable for me if I could stay with my baby for an additional two months.

But in this study shown most of the respondents reply that they don't get any maternity leave facilities from their garments.

Analysis and Findings: Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The facilitator designed a discussion guide encompassing 14 key aspects of parenting styles, which were explored with participants during the focus group discussion. The FGD aimed to identify challenges faced by pregnant garment workers in Bangladesh regarding their parenting practices and related socio-environmental factors. Major issues highlighted included child care facilities, educational attainment among workers and their children, ability to meet children's needs, occupational safety and health (OSH) policies, workplace harassment, hazardous living conditions, children's behavior, inadequate time for sports and recreation, insufficient provision of healthy food, school attendance punctuality, and lack of

paid maternity leave, among others. The discussion successfully addressed the research objectives, with participants providing valuable insights into these challenges. The session concluded with closing remarks from the facilitator, followed by the provision of light refreshments to all attendees.

5. DISCUSSION

With an emphasis on child care during mother absence, educational engagement, dietary provisioning, behavioral development, and emotional support, this study examined a number of parenting issues faced by pregnant garment workers in Bangladesh. The results show how their children's development and well-being are impacted by the intricate demands of their jobs and their poor socioeconomic situation.

Child Care During Maternal Absence

The tight work schedules of pregnant garments workers often result in prolonged absences from their children. For children to develop normally, consistent, sensitive parenting is necessary, especially in the early years when attachment relationships are formed (Bowlby, 1988). These ties can be broken by maternal absence, particularly when peers or other family members who might not be able or want to show warmth and compassion are given the responsibility (Rahman & Khan, 2016). According to Ainsworth (1979), children's emotional stability and social skills may suffer long-term consequences if they don't experience maternal affection during these absences. Given that the mother's physical presence and emotional support help children learn how to control their emotions and build social skills that will be important in the future, this is especially troubling (Thompson, 2008).

Concentration on Work and Parenting Balance

Trying to balance their work and parenting responsibilities is a dual problem for pregnant garment workers. The conflict between parental presence and financial necessity may lead to less time spent with kids, which could harm their social and emotional growth. Positive developmental outcomes are significantly predicted by parental involvement and quality interaction time, according to studies (Cabrera et al., 2007). But because of the financial strain these women face, they frequently have to put earning money ahead of raising a family, which emphasizes the critical need for work-life balance-promoting workplace policies like flexible scheduling and longer maternity leave (ILO, 2017).

School Admission and Regular Attendance

Attending school is essential for a child's development since it gives them socializing chances and cognitive skills (UNICEF, 2019). Nonetheless, children of working mothers in low-income environments continue to have serious concerns about irregular school attendance. According to this study, a large number of kids were reluctant to go to school on a regular basis and would much rather hang out with their friends. Economic challenges, a lack of parental supervision, and inadequate school preparedness are frequently associated with irregular attendance and dropout rates (Chowdhury et al., 2017). Additionally, these families frequently have limited access to essential school supplies like uniforms and learning

materials, which further hinders children's academic engagement and success (Ahmed & Hossain, 2020). Children risk lower academic performance and less possibilities in the future if they don't attend school regularly and have the right resources.

School Accessories and Attires

Due to the pressure to have branded or appropriate school attire and accessories, children from low-income households may feel socially excluded and ashamed. Hamilton (2012) argues that these attempts can actually make stigmatization worse rather than better.

Possessing the required materials and dressing appropriately promotes a feeling of community and self-assurance, both of which are essential for fulfilling school experiences (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). As many survey participants noted, children who lack these necessities may become demotivated and less inclined to attend school.

Nutrition, Health Food, and Environment

Children's immune system, cognitive development, and physical growth are all greatly impacted by nutrition (WHO, 2018). According to the survey, most pregnant garment workers found it difficult to provide their kids a healthy diet, mostly because of financial limitations. In Bangladesh, malnutrition is still a major problem, especially for kids from working households with poor incomes (Ahmed et al., 2012). In addition to making people more vulnerable to disease, poor nutrition also affects cognitive function and academic achievement (Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007). Furthermore, by raising exposure to environmental pollutants and infectious diseases, bad living conditions make these problems worse (WHO, 2016). Improving the health of children requires addressing these environmental and dietary issues.

Discipline, Admiring Habits, and Behavioral Development

Children's development of discipline and socially desirable behaviors is greatly influenced by parental direction. Children pick up behaviors by watching and copying their parents, according to Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977). However, possibilities for regular modeling and reinforcement of positive behaviors are reduced when mothers are not there as much because of work obligations. According to this study, a large number of kids were ignorant about appropriate conduct, which could be related to a lack of parental monitoring and direction. When caregivers other than parents take on the primary responsibilities of raising children, disciplinary procedures are also impacted, which can occasionally result in inconsistent or insufficient behavior management (Bornstein, 2012).

Participation in Play and Recreational Activities

Play is essential for children's development of social skills, creativity, and physical health (Ginsburg, 2007). According to the survey, many children of textile workers were not given enough chances to participate in sports and leisure activities. Children's involvement in these activities is decreased in underprivileged communities due to time limitations on moms and a lack of safe play locations. In addition to having an impact on physical development, a lack of leisure time restricts social contact and emotional expression, both of which are

critical for overall development (Frost, 2010). To address this gap, community leisure initiatives and structured play opportunities are essential.

Children's Views, Opinions, and Emotional Expression

Autonomy, self-worth, and emotional health are all enhanced when kids are able to voice their opinions and take part in decision-making (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The results imply that many pregnant garment workers' children have few opportunities to express their thoughts and have their desires respected. Their motivation and psychological growth may suffer as a result of this lack of empowerment. Fostering responsible and self-assured adults requires encouraging children to participate in family and community decision-making (Hart, 1992).

Fulfilling Children's Needs

According to the report, most garment workers struggled to provide for their kids' material and emotional requirements, mostly because of a lack of social support and financial constraints. Children's general development and well-being are impacted by this disparity, making them more susceptible to behavioral issues, low academic performance, and malnutrition (UNICEF, 2015). The results highlight the necessity of comprehensive social protection programs that attend to the psychological and financial requirements of working women who are at risk as well as their kids.

6. LIMITATION

In order to provide a more comprehensive picture in regard to the established research objectives, the study's sample size was constrained by time and cost constraints, but it was nonetheless able to conduct surveys in all of Bangladesh's major garment (factory)-intensive locations. Lack of willingness to offer information or difficulty gathering information from pregnant women wearing clothing were further restrictions.

7. RECOMENDATION

In light of the results and the particular socioeconomic difficulties pregnant garment workers in Bangladesh encounter, a number of focused interventions are necessary to enhance the development of both the mother and the child. In order to resolve these problems, government organizations, factory owners, non-governmental organizations, and community stakeholders must work together. The proposals that follow are intended to offer workable and culturally appropriate solutions that are specific to the Bangladeshi setting.

- a) Provide Child Care Facilities at Reasonable Prices Close to Garment Factories.
- b) Unify Sector-Wide Maternity Leave Regulations.
- c) Put in place focused nutritional support initiatives.
- d) Encourage the rights of children of garment workers to an education.
- e) Establish secure indoor play areas and leisure areas.
- f) Strengthen Programs for Parenting Assistance in Clothing Communities.
- g) Increase the enforcement of anti-harassment laws and workplace safety.

Future Research Directions

Through longitudinal studies, future research should look at the long-term psychosocial impacts of maternal employment on the development of children. To enhance maternal and child outcomes, it should also assess community support initiatives and workplace regulations. Deeper understanding for focused treatments would also be obtained by examining father participation and contrasting urban and rural variations.

9. CONCLUSION

The study provides insight into the various obstacles pregnant Bangladeshi garment workers encounter in carrying out their parental responsibilities. Economic limitations, employment obligations, and a lack of social support have a negative impact on education, emotional development, nutrition, and child care. Improving maternity benefits, working flexibility, child care facilities, nutritional support, and educational access are all areas that need to be addressed through concerted governmental measures. In addition to enhancing maternal well-being, strengthening these supports will help their children develop more healthily.

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Declaration of authors contribution

The study was conceptualized and designed, report writing, oversaw the study, data analysis and interpreting the results and manuscript writing by Mahadi-UL-Morshed.

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