Exploring the quality of classroom teaching practices in preschools in Bangladesh

Mahmuda Shaila Banu

Bachelor of Education, Institute of Education & Research, University of Dhaka, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Master of Education (Department of Pre-Primary and Primary Education), Institute of Education & Research, University of Dhaka, Dhaka, Bangladesh

A Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia

June, 2012

Declaration

I, hereby declare that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution and affirms that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signed:

Date:

The research for this research received the approval of the Monash University Standing Committee for Ethical Research on Humans (Reference number: CF09/3641 - 2009001961).

Copyright.

Dedication

Dedicated

to

my beloved Grandmother

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to acknowledge my supervisor Dr Joseph Agbenyega who assisted me a lot to complete this journey and I recognize a debt of gratitude that I am sure I could never repay. Dr Agbenyega's incredible guidance, inspiration, critical and constructive feedback, and continuous support helped me to travel through the difficult world of academia.

I also express my gratitude to my former supervisor Dr Kerith Power who took initial responsibilities to start this project and supported me in many ways on an academic and personal level.

This study would not have been possible without the head teachers, teachers and program organizers of preschools in Bangladesh who generously and courageously shared their valuable opinions with me. I am really grateful to them for their knowledge, time and positive attitude. My thanks also go to A.Q.M. Shafiul Azam, Zahirul Islam and Dilruba Begum for allowing me to visit the preschools in Bangladesh. I acknowledge the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development of Victoria and teachers of preschools in Melbourne for their valuable time and comments.

I would like to thank Mayur Katariya for his kind advice, important information and cordial manner in which he supported me when times became tough. I am also grateful to Dr Raqib Chowdhury and Dr Anna Podorova for their academic support. My thanks go to Bronwyn Dethick and Debing Wang for their constant support and joyful words.

Special thanks to my friends and colleagues from the Monash Education Research Community. I am happy to get touch of such nice persons like Dr Corine Rivalland, Dr Hilary Monk, Dr Avis Ridgway, Dr Liang Li, Gloria Quinones, Sylvia Almeida, Helen Grimmett, Corrina Peterken, Andisheh Bastani, Lara Fridani, Feiyan Chen, Kiko Ikegami, Sunanta Klibthong and Inusah Salifu. Hilary, you have given me mental strengths in every critical moments which are very precious in my life and I will always keep your encouraging words in my heart. I am also grateful to Dr Marilyn Fleer for her nice words and a friendly smile.

I have dedicated this thesis to my grandmother who was with me until I submitted my thesis. Unfortunately, I could not give her the news that I have completed this journey successfully. She wanted to see me but for PhD I could not fulfil her last wish. I will always miss you, *Nanu*.

Thanks, mother, as you frequently supported and motivated me to do a PhD Degree. I am grateful to you and father for financial and mental assistance. It is true that if you did not push me then I would not be able to stand here now. Mithu, my husband has sacrificed a lot, left his prestigious job in Bangladesh, worked hard in Melbourne to bear the expenses. My heart Orpa, thank you so much for your patience and affirmative behaviours at my critical moments of PhD. I love you, *Ma*.

I am grateful to my respectable teachers of IER in University of Dhaka, especially to Professor Salma Akhter, Professor Siddiqur Rahman, Professor Abul Ehsan, Professor Nazmul Haq and Professor Quazi Afroz Jahan Ara for their academic support. I would like to thank my colleagues and friends Professor Tahmina Akhter, Hosne Ara Begum, S.M. Hafizur Rahman, Nure Alam Siddiqui, Tariq Ahsan, Jahirul Islam Mullick, Ahsan Habib, Moninoor Roshid, Saiful Malek, Mahbub Alam Sarkar,

Jui Gomes, Shukla Sikder, Masud Ahmed, Foez Ahmed, Miron Kumar Bhowmik, Saiful Islam, Nashid Monir, Nahid, Joya and Mostafa Kamal.

In this journey, some people looked after me and my family and made me stress free at any time I wanted. I am grateful to Dr Biswajit Banik, Dr Rimi, A.Q. M. Shafiul Azam and Mrs Nazu for their regular support and love.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Appendices

Abstract

This study focuses on the quality of preschool classroom practices in Bangladesh. The study uses a postcolonial theory in an effort to explore and explain what is currently occurring at this level of education in light of Bangladeshi government's push to provide quality preschool for all children. The aim was not to make generalisations based on the limited data collected in this research but to provide insights into current practice standards, and those that are articulated in the literature as ultimately representing quality preschool education. The study, which involved a government, a private and a non-governmental organisation (NGO) preschool, adopted qualitative data collection approaches of document analysis, classroom observation and semi-structured interviews with two head teachers, a Program Organiser and six teachers who were purposefully selected from these schools.

A postcolonial analysis of the data according to seven dimensions of quality indicators suggests that the research represents a substantial and significant contribution to knowledge, in three domains. First, it contributes to the knowledge and understanding of how the participants in this study conceptualised quality based on academic merits. This understanding of quality was found to influence the preschool teachers' pedagogy. In this regard young children are subjected to teacher directed teaching, coaching, memorising of facts through rote learning, and frequent testing to prepare them to pass primary school entrance examination and get a chance to enter their favourite primary schools.

Secondly, the study contributes to our knowledge of the curriculum documents in use in these preschools to inform teaching practices in Bangladesh. Such knowledge

helps to improve an understanding of the curriculum making processes which currently exclude teacher's and the community's inputs. This is important for the future by noting that quality preschool depends on policies and programs that adopt a consultative approach rather than top-down models.

Thirdly, the study contributes to knowledge about the consequences of poor structural resources, and colonial relationships that the teachers develop with children, and how the wellbeing of children is often not given serious attention and therefore, compromising the quality of preschool programs being delivered to young children in Bangladesh. Based on these findings the study proposed a transformative postcolonial model for developing quality preschool systems in Bangladesh.

Chapter One
Introduction

1.1 Background

> "Quality is at the heart of education system" (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2000, p. 17).

In recent times there have been significant increases in preschool education globally. These increases have led to new policies and programs with the aim of using preschool education to prepare children before they enter primary schools. As a result, research into preschool education has also increased dramatically, to provide rich and relevant information to guide educators in this endeavour. The purpose of this study was to examine the quality of preschool classroom practices in Bangladesh through a postcolonial lens in an effort to shed light on what is currently occurring at this level of education. It was an attempt to augment national efforts in making preschool education a national priority. The aim was not to make generalisations based on the limited data collected in this research, but to provide insights into current practice standards, and those that are articulated in the literature as ultimately representing quality preschool education.

Several studies and commissioned research reports have demonstrated that *quality* is one of the most complex and widely contested discourses in preschool education (Balaguer, Mestres & Penn, 1992; Dahlberg, Lundgren & Åsén, 1991; European Commission Childcare Network, 1996; Evans, 1996; Farquhar, 1993; Moss & Dahlberg, 2008; Moss & Pence, 1994; Munton, Mooney & Rowland, 1995; Pascal,

Bertram & Ramsden, 1994; Pence, 1992; Williams, 1994; Woodhead, 1996). This contention arises as a result of different ideologies, beliefs and cultural values that inform education in different countries. Various international forums have given utmost importance to quality preschool education because of the belief that it is through quality that children gain the necessary skills and dispositions to be valuable members of their community (Moss & Dahlberg, 2008; Moss & Pence, 1994; Munton, Mooney & Rowland, 1995; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2006; UNESCO, 2000).

In a UNESCO forum in Dakar Framework for Action 2000, it was mandated that "expanding and improving early childhood care and education, especially for most vulnerable and disadvantaged children" (UNESCO, 2000, p. 15) might give children a better start in life. At this same forum children's wellbeing became the central policy imperative with a vision that it is through quality early childhood programs that children's wellbeing can be assured. At present, the overall quality of preschool educational organisations has become electoral agenda in many countries (OECD, 2006). Globally, different commitments to expanding quality preschool education have increased government and non-government interests and investments across many countries. The goal of preschool education in Bangladesh where this study was conducted is also to provide quality preschool educational opportunities for the benefit of all children (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education [MoPME], 2008).

This study explored the quality of preschool education in Bangladesh, particularly from the widely espoused perspective of seven dimensions of quality which include: policy, structure, educational concept and practice, interaction, leadership and management, assessment of child learning outcome, and parent and community

involvement (Expert Advisory Panel on Quality Early Childhood Education and Care [EAPQECEC], 2009; OECD, 2006). Using the paradigm of postcolonial discursive framework (Agbenyega, 2009; Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1989, 1998; Dirlik, 1994; Jordão, 2008; Kincheloe, 2008; Mprah, 2008; Spivak, 1985; Viruru & Cannella, 2004), because of Bangladesh's postcolonial status, I investigated how agency, power, representation and voice are implicated in preschool quality discourse, and practices in three preschools.

1.2 The State of Children in Bangladesh

In order to advance a strong case for quality preschool education in Bangladesh, attempt is made to provide some brief situational analysis of the state of children in Bangladesh. It is estimated in a UNICEF country report that 33 million children in Bangladesh, which is about half of all Bangladeshi children are living in poverty. Out of this, one in four children is deprived of at least four basic needs for survival: food, education, health, information, shelter, water and sanitation (UNICEF, 2009a). In another study it is documented that 64 % of children in Bangladesh are deprived of sanitation, 52 % are deprived of information, 57 % are deprived of nutrition, 41 % are deprived of shelter, 16 % are deprived of health, and 8 % are deprived of education (Holmes, Farrington, Rahman & Slater, 2008). Carel de Rooy, a UNICEF representative speaking on UNICEF study on child poverty and disparities in Bangladesh press release in 2009 said conclusively that *child poverty in Bangladesh remains a grave concern* (UNICEF, 2009a, n.p). Bangladesh is the most densely populated country in the world with over 143 million people, half of whom are below poverty level and of which 65 million are children and live in 1, 47,570 square Kilometre area. Although the growth rate has declined, the population is still estimated to rise to 181 million people by 2015.

This situation suggests that there is a tremendous pressure on children's health, education and overall infrastructure in schools (CIA Fact Sheet, July 2002, as cited in Save the Children, Sweden, 2012). About 36% of the population is living below one US dollar per day therefore many families find it difficult to send their children to school (Save the Children, Sweden, 2012). It is also reported that Bangladesh has one of the highest rates of illiteracy in the world, and the adult literacy rate in year 2000 is 49 % male and 30 % female. In 1991 the Bangladeshi government declared primary school compulsory which saw dramatic increase in school enrolment in 1998-2002 at the rate of 97 % male and 98 % female. Despite great increases in enrolment the dropout rate is extremely high (Save the Children, Sweden, 2012).

The Government of Bangladesh has increased its spending on education from 1.5 % of the total GDP in 1990 to 2.5 % in 2000, but the education facilities are still inadequate (Save the Children, Sweden, 2012). The gender gap in primary education has narrowed considerably; however, quality and inclusiveness are the two major issues in the education sector that hamper full realisation of children's rights. Government efforts into education issues has helped reduced some of the school attendance issues but children from the poorest and neglected sections of the community are not fully benefiting from quality preschool education, further compounding the poverty situation in those communities. The Millennium Development Goals and targets are therefore timely and crucial for Bangladesh as its focus is on lifting children from ignorance and poverty. This positions preschool education strongly in the debate because without a focus on children's education it is absolutely impossible to achieve MDGs. This study on preschool quality, positions children at the centre of the key debates in national programs aimed at addressing poverty, safety of children, and social improvement interventions.

1.3 Preschool Education Policy and Practices Context in Bangladesh

Concerns about quality as well as access also require attention although there is no consensus on the definition of quality cross-nationally (Helburn, 1995; Moss & Pence, 1994). Beginning in the 1990s, the issue of quality received increased attention in the European and North American countries, but raised little attention in the developing countries of Asia and other regions (Kamerman, 2006). Bangladesh, as a developing country, is facing these sorts of challenges in its preschool education programs, which has motivated me to do this study. The next section discusses the context of Bangladesh to outline recent developments in policy and practices of preschool education in this country.

Bangladesh is characterized as a developing country in the world. It is estimated that "around 40% of people live in poverty, with 25% of those classified by government as extremely poor" (Holmes, Farrington, Rahman & Slater, 2008, p. 2). It is also emphasised that poverty is the main factor limiting quality preschool education in Bangladesh. One of the aspects of this economic positioning is that this country has many challenges in its education program. Attitudes inherited during colonisation have also contributed to mixed practices within the education system. Following is a brief overview of the history of Bangladesh's education system and the existing situation of preschool education.

1.3.1 Education system in Bangladesh.

A discussion on education system in Bangladesh needs some background information about the history of Bangladesh which emerged as an independent country in 1971. Bangladesh is a new name of an old land where many European countries, such as Portugal, Holland, France and Britain entered and ruled from 1498 to 1947 (Baxter, 1997). By defeating the last Nawab of Bengal, Sirajuddaula the British East India Company, won the position of a ruler to control one of the most prosperous regions of Asia (Schendel, 2009). According to Schendel (2009), this victory of the British signalled not only the emergence of foreign monarchs in Bengal but also "the beginning of European domination, new forms of capitalist exploitation, a racially ordered society and profound cultural change" (p. 56). Bangladesh was a part of India and known as East Bengal until 1947, when India was divided into two parts on the basis of the Two Nation Theory. This theory was based on the concept that Muslims and Hindus could not live together as a single nation as they had many differences in religion, language, culture, food and so on (Baxter, 1997). East Bengal became an independent area, named East Pakistan, as a province of Pakistan on 15 August, 1947; however, they became colonised again by the Muslim rulers of West Pakistan (Baxter, 1997). The lesser opportunities for East Pakistanis in administration, the military, the lower share in foreign trades and funds for economic development and the fight for the Bangla language led people of East Pakistan to become involved in the Liberation War in 1971. After nine months of war, on 16 December, 1971, Bangladesh became a sovereign country in the world (Schendel, 2009).

In 1835, the Chairman of the Education Committee of the East India Company, Thomas Rabington Mackle announced, **"**the objective is to create a class of people

Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in mind and in intellect" (Sharfuddin, 1996, p. 6). This means that "the British developed an education system in colonial India that basically created only clerks and this followed the declared education policy of the East India Company which was to create a class of loyal servants to work in offices of the British rulers" (Islam, 2011, p. 1). Though Bangladesh became an autonomous country in 1971, independence has had little or no positive effect on changing the education system inherited from colonialism (Islam, 2011). For example, most of the educators, teachers and parents in Bangladesh still believe that education should make children good citizens who will be able to get good clerical jobs and salaries in future (Islam, 2011).

The present education system in Bangladesh is generally divided into three major stages: primary, secondary and tertiary education (Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics [BANBEIS], 2010). The first level of education, primary, is comprised of five years of formal schooling. This stage normally begins at six years of age and lasts up to 11 years (BANBEIS, 2010). In Bangladesh, primary education is generally provided in government, registered and non-registered non-government primary schools, however, other two streams of education – Madrasah and English medium schools are also operating primary education (BANBEIS, 2010).

Madrasah education is an old education scheme in Bangladesh which was introduced in 1780 with the establishment of Calcutta Madrasah. Through this education one can learn Islamic religious education along with general education (BANBEIS, 2010). This education system has been continuous as it is in demand in Bangladesh, and the government provides grants to the teachers and employees of the non-government madrasahs just as they do to other non-government education institutions (BANBEIS,

2010). There are five levels in the Madrasah education system. The first level, *Ebtedayee,* is equivalent to the primary level of general education. This level of Madrasah education is comprised of five years of schooling (grades I - V). Children of six years of age begin in class one and finish in class five at the age of 11 years (BANBEIS, 2010). Madrasahs are beyond the scope of the present study, which focuses on mainstream preschool education.

English medium school is another important branch of the education system of Bangladesh. The English-medium schools in Bangladesh, cater most to the needs of the very to moderately rich sections of society and has the strongest connection with the Anglo-US/US-European alliance. A number of English-medium preschools and tutorials offered alternative English language education and prepared students for British O' and A' levels (Al-Quaderi & Mahmud, 2010, p. 125).

From the early 1990s, however, these tutorials proliferated into 'International schools.' The late 1990s saw the establishment of a number of full-fledged international schools run as commercial ventures and often headed by foreign nationals. For the reasons stated above, English medium schools are also beyond the scope of the present study. The next sub-section describes the movement of preschool education in Bangladesh which is the focus of this study.

1.3.2 Preschool Education in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has committed to providing preschool education to children of age three to five years to "ensure the wellbeing of children, their physical and mental development and effective participation in primary education" (Government of Bangladesh, 2008, p. 4). A number of international and national pledges on preschool

education, such as, the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Education for All Declaration (1990), Millennium Development Goals (2000), The Dakar Education for All Framework (2000), National Children's Policy (1994), National Education Policy (2000), and Policy Framework for Preschool Education provide directions to the government of Bangladesh in preparing its framework for preschool education (MoPME, 2008). The commitments, strategies and goals of these documents also motivated the government and non-government organisations of Bangladesh to establish and offer preschool education to more children including the disadvantaged groups (Shahjamal & Nath, 2008). As a result, the number of children aged 4-5 years increased significantly in preschools. For example, the rate was 9.3% in 1998 and 9.6% in 2000 and in 2005 had seen an increased 13.4% of children enrolled in preschools (Nath, 2006). At present, four ministries provide preschool education and other services in Bangladesh. These include the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Social Welfare (UNESCO, 2006).

In addition, the Ministry of Religious Affairs alone runs 18,000 mosque-based preschool centres all over the country (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2008). Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children-USA, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), PLAN Bangladesh and Bangladesh Shishu Academy have been active players in creating a National Early Childhood Development Network. This network has enrolled more than 110 potential partners and organisations (Government and NGOs) to promote collaborative initiatives in the area of preschool learning and education (UNESCO, 2006). Examples of other entities involved in preschool education are - City corporations, The Chittagong Hill Tract Development Board, Islamic Foundation

(public/government with support from donors) and Preschool Associations (private) (UNESCO, 2006).

The next sub-sections describe the present status of preschool education in Bangladesh regarding policy, programs, teachers and teaching practices.

1.3.3 Recent policies and programs in preschool education.

In 1990s preschool education became the main focus for educators and policy makers in Bangladesh (Lusk, Hashemi & Haq, 2004). The first National Plan of Action (1991-2000) in Bangladesh proposed a comprehensive preschool education programs (UNESCO, 2006), which led the government to launch informal preschool education programs in public primary schools which are still known as 'Baby Classes' (MoPME, 2008). During the 1990s, nearly one million children attended the preschool classes which were attached with the government primary schools (MoPME, 2008). In addition, at that period, same number of children participated in preschools, madrasahs, and other non-government institutions for receiving preschool education (MoPME, 2008). By a government notice in 1994, the Primary and Mass Education Division of Government of Bangladesh encouraged primary schools to organize baby classes (MoPME, 2008). However, they did not make any provision for a full time teacher or regular curriculum. As a result, these classes worked to make children familiar with schools but did not provide any formal opportunities for child development (MoPME, 2008).

In 2002, over one million under-age children were reported to have arrived at the baby classes of government primary schools with their older siblings, yet there were no educational activities for them (Bangladesh Education Sector Review Report No.1, 2002). As different international and national organisations understood the importance

of preschool education they took steps to design and implement preschool education programs with the support of local community and by 2006 they offered programs for children from 3 to 6 years in over 100,000 villages (Aboud, 2006). In 2009 these programs included 1,426,986 children in preschool education and 734,573 parents in parenting education (MoPME, 2009b). Recently, many private preschools and more than 150 NGOs are operating preschool education throughout the country (MoPME, 2008). For non-government organisations, communities provide the preschool space, recruit the teachers and create play materials, while the organisations make available technical supports through training programs, supervision of the teachers and the allocation of educational resources. If parents are able, they pay a small amount of money as monthly fees for their children (MoPME, 2008). The following table gives the information of recent preschool education activities of some organisations in Bangladesh (Lusk, Hashemi & Haq, 2004):

Table 1.1

Preschool programs provided by different organisations in Bangladesh

Name of organisation	Area of work	Types of program
Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)	Whole of Bangladesh	Preschool education and early childhood care and development
Bangladesh Protibondhi Foundation	In capital city	School for disabled children of 3-12 years old
CARE	In seven districts	Preschool education, Parent education, Home based child care
Dhaka Ahsania Mission	In three districts	Preschool education
Friends in Village Development (FIVDB)	In one district	Preschool education
Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA)/ Shishu Academy In partner-ship with UNICEF, Institute of Children and Mother Health (ICMH)	National level	Preschool education, advocacy
Phulki	Dhaka - in industrial area	Child day care - factory and community based
Plan Bangladesh	In six districts	Preschool education, child development and care, Parent education
Save the Children USA	In two districts	Home based preschools and preschool education reading for children, Parent education
UNICEF with MOWCA and ICMH	National level	International early childhood, advocacy

In respect of executing the preschool education program all over the country, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education in Bangladesh took initiatives to bring all preschool education activities under a framework (MoPME, 2008). For this purpose, the ministry set up a committee which established the Operational Framework for Preschool Education in Bangladesh in 2008. This is followed by a comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Framework in 2009 (MoPME, 2009). This policy framework targeted three missions for the improvement of preschool education system:

- Ensure equity and quality in services and to enhance knowledge, attitudes, practice and skills related to “care” of children from conception to eight years;
- Promote a responsible and accountable mechanism involving government/NGOs and all other stakeholders, for meeting the health, nutrition, education and development needs of all children;
- Strengthen the capacity of parents, caregivers, community and other service providers to enable them to create a developmentally appropriate and stable environment for children (MoPME, 2009, p. 13).

The Operational Framework for Preschool Education in Bangladesh has fixed some learning outcomes for children to achieve after completing this education.

- Children can say own name, name of parents, address of family and own date of birth,
- Can tell the names and function of different parts of the body,
- Follow social practices,
- Recite rhymes, sing national anthem and other songs, and tell stories,
- Categorize similar objects/articles and separate dissimilar objects/articles,
- Draw and name circle, triangle, rectangle,
- Recognize and tell the names and functions of natural objects, such as, flower, fruit, fish, bird, animal, sun, moon, tree, transport, weather, land and water,
- Show creativity by making objects, toys/ play materials by using blocks, clay, leaf, paper, sticks etc.,
- Count, recognize, read and write numbers from 0–20,
- Do simple addition and subtraction (with numbers below 10),

- Recognize, read and write Bangla letters,
- Read and write words composed of two Bangla letters,
- Describing events from a picture (MoPME, 2008, p. 11).

Although the Operational Framework for Preschool Education (2008) and Comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Framework (2009) have set the goals, missions, visions, lesson plans and learning outcomes of preschool education in Bangladesh, these documents have not mentioned any policy or regulations regarding teachers' educational and professional qualification. Also, the two policy documents seemed prescriptive and bookish in nature because the emphasis is on memorisation of facts rather than on conceptual learning. The next sub-section provides information on the recent situation of teachers and their teaching approaches in preschool in Bangladesh.

1.3.4 Existing conditions of teachers and pedagogical practices in preschools.

This study is closely related to the teachers of preschool in Bangladesh because their concepts, attitudes and proficiency have enormous effect on the quality of teaching in preschools. Although available literature on teachers' classroom teaching practices in Bangladesh is limited few that exist consider teachers as the most important factor in determining educational program quality (Catron & Allen, 2008). It is recognized that without quality teachers it is difficult to achieve the goal of Education for All (Haq, 2006). This is, particularly the case for learners who require additional support to make progress in school but might fall through the crack due to poor teaching. Government report in Bangladesh suggests that poor teaching in many preschools affect many children's potential to become innovative thinkers. For example, a large number of

teachers are teaching preschool education in different types of preschools without a minimum educational qualification and professional knowledge of child development and learning (MoPME, 2008). Other non-governmental report indicate that the majority of teachers at this level do not have any long term professional training on the teaching strategies for preschool education (UNESCO, 2006). According to a study, only about 13% to 14% of teachers at the preschool level have clear concepts regarding child development, and below 20% of all teachers in this sector have training on preschool education (UNESCO, 2006).

Coupled with this situation is the large number of children in one classroom with one teacher which serves as a significant barrier to quality preschool education in Bangladesh. In government preschools for example, the average teacher–child ratio stands at 1:52 whereas in non-government preschools it is generally 1:20/30 (Nath & Sylva, 2007). Thus, it is more difficult for teachers in government preschools than their counterparts in other schools to provide for individual children's needs. In view of this Bangladeshi preschool teachers, most of the time, resort to traditional teacher-centred methods which are quite rigid and sometimes authoritarian (Carron & Chau, 1996). This approach to teaching restricts itself to reading from textbooks without explanation of lessons, which is followed by questions to children to complete tasks. Usually, children do not have opportunity to ask questions back to the teacher (Haq, 2006). It is suggested that "low-quality teachers do not like their students to ask questions" (Haq, 2006, p. 33). Haq added that, "when teachers start teaching without having any training, they get used to the conventional teaching method; and afterwards it becomes difficult for them to adapt when they are trained and asked to provide quality education" (Haq, 2006, p. 33).

1.4 My Logical Positioning as a Researcher

In this section I provide information about my interest and rationale to conduct this study. Interestingly, my education and work experiences are connected with preschool education in Bangladesh which inspired me to do research on preschool education in my native country. My imprecise memory of my preschool education was restricted to memorization of rhymes and numbers with less stimulation for curiosity and exploration. I experienced this same method of teaching in primary and secondary education. In the 21st century, approaches to teaching and technology had changed in many parts of the world and yet little has changed in the ways preschool teachers approach teaching in Bangladeshi classrooms. Very young children are still being taught through traditional and boring lecture method in preschool classes in the same way I experienced it some 20 years ago.

After my Master's degree in education I visited some government and non-government preschool in Bangladesh. These visits reiterated my concern for children's vulnerability in terms of how they were being positioned and taught at their early age. Teaching was restricted to one-way lecture method, and children were reduced to mere spectators and listeners. This method of teaching also positioned children as blank slates, without rights and voice to actively participate in the teaching and learning processes. This situation often affected the children's interest, happiness and inspiration to stay in the classrooms or come to school the next day. These processes called for several questions: Why do the teachers in these preschools teach children in ways that children had no opportunity to play or do child initiated activities? How could these teaching approaches support constructivist learning that benefit all children? Why is it that an independent country's schooling system still bears the hallmark of colonisation?

Since then, I have been looking for suitable research topic that might help illuminate preschool education practices in Bangladesh, and to provide context specific approaches to help preschool educators enhance the quality of their work with children. This is when my chosen topic, the quality of preschool education in Bangladesh, was born.

The importance of quality preschool education and its impact on children has received increasing attention in recent years (Fleer, 2000; UNESCO, 2000, 2006) and different national and international plans are being put in place by many governments to implement quality preschool programs. The Government of Bangladesh is also trying to meet this goal and provide quality education to all children. It is therefore timely and important to investigate preschool teachers' understanding of quality and how they are delivering quality teaching practices in their classrooms in Bangladesh.

1.5 The Research Problem

Children living in today's global society have many socio-political and economic challenges. Some of these challenges include an increasingly competitive workforce environment, poverty, disease, malnutrition, dramatic cultural shifts and issues of instability. There is also another problem faced, particularly by children of Bangladesh, which is high increase in population implying, these children need specialised skills to be successful in living in their complex and challenging society. This requires that all children in Bangladesh are given the necessary critical thinking skills at their early age to be able to engage with their world.

In Bangladesh, preschool education is identified as one of the major interventions in the National Plan of Action III (UNESCO, 2006). To achieve the Education for All goals, government and non-government organisations run a number of

preschool schools. However, several factors of this education system have raised concern among the educators, policy makers and teachers regarding the quality of preschool in Bangladesh.

There seems to be a lack of integration between government and non-government organisations' policies and activities such as in curriculum, educational resources, teacher training, and teaching-learning practices, which affects the quality of preschool education. The different organisations "follow varying objectives, methodology and curricula with inadequate coordination and do not focus on children with special needs or in highly disadvantaged circumstances" (MoPME, 2008, p. 8). As there is no standard curriculum, some important components of child development are not included in many programs (MoPME, 2008). For example, most of the preschool classes in government schools pay no heed to the widely accepted concept of play as a leading activity in children's learning for cognitive, social, moral and physical development (see Fleer, 2006; 2011 for example, for play as a leading activity). By contrast teaching in Bangladeshi preschools are subject and examination based, and children are assessed on how best they can memorise facts from their textbooks. There is minimal regard for use of concrete educational materials, such as blocks, cards, clay, sand pits, picture books or play items to stimulate children's imagination. This situation demand insights into how these approaches constitute or not, the quality of classroom teaching practices in Bangladesh. The research literatures on quality preschool education serve to guide this investigation.

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) on preschool study examined that children who interacted with a larger number and variety of materials had higher cognitive development because practical

manipulation of materials fosters their cognitive skills (Fleer, 2006; 2011). Moreover, they got “more opportunity to discover aspects of the world around them” (Bracey, Montie, Xiang, & Schweinhart, 2007, p. 8). However, in Bangladesh “only 16% of teachers are regularly using proper teaching aids and materials” (UNESCO, 2006, p. 9). This means 84% teachers generally use textbooks to teach without consideration for child centred and play-based activities in the classrooms (UNESCO, 2006).

A study conducted in 2006 by PLAN International Bangladesh also reported that the general quality of preschool in Bangladesh was lower than the quality of preschool in many other countries (Moore, Akhter & Aboud, 2008). Furthermore, most of the preschool programs “do not focus on children with special needs or in highly disadvantaged circumstances and some important components of development are not taken into consideration in many programs” (MoPME, 2008, p. 8). Quality teaching in preschool accentuates children to reach their potential which means, teachers have a direct influence on the future of all children. The statement of the problem is, what kind of influence are preschool teachers making on young children in their preschools in Bangladesh? Also, another problem is the confusion surrounding the discourse of quality and what it means in the Bangladeshi context. This study makes the proposition that when children receive more effective instruction, they will tend to develop at their optimal life trajectory. Conversely, bad teaching has the potential to destroy children’s life courses.

These uncomfortable issues of preschool education therefore, call for a study to investigate the quality of education children are receiving and how teachers’ are currently approaching classroom teaching in preschools in Bangladesh.

1.6 Purpose of the Study

Research may have different purposes such as to explore, to describe or to explain. Sometimes the purpose may be one or multiple. Importantly, the purpose of research steers the way the research is conducted. The purpose of this study is to examine the quality of preschool classroom practices in Bangladesh, identify practice issues, and re-theorise quality preschool education practice and teaching in Bangladesh from a postcolonial perspective. A postcolonial theorisation is necessary because its epistemology does not conceptualize quality as a universal concept; rather it locates quality in contextual factors (Moss & Dahlberg, 2008). Consequently, this study explores preschool teachers' and head teachers' concept of quality and how their conceptualisations influence their practices. Another purpose is to analyse the practices that are rendered in preschools and to identify and theorize a practice model that may be best fitted to achieving quality classroom practices in preschools in Bangladesh. To achieve this purpose, postcolonial categories such as agency, representation, power and voice of teachers and children are critical to the investigation. The same are used to make sense of the data collected in the field. Beyond this immediate purpose, it is also hoped that the findings and recommendations of this study may contribute to preschool policy formation in terms of instructional methods and teacher training models.

1.7 Research Questions

The review of literature about quality in classroom teaching processes, and the statement of the problem led to four main research questions.

1. How do preschool teachers and head teachers in Bangladesh conceptualize quality in preschool education?

2. How do their conceptualizations influence their practice?

3. What forms of knowledge are prescribed by the curriculum documents?

4. How can postcolonial theory be used to critique quality in preschool education in Bangladesh?

At present, preschool education is receiving increasing attention to quality, and several research and policy initiatives are being implemented regarding this issue. According to Moss and Dahlberg (2008), "early childhood education and care has not escaped the increasing attention paid to quality; research and policy have become increasingly devoted to the subject" (p. 3). This growing awareness of quality in preschool education is related to the first research question of this study which aimed at understanding how preschool educators in Bangladesh understand the discourse of quality. It is anticipated that there is an association between teachers' philosophy of quality and teaching practices. The second question is critique oriented. It is about excavating systemic and internally imposed structures that may still constitute a hall-mark of colonisation from individual teachers to children or from policy makers to teachers and so on. The third question of this study is future-oriented in its direction towards improving quality in preschool classrooms in Bangladesh.

The fourth question is a theoretical explication as theory and practice are interconnected. These research questions require an empirical investigation of quality in teaching approaches in Bangladesh's preschool schools and suggest the need to design a

research methodology which is able to incorporate the picture of real classroom practices of preschool in Bangladesh.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The Consultative Group on Early its *4 Cornerstones to Secure a Strong Foundation for Young Children*, and promote Childhood Care and Development (2010) proclaims:

> The real crisis in education is in early primary – yet it receives almost no attention. By the time more money and resources are put into the later years of school, it is too late for the many who have already dropped out of school altogether!... Good quality early primary education improves the efficiency of schooling system and saves money by improving achievement and reducing repetition and drop-out. It dramatically improves the chances of meeting the targets of EFA and the Millennium Development Goals. The return on investment is magnified when quality early primary schooling is combined with early childhood services prior to children entering school (pp. 1-2).

This is reiterated by Vargas-Barón (2009) that "the period of gestation to age three is the foundation for all later growth and development. If children who are fragile, pre-term, low-birth weight, at-risk, developmentally delayed or disabled do not receive appropriate, quality ECD services, they will never reach their inborn potential" (p. 10). Therefore, the significance of quality early childhood care and development interventions is located in the argument that quality preschool programs can reduce the risk for vulnerable children (Garcia & Pence, 2010).

Further evidence is provided by James Heckman (2006), a Nobel Laureate in economics, who stated emphatically that preschool education "is a rare public policy

initiative that promotes fairness and social justice and at the same time promotes productivity in the economy and in society at large. Investing in disadvantaged young children is such a policy" (p. A14).

At the present time, "increasing numbers of scholars and practitioners in the early childhood field, across many countries, are working with post foundational thinking and their theories and concepts have begun to influence practice and research" (Moss & Dahlberg, 2008, p. 7). This research study is significant in many ways. The study of preschool quality in Bangladesh can be a learning paradigm to enhance the researcher's and education stake-holders' knowledge about barriers and facilitators of quality preschool programs. Although this is not a comprehensive study its imperatives provide small contribution that aligns with the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) that all children be provided with quality preschool education as a way of uplifting them from poverty and ignorance. This would ensure their meaningful future participation in society. The study's ultimate significance is to help children improve critical thinking and future academic learning competence, develop socialisation skills, and decolonise their personalities. This can be achieved when teachers understand and develop new perspectives on children's learning and quality in preschool education.

The study also has a theoretical significance to find how best to reconceptualise the quality framework that best suit teaching practices of preschool in Bangladesh. It also contributes to establishing the professional needs of preschool teachers, head teachers and administrators and also how best to train them for quality preschool education. Finally, this study has policy significance; its findings provide directions for refining the preschool education policy and early childhood curriculum in Bangladesh.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

Agency- The idea that individuals, including children are furnished with the ability to understand and participate in social actions, regardless of their circumstances or age. It is argued that agency must be understood and understood in terms of their relation to the objective structures of a culture (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002, p. ix). Children who have agency are able to act with intention, explore their environment and contribute meaningfully to their own lives (McNay, 2000). It also means the rights of children and families to participate in classroom and school activities.

Identity: Identity is a fundamental term in the life of a human being which applies to and locates their existence and importance in society.

Representation: The notion that one has no right to be heard or to influence decision but to be head through somebody else. For example, representation arises when teachers position themselves as the mouthpiece of children and dominate their ideas.

Voice: The ability to act freely with intent and influence one's environment. The state of recognizing teachers, families and children as valued members of a school's community.

Quality: A socially constructed discourse with political, economic and educational embedded intensions and values for identifying the efficacy of a schooling system.

Preschool: In this study preschool is used instead of early childhood education. It is the level of education in Bangladesh prior to entering primary school.

1.10 Organisation of this Study

This thesis is organized into six chapters. The first chapter provides background information, statement of the research problems, research questions and the significance of the research. This chapter also describes preschool policy and practice context in Bangladesh.

Chapter Two is divided into two parts. Part one is devoted to the theoretical and conceptual framework which discusses issues of post-colonialism which are allied with the quality of classroom teaching approaches.

Part two of Chapter Two reviews the literature relating to quality in preschool education. Here, the research and practitioner literature problematizes the concept of quality in preschool education, lays out seven dimensions of quality for preschool, explores quality frameworks of different countries.

Chapter Three details the methodology and design of this study derived from its background, the research problem and theoretical underpinnings. A rationale for the study design is provided. The chapter explains and justifies the design and methodological options within the selected theoretical framework of a qualitative research paradigm, its extended epistemology and the methodology of post-colonialism. It also presents data collection strategies which are commensurate with this theoretical framework and the research context.

The intention of Chapter Four is to present the data according to the data gathering process. This chapter presents the data chronologically from the documents, classroom observation and interview. The data have also been analysed in this chapter

according to seven dimensions of quality in the light of postcolonial issues which are agency, power, voice and representation.

Chapter Five discusses the findings in response to the research questions and each of these discussions is examined in relation to the literature.

The final Chapter Six is a synthesis of the knowledge generated in the research. It includes recommendations and limitations of the study. I also provide directions for future research in this chapter. These are followed by references and appendices.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Part One- Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Introduction

The literature review chapter is divided into two parts. Part one is the theoretical and conceptual framework. The second part is the review of literature on contemporary issues of quality preschool education.

This part of chapter two provides detailed information on the theoretical framework that informs this study. Theoretical frameworks are very crucial in every research because they act us the compass of the research process. That is they guide the research methodology, methods and design. They also influence approaches to data analysis and interpretation. The theoretical and conceptual framework of this study is grounded in a postcolonial theory. Postcolonial conditions of life in Bangladesh, including the continuing poverty of public institutions and individual people, are considered to be major factors in determining the level of quality of classroom practices in preschool education. Moreover, colonial thinking places limits on what teachers, parents and institutions imagine might be possible. In the following section, I discuss how postcolonial theory can be employed in the seven dimensions of quality to open up a space for different kinds of thinking and practices regarding quality in preschool education in Bangladesh.

This study recognizes the impact of colonisation on quality teaching in the preschool education system in Bangladesh. The postcolonial literatures explore the influence of colonial power in Bangladesh with implications for the economic, cultural,

social, educational, and the intellectual activities (Rivas, 2005). Significant ideas in postcolonial theory comprise identity (Berthelsen & Brownlee, 2005; Freeman, 1998; Mayall, 2000; Türkmen, 2003), agency (Coady & Page, 2005; Foote & Ellis, 2011; Mashford-Scott& Church, 2011; Page, 2008; Smith, 2007a; Tobin, 2005), power (Foucault, 1991; Jordão, 2008; Viruru & Cannella, 2004), voice and representation (Berthelsen & Brownlee, 2005; Schapiro, 1999; Tomanovic, 2003). These ideas form the basis of the review and are used to guide data collection and analyses.

The conceptual framework in Figure 2.1 of this study is guided by the research literature on quality in preschool education. To explore the concept of quality in preschool education, I have selected seven dimensions of quality that have been identified in the international literature (EAPQECEC, 2009; OECD, 2006). These dimensions of quality are not used in this study for comparative purposes because a postcolonial framework objects to such comparisons. Therefore, the dimensions as discussed in the previous chapter offer conceptual guidelines for interrogating quality practices in preschools in Bangladesh on its own merit. Specifically, postcolonial constructs such as, identity, agency, power, voice and representation are used to interrogate quality discursive practices. The following figure illustrates the conceptual framework of this study.

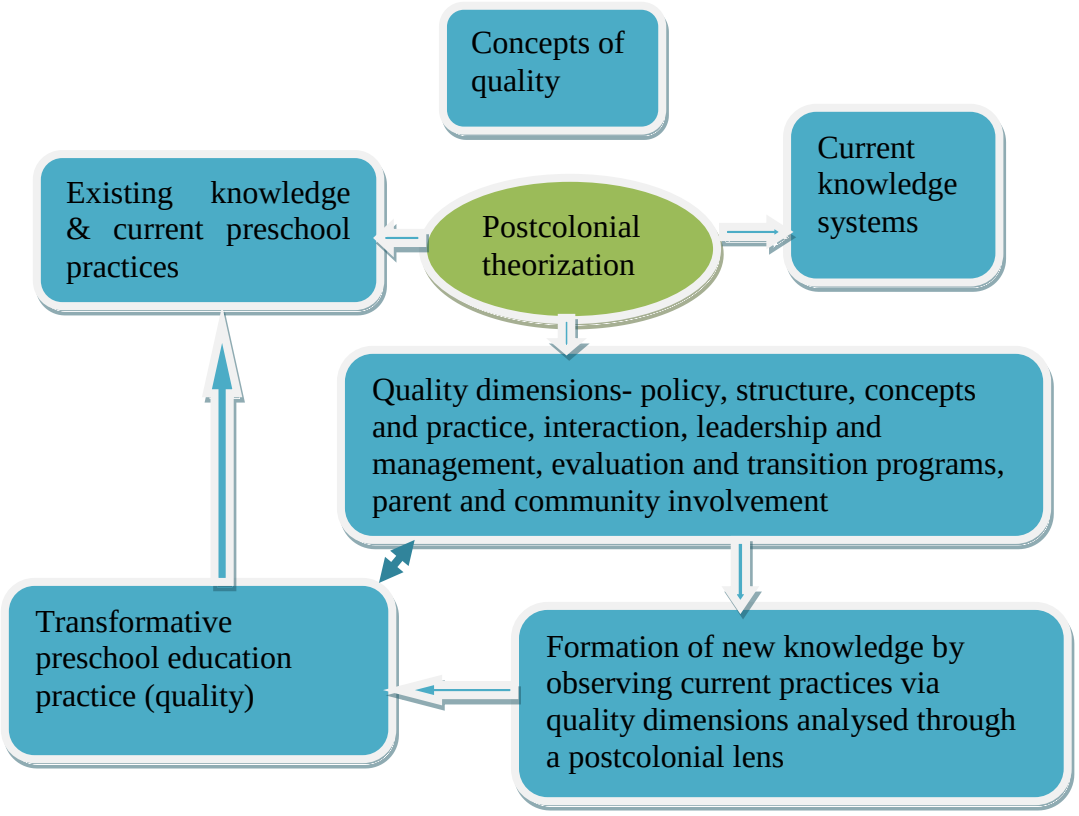

Figure 2.1 Transformative postcolonial framework.

The conceptual framework of this study is based on research literature which discusses different concepts, initiatives of some countries regarding quality and measurement criteria of quality in preschool education. At the heart of this framework is postcolonial theory. Theory is important in educational practice. Theory binds all the components that play important role in making preschools respond to the needs of all children. First is the concept of quality. This is a critical component of teachers' practice because teachers' understanding of quality influences what they do daily in their classrooms. From the perspective of the conceptual framework above, a postcolonial theory could influence teachers' concept of quality and invariably transform their practice from a position of colonized identities to liberative practitioners.

The framework also included existing knowledge and current practices. These can also be transformed through the understanding and application of postcolonial perspectives. Postcolonial theory as the framework portrays will help teachers develop new knowledge forms that are premised on multi-logical reasoning. Multi-logical reasoning as Kincheloe (2008) suggests is eclectic drawing on different theoretical standpoints to influence practices in education. Such knowledge is useful in working with the seven quality dimensions. Therefore, the main idea espoused by this conceptual framework is that quality preschool education requires ongoing transformation in current knowledge and practices. Transformation requires interrogating existing knowledge systems, their origin and application, tensions and contradictions in order to develop new knowledge and apply this new knowledge to make continuous improvements in existing preschool systems and teaching practices. Finally, all of these ideas show a direction towards generating a system of quality teaching in preschool education in Bangladesh, where children are free to act with intent, critical reasoning and build the capacity to continue learning in primary school. Before outlining a rationale for using seven dimensions of quality in relation to postcolonial issues in this study, the next sections state the concept and measurement criteria of quality in preschool education.

2.2 Concept of Quality in Preschool Education

The term quality is difficult to define yet as Moss and Dahlberg (2008) have put it, “it is a technology of distance, claiming to compare performance anywhere in the world, irrespective of context, and a technology of regulation, providing a powerful tool for management to govern at a distance through the setting and measurement of norms of performance” (p. 5). The derivative of this is that ‘Quality’, cannot be perceived in

neutral or self-evident terms but are inscribed in values and norms and ideologies. Therefore in straight terms, it is a socially constructed discourse subject to varied interpretations.

Seen from a critical lens, the root of the construct of quality can be traced to management theory, which has been borrowed and incorporated into early childhood care and other services as part of the revolution of new public management and the growth of the 'audit society' (Power, 1997). This is consistent with an Anglo-American discourse on early childhood, which has become increasingly influential, and can be considered another form of colonial hegemony. Santos (2004) rather referred to this as 'hegemonic globalization', that is "the successful globalization of a particular local and culturally-specific discourse to the point that it makes universal truth claims and 'localises' all rival discourses" (p. 149).

Universalising the concept of quality is about subjecting oneself to the globalization and dominance of this local Anglo-American discourse, neoliberal ideas of education, whose values and assumptions embodies a one way traffic of perceiving the world. This perspective often uses dominance and compelling narratives of how social and economic problems can be eliminated by,

> early childhood services, delivering predetermined outcomes through early intervention with powerful technologies; of workers as competent technicians; and of children as redemptive agents, able if given the right start to rescue society from its problems (Moss & Dahlberg, 2008, p. 5).

This universal rationalist view of quality discourse is positivistic, technical, colonialist, instrumental and calculating, inducing educators to follow a specific trend in order to get a high return on public investment (Heckman, 2006). This technocratic way

of perceiving quality, is also rooted in certainty and mastery, linear progress and predetermined outcomes, objectivity and universality, stability and closure which is foundational on biological deterministic view of child development, management and economics (Moss & Dahlberg, 2008). It is important to note that the priority a country attributes to quality and the dimensions on which she focuses are based essentially on particular discourses and narratives of childhood and political ideologies. Such pre-occupations emanate from theoretical and philosophical paradigms, for example, modernity and colonisation, which is the paradigm of universality and mandatory regulation of how to live and behave (Hardt & Negri, 2001; Santos, 1995; Toulmin, 1990).

Moss and Dahlberg (2008) argue that "the concept of quality is inscribed with the values and assumptions of that paradigm…the value given to certainty and mastery, linearity and predetermined outcomes, objectivity and universality (p. 5). The danger is, if we ascribe to universality and objectivity and the ability of science to reveal all the true nature of children, we may not able to understand quality in context and hence, abuse the rights of children from diverse cultures who may fail on the universal normative assessment approaches that we use to measure quality standards.

According to some postcolonial theorists quality is a "subjective, value-based, relative and dynamic concept" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2008, p. 4). Therefore, we need to consider the context of social, economic and cultural diversities when we want to understand its meaning and attempt to set the indicators to measures quality in preschool education (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999). Others noted that quality in preschool education is a difficult concept (Penn, 2011) and different countries explain it from different perspectives. For example, in the national Early Years Learning

Framework, for Australia the quality focus is on the characteristics of children's belonging, being and becoming (DEEWR, 2009). Some others conceptualised quality of preschool education as giving attention to "the right to children's education by ensuring their development and preparation for entry into primary education" (MoPME, 2008, p. 10). Preschool education systems that are foundational on the right of children constitute education for freedom and potential development because the practices in such systems ensure that each child's individual and unique needs are taken into consideration when planning for teaching and learning. This also depends on how educators and policy makers conceptualise quality in preschool education.

There is some evidence to suggest that many preschool educators, managers, policy makers, parents and researchers all have conflicting understanding of the term quality (Williams, 1994). Consequently, Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2007), have raised some questions about quality. These questions are related with the meaning, measurement criteria and the process of measuring of quality in preschool education. For example, how should quality be defined when there are different education systems and in different cultures? How might we go about measuring quality without objectifying others? What kind of theoretical tools are valuable for understanding quality discourse comprehensively? It is proposed that educators who work with young children need to understand how children develop and the various factors that influence their development to be able to determine what constitute preschool quality (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007). These issues are applicable for this study as it is aimed to explore teachers' concept of quality of preschool education in Bangladesh, specifically regarding classroom teaching practices.

Despite the difficulty to give a precise or universal concept and definition of quality, quality matters and its definition need to take into consideration the cultural context in which the schools operate. The most important argument is that all children have the right to get quality preschool education which provides safe, secured and healthy environment for them, and also helps them improve their knowledge, skills and constructive attitude. According to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), quality education is associated with healthy and well-developed children who are able to learn and get support for learning from family and community (UNICEF, 2000). It is also related to the safe and joyful environment, child appropriate contents, enough educational resources and facilities for children, qualified and trained teachers who use child-centred teaching approaches, and knowledge, skills and attitudes based learning outcomes of children (UNICEF, 2000).

To achieve quality in preschool education is a challenge for developing and undeveloped countries (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007). The backward socio-economic conditions and the lack of awareness of policy makers, educators and parents of what constitute quality preschool education in many countries create limitations and barriers to gaining quality preschool education. However, the quality in preschool education has become a global issue now. The educators and researchers of preschool education are in search of answers about the meaning and measurement of quality of this education system (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007). Therefore, they are trying to introduce particular terms to focus on including specific meaning and aspects of quality in preschool education (Farquhar, 1990).

2.3 Measurement Criteria of Quality in Preschool Education

Several countries of the world have become concerned with how to increase the quality of preschool education, and have funded research to investigate how quality can be assured and measured at this level of the education system. To compound the issue, the literature review of this study identifies significant diversity in the understanding of the concept of quality. The general idea and dimensions for measuring quality in preschool education is not applicable to all countries in the world due to different school structures, curriculum, teachers' qualification, and children's age at this level of education.

Quality discourses in preschools and children's development have included a wide range of measures which can be categorized into two broad types, structural and process factors (Lamb, 1998; Phillips & Howes, 1987; Vandell & Wolfe, 2000;). The physical infrastructure of schools, group size, teacher-child ratios, teachers' educational qualifications and experience are the important components of structural dimension (Brown and Sumsion, 2007; Phillipsen, Burchinal, Howes & Cryer, 1997). For example, the outdoor environments and play materials are important factors for measuring quality of preschool service in Australia. In this regard, components of the preschool environment must include set plants, trees, edible garden plants, sand, rocks, mud, water and other elements of natural atmosphere in the outdoor areas which give children the opportunity to explore and interact with the environment (DEEWR, 2009). On the other hand, in Bangladesh, most of the preschools are situated in crowded and narrow residential areas where children have a minimum space to play. Therefore it is not possible to explore the quality in preschool education of these two countries by using the same measurement criteria.

Another category is related to classroom processes where children are directly involved with the teachers, teaching methods and practices. Researchers, educators and policymakers of preschool education have argued for structural measurements of quality because these factors have influential relation with the quality of teaching process (Amett, 1989; Phillipsen, Burchinal, Howes & Cryer, 1997; Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1990). To assess the quality of preschool schools Harms, Clifford and Cryer have developed and revised the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale in 1998 which consisted of seven aspects (Sylva et al., 2006). These are – "Space and Furnishing (e.g., indoor space, room arrangement for play, child-related display), Personal Care Routines (e.g., greeting/departing, meals/snacks), Language-Reasoning (e.g., books/pictures, encouraging children to communicate), Activities (e.g., dramatic play, nature/science), Interaction (e.g., supervision of children, staff-child interactions, interactions among children), Program Structure (e.g., free play, group time), and Parents and Staff (e.g., provisions for parents, staff interaction)" (Sylva et. al, 2006, p. 78).

It is an established view among child education researchers that higher quality of preschool education relates to better developmental outcomes, and lower quality to lower developmental outcomes (Belsky, 2001; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2001; Vandell & Wolfe, 2000). This is, particularly true for children from disadvantaged backgrounds "who would otherwise experience impoverished and relatively non-stimulating home environments" (Lamb, 1998, p. 14). Although this may not be universally true for all underprivileged children poverty does disadvantage individual children in education because they and their families are preoccupied with physical survival and therefore cannot engage fully with the opportunities to develop social practices (including attendance) that are congruent with success at school (Lamb, 1998). Compounding this

problem is also the fact that formerly colonized countries may not be able to afford the resources needed to provide some of the determinants of quality such as highly qualified staff and modernized preschool structures.

2.4 Postcolonial Issues and Quality in Preschool Education

The study applies a postcolonial discursive framework to theorize and discuss quality issues related to classroom teaching practices of preschool in Bangladesh. The justification for a postcolonial theory is related to the fact that Bangladesh is a postcolonial country. It was under British colonisation for nearly 200 years and that colonisation still has influence on the preschool education system of this country.

2.4.1 A brief historical overview of postcolonial theory.

The past of colonisation has a record of slavery, unimaginable and unnamed deaths, oppression, and forced migration (Young, 2001) which occupied 90% of the world at the beginning of World War I (Viruru & Cannella, 2004). At the start of the 18th century, the East India Company came to India, initially to establish trade, but by the end of the century, the Company became the militarily governing to rule the states of this country included Bangladesh (Marshall, 1987). In the colonial period, the British education system gave more emphasis on increasing the number of literate persons in an elite class who could provide clerical and administrative support to the colonial organisation than on developing practical and technically skilled persons among the population as a whole (Heitzman & Worden, 1988). This colonial attitude is still present in the existing preschool education system that does not establish a firm base among the whole population of a preschool system that can decolonize the thinking of the citizens and effect transformation in preschool practices.

According to Gupta (2006), a postcolonial discursive approach seeks to place contemporary educational issues in the context of underlying colonial experiences like Bangladesh. Traditionally, postcolonial theory involves discussions about slavery, suppression, representation, difference, race, gender, place, and responses to the influential discourse of imperial history of Europe on previously colonized nations, such as, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, South and Central America (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2006). The main ideas within a postcolonial theorization are a critique of unequal power relations, suppression of voice, uneven distribution of capital, cultural values, and dominant beliefs. The way the postcolonial theory is applied in this study is to investigate how domination and alienation are constituted within preschool educational practices. The purpose is to make invisible individuals visible (Agbenyega & Deku, 2011). Many countries which are free from the rule of colonisation still bear the hallmark of colonisation in terms of ideas, educational practices and relationships. Thus postcolonial theory allows us to critically inquire into the relationships between western and non-western societies and their practices. In the following section I discuss the different notions of postcolonial theory and their relevance to this study.

2.4.2 Different lenses of postcolonial theory.

In this study I use postcolonial theory because of its capacity to problematize concepts of quality in the field of preschool education in Bangladesh. Problematizing in this sense means a deliberate attempt to disrupt the status quo within preschool education which, I argue, is built on colonial thinking. In support of this research study postcolonial theory provides a framework which helps to address research questions regarding identity, agency, power, voice and representation of teachers and children in the classrooms of preschool in Bangladesh. It is hoped that this process could lead to

new thinking regarding what might constitute a relevant preschool education system for Bangladesh.

There are many versions of postcolonial theory. Dirlik (1994) provides three important lenses on using postcolonial theory in research. The first lens can be used to literally describe the conditions of former colonial societies; the second one is an explanation of global conditions after the period of colonialism, and the third lens is the depiction of a discourse that has been formed by the epistemological and psychic orientations of colonisation (Dirlik, 1994). In this study I am applying the third lens because it opens up an intellectual space to interrogate and analyse discursively, the contradictions of quality of classroom teaching practices of preschool in Bangladesh.

2.4.3 Postcolonial theory and preschool education.

As a number of literatures on education have indicated, the purpose of preschool education is to make children understand their world. It is about developing in them the appropriate dispositions and skills in an early age to be able to continue with this in school. From a postcolonial point of view the real crisis in preschool education is that children are silenced by teachers, subjected to various forms of abuse hence, their inability to become critical thinkers (Kincheloe, 2008). The overwhelming concern is that children's voices and perspectives are too seldom heard in preschool classroom even when it comes to crucial matters that concern them. As a result of this, by the time children enter primary school, they fail to develop dispositions that are crucial for further learning. They become spectators and resort to rote learning (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2011). A postcolonial framing of preschool quality does not see knowledge as a prerogative of teachers but consider knowledge as socially constructed hence the need to involve children in all aspects of learning through critical thinking.

Good quality preschool education is achieved through dialogic engagement of teachers with children. This means teachers must establish good professional relationships with children to be able to achieve preschool quality. Postcolonial theory values good and positive teacher-child relationships and abhor master-servant relations in preschool classrooms. Several studies pointed out that long-term achievement in school is related to teachers developing good relationships with children (Anderson, Nagle, Roberts & Smith, 1981; Birch & Ladd, 1996, 1997; Howes & Hamilton, 1992; Ladd & Burgess, 2001; Lynch & Cicchetti, 1992; Pianta, 1994). It is argued that when children are valued the relationship teachers develop with them is decolonised, and this leads to higher levels of achievement and cognitive skills than those with lower quality relationships built on authoritative models (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Peisner-Feinberg & Burchinal, 1997). There are variations in how teachers establish relationships with children (Pianta & Nimetz, 1991; Pianta, Steinberg, & Rollins, 1995). It was shown in another study that decolonising relationships makes teachers to respect children's individual differences, identify their needs and to support them. This was found to influence higher levels of cognitive and social competence in preschool (Pianta & Nimetz, 1991).

The context of this research is Bangladesh whose educational system has been inherited from the era of European colonialism (Hickling-Hudson, 2003). A postcolonial theory thus provides a useful framework for appreciating the powerful effects of colonialism on classroom teaching practices in preschool education. Critical areas that postcolonial theory contributes to in this study, includes "discursive concepts of agency, identity, voice, representation and power" regarding the quality of preschool education (Kumar, 2000, p. 82). These issues have enormous and have strong influences on the teaching process in classroom.

2.4.4 Framing identity through postcolonial lens.

Identity is a fundamental term in the life of a human being which applies to and locates their existence and importance in society. Identity depends on the background of a person's education, socio-economic class, culture, skin colour, religion, race and gender. It is not predetermined, so children can build and shape their identities through their developing experiences and relationships (DEEWR, 2009). In a postcolonial environment children are identified as persons and constructors of their own social worlds who have rights to participate in the social process (Freeman, 1998). They need to be positioned as active decision makers in preschool education programs and services as they have valuable knowledge to contribute.

At present, in many societies children are identified as a "monetary unit" (Papatheodorou, 2010, p. 2) and the subject and object of economic benefits and returns in the global market (Keeley, 2007). Government and non-government organisations of different countries become interested in spending money for their education and care and expect, in return, the generation of money in the future (Papatheodorou, 2010). However, this purely economic concept of identity is a practice of colonisation which does not respect children as persons. It limits children's life choices and forces them to achieve educational competencies to become good and economically productive citizens.

From a colonial perspective, children have no position in society. They have been identified as needing to be controlled by adults who set their position and underestimate children's capabilities (Berthelsen & Brownlee, 2005). Similarly, in a colonial preschool environment, children are positioned as deviant, simplistic in need of absolute domination (Agbenyega & Deku, 2011). In western normative models of child

development, children's' potentialities have been identified according to their age. In this way assumptions have been formed about what children can do and cannot do at a certain age (Freeman, 1998; Mayall, 2000; Smith, 2002). According to Viruru and Cannella (2004), children "have been placed into the societal institutions that classify them as slow, gifted, or hyperactive, as well as innocent, incompetent, and savage" (p. 64). The purpose of giving these identities to children is to control them mentally and physically (Viruru & Cannella, 2004). A postcolonial critique requires adults to change their perceptions and thoughts on children's identities and to accord them a position as important human beings in their societies (Viruru & Cannella, 2004).

In Bangladesh, discrimination between children of different socio-economic status and cultures influences the identities of children and categorizes them as underprivileged, oppressive and controlling objects (Viruru & Cannella, 2004). For example, the economic structure of Bangladesh has identified some children as poor and disadvantaged who are not allowed to enrol in preschools or English medium preschool as they are not able to pay the tuition fees of these schools. In addition, the socio-cultural system of this country has categorized the children of barbers, swappers and prostitutes who are not socially accepted and easily greeted in the preschool in Bangladesh.

2.4.5 Framing agency through postcolonial lens.

Researchers have long argued for the importance of agency in quality preschool education (Coady & Page, 2005; Foote & Ellis, 2011; Mashford-Scott& Church, 2011; Page, 2008; Smith, 2007a; Tobin, 2005). Agency is a "fundamental component of childhood studies" (Smith, 2007b, p. 152). In this study I use the word 'agency' to mean the rights of children and families to participate in classroom and school activities. I

explore how teachers of preschools in Bangladesh recognize and accord these rights. As this study is theorized through a postcolonial discursive lens, it is important to draw attention to a postcolonial understanding of how children's agency contributes to quality preschool education no matter which country it takes place. A postcolonial theorization of agency is concerned with how children's agency in the generation and experience of social capital has been largely neglected by either teachers, policy makers or parents (Morrow, 1999). This perspective of agency provides a complete new understanding in transforming preschool education systems, particularly in postcolonial societies like Bangladesh which still struggles with the colonial legacy of education systems, ideologies and practices. A postcolonial theory therefore provides avenues for a revitalization and recognition of the agency of previously colonized peoples by offering new conceptual tools to subordinated individuals such as parents and children to uplift themselves.

Agency is constructed by the storylines that define and position people, ideas, kinds of knowledge and ways of knowing (Jordão, 2008). For example, the storyline of "Third World Countries" positions and identifies people of these countries as poor, not well educated, economically and culturally undeveloped. These categories outline their agency so as to be controlled and administered by the so called "First World Countries" for their self-development. In a colonial system, two groups are often constructed where one group work as an agent and the oppressor, and another group as the oppressed with no rights to represent or transform their agency, voice and thoughts (Viruru & Cannella, 2001). The people of the oppressed group are objects of colonisation who considered as deficient, simplistic and needing to be controlled by the dominant group (Viruru & Cannella, 2001). As human beings, everyone has rights to their own values and beliefs yet power forces them to abide by other's decisions. Just as children should have

freedom to use their agency to choose what and how to learn, teachers also should have freedom about how they will arrange classrooms, what content will be taught, what strategies they will follow to teach children, how to manage them and they need to use this freedom to deliver high quality education to children. However, in the preschool education system of Bangladesh, the government body or schools authorities usually determine the curriculum, teaching methods, textbooks and evaluations process without seeking opinions from teachers of preschools and parents. This is an example of a colonizing practice in Bangladesh.

2.4.6 Framing power through postcolonial lens.

Power is a strong mechanism in the world which "operates within the social realm and works from top to bottom throughout the social body" (Walshaw, 2007, p. 69). It controls the positions, agency, voice and representation of people in the community. Postcolonial interpretations argue that "hegemonic epistemological orientations, dominant languages and privileged discourses generate power for particular groups of people which are constructed as intellectual and as an expectation for ways of being" (Viruru & Cannella, 2004, p. 45). Moreover, the dominant groups signify the colonized people as underdeveloped, less advanced to think and unqualified to present their voices (Viruru & Cannella, 2004). According to Foucault, the social positions of people and groups are controlled by power which confine their identity, agency, voice and representation, and rights to receive attention from the society (Foucault, 1980).

Many countries once under British imperialism are now sovereign but still have the influence of imperialist power in different social sectors of these countries. The power of former colonisation has a strong influence on those nations which were once

purely conquered politically, economically, educationally and culturally (Jordão, 2008). The misuse of power can be shown through dominating attitudes to people's identities, agency, representation and voice (Viruru & Cannella, 2004).

In the education sector, the first world or developed countries actively apply a rigid power and control of knowledge, culture and education in those countries which are identified as third world countries. They directly or indirectly impose their power on the ways and styles of learning, construction and distribution of knowledge, science and cultural influence (Jordão, 2008). In colonized societies of these third world countries, children have been colonized for many years and their activities have been defined and explained by adults. They are represented as a group who must be observed, controlled and directed by adults who have more intellectual ability and agency (Viruru & Cannella, 2001). The postcolonial perception argues that adults must guide children but not impose on them to fulfil their desires or carry out their decisions.

2.4.7 Framing voice and representation through postcolonial lens.

Other important aspects of postcolonial consideration in this preschool education research on quality are representation and voice. There is a correlation between representation and voice because representation provides opportunities to children to talk. In the situation where children have no agency and representation they also have no position to speak in their own voices (Schapiro, 1999). In preschool classrooms, children's rights to participate are enacted when they have opportunities to express their thoughts and opinions freely (Tomanovic, 2003). Shier (2001) defines a hierarchical model of five levels which situates children's representation and voice in the preschool education system and these are – "children are listened to; children are supported to express their views; children's views are taken into account; children are involved in

decision-making processes; and children share power" (Shier, 2001, as cited in Berthelsen & Brownlee, 2005, p. 3). These five levels give importance to children's voices, views, power and rights to be involved in decision-making processes.

Representation in preschool education and practice entails the positions imposed on children where children are considered to be novices who lack the capacity to make contributions to adult knowledge. This perspective tends to lead to oppressive, controlling and colonizing pedagogical practices. Viruru and Cannella (2004), for example, argue that there are "a variety of contemporary forms of representation that create individuals and bodies as instruments of colonisation" (p. 83) in educational systems. Different cultural practices in which education takes place play significant roles in the representation, voice and power positions that teachers, parents and children occupy within the education system.

I use the concepts of identity, agency, power and representation/voice in this study because Bangladesh was previously a colonised country. Although it is now a sovereign county the above discussed aspects of colonisation are present in various forms within the education system and have various effects on the quality of classroom teaching practices of preschools. The details of their effect are discussed in Chapter Five in relation to the data collected in this study. The next section is about decolonisation in preschool education where notions of transformative practice in preschool education informed by postcolonial theory are discussed.

2.5 Transformational Perspective in Preschool Education

Educational transformation is an ongoing process which addresses issues of exclusion in education. It seeks to change the environmental, cognitive, and pedagogical

contexts in classrooms that prevent certain children from fully participating in activities with their teachers (Gay, 1995; Sleeter, 1996). Through transformational perspectives, students are accepted as “critical thinkers, participatory and active learners, and envisioners of alternative possibilities of social reality” (Nagda, Gurin & Lopez, 2003, p. 167). From a transformational perspective teachers would no longer consider themselves as the custodians of knowledge in preschool education, dictating teaching to children; instead they become listening teachers who draw on multiple epistemologies including children’s perspectives leading to a transformative pedagogy. In this regard, quality in preschool education does not only mean the socialisation of children but also about helping children to discover themselves as democratic citizens. A transformational process allows democratic approaches in classrooms, giving recognition to children’s voices citizens and not as spectators. A postcolonial theory which has been used in this study is therefore a justified move to transform teachers’ minds in order to recognise children’s positioning in classrooms which is very important for quality preschool education.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a literature review which explores concepts of quality generally and contextually. In particular this review has traced the emergence of postcolonial issues of agency, identity, power, voice and representation. The literature had made a rationale that these are subjects of concern for quality in preschool education as they are still exercised in a colonizing way in the education system of former colonized countries. The next part of this chapter is about the current issues of quality preschool education.

Part Two- Contemporary Issues of Quality Preschool Education

2.7 Introduction

As mentioned in the first chapter, it is a pragmatic concern for quality in preschool education that has focused my attention on investigating preschool quality. This chapter explores the different conceptualizations of the constituents of quality of classroom teaching practices in preschool education. The literature review of this chapter is framed in international research on quality preschool education. It foregrounds important aspects of quality, as well as how teacher beliefs influence what they do in their classrooms. The literature review also locates historical and contemporary preschool practices in several countries in order to inform arguments in the local context.

2.8 Importance of Preschool Education

As this study is concerned with the quality of preschool education, it is crucial to review the literature on the importance of preschool education for children in order to understand its quality framework. This is followed by the impact of quality preschool education according to the findings of research studies of different countries. Research findings in many countries have provided compelling evidence of the importance of preschool education.

Throughout the world there is growing understanding that the period from birth to the start of primary education is a critical formative stage for the growth and

development of children (Early Childhood Development in Bangladesh: A Policy Paper, 2006). The learning outcomes, norms and values, knowledge and skills at primary education level become stronger when learning occurs in the early years of children by receiving regular preschool education. Child development is a, continuing and cumulative process and human body is genetically wired for exploring the environment and receiving information, which allows the brain and physical body to mature (MoPME, 2008). However, the process of child development could be impaired if the child cannot live in congenial environment and does not feel interest to learn.

When children of five or six years old spend one to two years in an early childhood education centre or in preschool, then we can call this education as preschool education (Ministry of Human Resource Development, Education & Cultural Affairs [MHRDECA], 2004). Preschool education offers all the necessary supports to every child for his or her right to live in a safe and protective environment, to get care and quality education that ensure children's holistic development (Evans, Myers & Ilfeld, 2000). The activities of preschool education take place before the primary school programs (Härkönen, 2004). Globally, the field of early childhood has been mentioned by different name, for example, early childhood development (ECD), early childhood education (ECE), early childhood care and development (ECCD), early childhood care and education (ECCE), and preschool education (BANBEIS, 2010). In this study I use preschool education instead of early childhood education as this term is familiar in the context of Bangladesh.

The purpose of preschool education is to provide care and adequate experiences to children for their overall and optimum development which may support them to enter primary schools and achieve more knowledge and skills (MHRDECA, 2004). The areas

and domains of children's development depend on the individual context of countries they define and label, for example, in the context of Bangladesh, the preschool education has recognized and focused on four most important developmental domains which are - physical and motor development, social and emotional progress, language and communication improvement, and cognitive development (Rich-Orloff, 2010).

The aim of preschool education is to help children's development in different areas. For example, this education assists children to make progress in their physical, emotional cognitive, social, psychomotor, language areas, acquisition of good habits and manners, and in environmental awareness and aesthetic development (UNICEF, 2010). However, many educators and teachers of preschools in different countries conceptualised the aim of preschool education as a process of making children knowledgeable and skilled in subject matters which may lead to getting good marks in tests (Agbenyega, 2009; Ahmed et al., 2005; Friere, 1998; Haq, 2006, Li, 2004; Mprah, 2008;). According to Education For All National Action Plan of Sri Lanka (2004) for example, "the aim of preschool is not to teach reading, writing and number work but to prepare the child for learning to read and write and provide experiences that would promote total development" (MHRDECA, p. 46). So, it can be said that the aim of preschool education is to support children's development which includes the basic care of children and to prepare them "to be ready and mature for a smooth transition to school" (Härkönen, 2002, p. 2).

The first years of a child's life is a period when his or her brain develops rapidly and many fundamental skills of children improve without difficulty; however, if they do not get proper food, care and education at their early age, the progress can be slower (Ravens, 2010). The child, who gets proper care at these stages, is able to develop

physically, mentally, socially and emotionally, moreover, he or she has opportunity to be a good and productive member of society in future (Myers, 2004). According to the report of UN General Assembly in 2010, preschool education opens the window of opportunity in preventing children's pessimistic outcomes, and stands for cost-effective strategies, and produces higher rates of economic return for individual person, community and country (Rich-Orloff, 2010).

Preschool education provides support to children for their optimal development (Evan, Myers & Ilfeld, 2000). Global experience demonstrates that this education enhances children's cognitive, manipulative and socialization skills - especially for the most disadvantaged children (UNICEF, 2006). In addition, children who receive preschool education do better at primary school (UNICEF, 2006). Preschool education also helps to "reduce the need of special education and grade retention and increase levels of school attainment" (Campbell & Ramey, 1994; Ou, 2003; Reynolds, Temple, Robertson & Mann, 1996; Schweinhart, Barnes & Weikart, 1993, as cited in Nath, 2006, p. 1). Barnett (1995, 1997; cited in Fleer, 2000) found that preschool education programs "have huge influence on children's Intelligence Quotient (IQ)... generous and persistent effects on reading and maths achievement, grade retention, special education, and socialisation" (p. 18). According to Boocock (1995), "participation in a preschool program promotes cognitive development in the short term and prepares children to succeed in school" (as cited in The Centre for Community Child Health, 2000, p. 16). In developing countries, preschool education may be used as a "powerful tool to address social inequality and to give the poorest children a better start in life" (Lusk, Hashemi & Haq, 2004, p. 8).

2.9 Financial Benefit of Preschool Education

Preschool education acts as a powerful tool to reduce social and economic discrimination in society because it creates opportunities for poor children to start a better life (Heckman, 2006). Lynch reported that well designed and quality preschool education programs have influence on children to be more successful in school and in life; in addition, children who benefit from high quality programs have – "higher employment rates as adults, higher earnings as adults, greater self-sufficiency as adults, lower welfare dependency" (2004, p. 4). Social and economic inequalities, and other forms of social deprivation at the early age of children's life is extremely interlinked with the lower incomes and social disadvantage in future period (Heckman, 2006; UNESCO, 2005) which can be circumvented by providing preschool education to children.

A strong body of literature has presented convincing arguments about the benefit of investing money in preschool education. For example, it is argued that quality preschool education enhances children's potential for social skills development and prevention of child-related crime (Irwin, Siddiqi & Hertzman, 2007). The World Health Organisation has reported the impressive returns of early childhood education of different countries (Irwin, Siddiqi & Hertzman, 2007). According to Jaramillo and Mingat (2006), "87% of the investment in ECCE pays itself back as a result of reduced primary education drop out alone" (cited in Ravens, 2010, p. 45). The report of OECD (2005) stated that the average numbers of years that children participate in preschool education in a country by one year lead to an increase of three percentages to six percentages in the GDP of that country.

A number of research studies of different countries have shown the positive outcomes of investing money in preschool education. In Bolivia, the benefit-to-cost ratios of preschool education programs have been calculated to be of 2.38 to 3.18 (Gaag & Tan, 1998), and the ratios of 3.00 were calculated for an early childhood program in Philippines (Glewwe & Jacoby, 1993). The ratio of the Perry Preschool Program in the United States was 7.16 (Schweinhart, Barnes & Weikart, 1993). A recent review of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Study after 40 years of follow-up has stated certain benefits of early childhood programs, and that children who attended the preschool program were - more prepared for school at age 5; more committed to be regular in school work and show better school results at age 14 which is likely to have earnings over US$20,000 at age 40; and less likely to be arrested for crimes by age 40. It also estimated that the total return was US$13 on each dollar spent on preschool education programs (Schweinhart, & Montie, 2004).

The recent cost-benefit analysis of the Government of Egypt has also estimated the average benefit-to-cost ratio between 1.2 and 2.49 for the nation as a whole, with benefits above 5.8 in the most disadvantaged areas (World Bank, 2003). Lynch's study estimates that every dollar financed in quality early childhood intervention profits about three dollars in benefits to the government (2004). According to Cleveland and Krashinsky (1998), the Canadian study calculates a benefit and cost ratio of 2:1 in quality early childhood education and care services to all children of two to six years old. These are convincing arguments that if developing countries want to uplift themselves from massive poverty then they must invest in quality preschool education. This is where Bangladesh, whose citizens are wallowing in poverty, comes to the radar.

2.10 The Impact of Quality Preschool Education on Children's Development

The economic and social strength of a country is associated with the quality of its education system (Nath & Chowdhury, 2008). According to the US Department of Education, a school fulfils its mandate successfully when the students who pass through them learn values and social skills which are necessary for developing their social and intellectual aspects, and also learn adequate skills and competencies to be economically productive (Mayer, Mullens, Moore & Ralph, 2000). In this regard, quality cannot be understated when considering any country's education system. Importantly, quality is related with everything that happens in the school system however, what happens and how these happen are important to the understanding of quality (Nath & Chowdhury, 2008). Quality is not out there to be captured but a procedural concept, which varies from time-to time as a result of the dynamic nature of humans and their society they develop to live in.

The question of quality is not only applicable for low and middle income countries, but also a concerned issue for the high income countries in the world (Nath & Chowdhury, 2008). The question of quality has been raised in every international program, from the Jomtien Conference to the Dakar Forum (UNESCO, 2000; World Conference on Education for All, 1990). For example, the Dakar goals of Education for All gave importance to improving quality in all aspects of education. The notions of quality in education are associated with the approaches of humanistic, behaviourist, critical, indigenous and adult education (UNESCO 2005). In addition, healthy and active children, competent and friendly teachers, child based curriculum and teaching methods, good governance, adequate and child appropriate resources have been set as

indicators of quality in education (Nath & Chowdhury, 2008). With respect to children of four and five years old, preschool education program are subject to quality scrutiny to be able to bring the optimistic desired outcomes for their development (Ravens, 2010).

It is argued that the classroom of preschools can maintain quality when teachers de-emphasised comparing children's academic achievements to others, recognize their unique potentials, and give them opportunities to explore and learn through play (Fleer, 2006, 2011; Ravens, 2010). Also, important, is the recognition and respect for their identity, agency, power, voice and representation would enable children to gain the necessary foundation for future learning (Agbenyega, 2011). Drawing from this it can be argued that quality preschool classrooms present education to children as fun, interesting, rewarding activities which support the natural progression of their developmental milestones and motivate them to come to school for continuous learning (Rich-Orloff, 2010).

Quality preschool education incorporates activities concerned with children's health, nutrition, and development in different aspects and success in education (UNICEF, 2010). Quality preschool programs also focus on transition services for children from home to school and while in school, how to move from one stage of to the next stage. This is found to "improve children's enrolment and retention rates and academic performance in primary school and beyond" (UNICEF, 2010, p.1). The importance of quality of preschool education is more necessary in those countries where most of the children live in disadvantaged situations, have no minimum chance to receive inspirational facilities at home or school for their physical, social and intellectual development (Aboud & Hossain, 2011).

Myers mentioned that quality preschool education is a key issue in producing constructive outcomes of children (2004). According to Peisner- Feinberg (2004), “better quality child care [for children of preschool age] is related to better cognitive and social development for children” (p. 4). A study conducted in a quality preschool in Mauritius on three to five years old children found that by the age of 10, the children who attended the quality preschool showed better social skills, more organized thinking and had more friends than the children who received no such enrichment. In addition, it observed that the young adults, who attended the quality preschools, were still carrying the positive manners at their age of 17 and 23, and they were more socially adjusted, calmer and were up to 52% less likely to commit a crime (Raine, Mellingen, Liu, Venables & Mednick, 2003).

The higher quality preschools provide higher-quality materials and instruction which results in children’s better developmental outcomes (Moore et al., 2008; Opel, Ameer, & Aboud, 2009). Moreover, children’s academic performance and achievement of high scores in the tests depend on the high quality of preschools (Aboud & Hossain, 2011). Quality preschool education not only help children in better performance but also positively impacts on their families, society and economy where they grow up and start their lives (Ravens, 2010).

A number of research studies have been conducted on the benefits of preschool education in many countries which are well documented. The useful study of preschool education outcomes is The High/Scope Perry preschool project (1962 – 1967) in America, which found “substantial benefits including lower dropout rates, higher school achievement, lower referral rates to special education services, lower dependency on welfare benefits, and lower incidence of crime” (Rich-Orloff, 2010, p. 8). In Malaysia, a

study was carried out in 1980 to explore children's performance in primary school in Standard I and II. The results of this study showed that there was advantage for those children who had preschool education experience. It also indicated the close relationship between socio-economic status and the extent to which children benefited from preschool education as the study found that the children of disadvantaged groups gained more skills than children from higher socio-economic groups (Evans 1996; Myers, 2004).

A qualitative and quantitative study in Nepal, which examined the effects of participation in preschools on children, parents and communities in 38 early childhood education and care centres in the district of Siraha, also provided some potential benefits (Bartlett, Arnold & Sapkota, 2003). The findings were related to instant cognitive and social improvements of children who benefit from preschool education and progress to primary school. The findings suggest that the children in primary school who participated in preschool compared to those who did not – "were more likely to enrol in school and had better attendance records; were less likely to be retained or drop out in grades 1 and 2; and had dramatically better results on year-end examinations" (Myers, 2004, p. 12).

Similarly, in study conducted in Guinea and Cape Verde, it was reported that children from low income communities benefited more from preschool education than children of higher income families in terms of their cognitive and social development (Jaramillo & Tiejen, 2001, as cited in Myers, 2004). Further evidence is provided by an experimental study in Bahrain which was conducted between 1989 and 1994 which found significant differences between children who attended preschools and those who did not regarding the measurement of developmental outcomes (Myers, 2004).

In Bangladesh, Save the Children-US conducted a study on the impact of preschool education on primary school achievement for more than a period of three years (Rich-Orloff, 2010). They used the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) to measure the quality of classroom of preschools and this scale was modified to get better results in Bangladeshi context (Aboud & Hossain, 2011). They found that the quality of classroom rating increased from 3.5 in 2006 to 5.24 in 2008 and as classroom quality increased, children's achievements also increased (Aboud & Hossain, 2011). Moreover, the children who attended the quality preschools performed appreciably better on five competencies such as, speaking, reading, writing, and oral and written math (Aboud & Hossain, 2011). However, this study only focused on children's academic achievement, and did not concentrate on other important developmental domains, such as, their physical, social, or emotional development (Rich-Orloff, 2010).

Quality preschool education has a positive impact on the survival, growth, development and learning potential of children (UNESCO, 2000, p. 15). This is because quality is associated with rich and continuous stimulation of children to perform at their optimum levels. It has been acknowledged that quality preschool education is related to better cognitive and social outcomes of children (Sylva et al., 2006). Current studies support the view that children benefit when the programs of preschool education maintain acceptable level of quality (Andersson 1989, 1992; Bredekamp & Copple, 1996; Howes & Stewart, 1987; Jacobs, Selig & White, 1992; Melhuish, Mooney, Martin & Lloyd, 1990; Schlieker, White & Jacobs, 1991; Vandell & Powers, 1983). Doherty-Derkowski (1995) lists a number of longitudinal studies which show that, children who receive quality preschool education, "have greater social competencies, fewer behaviour problems in elementary school and higher levels of language

development" (Andersson 1989, 1992; Howes, 1988, 1990; Jacobs et al., 1992; Lamb, Hwang, Broberg & Bookstein, 1988; White, 1989, as cited in Doherty-Derkowski, 1995, p. 20).

Several research studies and projects of different countries have established the significant connection between quality preschool education and children's development. For example, the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project in the USA showed that children who were brought up in poverty and experience high threat of school failure gained significant benefits through quality preschool education (Schweinhart et al., 1993). In another related study known as the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) study in the UK, the results have shown a considerable correlation between quality preschool education and improved intellectual and social outcomes of children. For example, children of quality preschool organisations showed "more independence and reduced anti-social/worried behaviour by the time they enter primary school" (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2004, p. 3). Similar findings were documented in one Chicago evaluation program that quality preschool education programs were notably associated with higher rates of school completion, lower school dropout rates, less grade retention and less need for special education in primary and secondary education (Reynolds, Temple, Robertson & Mann, 2001). These studies were not confounded to developed countries alone. In a Botswana study which examined how children who participated in preschool perform compared to those who do not, it was found that those who participated in preschool before going on to primary school outperformed their peers on different subjects in grade one than those who did not have preschool education (Taiwo & Tyolo, 2002, as cited in Moore, Akhter & Aboud, 2008).

The studies of Eurasian and Asian Countries also provide evidence regarding the impact of quality preschool education on children. The Early Enrichment Project of Turkey reported that children of preschool had better performance on cognitive skills than children who stayed at home (Kagitcibasi, Sunar, & Bekman, 2001). The Haryana Project in India found that preschool education had great impact on vulnerable children as this education reduced 46% drop-out rates of the poorest children (Chaturvedi, Srivastava, Singh & Prasad, 1987). A government research study conducted in Bangladesh on preschool education indicated that quality preschool education enhances children's learning skills and increases the opportunity of completion rate of primary education (MoPME, 2008).

The above findings in different countries seem to corroborate the evidence of quality preschool education on children's overall stability in school and for their holistic development. The next section provides some insights into the emergence and movement of preschool education in selected countries of the world.

2.11 The Global Story of Preschool Education

This section focuses on the history leading up to a surprising global increase in the prevalence of formal provision of preschool education, including the global social movement and the Jomtien and Dakar Conferences of the United Nations. The Jomtien Conference, held in Thailand from 5th March to 9th March, 1990, was mainly sponsored by United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and The World Bank (Torres, 2001). The Dakar Framework for Action (2000) in Senegal, Africa, was organized by the International Consultative Forum on

Education for All. This forum was created in 1991 to monitor Education for All (EFA). Five international agencies – UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Bank sponsored this conference and a number of agencies, governments and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) of different countries, as well as some education specialists, cooperated to arrange it (Torres, 2001). The Jomtien conference was a major milestone for education as it recalled education as a basic right for all people of all ages throughout the world, reinforced education as a means to make safe, strong, successful environments and to contribute to social, economic and cultural development (UNICEF, 1990). The Dakar Framework was also an important event in preschool education as its target was that "by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and ethnic minorities should have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality" (Torres, 2001, p. 6).

Preschools and nurseries were first recognized in the nineteenth century in Europe and North America and in several Asian countries subject to European colonizing influences such as China and India (Kamerman, 2006). Several aspects of the history and development of preschool education in Europe, Anglo-American countries, Australia and Asia are narrated in the following sub-sections.

2.12 Preschool Education in Europe and the Anglo-American Countries

Several factors played an important role in changing preschool education traditions all over the world. For instance, the rise of the service economy and the entry of women into salaried employment influenced parents to re-think about traditional

child care and education practices. In some countries, “over 75% of women between the ages of 25-54 are now in the labour market” (OECD, 2006, p. 20). This significant employment of women has increased the demand of preschool education services and programs for their children. Preschool Education and Care policies and programs in Europe and the Anglo-American countries made extremely fast progress with the similar historical currents (Kamerman, 2006). According to Kamerman (2006), “in all the countries, one overarching theme is the movement from private charity, beginning in the early and middle nineteenth century, to public responsibility, evolving largely after World War II” (p. 10). The movement of preschool education from private charity to public-sponsored programs occurred and increased throughout the early 19th and the 20th centuries (Sells, 2012).

Preschool education in Germany has influenced education throughout the world. The term ‘preschool’ (Children’s Garden) - a German invention, has directed the theories and practices of preschool education (Sells, 2012). In Germany, Friedrich Froebel set up his first preschool in 1837 (Sells, 2012). The first nursery school was opened in England in 1816. This school provided day care services for the children of cotton mill workers (Sells, 2012). Compulsory education for English children of ages five and up was established in 1870 (Sells, 2012).

In France and Italy, similar movements from private to public provision started in the nineteenth century with services run by charitable organisations for poor, disadvantaged and abandoned children (David & Lezine, 1974; Pistillo, 1989). Programs for three to five year olds were taken over by the Ministry of Education of France in 1836 and integrated into the public school system in 1886 (Kamerman, 2006). Since World War II, and the mid-1950s, the pressure exerted by middle class families to

expand programs to include their children led to a significant extension (Kamerman, 2006). In 1907, Maria Montessori opened a school in Italy where she hypothesized that children learn best by themselves in an appropriate environment (Sells, 2012).

In America, the earliest education programs for young children began with the Infant Schools. By the turn of the eighteenth century, this country experienced a growing economy and arrival of immigrants (Kagan & Reid, 2008). These situation influenced the emergence of day nurseries to "provide services for children by attending to their education, health, and nutritional needs, and to provide job placement services and language instruction for their parents" (Kagan & Reid, 2008, p. 3). Beginning in the mid- to late-1800s, American preschools included nutrition, cleanliness, and good health in their program with the mission of promoting children's physical development (Beatty, 1995; Cahan, 1989; Ross, 1976). As public support for preschool grew gradually, by the end of the 19th century, over half of American public schools had preschool programs (Kahn & Kamerman, 1987). During national crises such as World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II, the United States Federal government established child care facilities. In the 1960s the War on Poverty stirred up the Head Start program for low income children and this program is still standing as the foundation for much American preschool education innovation (Kagan & Reid, 2008). The sub-section that follows summarizes the history of preschool education of Australia and other affluent 'developed' countries in the world.

2.13 Preschool Education in Australia

In Australia, preschools started during the last decade of the nineteenth century as women's charitable work. A preschool based on Froebel's principles opened at

Crown Street Public School, Sydney, in 1882 (Brennan, 1994). Two strands characteristic of Western European early childhood mentioned above stimulated preschool programs in Australia by the turn of the century. One was the adoption and implementation of Froebel's methods by the lower grades of primary schools and another was the emergence of the Preschool Union of New South Wales who established free preschools in the inner Sydney slum areas during the late 1980s (Mellor, 1990). In 1893, some girls' schools in Sydney for the children of wealthy families were running fee-charging preschools and the state government was showing interest to this program. Consequently, a group of social reformers and educationists formally established the Preschool Union of New South Wales.

In Australia, as in the United States, persons with the most passionate progressive educational ideas accepted the preschool movements as a mechanism of social restructuring (Brennan, 1994). Through preschools, upper and middle-class women tried to reach those families who lived in unhygienic, crowded, poorest areas to transfer middle-class values to the children of lower class families (Brennan, 1994). Although the free preschools followed Froebel's methods as their foundation, they were also influenced by the American free preschool movement which gave importance to social modernization (Mellor, 1990). Hence, in the early decades of the twentieth century, their principles and practices were affected by new theorists like Montessori. There was intensive collaboration between leading members of different state education departments; as a result, free preschool associations were established in each state. In Victoria, one state of Australia, Protestant churches played an active role in establishing preschools. In 1901, the first free preschool was established in Carlton, Melbourne by a group of women from the Baptist Church (Brennan, 1994). In 1905, a Presbyterian group opened a preschool in the highly populated Melbourne suburb of Burnley where

poor families lived (Brennan, 1994). A distinctive feature of Victoria was that senior members of the state education department as well as members of the social elite such as the wife of the Governor-General, Lady Zara Gowrie, were interested and involved in developing the preschools in this state.

2.13.1 Recent polices of preschool education in Australia.

In recent years, the government of Australia is giving attention to the quality of preschool education for enriching children's learning. The first national Early Years Learning Framework for Australian early childhood educators has published in 2009. The Council of Australian Governments has developed this framework along with considerable input from the early childhood sector, early childhood academics and the Australian State and Territory Governments. The aim of this document is to support and guide educators for providing opportunities to children to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for future success in learning (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace relations for the Council of Australian Governments [DEEWR], 2009). The Framework recognizes that early childhood stage is the fundamental period in children's learning and development; therefore, it forms the foundation of preschool education for ensuring that all children in every education and care centres receive quality teaching and learning practices. In particular, the framework has put emphasis on play-based learning approaches and also gave importance to the improvement of children's communication and language skills, including literacy and numeracy, and social and emotional development (DEEWR, 2009). This national framework of Australia categorized children's life as belonging, being and becoming, which acknowledges children's interdependence with the members of family, neighbours and community, and also the origin of relationships to set identities. Being,

recognizes the consequence of the place and time in children's lives and becoming, emphasizes on children's learning through fully and actively participation in society (DEEWR, 2009).

While Australia's geography locates it in Asia, its preschool education services history duplicates a Western European and specifically, British service model. The next sub-section looks at the expansion of preschool education of Australia's closest neighbours, the developing countries of Asia.

2.14 Preschool Education in Some Developing Countries of Asia

As Bangladesh is located in the Asia-Pacific region, it is imperative to provide a brief overview of what is currently occurring in some of her neighbours to provide a broad understanding of preschool education in this region. It is a contention of this thesis that children everywhere need preschool education before going to primary schools and this intervention is, particularly important in South and West Asia and Sub-Saharan African countries because of their poor status on indices of child well-being (Rao & Sun, 2010). More than 200 million children of age under five around the world are not improving properly because they live in poverty and do not get enough health and nutritional facilities, or preschool education and care (Grantham-McGregor, Cheung, Cueto, Glewwe, Richter & Strupp, 2007). Most of these children live in India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and these children are at risk of developmental delay leading to less success at school (Grantham-McGregor, et al., 2007). Before the 1990s there was no significant interest and improvement in preschool education and care in these countries.

It has been mentioned above that two events – The World Conference on Education for All (1990) and the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) played a major role in changing the global situation of preschool education which has also affected Asian countries. These two conferences mainly focused on universalizing basic education as children's fundamental right. A striking development of these events is that, in many countries of Asia, nearly all children are enrolled in preschool before going to primary schools (Kamerman, 2006). The UNESCO report (2009a) shows that the rate of Gross Enrolment Ratios in preschool education increased noticeably in 2007 in South and West Asia (Rao & Sun, 2010). This reveals that developing countries of Asia are giving emphasis to preschool education to meet the goals of Education for All. For example, the government of India has initiated the world's largest child development program, the Integrated Child Development Services in 1995 which serves to over 121 million children of this country (Government of India, 2009; Rao & Sun, 2010).

In Indonesia, the National Education System Law (2003) established the definition and provision of early childhood care and education (Rao & Sun, 2010). In Philippines, the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Act of 2000 institutionalized an integrated and comprehensive national early childhood system. Moreover, The Philippines Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 mandates delivery of early childhood education in preparation for primary education as a part of basic education (Caoli-Rodriguez, 2008). In Bangladesh, the Operational Framework for Preschool Education, 2008 was prepared by the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education to provide guidelines for implementing preschool education programs for children of three to five years of age and also sets national standards for all preschool programs, be it government, non-government or community operated (MoPME, 2009).

Although the participation rate in preschool education is increasing, the countries of Asia and the Pacific region are facing challenges. This education system has become “complicated by variations in the definition of ECEC, the fragmentation of administration and delivery systems across government agencies and divided between age groups, the distinction made between care and education, the poor quality of programs and the inadequacy of teaching staff” (Kamerman, 2006, p. 32). Just as in South and West Asia, in all sub-regions in the Asia-Pacific, the gross enrolment ratio in preschool education has increased and children are now attending school-based, centre-based, community-based or home-based preschool education programs (Rao & Sun, 2010). This rapid expansion has led to concerns about the quality of programs in some parts of Asia. However, millions of children in the Asia-Pacific region still do not have access to preschool education program because of issues of poverty, low levels of parental education, language and ethnicity, rural residence and disability (Rao & Sun, 2010). The following discussion is about the preschool education in India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

2.14.1 Preschool education in India.

The concept and development of education in India is related within the context of its history, cultural and spiritual philosophy, and the social–political–cultural influences of foreign invasions. From about A.D. 1600 onward, French, Portuguese, Dutch and British traders and subsequent trading companies came in India to do business, however, they led to set up the European and Christian powers in the educational system (Gupta, 2006). The turning points of the British manipulation on education in India were the implementation of English as the language of instruction and the textbook based pedagogy (Gupta, 2006). These issues begun the practice of rote

memorization and examination based system of education became the way to produce the clerks and low-level bureaucrats for the British officers (Saini, 2000) and a large number of schools are still following this practice (Gupta, 2006).

At present, preschool education is rising as an important equity issue in India because the lack of preschool education and care centres affecting the quality of classroom teaching practices and increasing the drop-out and repetition rates in primary schools (Kaul & Sankar, 2009). As a result, several provisions in the Constitution of India have been used to provide preschool education and the National Curriculum Framework, 2005 has promoted the play based developmentally appropriate curriculum for the two years of preschool education program; moreover, in 2007, nearly one million institutions are providing preschool education and care for three to five year old children in the country (Kaul & Sankar, 2009).

2.14.2 Preschool education in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka, a developing country of South-East Asia has the expanded history of civilization of more than 2000 years. This country was under the control of British power till 1948 and the dominating rules created the injustices in the existing system of education where only rich people had rights to get benefits of a quality education; moreover, English language based education was the passport for receiving a good job and social respect (MHRDECA, 2004).

It has been observed in the literature that Sri Lanka has not paid enough attention yet to the quality and development of preschool education programs and activities (Achchillage, 2002; MHRDECA, 2004). Like other developing countries, in Sri Lanka, the primary schools admit the children after 5 years of age who have to fight

in the admission competitions for primary school entry (MHRDECA, 2004). In addition, the civil war has dislocated more than 300,000 children, who have become homeless, orphaned and now live in stressed and unsafe environments (Achchillage, 2002). According to Achchillage (2002), “due to non-functioning of services such as schools and hospitals, children are deprived of proper schooling and access to medical services with the virtual absence civil law in many parts” of this country (p. 1).

In 2001, the Primary Education Section of the Ministry of Education prepared the National Policy on "Early Childhood Care and Education" and at present the Ministry of Health, Ministry of social service and Welfare (Children Secretariat office) Human Resources, Education and Cultural Affairs and other Ministries are modifying this policy together (MHRDECA, 2004). According to the data of 2000, the number of preschools in the 19 districts was 7725 where nearly 204695 children received preschool education (MHRDECA, 2004). The government of Sri Lanka hopes that these figures could be increased now as the number of preschool trained teachers has increased, parent's awareness of the need of preschool education has improved and a number of Day Care Centres have launched the Early Childhood Care and Development programs (MHRDECA, 2004).

Though the government of Sri Lanka is working for the improvement of preschool education still this country is facing some challenges. For example, the government and the early childhood care and education institutions have not adequate liaison and coordination; moreover, the lack of systematic training and facilities of the schools raise concerns for the quality of preschool education (MHRDECA, 2004).

2.14.3 Preschool education in Indonesia.

Indonesia is one of the most populous countries in the world with over 200 million people and it is a low-middle income country. The formal education system of Indonesia is comprised of six years of primary education, three years of lower secondary education, three years of upper secondary education and four years of higher education but preschool education is not part of the formal education system of this country (UNESCO, 2005). The National Education System Law 20/2003 recognises early childhood education as a stage preceding basic education and stipulates that it can be organised formally, non-formally or informally. According to UNESCO (2003), at present, five key early childhood services can be identified in Indonesia. They are:

1) Preschool or Taman Kanak (TK) and Islamic Preschool or Raudhatul Athfal (RA) - these are the main centre based pre-primary education service for children ages of four to six years. Both of the institutions are same but RA has programs with the emphasis on Islamic teaching. The focused areas of these two institutes are – preschool education, child development and school readiness, and religious teaching in RA. The data of 2002 has shown that there are 47,746 preschools with 1,749,722 children and 11,560 Islamic preschools with 378,094children and these preschools run their programs two hours in every day. Ministry of National Education and Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia supervise and monitor the activities of TK and RA.

2) Playgroup or Kelompok Bermain (KB) provides play based education for children ages of two to six years and assist them to improve their mental and emotional conditions. According to the data of 2002, the numbers of this type of preschools are 1.256 and the numbers of enrolled children are 36,649 and these centres operate their

program two hours of three days in week. Ministry of National Education provides curriculum to these preschools and Ministry of Social Welfare supervise their activities.

3) Childcare Centre or Taman Penitipan Anak (TPA) caters for children ages 3 months to over six years, whose parents especially mothers who work and these centres have been located near the parents' workplaces. However, in urban areas, it has increasingly incorporated educational activities, and is providing both education and care services to children of high-income working mothers. The data of 2002 has calculated that the numbers of TPA are 1,789 where 15,308 children have been admitted. The centres operate their program eight to ten hours daily. Ministry of National Education offers developmental guidelines to these centres and Ministry of Social Welfare supplies care and social service components and also supervise their activities.

4) Posyandu, or Integrated Service Post, was originally a community health centre where pregnant or breastfeeding mothers came to receive health care, for example they got assistance in supplementary nutrients, immunisation for themselves and for their young children. It has now evolved into a comprehensive service centre for mothers where they come twice a month, both for receiving health care and learning about parenting. Recently, these centres arrange activities for children who accompany their mothers to the centres. The centres run their programs for two hours of two times in a month. Ministry of Home Affairs started the programs in partnership with the Family Welfare Empowerment Movement and the Ministry of Health provides technical support and supervise their programs.

5) The initial purpose of Mother's Program or Bina Keluarga Balita (BKB) was to provide mothers with information on parenting skills – how to nurture and supervise

the physical, emotional and intellectual development of young children. At present, it has delivered jointly with Posyandu, reinforcing the latter's parenting function. Both Posyandu and BKB are delivered by trained volunteers and the programs open for two hours of two times in one month. Ministry of Women's Affairs makes the policy and National Family Planning Coordination Board delivers the services and supervises.

The Curriculum Development Centre of the Ministry of National Education of Indonesia established the competency based curriculum for early childhood education in 2002 and it works as a central mechanism for congregating different preschool education services within a progressive and constant learning framework (UNESCO, 2005).

A number of initiatives have been taken to improve the training of early childhood educators, for example, the Directorate of Preschool and Primary Education is executing different programs to develop a Professional Development System for improving the preschool education and training facilities of TK teachers and supervisors. The Directorate of Early Childhood Education has also offered, in collaboration with the Early Childhood Education Forum and the Early Childhood Education Consortium, in-service training for the educators of TPA and KB (UNESCO, 2005).

As a developing country, Indonesia is facing the problem of low participation of children in preschool education as the rate is one of the lowest in the world (UNESCO, 2005). According to the data of 2000, the gross enrolment rate of children ages of four to over six years in educational early childhood services was 15%. In 2001-2002, the World Development Indicators reported that the rate increased to 20% but Indonesia still lags behind many developing countries in the region. For example, the gross

enrolment rate of preschool education India and Vietnam was 26% and 43%, respectively, whereas their GDP per capita was lower than Indonesia (The World Bank, 2004).

Another problem of Indonesia is inequitable access to preschool education services. The major access gap was noticed between rural and urban children in Indonesia. In 2003, the gross enrolment in early childhood services was 45.3% in urban areas and 24.1% in rural areas (UNESCO, 2005). Moreover, the lack of government investment and the expansion of fee-paying preschool education services make parents to accept this education as a burden. This country invests a little amount, 1.3% GDP, in education sector. The total expenditure of Ministry of National Education of Indonesia in 2003 was 0.55% of the education budget for the early childhood care and education (UNESCO, 2005). In addition, the administrative coordination between the two directorates in the Ministry of National Education is the overwhelming challenge for Indonesia in preschool education and early childhood services.

2.15 Recent Activities of Some Countries for Achieving Quality in Preschool Education

At present, preschool education is achieving a rising focus and transformation worldwide, and internationally, the number of children is increasing in preschools (Ahmed et al., 2005). This rapid expansion has caused governments and no-government agencies to frame or review policies, establish child-oriented curriculum, arrange teacher training and child-friendly classroom settings in the preschool school to promote quality educational practices (Drury, Miller & Campbell, 2000; Lambert & Clyde, 2000; Miller, 2002). Different countries in the world are taking different types of initiatives

which are guided by the policy, regulations and socio-economic structures of those countries. The following table shows the key features of these programs of some countries which have been instigated to ensure quality in preschool education.

Table 2.2

Initiatives of some countries to increase the quality of preschool education

Country	Program/policy/curriculum	Important features	Quality oriented characteristics
Australia	The Council of Australian Governments has developed the first national Early Years Learning Framework for early childhood education. It forms the foundation for ensuring quality teaching and learning for children (DEEWR, 2009).	The framework frames children's lives as *belonging, being and becoming*. Belonging admits their interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. Being is about the present and them knowing themselves, building and maintaining relationships, engaging life with joy and complexity and facing challenges. Becoming reflects on the rapid and changing process of knowledge, understanding, capacities, skills and relationships (DEEWR, 2009).	The framework emphasizes play-based learning and recognizes the active participation of children for social and emotional development. It respects their family, culture, identity and language (DEEWR, 2009).

New Zealand	For development in preschool education, New Zealand established the first national curriculum, *Te Whāriki*[1], in the 1990s. Curriculum focuses on what learning is provided by the people, places and things in the child's environment. It integrates care and education (Ministry of Education of New Zealand, 1996). It is the first bicultural curriculum which has embraced the indigenous perspectives of Maori people (Papatheodorou, 2010).	The curriculum has set four principles which empowers children as a key factor to learn and grow; reflects on the holistic development of children; strengthens family and community links; and that children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places and things (Ministry of Education of New Zealand, 1996; OECD, 2004).	Gives importance to children's uniqueness as learners, their knowledge, skills, experience, attitudes, ethnicity and rights. This curriculum has chosen to use play as an approach and given importance to belonging, culture and language of community for their development (Ministry of Education of New Zealand, 1996; OECD, 2004). Belonging has been recognized in this curriculum though being and becoming are not overtly included.
America	The High Scope curriculum was developed more than 40 years ago by David Weikart and his team in Michigan. It is now used for preschool and elementary programs both in the United States of America and around the world (Epstein, 2011).	The space and materials in High Scope settings are arranged to promote active learning and the centre is divided into interest areas with the organisation of specific play activities, such as, block area, sand-water area, book and art areas (Epstein, 2011). The daily routine of the preschool schools revolve	Children are the central element of this curriculum. Teachers and children are active partners in the learning process (Epstein, 2011). The daily activities are play based where children have easy access to the equipment to play (Epstein, 2011). Parent and community involvement is not mentioned in this curriculum.

1 *Te Whariki*= Maori language for a woven mat

		around a plan-do-review sequence, small and large group times, greeting time and outside time (Epstein, 2011). Teachers use the Preschool Child Observation Record to assess children's Progress (Epstein, 2011).	
England	The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a legislative framework of England whose implementation started in 2008 (Papatheodorou, 2010). It is an outcomes and play-based curriculum and mostly influenced by developmental views (Papatheodorou, 2010)	The framework has underpinned by principles which are: uniqueness and competency of children from birth to five years old; loving and secure relationships with parents and other related persons; supportive environment for child's development and learning; and the recognition that the rate of development and learning in each child is different but interconnected (DfES, 2007a)	Gives importance to the learning environment and relationships with parents and others. The framework acknowledges the child's individual learning and progress.
India	In India, early childhood care and education encompasses a range of services within diverse settings (Hegde & Cassidy, 2009). The most common kind of early childhood care and education centres are run by the centrally sponsored Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), and the state	In urban areas preschool schools run programs for two to three hours, five days a week (Hegde & Cassidy, 2009). Teachers use Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) in the classrooms.	The preschool school programs are child-centred and play-based and recognize the individual needs of children (Hegde & Cassidy, 2009). The child-teacher ratio is higher than other developed countries who are using DAP approach in the

	government or local bodies. The goal of ICDS is to empower underprivileged children younger than the age of six years, and ensure that they are physically healthy, mentally alert, emotionally secure, socially competent, and intellectually ready to learn when they reach primary school age (Gupta, 2006). There are also services run by non-government organisations and private preschools (Gupta, 2006).		classrooms of preschool schools. For example, 60-70 children in one classroom). This country follows western strategies in the classrooms without examining how realistic these practices are in the context of India (Hegde & Cassidy, 2009).
Bangladesh	Bangladesh has prepared an Operational Framework for Preschool Education which will be started in 2012 for children between 3 to 6 years of age. This framework provides a common standard guideline for all preschool programs. Initially the government will provide preschool support to all government primary schools and then expand to all other primary schools from 2012 (MoPME, 2009).	The framework arranges preschool education program which supports children for their health, nutrition, social, physical and intellectual development, and being initiated into formal education (MoPME, 2008). The learning outcomes, core materials, duration of programs and assessment techniques have been fixed by this.	Gives importance to child-friendly environments and the participation of parents and community in the activities of preschool schools. Children are not central and active in the teaching-learning process. There is no unique curriculum or teaching approaches for applying in classrooms of preschool as opposed to primary schools.

From the table it has become clear that many different countries are focusing attention on the importance of quality in their policies and taking initiatives to achieve quality education. The literature and conceptual framework suggests that the meanings and measurement of quality are varied and its implementation depends on the social, economic and cultural context of each country.

After the above discussions on the concept and measurement process of quality in preschool education it has seemed that researchers use different indicators to assess quality. In this study seven dimensions of quality have been employed as a guide and the next section is about these dimensions.

2.16 Dimensions of Quality in Preschool Education

The earlier discussions on quality in preschool education introduce quality as a challenging concept and complicated to measure. The quality of preschool is "a multifaceted and multilevel construct that includes a variety of programs and features" (Mashburn et al., 2008, p. 735). The complexity of the concept of quality derives from complex societal systems, values, beliefs and norms. For this research I give importance to those aspects which guided me to examine the condition of quality in the classroom teaching process of preschools in Bangladesh. On the basis of *Starting Strong Report* (OECD, 2006) and *Towards a national quality framework for early childhood education and care* (EAPQECEC, 2009), I selected seven dimensions of quality to conduct this study. Figure 2.2 shows the seven quality dimensions:

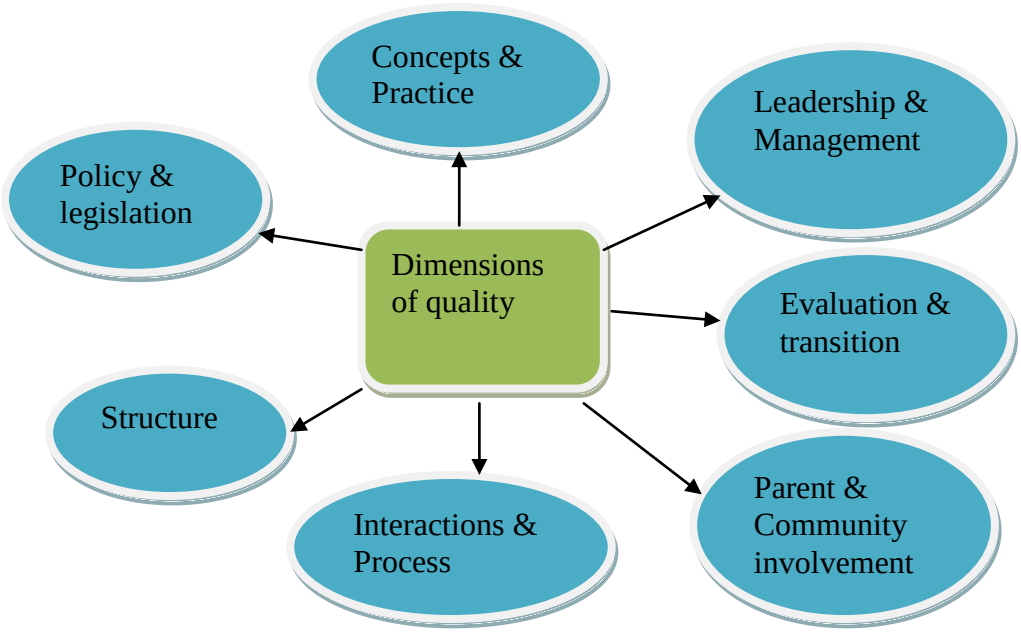

Figure 2.2 Seven dimensions of quality

This study explored the quality of preschool education in Bangladesh taking into consideration these seven dimensions which are related to each other. The following sub-sections discuss each dimension to explain how these affect the quality of preschool education from a postcolonial perspective.

2.16.1 Dimension 1- Policy and legislation.

Preschool policy is very critical to the institution's survival. It is one of the most important dimensions of quality as everything within preschool programs depends on it. All stake-holders in preschool education do policy knowingly or unknowingly. But there are official policy making bodies that make policy for preschool education. Preschool policy determines the quality of the programs that children attend. It controls all the other dimensions of the program. Preschool policy also regulates the setting up,

licensing and other rules that govern preschool operations. Good preschool policy making encourages policy actors to engage with community participants in discussing relevant policy, program and administrative issues (Torjman, 2005a).

Preschool policy, first and foremost, must be concerned with the legislation, programs and practices that govern the substantive aspects of preschool programs. This dimension of policy includes, establishment and licensing, and the second dimension must relate to how the preschools must be generally administered. These include curriculum, teachers, salaries, assessment, and resources, just to name a few. Preschool policies are either made vertically, that is, what we normally refer to as traditional policy making process or top-down (Torjman, 2005b). This usually is not consultative at the grassroots level and therefore, may exclude parents, teachers and community members. This form of policy making can be colonising as broad-based participation is minimal (Smith, 2003). Horizontal preschool policy making is more consultative and less colonising as it includes grassroots participation (Smith, 2003).

Contemporary preschool policy making is focusing more on horizontal approach as it has been realised that issues of preschool quality are generic and complex and governments alone do not have the answers to the issues. This approach, which uses collaboration, is geared towards enhancing quality in service delivery of care and services to children. Such collaborative policy making is framed in postcolonial thinking where every actor in education is valued and respected as well as given voice in the policy making process. Preschool policy making can be reactive or proactive. Reactive policy emerges in response to a concern or crisis that must be urgently addressed, for example, abuse in preschool by teachers (Cochran, 2011). Preschool proactive policies, by contrast, are introduced and pursued through deliberate choice, for

example, enacting a new curriculum framework, or introducing a new qualification standard for teachers as a way of improving the quality of the program.

In light of this national policy, legislation and regulation of the education system are important as they provide guidance to government and non-government agencies to set vision, goals and objectives of preschool education (EAPQECEC, 2009). It is the first step in any planning cycle which is necessary in designing implementation and evaluation procedures of preschool education effectively (Haddad, 1995). The policy and regulations have to be consistent with the current aims and objectives of a society that have contributed to the production of the preschool education policies and programs (Cochran, 2011). Preschool policies are different from country to country as "the cultural beliefs, values and norms; sociopolitical and economic ideologies; national wealth (per capita GDP); social welfare approach; race, gender, religion; and institutional criteria" (Cochran, 2011, p. 67) of a country influence the policy making process.

National and local policy is very important for preschool education as it manipulates the whole system of education and establishes the organisational framework, curriculum, pedagogy, teaching strategies, teacher recruitment, teaching materials and assessment techniques. Moreover, it determines several features of preschool education programs, such as:

> children's eligibility to enrol, qualifications of teachers, additional services that are available to children and their families, the opportunities and types of teacher professional development, and approaches to monitoring program and classroom quality (Pianta, Cox & Snow, 2007, as cited in Mashburn et al., 2008, p. 732).

This dimension plays a significant role in fixing the ages of children, selecting classroom settings, curriculum, pedagogy, financial strategies, and parent involvement according to the context of the country (Cochran, 2011). As this dimension has great influence on the preschool education program it is required to establish well considered policies and regulations for the benefit of all children. Children's agency, representation and voice need to be considered in the policy decision-making process because the decisions are relevant and carry a great deal of weight in relation to children's own goals for their learning and development (Foote & Ellis, 2011). When children get opportunities to be active participants in the policy framing processes and people hear their voices, then a sense of empowerment and agency is accorded to them (Foote & Ellis, 2011). The rights of representation and agency help children to grow up as competent and constructive learners who identify themselves as citizens and feel interested to make a valued contribution to their society (Ministry of Education, 2006).

2.16.2 Dimension 2- Structural.

The structural dimension of quality is related to the physical environments of preschool. The infrastructure of buildings, classroom size and settings, indoor and outdoor materials, child-teacher ratios, the quality and training levels of teachers and child-appropriate curriculum are important components of this dimension (OECD, 2006). A number of researchers have identified the provision of physical health and safety, physical space, group sizes, child-teacher ratios, staff qualifications and training, and positive relationships as imperative factors for quality in preschool schools (Ceglowski, 2004; Love, Schochet & Meckstroth, 1996; Press, 2006). The following paragraphs expand the discussion on the importance of these elements for the quality in preschool.

The environment of pre-school has a strong influence on children's and teachers' feelings and actions. A good preschool environment that utilizes culturally relevant resources has a considerable impact on how children will develop as learners and social beings (Foote & Ellis, 2011). Moreover, the environment provides guidelines to children about "what they can do, how and where they can do" (Pairman & Terrinin, 2001, p. 1). Therefore, educators and teachers have to consider the powerful effect of the environment in creating the school and classroom settings for children's learning and wellbeing (Foote & Ellis, 2010). A study conducted by Agbenyega (2011) on preschools in Australia showed that children value and enjoy learning environments that consider child inputs rather than those that are constructed by adults without their contributions. One would argue that how could children contribute to the development of the structural aspects of their schooling? There are various ways to incorporate children's perspectives in constructing their learning environments. For example, children could be interviewed about the type of resources and play materials they would like to have in their environments. Children's ideas are also important in procuring furniture and equipment for their classrooms.

The child-teacher ratio is also vital and significant for achieving the quality in preschool education because small size classroom and favourable child-teacher ratio directly influence the quality of preschool education (Mashburn & Pianta, 2010). When a teacher has the appropriate number of children in the classroom, then he or she gets more opportunity to give attention to all children and also to be able to involve them in more individual activities (Rimm-Kaufman, Paro, Downer & Pianta, 2005). In addition, teacher-child ratio plays a significant role in improving children's performances and skills. One research study has found that smaller group size of children in the classroom is connected with their constructive behaviour and educational achievement (Brophy,

1999, as cited in Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2005). This is because teachers are able to attend to individual child's needs when the class size is small. The above discussions of the literature on teacher and child ratio recognise that appropriate number of children in the classroom is a major factor for ensuring quality of the teaching practices in preschools.

Teachers' qualifications and training are also the key indicators of structural dimension of quality preschool education programs (Tayler et al., 2006). The Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) study (2004) found that qualified teachers had the greatest impact on quality, and was linked with better cognitive and social-behavioural achievements of children. In contrast, less qualified and untrained teachers are responsible for poorer learning outcomes of children (Sammons et al., 2002; Sylva et al., 2004). If the teachers of preschools do not have relatively academic and professional qualifications, then it becomes critical to train them and improve the quality of their teaching processes (Rao & Sun, 2010).

The above mentioned components of structural dimension are not neutral, as social power relations play dominant roles in how the environment and resources are structured for children (Freeman & Nairn, 2000). The extent of children's participation depends on the nature of power relationships which position children either as an active participant or a passive receiver (Foote & Ellis, 2011). In most preschool, the environment, settings, activities, resources, opportunities and routines are created and controlled by adults where children have little or no chance to express their agency and voice (Foote & Ellis, 2011). Such colonized structural dimensions view children as passive recipients of knowledge from adults (Foote & Ellis, 2011).

2.16.3 Dimension 3-Educational concepts and practice.

This dimension is concerned with teachers' knowledge and perception to curriculum and contents of preschool education, and also the application of their understandings in practice (EAPQECEC, 2009). Curriculum is the important factor of this dimension because it provides the information about the goals, contents and learning competencies of preschool education to teachers. Moreover, it identifies and explains the issues allied with children's achievements, the processes of teaching, classroom organisation, textbooks and materials, relationships between teachers, students and parents (Weikart, 1986). Curriculum is linked with quality of preschool education (Catron & Allen, 2008) so educators and teachers need to have in-depth understandings of the curriculum, which implies they must be involved actively in the curriculum making process.

Teachers of preschools are the major persons in children's educational life so their correct knowledge and skills on the curriculum, content and learning outcomes are important for the quality classroom teaching practices. Teachers' knowledge on contents and teaching approaches can work as an effective resource in preschools. Their level of understandings on context and children's ability influence their teaching practices and quality of preschool education. So they need to understand the lessons properly and prepare before teaching in the classrooms. Often, the curriculum is prepared by authorised bodies and handed down to teachers without public or teacher consultations. Such approaches to curriculum making depict colonial relationships with teachers and families. In Australia for example, the recent Early Years Learning Framework (National Curriculum) passed through a public consultative process (parents, teachers, civil society) before it was finally approved and launched in 2009.

This is a postcolonial way of developing a curriculum document that serves the ultimate interest of teachers, children and society.

2.16.4 Dimension 4- Interactions and processes.

The dimension of interaction and process focuses on the teaching strategies of teachers, their attitude, behaviour and relationships to children and parents. In the preschool schools teachers are the main drivers of the education program. They "take responsibilities for stimulating, directing and supporting children's development and learning by providing the experiences that each child requires" (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2009, p. 17). Teachers' view of children has effects on the learning process and also on teaching approaches which they apply in the classrooms (Johansson, 2004). When teachers decolonise their thinking and acknowledge children as social agents with opinions and voices of their own, the power shifts to children's goodwill (Smith, 2007a) and they feel happy and comfortable in the preschools. In some preschools there are strong power relations that reproduce the colonial experience. Teachers may consider themselves as the wiser and more knowledgeable person and believe that children do not know anything, therefore they must be controlled (Friere, 1998). In a colonised classroom, the teacher plays a role as the subject of the learning process, while the students are completely objects (Freire, 2007; Mprah, 2008). In this type of classroom, children just sit in front of teachers quietly and they are not allowed to move, talk or ask question when teacher is present in the classroom. This approach of teachers ignores the identity of children as social beings and prevents them from representing their own voices in the presence of teachers.

Relationships in preschools are important because through it children construct their understandings, develop skills and learn to respect and acknowledge the value of

each person (NAEYC, 2009). When teachers create positive and close relationship with children they have a better realization about children's individual needs, interests, values and beliefs, culture, abilities and expectations (NAEYC, 2009). Relationships between children and teachers are "most effective when it includes care, rearing and concern for the general well-being of every child, as well as special support for their learning" (OECD, 2006, p. 128). Children feel secure in the classroom environment and do activities spontaneously when they have friendly and pleasant relationships with teachers (Howes & Lee, 2007).

When the general picture of child-teacher interaction in classrooms reveal contradictory situation with the above mentioned, and where children are treated as an audience to receive knowledge from teachers who assume themselves as superior and more powerful (Agbenyega, 2009). Under colonised and colonising teachers effective learning diminishes, children receive little or no recognition for their contribution to knowledge and feel scared to represent their ideas and thoughts. All children require quality education in a democratic classroom (Giroux, 1992). Hegemonic practices of teachers fail to create "trustworthiness, inclusiveness, respect, wellbeing and value for all learners" (Agbenyega, 2009, p. 8). Extreme exercise of power in classrooms by teachers does not allow children to be inventive and critical, to make their own sense or express their ideas openly in the classrooms of preschools.

2.16.5 Dimension 5- Leadership and management.

In this study the dimension of management and leadership of preschools discusses about the authorization structures of preschools (EAPQECEC, 2009). In the pursuit of quality administrating the educational activities, every preschool requires to have a management body. This can be formed on the basis of a country's policy and

regulations and need to include teachers, parents and community leaders. The role of each member of the executive committee is important for the better performance and quality of a preschool (Thornton, Wansbrough, Clarkin-Phillips, Aitken & Tamati, 2009).

From a postcolonial view, every member of the committee or group should have identity, agency, speaking position, representation and power to express their opinions and preferences. At present many countries move from the central government to the local school level and share the activities with the principals, teachers, parents, community members and children of school (Levacic, 1998; Raab, 2000). For example, in Bangladesh, the regulation of the Operational Framework for Preschool Education has made provisions for non-government organisations, teachers, parents and community persons to be included as members in the preschool management committee for sharing their views and thoughts (MoPME, 2008). But how this is translated from policy level to practice is another issue. In order to improve the quality and enhance the knowledge-based economy, all persons concerned with preschools should have the opportunity to say what they think about budgets, plans and programs for preschools, teaching strategies, and evaluation techniques.

2.16.6 Dimension 6- Evaluation and transition methods.

Evaluation techniques, transition programs, health and safety issues of children are implicated in this dimension. To achieve productive learning outcomes are the major goal of preschool education program in all countries (OECD, 2006). However, the outcomes could be varied from community to community regarding location, history, philosophical and educational approaches, and demand of the society (Elliott, 2006). Because a number of factors are related with the developmental outcomes of children,

such as, wealth, warm and appropriate relation of teachers with children, their awareness of children's individual learning needs, their knowledge and understanding of the goal of preschool education and content, and teaching approaches in the classrooms of the preschools are paramount (Elliott, 2006). This is where evaluation is critically important. Evaluation needs not adopt one dimensional approach such as positivist (quantitative) or interpretivist (qualitative). A blend of approaches is the surest ways of evaluating children and programs to gain a comprehensive picture of how they are performing.

Another important part of this dimension is transition programs from home to preschools. Transition programs are essential in children's life because smooth school transitions help them to feel secure and comfortable in the new environments (Broström, 2000). The family environment is the most comfortable place for all children so when they start to go to preschools, they meet with new situations, persons and educational materials. These issues seem challenging and make children feel painful, sorrowful and traumatised. Therefore, preschools need to give attention to transition processes that support children in accepting the preschools as a place of second home with joyful activities. Moreover, teachers and parents require working together for the successful transition process (Pianta & Cox, 2002). The transition period is a critical period therefore policy makers, educators, teachers and parents - all need to have good understanding about the preschool transition processes, and their roles and skills for children's benefit in their early age of education (Broström, 2000).

2.16.7 Dimension 7- Parent and community involvement.

This dimension gives importance to the involvement of parents and communities in preschool programs (EAPQECEC, 2009). The first and primary source of social

support for young children is parents so the rationale to involve them in school related activities is significant and their involvement in the learning process leads to greater student achievement (Fullan, 1991). The relationship between teacher and parent is an essential factor for children's development and it is associated with better child outcomes (Desimone, 1999; Fan & Chen, 2001; McNeal, 1999). A large body of literature recognizes that parental involvement has a positive impact on children's learning and success in the preschool (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Koegel, Koegel & Schreibman, 1991; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995;) because parents have a lot of ideas about their children's knowledge, skills and interests (Jinnah & Walters, 2008). Researchers have found that parental involvement in their children's educational institutions increases their understanding of whether the educational practices are effective (Gelfer, 1991) so that they can contribute to teaching practices in classrooms to improve their children's educational outcomes (Baker et al., 1996; Bryant, Peisner-Feinberg & Miller-Johnson, 2000; Cooter, Mills-House, Marrin, Mathews, Campbell & Baker, 1999).

Moreover, the good relationship between teachers and parents is a prerequisite for quality preschool education (Doherty-Derkowski, 1995; Hughes & MacNaughton, 2000). Therefore, the governance authorities and teachers of preschool schools need to realize that parents' participation and efforts are meant to be constructive and valued. In addition, it is necessary to make a place for them in school activities and welcome them to participate in school processes, valuing their knowledge for their children's learning, and respecting their self-confidence (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000; Soodak & Erwin, 2000). Involvement in management committees and governing bodies of preschools empowers parents and community and gives them voice (Draper & Duffy, 2006). However, there is a chance for some barriers to emerge which could become

challenging for preschools, parents and community. Parents do not like a relationship where teachers or members of the schools see themselves as having all knowledge about children and their development, and take parents as having no understanding about learning and progress of their children (NAEYC, 2009). If preschool authority disregards the voice of parents and communities it may create barriers and derail quality in preschool education. The dimensions discussed above cannot lead to quality in themselves. This means teachers' beliefs, practices and how children learn must be considered; these are reviewed in the next section.

2.17 Teachers' Beliefs and Teaching Practices in the Classrooms of Preschools

This sub-section introduces a review of the literature about the relationship of teachers' beliefs and teaching practices in the classrooms of preschools because these are important for coordinating all the seven dimensions. It highlights the need to focus not only on how teachers of preschools are teaching in the classrooms but also how they perceive the quality of preschool education. According to Borg, "beliefs dispose or guide people's thinking and action" (2001, p. 186). Pajares (1992) postulated that the belief system of a person is composed of his or her culture, attitudes, and values. In addition, the belief which a person holds, leads him or her to take decisions throughout the whole life (Bandura, 1986; Dewey, 1933; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Pajares, 1992; Rokeach, 1968). However, knowledge and experiences play an important role to change the person's beliefs and views.

On the basis of constructivist approaches, different educational researchers have investigated teachers' implicit and explicit concepts and beliefs occurring education as

decisive factors of teaching and learning practices (Fennema & Loef Franke, 1992; Jacobs, Yoshida, Stigler & Fernandez, 1997; Thompson, 1992). Every single teacher carries belief (Pajares, 1992) and teachers' beliefs play the foundation role is determining the teaching approaches in the classrooms. According to OECD report, "teachers' beliefs, practices and attitudes are important for understanding and improving educational processes" (2009, p. 89). In different researches in education, teachers' beliefs have been explored to understand their perception about teaching and learning process, learners, subject matter, and the role of teachers (Borg, 2001; Calderhead, 1995). In this study, to explore the quality of classroom teaching practices of preschools in Bangladesh, the research questions attempt to understand teachers' concepts and beliefs about the quality of preschool education. The reason to emphasise on teachers' perceptions on learning achievements is the influential relationships between their conceptions, teaching and learning processes, and practiced outcomes (Biggs, 1993; Brownlee & Chak, 2007; Watkins, 2004). Therefore, I have given importance to the relation of teachers' beliefs and practices and discuss these issues in the light of the research literature.

A number of research studies have found that teachers' beliefs and values about curriculum, content and pedagogy have impact on their classroom teaching practices in schools. For example, Woods'(1996) study of ESL teachers in North America and Borg's (1998) case study of a practising EFL teachers have established that teachers' beliefs and knowledge influence their classroom behaviours (Borg, 2001). Their beliefs influence their attitude, thoughts, judgements and behaviour to children in the classrooms of preschools (Fang, 1996; Goodman, 1988; Isenberg, 1990; Pajares, 1992; Rimm-Kauffman, Storm, Sawyer, Pianta, & La Paro, 2006; Vartuli, 2005). Cobb, Wood, and Yackel (1990) showed close relationships between teachers' beliefs and

practices which manipulates each other (as cited in Jin, 2011). Several research studies have demonstrated that teacher beliefs, instructional practices, and student learning in education are interconnected (Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991; Staub & Stern, 2002; Trigerll, Prosser, & Waterhouse, 1999; Watkins & Biggs, 2001). In addition, the beliefs teachers hold have significant effect on improving their professional development, preparation of lessons, instructional behaviours and teaching practices, and assessment strategies in preschool education (Ashton, 1990; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Buchmann, 1984; Clark, 1988; Dinham & Stritter, 1986; Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Fenstermacher, 1986, 1979; Goodman, 1988; Kulinna, Silverman & Keating, 2000; Munby, 1982, 1984; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Tabachnick, Popkewitz, & Zeichner, 1979; Weinstein, 1988, 1989;Wilson, 1990). However, the beliefs varied from teachers to teachers and these variations depend on teachers' educational level, the nature of curriculum and program of preschool education and personal experiences (Vartuli, 2005). For example, the perception of quality preschool education among Bangladeshi teachers is different from the view held by Australian teachers. While the former regards preschool quality as academic scores of children the later considers quality in terms of children's overall dispositions.

In the context of preschool education, McLean argued that teacher's belief about how children learn or process of learning influence their practices (2001). At present, the constructivist learning of children has been hailed for improving the quality of preschool education. According to Berthelsen and Brownlee (2005), effective children's learning happens when they are active observers in social settings, for example, they can learn - through watch and listen; through active participation in learning process and social settings; collaboration with teachers and other children; and learning by themselves. These realisations motivate teachers in changing their

perception to accept positive approaches in their classroom teaching process where children can be recognized as active learners rather than passive visitors.

Teachers' belief about the nature of learning of children directs them to select the teaching approaches and subject matters in preschools (Kember, 1998; Trigwell, Prosser, & Waterhouse, 1999; Watkins & Biggs, 2001). For example, when teachers believe that their roles as teachers are to transfer subject knowledge in a structured way to children for them to memorize, they make sure they are quiet, submissive within a controlled environment where they apply the direct transmission methods in the classrooms (OECD, 2009). In this situation, children are identified as objects in the classrooms who have no opportunity to participate in activities or speak in the classrooms. On the other hand, when teachers believe that children are not passive recipients in the classroom, and that they are able to develop themselves when they participate as active learners "in the process of acquiring knowledge" (OECD, 2009, p. 92), then they use the constructivist approaches. In this condition, children's improvement of thinking and reasoning get more importance than the achievement of particular curriculum and content knowledge (Staub & Stern, 2002).

In classrooms, both teachers and children are the main components of the teaching and learning process (Jin, 2011). Teachers' beliefs drive their practices and in turn, their practices impact on children's learning and achievement (Kember, 1998). According to Kember and Kwan (2000), teachers who believe that direct teaching is the only process of transmitting knowledge they have a tendency to use the rote learning or content based methods. On the other hand, those who recognize teaching as to support children for their physical, intellectual and social development are inclined to apply child oriented approaches. These teachers hold the beliefs that learning have to be a

pleasant experience for children where they get opportunities to learn through play and other joyful activities (Jin, 2011).

Teachers, who apply the conventional teaching methods in the classrooms of preschools, believe that the contents of subjects are the central parts in the teaching and learning practices. Therefore, they always give attention to the children's memorization skills of lessons even if they do not understand the meaning or theme. The focus here is to encourage children to learn specific tasks in order to get higher marks in examinations (Jin, 2011; Leung, 2001). A number of early childhood studies indicated that child centred approaches and curriculum are supportive of children's overall progress (Dunn & Kontos, 1997; Frede & Barnett, 1992; Hirsh-Pasek, Hyson, & Rescorla, 1990). These approaches recognize children's individual identity, agency and interests and give them "freedom to create their own learning through choosing from various classroom activities" (Tzuo, 2007, p. 33). However, in some preschools teachers prefer to use teacher centred curriculum and approaches as they believe that these approaches are suitable for children to learn the subject matter and achieve highest scores in examinations (Jin, 2011; Leung, 2001). In this situation, this is the need to bring changes into the teachers' beliefs and conceptions of teaching and learning approaches that are adopted in preschools otherwise, the fundamental changes to the quality of classroom teaching practices are unlikely to happen (Havita, 2000).

2.17.1 Teaching approach/practice and its importance in preschool education.

In an education system, teachers, children, and teaching and learning practices are closely interlinked. In classrooms, teaching practices involve both teachers and children in activities. In preschool classrooms, children learn spontaneously when they

find the approaches interesting and joyful, and the activities are diverse. They prefer to learn through different teaching practices which are filled up with various play activities and problem solving tasks, for example, some children feel excitement when they are engaging in building towers or houses by blocks while others like to make shapes with a puzzle (Chen & McNamee, 2011).

Kagan, Moore and Bredekamp in 1995 argue for concept of teaching and learning approaches in preschool education field to adopt multidimensional teaching approaches in preschools (Chen & McNamee, 2011). Teaching approaches or practices are the ways through which children participate in classroom activities, make interactions for learning (Fantuzzo et al., 2007). According to Chen & McNamee, "instead of describing what children learn with regard to specific content areas, approaches to learning must focus on how children learn across varied curricular tasks" (2007, p. 71).

Constructions of teaching practices are important for children because such practices recognize children's identity as active learners and enhance child's capacity to learn (Hyson, 2005; 2008). It also contributes to children's school readiness and preschool education success (Bredekamp, 2008). To engage children in activities, teachers must give attention to individual need and interest, active learning environments, children's voice and representation because these are important components of constructive practices in teaching and learning process regarding the quality of preschool education programs (Denton & West 2002; Fantuzzo et al. 2007; Hyson 2005, 2008). In optimistic teaching practices, teachers of preschools 'can support the development of learning approaches through specific adjustments in how they set out learning materials, pace an activity, and through comments they make while the

children are engaged in the activity" (Chen & McNamee, 2011, p. 77). Denton and West (2002), showed that children who learned through positive and child centred teaching practices at the beginning of preschool education tend to achieve more developmental outcomes than learning through memorisation. Li-Grining, Votruba-Drzal, Maldonado-Carreno and Haashas (2010) reiterated that child development focused teaching practices in preschools can encourage long-standing academic progress for all children (2010). In addition, the positive and child activity based teaching practices help preschool children to acquire subject knowledge and skills more quickly (Denton & West, 2002) and enhance the quality of such programs.

2.18 Children as Informed Learners

Teaching and learning is a complex process and it is important to know about children and their characteristics to be able to support their learning. The view of the child as strong, capable and active learner has a significant implication for selecting teaching approaches and materials in preschools (Patterson, 2005). Children are naturally inquisitive and imaginative, and have the skills to make relation between their physical and social environment from early days in preschools, and this can occur only when educators provide supporting learning environments, are helpful and interactive, as well as develop partnership with parents and family members (Talay-Ongan & Emily, 2005). It is recognised that:

> Young children construct their knowledge through their interactions with objects and people, and are not passive recipients of knowledge. They are motivated to achieve new means for new ends. Young children are primed to explore and discover their environment, and deduce the regularities or principles of how

things operate and relate to one another, with qualitative changes in different stages of development (Talay-Ongan & Emily, 2005, p. 57).

The Reggio Emilia approach in Italy for instance, believe that "all children have preparedness, potential, curiosity, and interest in engaging in social interaction, establishing relationships, constructing their learning and negotiating with everything the environment brings to them" (Gandini, 1997, p. 16). In support of this the New South Wales Curriculum Framework in Australia also views children of any age as having strength, power, rights, competence, possibilities, skills and abilities, feelings, knowledge, experience and understandings (Office of Childcare, 2002) that teachers need to harness in the process of their teaching. These positive images about children as capable learners indicate that the curriculum of preschool education have to support children's welfare and learning, and create potentials and prospects for their engagement rather than subject them to recipients of transmitted knowledge (Office of Childcare, 2002). The teaching approaches of preschools need to be integrated and child-centred to enable children explore and experiment. Programs and practices in preschools must be related with children's unique learning capabilities and daily lives, and offer purposeful activities to make them construct own knowledge (Patterson, 2005). Research suggest that creating chances for children to learn through real events and objects, induces spur their interests and curiosity for in-depth learning rather than surface learning. In this way children better understand the world around them and therefore, develop dispositions and skills that are useful for themselves and the society in which they live (Mannigel, 1998).

2.19 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the rationale of quality preschool education for children and society. It has also described the diverse activities and initiatives of preschool education in different developed and developing countries. This literature review also has discussed seven indicators employed to measure quality in preschool education and helps to outline the conceptual framework for this study. The following chapter is about methodology, research design and methods of this study.

Chapter Three
Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a review of the literature and the theoretical framework of this research study. It also discussed the seven widely accepted dimensions of quality in preschool education. In this chapter, I discuss and analyse the methodological issues in conducting this research using both postcolonial methodology and qualitative design grounded in an interpretive framework. The methodology provided a useful way to analyse the mechanisms by which domination, representation, identity and voice are implicated in the seven dimensions of quality.

3.2 Methodology

This chapter discusses the research methodology and design employed in this research. It provides the philosophical basis for conducting documentary analysis, non-participant observationa and semi-structured interviews in investigating the quality of classroom teaching practices of three preschools in Bangladesh. It also analyses the philosophical grounding and justification of using a postcolonial interpretive methodology for exploring the quality in preschool education in a developing country Bangladesh.

The research questions leading this research are:

1. How do preschool teachers and head-teachers in Bangladesh conceptualize quality in preschool education?

2. How do their conceptualizations influence their practice?

3. What forms of knowledge are prescribed by the curriculum documents?

4. How can postcolonial theory be used to critique quality in preschool education in Bangladesh?

These research questions guide the research methodology and design of the study. It is argued that research questions must lead the methodology and design (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Doing a study on the quality of preschool education in a country previously colonised by a foreign country is a complex research activity. Such research must attempt to understand the complex factors implicated in the education system as a result of the legacy of colonialsation (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2011). Secondly, the term quality is a contested term with no universally binding definition (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999) therefore, situating the methodology of this study in postcolonial theory allows for critiquing internally imposed practices that could induce problematic quality dimensions in the education of young children in local situations.

The rationale for a postcolonial interpretive methodology in this research is related to issues of identity, agency, power, voice and representation and their implications for practice There are many lenses of postcolonial theory. Dirlik propposes three conceptual lenses of this theory which I mentioned in Chpater Three. The methodological approach of this study is based on Dirlik's third lense of postcolonial theory which examines discursively, discourses and structures within education system that imposes structures on individuals who are agents within the system (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1997; Tobin 1997). Evident in poscolonial methodology is a rejection of a universal truth; and percieving the colonial in this way is

not to ascribe the domination and oppression in education to the external or the foreign, but to actions and activities that are generated within the school's own structures (Agbenyega & Deku, 2011; Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2011). This might include for example, how individual teachers plan and deliver pedagogy to children in the education system in Bangladesh. Therefore, I used this methodological approach to explore the ways in which children and teachers of preschool in Bangladesh have been identified and represented in their schools (Cannella & Viruru, 2004; Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999; Gupta, 2006; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1997; Tobin 1997; Viruru, 2002, 2005; Viruru & Cannella, 2001).

3.3 Choosing a Postcolonial Interpretive Approach for this Study

In this study a postcolonial interpretive approach is chosen as it provides a deep insight into "the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118). This methodology allows for those involved in educating children to be observed in practice and interviewed. Interpretive approach is based on the assumption that reality is socially constructed and the researcher becomes the tool by which this reality is uncovered for public scrutiny (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001). In this sense the concept of quality in preschool education in Bangladesh is considerd a socially contructed discourse. The construction of such concepts is characterised by interaction among all social actors of education. Interpretive research approach is valuable as it enables the researcher and the participants to co-produce meanings of such social realities (Mingers, 2001). In a postcolonial interpretive study the focus is not on the researcher imposing quantitative

arguments supported by statistical exactness but rather qualitative discursive insights, and subjective statements (Garcia & Quek, 1997).

For this particular study on the quality of preschool education in Bangladesh, I strived to attain a postcolonial discursive account of the analysed teacher classroom practices, the concepts of quality and how various curriculum documents impose restrictions on children or facilitate their learning and development (Mingers, 2001). A postcolonial interpretive research such as this one is not concerned with the absolute truth but a conceptual process of troubling the status-quo within preschool education practices in a developing country such as Bangladesh. It is argued that "no construction is or can be incontrovertibly right [and researchers] must rely on persuasiveness and utility rather than proof in arguing [their] position" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108).

In interpretive research, "our knowledge of reality is gained only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents, tools, and other artifacts" (Klein & Myers, 1999, p. 69). Similarly, postcolonial researchers are interested in how language, consciousness, shared meanings, tools and other artefacts are used to objectify the other; that is to dominate, exploit, oppress, alienate and commit violence against other people. For example, teachers may commit violence against children through the way they teach and manage their classrooms. In this sense a postcolonial interpretive methodology provides space for interrogating socially acceptable education practices that make children's identity invisible or their voices and agency subjugated in their experience of schooling (Agnehyega & Deku, 2011).

In general, this study utilises a qualitative research approach in order to investigate an educational problem in a natural (classroom) setting to build an all encompassing and complex representation, using a rich description and postcolonial

explanation of participants' views (Creswell, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Morgan & Smircich, 1980). This does not mean all qualitative research is interpretive. A "qualitative research may or may not be interpretive depending upon the philosophical assumptions of the researcher" (Klein & Myers, 1999, p. 69) and the research questions. Some of my research questions asks; how do preschool teachers and head-teachers in Bangladesh conceptualize quality in preschool education? What forms of knowledge are prescribed by the curriculum documents? These are ontological question asking, "What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). This is the basis for defining how I approach the research problem in this study. I would like to argue that first, a postcolonial interpretive researcher's ontological assumption is that social reality concerning the quality of preschool education is locally and specifically constructed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) by teachers and policy makers through their action and interaction in everyday school practices (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). I concur with Neuman's (1997) proposition that "social reality is based on people's definition of it" (p. 69).

Second, as a postcolonial interpretive researcher, I do not consider the existence of an objective static world, and therefore I see the concept of quality preschool education and practice strongly bounded by particular time and specific context. This orientation has led to other epistemological research questions: How do the teachers' conceptualizations influence their practice? How can postcolonial theory be used to critique quality in preschool education in Bangladesh? These questions attempt to establish "the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108) which can only be understood using the ontological view. The epistemoligical assumption underlying this research is that "findings are literally created as the investigation proceeds" (Guba & Lincoln,

1994, p. 111). In explicit terms, the undertanding of the quality of preschool education is visible through my obervation of how practices and meanings are formed, enacted and informed by the “language and tacit norms shared by humans working towards some shared goal” in the preschool (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991, p. 14).

In order to understand how the quality of preschool education is conceptualised and practiced in Bangladesh and offer a convincing explanation of what is going on I conducted interviews, observed classroom practices and analysed curriculum documents. In this way, I shared in the participants’ everyday life during fieldwork over a period of six months.

3.4 Method of this Study

In this section, I outline the reason for selecting the qualitative methods for this study. The research method is important as it provides direction to the selection of research techniques, participnats and analysis categories (Merriam, 2002). The research method in education can be quantitative, qualitative or mixed. As this study is informed by postcolonial theory I settled for the qualitative methods of data collection. By using the qualitative approach of documentary analysis, observation and interview, I could interrogate discursively, the daily teaching pracitces of classrooms regarding quality. In addition, the postcolonial issues of this study, such as, identity, agency, power, voice and representation, offered progressive ways to use qualitative research methods (Jack & Westwood, 2006). The progressive approach allowed me to investigate teachers’ perspectives and experiences in relation to quality classroom teaching practices of preschool education, the philosophy of teachers in relation to children, as well as voice and represantation of children in the classrooms. As a qualitative researcher, I reflected

on, and interpreted the kinds of quality teaching practices that were happening in the classrooms of the preschool in Bangladesh from the viewpoint of head teachers, a program organiser and teachers. The following section is about the research design of this study.

3.5 Research Design

The research design is a blueprint of research which informs the selection of research tools and participants, and determines the logical categories for analysing the collected data (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1994). To conduct this study, I used a qualitative case study approach to collect data as these explored different features of classroom teaching situations of the preschools in Bangladesh (Jolayemi, 2011). Merriam (1998) lists three methods for conducting qualitative case studies, which include analysis of documents, observation and interview. I have employed those for data collection in this research. These approaches were interrelated and as one method influenced others in my data collection process. For example, document analysis provided direction for areas to focus on during classroom observation in the research schools. Observation and document analyses also guided the development of the interview questions on concepts and judgments about quality teaching practices in the preschool in Bangladesh. The next section provides a more detail account on the participants and each of these three main stages of data collection.

3.6 Steps in the Data Collection Process

Qualitative research is complex research endeavour. It is not easy and feasible often on the onset to identify or map out the parameters completely before fieldwork. In

this case some pilot field work is necessary. With respect to this I conducted this study in two stages. The first stage involved a scoping study in Melbourne, Australia. The scoping study was conducted because it is “a useful way of mapping fields of study” (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005, p. 6) that is to determine the direction, including plans for conducting the main study in Bangladesh.

3.6.1 The scoping study.

This is not a comparative study, therefore the scoping study was not conducted for comparative purposes. The aim of the scoping study in preschools in Melbourne was to become familiar with classroom observation processes, and also to formulate interview questions for the main study. To explore the situation of quality classroom teaching practices in a Western developed country, I visited four preschools in a suburb of Melbourne, Australia. I used the revised Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS-R) (Harms, & Clifford, 1980; Sylva et al., 2006) to observe the classrooms teaching practices. The ECERS-R was first developed by Harms and Clifford in 1980 in United States of America to assess seven aspects of early childhood and preschool environment (Ishimine, Tayler & Bennett, 2010).

In 1998, this scale was revised and is now comprised of 43 items in seven aspects used to measure the quality of preschools (Sylva et. al., 2006). During classroom observations in the scoping study, I evaluated the following seven aspects of the ECERS-R (Appendix 3):

- space and furniture;
- personal care routines;

- language;
- activities;
- interaction;
- program structure; and
- relation between parents and staff (Sylva et. al., 2006).

In terms of the observation using ECERS-R, it appeared that the preschools met most of the requirements of suitable inside and outside physical facilities, and adequate educational resources and interactive acitivities for children to be classified as quality child learning centres. Couple with the resources of these preschools, were also the teaching approaches used by the teachers, most of which also met the standard requirement of the ECERS-R. However, during observation I noticed that in two of the four preschools, the teachers rarely interacted with some of the children. In particular, children who were shy or have come from non-English speaking backgrounds had difficulty working with some of the teachers. In many instances, some of these children played alone and did not take part spontaneously in play or activities.

After the classroom observation in the scoping study preschools, I obtained permission from the teachers to enagage them in formal conversation about their practices. I wanted to gain insight into the teachers' concept and perception of quality, and how this influenced their teaching approaches in the classrooms. Questions for the dialogue between me and the teachers were related to their thoughts and beliefs about

quality preschool education, their professional qualifications, and their relationship with children, parents and others. Sample questions I asked included:

i) What is your understanding of quality teaching in preschool?

ii) How do you teach to achieve quality?

iii) How do classroom settings, teacher-child ratio and educational materials influence your teaching?

iv) How do you maintain relationship with children and parents?

v) How are parents and community involved with school activities?

vi) How does your school manage and organize educational programs for children to ensure quality?

These preliminary interviews with the teachers during the scoping study was invaluable as it gave me ideas on what to focus my questions on in the main study in Bangladesh.

Initially, I decided to use the rating scale to explore the quality of preschool education in Bangladesh however, I realised that the theoretical framework of my research (postcolonial theory) is not compatible with using western tool to measure quality in a developing country Bangladesh. Doing this would mean comparing 'apples with mangoes' which might constitute an epistemological and methodological imposition. The main concern is that the ECERS-R contains some items which are not present in Bangladeshi preschools. For example, in Bangladesh, there were no

regulation and provision regarding arrangement of equipment for leisure, sun safety, and space for privacy, meals and quality in the preschools. Although, these items influenced the quality of preschool education generally, Bangladesh has not yet attained the same status for this instrument to be validated there. Moreover, the ECERS-R is an evaluation instrument and my study is not evaluating a program but rather exploring issues of quality as they pertain to Bangladesh.

Despite these, the scoping study was useful as it contributed to how I selected the participants and research tools for data collection in the main study.The following section presents information on the participants of this study in Bangladesh.

3.7 Participants

In this study, I employed purposive sampling technique in selecting three preschools for the study. This technique is based on the assumption that by using purposive sampling I would be able to discover and locate the significant information I need from the participants to respond to the research questions (Merriam, 1998). Purposive sampling targets sites and participants who are deemed to have indepth knowledge about the phenomenon under investigation and in this case, quality teaching practices in preschool education in Bangladesh. All the three preschools which participated in this study were selected from the three main categories of preschool in Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. These three schools were classified as urban and semi-urban schools. The schools also fall into the following categories:

i) A government preschool

ii) A non-governmnet (NGO) preschool, and

iii) A private preschool

The government preschools were the main types of early years schools in Bangladesh which are known as baby classes and are part of primary schools. According to the Primary Education Development Program-II Survey, 2005, the number of government preschool were 12,047 and during that year 51,7938 children attended preschool education (MoPME, 2008). I selected one school from this category to provide a snap-shot of the situations in classrooms and teaching process, and to understand teachers' perception and voice regarding the quality in a government preschool.

Beside government initiatives, a number of non-government organisations deliver preschool education all over the country. For example, UNICEF, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Plan Bangladesh, and Save the Children USA operate more than 25,000 preschool education centres for children in the country (MoPME, 2008). One of the non-government organisation, named (BRAC), runs 15,000 preschool education centres with over 90,000 children attending (UNESCO, 2006). As these organisations played a significant role in providing preschool education in Bangladesh, I selected one preschool owned by one of these organisations as a second site to explore how they were running the preschool education programs in terms of its quality.

The third research site was a private preschool. In Bangladesh, many private interpreneurs have established preschool education programs with their curriculum and contents following those of Western countries. According to UNESCO report (2006), nearly 4,84,000 children went to these types of preschools. In this study, it was important to explore teachers' views and practices related to quality preschool education in Bangladesh as the majority uses foreign curriculum documents. From this perspective I selected one private preschool as a site for data collection.

In qualitative research human participants are a good source of information about the research problem (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). In order to obtain a useful data I invited the head teachers, program organisers and teachers of the three preschool in Bangladesh as participants. Despite considerable diversity in the social, economic, cultural and academic backgrounds of the participants, they were all involved at educators in the various preschools, and their participation played a significant role in this study as they shared their thoughts and opinions regrading quality classroom teaching practices in their respective preschools in Bangladesh.

The following table shows the profile of the participant schools, the positions of staff interviewed and also the grounds for selecting them.

Table 3.1

Participants and reasons for selecting them

Participants	Number	Reasons for selection
Government Preschool	1 Headteacher	Responsible for the administration of the preschool
	1 Class Teacher	Directly involved in teaching the children in the preschool
Non-government preschool	1 Program Organiser	Responsible for the day-to-day operations of the NGO preschools
	1 Class Teacher	Directly involved in teaching the children in the preschool
*Private Preschool	1 Headteacher	Responsible for the administration of the preschool
	4 Class Teachers	Directly involved in teaching of children in the preschool

*Four teachers were selected in this preschool class because they do subject teaching in this school

At the time of data collection I focused on the voices of the head teachers, the program organiser and teachers as they were the central persons who have valuable information and knowledge to shed light on what I was investigating. The next sub-section discusses the approaches used in this study to collect data.

3.8 Research Process

The main phase of data gathering was in Bangladesh. The research process of this study comprised of three approaches - document analysis, classroom observation and interview of the head teahcers, program organiser and teachers. The documents reviewed provided some vital information about policy and programs of preschool education in Bangladesh; classroom observation described the details of teachers' and children's behaviour and activities; and interviews demonstrated participants'

knowledge and opinions regarding quality (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). Figure 3.1 below provides the processes that were followed in generating data for analysis. The following figure shows the phases of the research and its processes.

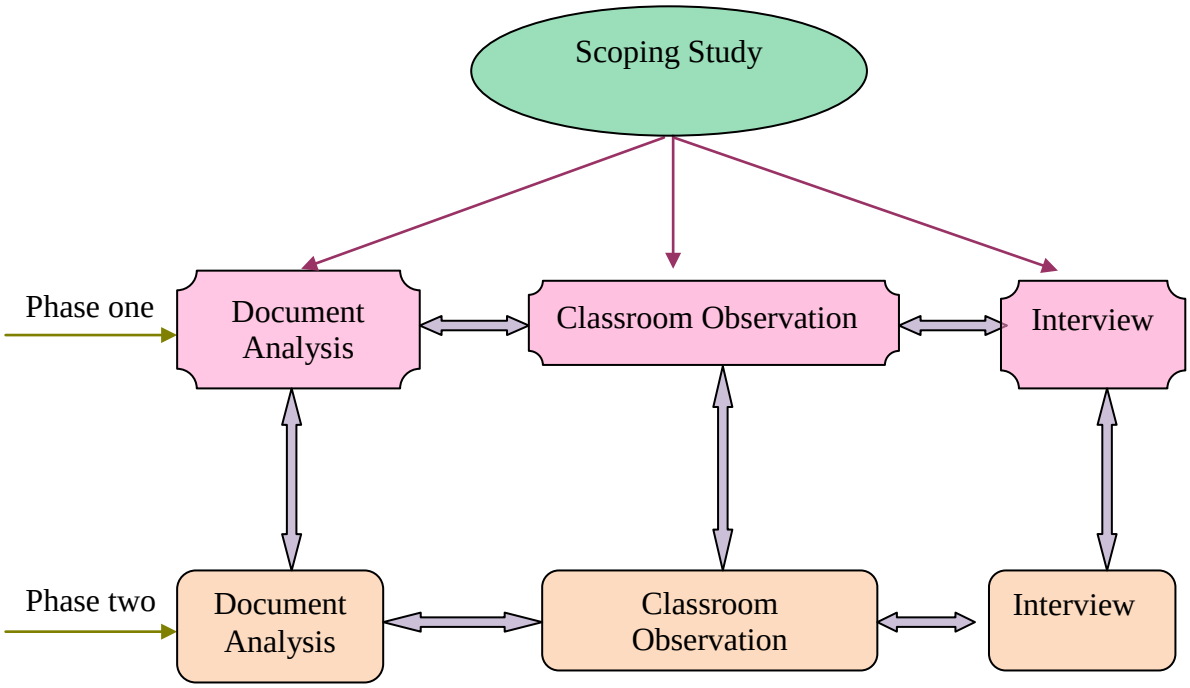

Figure 3.1 The data collection process

In the research site, I first collected and analysed three documents of the three preschool to get a detail information about the current policies and programs informing teaching and learning in these schools. This was followed by non-participant classroom observation in the three preschools. The final method involved interviews with two head teachers, a program organiser and six teachers of the preschools. Classroom observations in particular was useful because what I observed in the classrooms became the basis for developing relevant questions for the participants in the interviews regarding their practices, activities, behaviour and relationships with children, and parents.

3.8.1 Documentary analysis.

The first approach to data collection is document analysis. I decided to use documents as research instrument because like other research tools, documents “are manipulated in organized settings for many different ends, and they also function in different ways” (Prior, 2003, p. 4) to inform school practices. In research, documents can provide rich data (Ashleigh, 2005), for example, curriculum documents provide information on the philosophy underpinning teaching and learning in schools. As the participants of the study were from three distinct preschools in Bangladesh I selected three available documents of these schools. For information about government activities regarding preschool education, I analysed the 2008 Operational Framework for Preschool Education, Lesson Plans and the Research Report of the Governance Organisation in the non-government preschool.

These documents were examined and anlysed because of their conection to the research questions, purpose and theoretical framework. The information examined were related to:

- present policy, regulations and future plans on preschool education program of government, preschool and non-government schools;
- curriculum and duration of preschool education;
- environmental settings, child-teacher ratio and classroom procedures;
- teacher’s qualifications and provisions for their professional development;
- child-teacher relationships, and provision of parental involvement.

The documents provided directions for classroom observations and the development of some of the questions for interviews. Bowen (2009), suggests that researchers aiming to conduct observation in schools could use school documents as a starting point. This is a useful way to contrast what is in the documents and the practice. For example, one of the documents contains povisions about the effect of child-teacher ratios on classroom teaching practice, therefore, during classroom observations I focused on this dimension and examined how high teacher-children ratios were influencing teacher practices and their possible implications on the quality of teaching practices in the classrooms. The documents also influenced my preparation for the interviews. For example, I wanted to know the opinion of Head teachers, Program Organiser and Teachers about how they manage the high child-teacher ratios and what they think of this in terms of quality. Relevant information from these documents have been presented and analysed in terms of postcolonial theory and seven dimensions of quality in Chapter Five.

3.8.2 Non-participant observation.

In qualitative research and particularly in preschool education related research, classroom observation offers opportunity to gain direct information from the authentic classroom situation (Edwards in Naughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001; Merriam, 1998). For example, to find out how the teachers' concepts and views influence their teaching practices in the classrooms, I needed to observe their real teaching moments in the classrooms. I did not use participant observation as it could disrupt me from focusing on the detail activities and behaviours that were occurring in the classroom (Merriam, 2002), therefore I adopted non-participant observation approach. This approach made the observation less intrusive and allowed the children and their teachers

to proceed normally with their school activities. The observation made it possible for me to discover the approaches the teachers were applying in their classrooms; ascertain power dynamics between the teachers and children; determine whose voices were privileged and the overall relationships with children, staff and parents.

In all, I observed the practices of the three preschools. During observation I sat on the back bench quietly, as I did not want to interrupt the daily activities of teachers and children. The time of each classroom observation was approximately 60 minutes a day for five days a week, which fit in with the normal time schedules of the schools. These observations were repeated for three weeks in each preschool bringing the total observation time to 45 hours in each of the three preschools.

Prior to conducting classroom observation, I established relationship with the classroom teachers by first visiting the school to introduce myself. I used this first visit to explain what I would be doing in the classrooms. During observation I took notes of each research site using the seven dimensions of quality as the criteria. For example, I wrote notes on the structure and environmental settings of each school, classroom settings and facilities, interactions between teacher and children, activities in the classrooms, routines and other features of the sites which were related with the research contexts. I focused on the research questions and theoretical framework of this study when observing the classroom teaching practices in the preschool. For example, I examined teachers' teaching and interaction with children, materials use and environment. I also noted down tone of the teachers' voice when they spoke to the children at teaching times. Children's reactions and feelings expressed through behaviours were noted. Patton (2002) suggests, "feelings should be recorded at the time they are experienced, while in the field" (p. 303).

I faced some difficulties during classroom observations. The first problem was related to obtaining consent from the participants. Although I provided consent forms to the head teachers to be distibuted to the teachers, they did not distribute this to them before my arrival to observe as they believed that they had the authority to allow me to observe the classrooms without the classroom teachers' consent. I found that the teachers also gave no importance to giving consent on forms. The same relates to parents. The teachers thought that parents were not the people to consent for their children when they were in schools. The head teacher and teachers felt they are the final voice to allow me to observe the classrooms without parental consent. After thorough explanation of why consent was necessary both teachers and parents signed the consent forms for the observation to proceed. During observation of classroom practices some of the teachers and children reacted to my presence by being nervous as some of them think I was there to judge them on their performance. The teachers wanted to show me the best academic work they have been doing with the children. They also tried hard to induce the children to behave properly in the classroom during my presence. To overcome this problem, I assured the teachers that the purpose of my classroom observation was not to assess them or children's performances, instead I wanted to see how they work with children and what help they might need in making their work more enjoyable and fruitful.

3.8.3 Interview.

In this research study, I used semi-structured interviews to conceptualize the knowledge, thoughts and perspectives (Patton, 1990) of head teachers, program organiser and teachers on quality classroom teaching practices in the three preschools in Bangladesh. Interviews are considered as effective method of data collection in this

qualitative research because it allowed me to explore “the meanings that lie behind the observed behaviours or documentary evidence” (Edwards in Naughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001, p. 131). Through interview, I was able to explain the purpose of this research to the participants effectively and cleared up any misconceptions (Jane, 1995). Moreover, during interview it was possible for me to locate the ideas, opinions and plans of the head teachers, program organiser and teachers towards ensuring quality in classroom teaching practices.

The interview questions of this study were designed to encourage participants to share their views about quality classroom practices which could promote child development and uptimum learning. The interviews were semi-structured and indepth with some specific and some open-ended questions. The specific questions provided the concrete answers to the direct research categories and open-ended questions gave chance to the participants to express their thoughts, opinions and feelings which are important for this study from a postcolonial perspective. Before conducting interviews I constructed questions on the basis of my research questions and theoretical framework. As I used postcolonial theory for this study, it was essential to examaine teachers’ power, agency, identity, agency, representation and voice in their teaching processes. To elicit issues about identity, power, agency, representation and voice, I asked questions about the involvement and the right of children to express thoughts and how head teachers, program organiser and teachers are involved in policy and curriculum making process. Some of the interview questions were:

- How should a standard physical environment and space of quality preschools look like? How satisfied or unsatisfied are you with the physical environment and equipments of your preschool?

- What qualification do you have? How do you perceive your current level of qualification? What professional development opportunities there are for you to improve your professional practice?

- How does child-teacher ratio influence your work as an early childhood teacher?

For other interview questions, see Appendix 1 and 2. I asked more or less the same questions to all the nine participants during interviews, but it was necessary to do some adjustments in response to different situations. The interview approaches are outlined below:

- individual, face-to-face verbal interviews with two head teachers and one program organiser

- individual, face-to-face verbal interviews with six teachers

The interview sessions varied from 45 to over 60 minutes. All of the participants in the study agreed that I would record their conversations. Before interviewing I established good relations with the participants to encourage them to share information more openly. For example, I explained to them that their information and ideas were very important because these would be used to develop futher ideas to enhance the quality of preschool education. I also assured them that their identity would not be disclosed to any other party and neither would their comments be associated with names that could potentially identify them thus they could express their opinions freely. Despite this assurance, some participants were silent on some questions during the interviews as they considered those questions too personal. As a Bangladeshi studying in a foreign country, has also added to my profile which affected they way I was

perceived by the participants as having more voice than they do. To overcome this problem I used my local lingo and accent and made the environment friendly and informal as much as possible during the interviews. Some participants treated me as a guest in their schools and wanted to describe the good sides of the schools and teachers' activities. However, some teachers made complaints about rules, facilities and resources of their schools which were valuable information for this study.

First, I developed the interview questions (see Appendix 1 and 2) in English for head teachers, program organiser and teachers, and then translated each into Bangla by using familiar language to make the questions clear (Merriam, 1998) to the participants. The interviews were conducted in "Bangla" which is the official medium of instructions at the various schools and times chosen by the participants. I used a digital voice recorder to record the interview proceedings for later transcription. After each session, I transferred the file onto the office computer and deleted that from the recorder so there was no risk to hear the words by others. After each interview I transcribed and translated all the data. The transcribed data was sent to the participants for crosschecks and validation before it was finally included for analyses. The next section of this chapter discusses the approaches to data analysis.

3.9 Analytical Categories

Data analysis is a part of research design (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). As I conducted a postcolonial qualitative research situated in an interpretive framework much thought was required to making decisions about data analysis (Maxwell, 2008). Each qualitative research project is unique so the analytical categories of this study is distinctive (Patton, 2002) and also inductive (Merriam, 2002). The theoretical

framework and research questions of the study guided the development of the exact strategies used in analysing the data (Merriam, 2002). The analytical categories include postcolonial issues, such as, identity, agency, power, representation and voice. These were determined as categories so as to critically make sense of the seven widely accepted dimensions of quality. The following figure is a representation of the analytical categories.

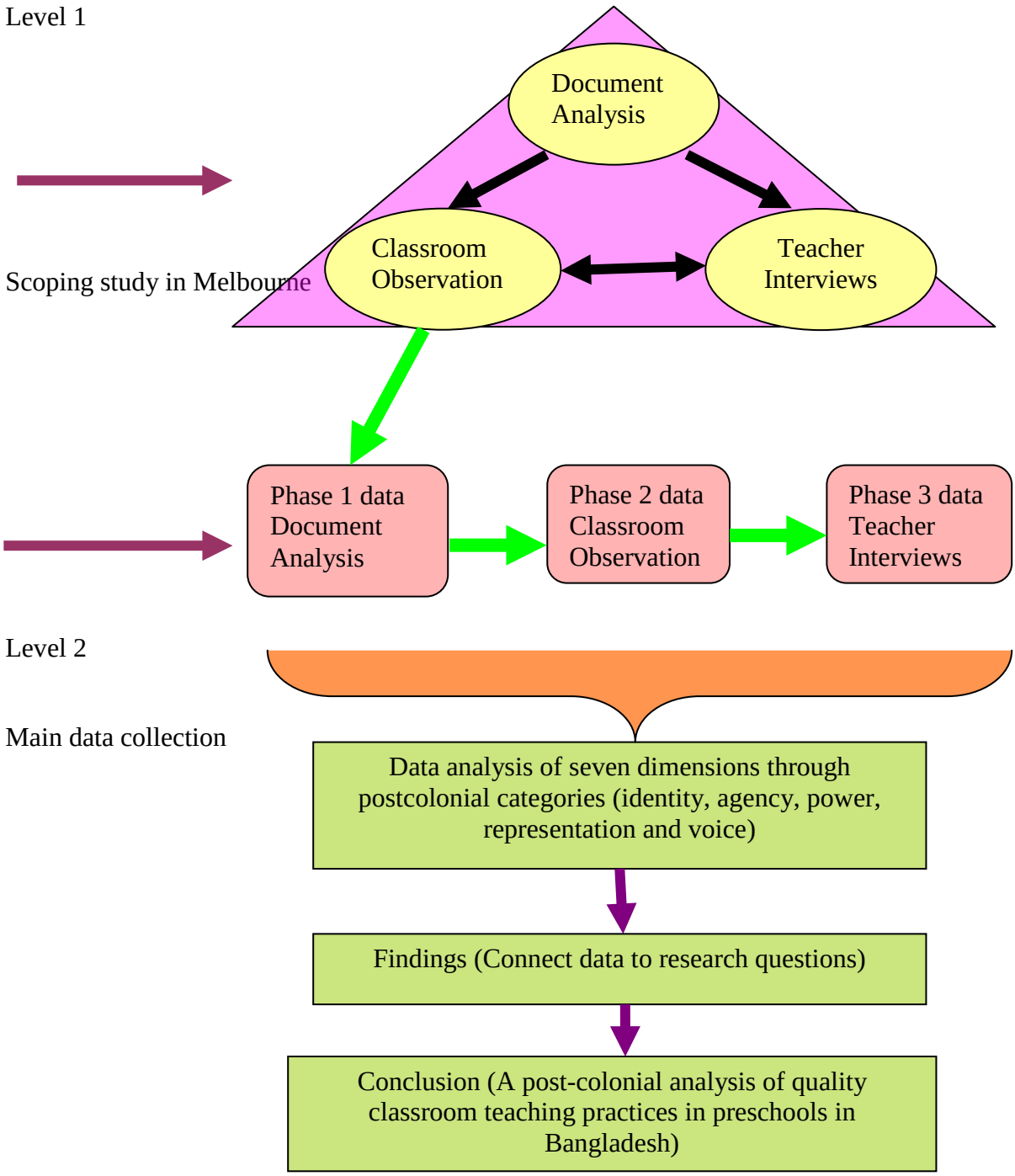

Figure 3.2 Analytical categories

In qualitative research, "data analysis is simultaneous with data collection" (Merriam, 2002, p. 14). In accordance with this, the data analyses process of this study started when I commenced classroom observation in the three preschools in Bangladesh. I examined three kinds of documents and interviewed head teachers, program organiser

and teachers. Combining my personal background and experience, the literature review and theoretical framework I initially attempted to investigate and illustrate the influence of seven quality dimensions on transforming the quality of preschool education in Bangladesh.

3.9.1 Approaches to data analysis.

The way in which discourse constructs an assumed universal reality is pivotal to postcolonial analysis. In order to expose the 'quality' of preschool education to a postcolonial analysis, I required a methodology that is particularly concerned with how discourse and curriculum documents present a specific interpretation of what constitute early childhood quality, and how it occurs through neo-colonial power relations and practices. I examined policy documents, interview transcripts and observation notes in order to make sense of how these data sources reveal the day –today practices of teachers and their views about quality. As a postcolonial researcher my analysis of data is not aimed at revealing the truth but to make visible any discourse underwriting any epistemological positioning of quality in early childhood in Bangladesh (Hall & Tucker, 2004).

To uncover the issues implicated in participant views about 'preschool education quality', curriculum documents, and teacher practices I employed a critical discourse analysis to analyse the important role that discourses play in the data collected. Critical discourse analysis on the data sets which were all texts looks at deconstructive analysis and interpretation of text. The justification here is that every text is conditioned and inscribes itself within a given discourse, discourse analysis is not about providing absolute truth to a specific problem, but it enables us to understand the issues behind a specific research problem (Apple, 1996; Baker & Luke, 1991; Ball, 1990; Bourdieu,

1992). In this study the analysis was geared toward uncovering dominant epistemologies (Bourdieu, 1992) that frame the quality in some other countries as the 'other' using universal notions of the term. For example, is the quality in preschool education in Bangladesh constantly heralded to be inferior, in need of salvation and thus expected to fit within the prescribed standards of Western statistical measures regardless of historical and cultural differences?

Thus in employing discourse analysis in this study I fruitfully explored the meanings behind the data set to create new forms of consciousness. Critical discourse analysis and postcolonial discursive framework are mutually constitutive. During data analysis I was attentive to how my own agenda and my insider knowledge as a Bangladeshi influence how the data are understood and the meaning I extracted from them. To conduct a reasonable analysis of my data analysis I was guided by both an inductive approach - using my research aims to guide the analysis, and deductive approach - reading through the data (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Saunders et al, 2009). Following this I projected the socio-cultural and policy framework of Bangladesh back onto the data (Tonkiss, 1998). By reference to the wider societal system of Bangladesh where this study took place I drew relationship between power, voice, identity and representations to denounce the fixed (universal) notion of quality (Apple, 1996; Baker & Luke, 1991; Ball, 1990). In the final stages of analysis I made certain suggestions from the data which contributed to building new set of ideas related to preschool quality and how context is implicated in this pedagogical discourse.

3.10 Feasibility and Validity

Qualitative research allows researchers to make up a picture of the actions and interpretations of participants (Edwards in Naughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001). As a researcher I was always conscious that the findings and explanation of this study would be subjective because of its pure qualitative nature, however this does not mean that there is no value in the research. The validity of qualittative research depend on the rigour of the methodology and analysis. Therefore I ensured that I collected data from multiple sources for analysis on the same subject matter (Edwards in Naughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001; Merriam, 2002; Patton, 2002).

3.10.1 Feasibility.

As qualitative research is open-ended it is difficult for the researcher to set the boundaries of information and allocate time effectively for data collection, analysis and writing (Edwards in Naughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001). Therefore, I made a timeline for each stage of the research and calculated a proposed timeline for each task of this process. In the process of developing the data collection protocols I became aware to focus in on, and limit the exact data for examination and discussion because in qualitative research, there is a tendency to collect enormous amounts of information which sometimes take the researcher away from key targets. In this study for example, when I interviewed head teachers and teachers, some of them tried to share their personal life, and interests which were important but not relevant to this study. Some issues they were bursting to share included persoanl relation issues, and family. To make this study feasible also, I visited Bangladesh a month prior to the data collection and established a professional relationship with the teachers and head teachers of the

preschools. This had augmented my field work in many important ways as it made the participants felt comfortable when I finally arrived to collect data for the study.

3.10.2 Validity.

Validity is the strength of the qualitative research which is based on the accuracy of the findings and this needs to be checked by me as a researcher (Edwards in Naughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001; Merriam, 2002). In research, validity means, how accurately I presented and interpreted participants' thoughts and remarks, as "validity refers not to the data but to the inferences drawn from them" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 125). In this qualitative research, I acted as a primary device in the data collection and analysis process, and contribute to the explanation of participants' interpretations and perceptions. Therefore, I employed a triangulation strategy (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Merriam, 2002; Patton, 2002) to reinforce the validity of the data. To apply this strategy I compared the observation data with the interviews and checked the observation and interview information with the written documents. I also adopted rigorous reflexivity in validating the data and findings. Rigorous reflexivity requires from researchers to be open-minded and accountable to the data that they collect, how they interprete it and how they report their findings (Subedi, 2006). In this persepctive, as a researcher I also re-examined my subjectivities and the ethical processes I adopted to involve the participants in the research process, including how I represented their voice in the findings. I am aware that some scholars have attacked rigorous reflexivity as being egocentric, narcissistic and lacks scientific value (Facio, 1993; Motzafi-Haller, 1997; Mutua & Swadner, 2004) but rigorous reflexivity ensures accountability for the research process, knowledge generation and ethics of representations in qualitative research.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Lassiter (2005) argues, it is the ethical dilemmas that have lead to discussions about “ethical responsibilities of researchers: to their disciplines, to themselves and especially the people with whom they work with” (p. 97). Therefore, as a researcher I had desired that my research would be a meaningful and valuable study which would raise consciousness about quality in the teaching processes of preschool education in Bangladesh. Moreover, I was conscious to give space to the identity, agency, representation, voice and power of teachers, parents and children. In research, it is obligatory to get ethics approval as the process to take real information from participants and analyse them are sensitive (Coady in Naughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001). In order to get approval of my fieldwork in Bangladesh, I submitted an ethics application to the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee. I provided explanations of the research objectives, questions and process, sample of consent forms, information about the three preschool schools in Bangladesh to the committee. I also gave them the official permission letters of these three schools which allowed me to conduct research in their schools.

It is common that participants of research do not want to share their real thoughts and perceptions with the researcher as they may feel insecure and scared. Ethical consent processes help to put them at ease and comfortable to speak freely, which is very essential for qualitative research (Coady in Naughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001). Before each classroom observation and interview I always disclosed the objectives of the study and provided the consent forms to the participants by informing them their rights to involve and withdrawal, privacy and protection (Merriam, 2002). Furthermore, I discussed the issues of consent with the participants, so all the

head teachers, program organiser and teachers agreed with the issues and allowed me to sit in the classrooms and understood that they were contributing on a voluntary basis during interview sessions. In the next section I discuss my position as a researcher in the investigation site in Bangladesh.

3.12 My Role in the Research

Qualitative research is essentially subjective. The researcher's knowledge, skill, values, interests and position in society influence their decisions on what should be researched and how the research should be conducted (Heron, 1996). As a postcolonial researcher, I believe it is important to be constantly critical of my own positionality, and the biases and assumptions that I carry when conducting this postcolonial study on quality in my native country, Bangladesh. It is argued, "any discourse based on the questioning of boundaries must never stop questioning its own" (Kwek, 2003, p. 141). It is therefore important for, a "researcher [to] aim to clarify his or her position in a wider societal hierarchy of power, status and influence" (Cloke et al., 2004, p. 29). As I write and speak in English because I am a privileged Bangladeshi woman studying in a Western university I can never truly know what it is, and how it feels to be working under a condition in a developing schooling system which I was once a member of, and now using my Western ideas to critique. In this way I consider myself no less representationalist and power-laden than that which I seek to critique (Kenny, 2008).

To overcome these tensions as a postcolonial researcher, I was constantly vigilant on how I collected the data, conducted the observations and interviews, and how I read the textual data. I was always careful of the power relationships between me and the participants, and my skills to understand and interpret their opinions and views

(Grieshaber in Naughton, Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001). Throughout my fieldwork, I emphasized to the participants that my study was a PhD thesis and not an official report to find fault in any way. Moreover, I explained to them that the findings of this study would not have any direct implications on the decision-making process of the schools or organisations that could lead to any damaging effects. Throughout this process, I was continuously aware of postcolonial factors such as voice, representation and power in relation to my position as a researcher of a well-known university in a developed country, conducting a study among the people in a developing country (Hole, 2007).

In interview sessions, sometimes the head teachers and teachers did not want to answer some of my questions, as they seemed to think that their answers could bring negative results in their jobs. They occasionally gave non-related answers and went out of track of the questions which required me to pause and bring them back onto the subject. But they also have the option to be silent on questions they did not feel comfortable to answer. In my data presentations I did not present it as if I am conveying absolute truth, and neither did I assign universal meaning to the main construct of the study, which is quality.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodological and theoretical grounding for this research. It also provided detail research design, data collection and analytical categories that were adopted in light of postcolonial theory, and the logic of situating the study in the seven dimensions of quality to explore the quality of preschools in Bangladesh. The chapter also described the scoping study in the preschool in Melbourne, Australia which provided some guide to the design of the main study -

classroom observation strategies and interview questions for the relevant participants. The next chapter will present and analyse the data derived from the three sources: document analysis, classroom observations and interview.

Chapter Four
Data presentation and analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the data of this study. The data sources include documents, non-participant classroom observations, and interviews with two head teachers, a program organiser and six preschool classroom teachers. I analyse the findings by focusing on the seven dimensions of quality (policy and legislation, structure, concept and practice, interactions and processes, leadership and management, evaluation and transition methods, and parent and community involvement). The analyses are situated cogently in postcolonial theory.

4.2 Data Presentation and Analysis

There is no universal way of presenting qualitative data as each qualitative study is unique (Merrian, 1998). The best way therefore is to present the data in a format that is easy for readers to make sense of the study and draw their own interpretations. In this study the data are presented and analysed in the order in which the study was conducted. It begins with data generated from three documents followed by observation and interview data. Each sub-section shows the data from the angle of different quality dimensions with analyses framed in postcolonial theory. I used acronyms to represent various participants when I present their actual dialogues. The following codes are used for the participants in order to protect their identities:

- HGP – Head Teacher of the government preschool

- HPP – Head Teacher of the private preschool
- PO – Program Organiser of the Non-governmental Organisation preschool
- PTG –Preschool Teacher of the government preschool
- PTN – Preschool Teacher of the NGO preschool
- PTP1 – Preschool Teacher 1 of the private preschool
- PTP2 – Preschool Teacher 2 of the private preschool
- PTP3 – Preschool Teacher 3 of the private preschool
- PTP4 – Preschool Teacher 4 of the private preschool

The next sub-section presents and analyses the findings of the government document on preschool education in Bangladesh. I would like to first state that a postcolonial data analysis seeks to uncover the imperialist assumptions that frames the 'other' in certain discursive constructions. Here the imperialist is not being conceptualised as a foreigner from outside of Bangladeshi education system but rather as those that have the power within to make or unmake processes and practices. Often the 'other' is persistently foreshadowed to be inferior, has no voice or agency who must live and experience education under rigidly prescribed rules of their superiors (teachers or education policy makers) regardless of historical and cultural differences.

Thus using a postcolonial discursive analysis of data in this thesis I explored the meanings behind documents, interviews and observation texts to create new forms of

understanding. While doing this, I constantly interrogated the narratives of teachers. I was also critical about my own agenda as Bangladeshi researching issues of quality in my own country and how my subjectivity might influence how I understood the narratives of teachers, documents and meaning extracted from them. To do this effectively my data analysis had to be informed by an inductive approach, using my research questions and quality dimensions to guide the analysis, and also applying deductive reasoning in reading through the data (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Saunders et al, 2009).

My main aim of doing the analysis in this way is to capture moments and surprises in order to do justice and uncover discursive practices that were implicated in preschool quality. Whilst conducting postcolonial discursive analysis, my intention was not to do undue critique and attack the system I was once part of but to take theoretical stance and question practices, opinions, documents and general classroom practices. This is the only way to contribute knowledge that is somewhat free from unnecessary bias and project a new framework for understanding and communicating ideas about the quality of preschool (Tonkiss, 1998). My observation of practices provided additional understanding of wider systems of knowledge and power at play in the school system, and the relationship to the interviews.

4.3 Document One - The Operational Framework for Preschool Education, 2008 (MoPME, 2008)

The first document I reviewed and analysed was the National Framework of the Government of Bangladesh for preschool education. This document sets up the mission, vision, goals, policies and strategies for establishing quality preschool education

nationwide. It was developed by a group of professionals from the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, National Curriculum and Textbook Board, Department of Primary Education, Institute of Education Research of Dhaka University, Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Early Childhood Development and Resource Centre of BRAC University and United Nations Children's Fund in 2008 (MoPME, 2008).

4.3.1 Policy and legislation.

According to the conceptual framework of this study the first quality dimension is policy and legislation. The Operational Framework for Bangladesh's Preschool Education is the standard policy of the government for preschool education in Bangladesh. The framework made some provisions for children's rights. This is perceived as an important inclusion in the document. Regarding the educational right of children the framework states:

> All children, especially those subject to various forms of disadvantages, are served by preschool education programs of acceptable quality (MoPME, 2008, p. 10).

The statements above demonstrate commitment of the Bangladeshi government in serving all children through education to increase their future prospects in society. Special reference is made to children with disadvantage which is an incredible credit to the government for taking into consideration the unique needs of children from disadvantage backgrounds. The document also positioned quality strongly, however, observation and interview data revealed the unsatisfactory nature of the implementation of this policy at the school level. It was observed during site visits that participating schools have resorted to teacher practices that place disadvantaged children at further

risk of dropping out of school even before they reach primary school level. For example, children's home experiences were not taken into account and teacher talk dominated teaching and learning throughout each school day. Teacher responses during the interview also demonstrated a lack of knowledge of the content of the document on vulnerable children.

> I don't really know much about this document (PTP1)

> We know we must teach children well but in relation to the document you are talking about I cannot give you any information in relation to children who come from poor homes. We know some children are very poor but this is not for teachers to worry too much about (PTG)

This lack of knowledge and concern may be attributed to the fact that the policy documents are kept away from the teachers, and policy regarding education continues to be a top-down affair. Teachers need to know about the policy with which they work. This would ensure that their practice is consistent with what the government of Bangladesh aims to achieve for young children. There is no need to write a policy and keep it away from those who need it most to do their work. One conclusion that can be made here is that although children's rights are prominently featured in the operational document, activities in the schools seemed to violate their rights. The meaning of rights was also variously held by different participants in the preschool education sector.

> Rights of children, I think giving them education (HGP)

> They need to be fed by their parents before they come to school this is looking after their rights. If parents bring children in to the world they must be responsible for their needs this is the right of the child (PTP2)

> I don’t think schools should be doing all this because schools are there to teach children in (PTP4)

> If you give children too much room to do things because you are respecting their rights the classrooms would become very disorganized so the teacher must use the power (PTG).

Children’s right is critical when considering the quality of preschools. This right should not be extended to only getting the children into preschool programs but the right to participation in meaningful activities is that which ensures quality learning for all children. Yet, as the data in this study revealed, the situation mirrors colonisation from within. Teachers as authority figures appeared to ignore the very important aspect of their responsibility to children by silencing them in order to maintain law and order in their classrooms. As the postcolonial literature points out, colonisation is an act of subject-object relation in which one party becomes the subordinate and the other the dominant figure (Agbenyega & Deku, 2011). The subordinate becomes essentialised, that is his/or her treatment by their bosses is regarded as normal practice. I would like to argue here that in education systems which teachers know little or nothing about the policies that inform their practice, there is little they can do to improve the quality of their practice to respect the rights of children. As the participants had no idea about the principles guiding preschool education there is little that was happening with regard to disadvantaged children in their schools.

Evidence from the data also showed that the government did not include teachers in professional developments regarding the policy document on preschools. Interestingly, the practices in the preschools are not informed by the guidelines from the document as the observation data indicated that each teacher and preschool were doing

their own things which essentially disregard the rights of the majority of children. In this regard children from disadvantaged background have little to benefit from the preschool, further marginalizing them.

The findings from observation and interview gave the impression that policy makers and education specialists responsible for preschool education in Bangladesh envisaged their responsibility only as making paper regulations and plans. They thought that it was the duty of head teachers and teachers to carry out the plan or program in the preschool though they were not involved in the policy making process. The head teachers, the program organiser and teachers were mostly responsible for implementing education policies and procedures and yet, they were excluded from participating in the policy production. It is therefore not surprising when the data of this study portrayed that the teachers were not interested in working according to the new directives and policies prescribed by the document.

> We knew nothing concerning this document when it was developed (PTP1, PTP2 & PTP3)
>
> We have no professional training on it (PTP4)
>
> It is difficult do something properly if you do not know how that works (PTP3)
>
> I don't really know how to put this, it is like…no respect for us the teachers, we are just left there to work and make these children learn and that is difficult I think. They talked about children's rights but what about our rights too as teachers? I think they need to balance this argument (PTG)

These pronouncements by the various participants indicate unhealthy relationship between educators at the preschool level and policy makers at the other end.

There seemed to be a weak connection which has overshadowed the interaction between the two parties in their effort to provide quality education for Bangladeshi children. There is also an issue of feeling of neglect when the teachers indicated that their rights have been overridden by those of the children. It is argued that when the agency, voice and representation of key actors in education are overshadowed their interest to be active players in makings schools achieve quality standard dwindles (Agbenyega & Deku, 2011).

4.3.2 Structure.

The structural dimension is one of the important dimensions in this study as it discusses major issues, such as classroom environments and teacher-child ratio, which are significant determinants of quality teaching in preschools. The government of Bangladesh recognized the importance of supportive and child-friendly environments for children in preschool schools, which is enshrined in the Operational Framework:

> Supportive and child-friendly environment is created in educational facilities, in communities and at home, so that children benefit fully from the educational programs (MoPME, 2008, p. 10).

The observation data in this study exposed the reverse situation of this policy provision as the physical infrastructure and settings were found unsuitable, unpleasant and unsafe for children. The observation data demonstrated that, the preschools, which participated in this study, were situated in crowded areas and surrounded by residential houses, shops and markets. The sound of transports, hawkers and noise from outside the schools' premises regularly interrupted classroom activities. For instance, most children were drawn to the tooting horns of cars and excessive noise from hawkers and squatters when I observed the classes.

Despite the good intentions prescribed in the document to ensure quality delivery of educational services to young children, it is unlikely that this could be achieved in the current situation. The environment appears to place children's physical, mental and social development at great risk. In addition to external factors acting on the school environment, observations indicated that the government and the private preschools that I visited have classroom conditions that do not support healthy child development and learning. The classrooms of these two preschools had no windows, lights and fans and children were seen fanning themselves with their exercise books or papers. This situation affected children's concentration on task thereby disrupting the quality of teaching and learning. As the classrooms were quite dark, both teachers and the children struggled sometimes to read what was written on the blackboard and in books. Words, number charts, and drawings of children were hanged on the walls of the schools I visited however; these were hardly visible and serve little purpose in the classrooms.

In the classrooms of the government and private preschools there were not enough benches for children. Therefore, many children sat very closely on each bench, some three or four on benches made for two children. The nature of the furniture made organisation for group work difficult. Whenever the children attempted to move the benches some of them often get hurt as one teacher interviewee from the government preschool has observed.

> As the classroom is small we cannot move properly and cannot go to all children. The other classrooms are very close so the sounds that come to our classroom and children cannot pay attention…we don't move the benches often because the children hurt themselves…the benches are just too bulky (PTG).

In addition to unsuitable furniture, observation revealed toilets that were very close to the classrooms in all the three preschools that participated in the study. As these toilets are not water-closet but dugout pits, the stench from them further complicated health issues for the children and teachers. Couple with this situation is the absence of outdoor spaces, playgrounds and play items for children in any of the preschool which participated in the research. This may have serious implications for the children's motor and cognitive development. A plethora of research findings suggest that environments that are rich with play contribute to children's learning and development (Agbenyega, 2011; Fleer, 2006). Perceived in terms of quality, these existing situations pertaining to the preschool classrooms gave clear evidence that the learning environments are not considered critical factors in the children's holistic development by the three preschools observed in Bangladesh. On the contrary, the situations offered threats to children's holistic development. There is also a disconnection between what the policy document says should be the condition of preschool structures and what was actually available on the ground in these preschools.

Another provision identified in the policy document is recognition for the number of students to a teacher in a classroom that is vital for quality teaching practices to occur. Considering the importance of teacher-child ratio, the pre-school document contains a clause which states:

> There should be no more than 20-30 children in each class where two teachers/facilitators will be with them (MoPME, 2008, p. 13).

The observation data showed child-teacher ratio that is contrary to the above policy statement. In the government preschool classroom, one teacher was teaching 90 children. In the NGO and private preschools the ratio of children to teacher was 35:1

and 30:1 respectively. These circumstances raised serious question about government commitment to implementing and monitoring the policy to ensure quality preschool education for all children in its own jurisdiction. As the government, non-government institutions and private preschools could not increase the number of classrooms and teachers; the quality of classroom teaching in Bangladesh created concern throughout this study. The head teachers and teachers of the preschools demonstrated anxiety with regard to the large number of students in their classrooms as they experienced difficulties in relation to classroom control and how one-to one assistance could be provided to children requiring additional support. In the interview sessions the head-teacher of the government preschool commented:

> We are very sincere in our desire to deliver quality education. The teacher always tries to follow the proper teaching techniques for early age children. Very often I observe the teaching process in the class and try to find out the problems and after class I give feedback, for example, I give suggestion that as children feel bored after sitting a long time, they need to involve them in joyful activities… I believe that my teacher has qualifications and sincerity but she cannot teach properly because we do not have enough resources or materials and good environment …and for her professional development the school cannot give any support. I cannot understand how quality education will occur when a teacher has to teach 80 to 90 children in a small size classroom! How can a teacher deliver good teaching to so many children …what can they learn? It is very difficult for a teacher to control 95 children at a time; if she wants to give at least one minute time to each child she needs 95minutes which is impossible in real situation (HGP).

This position is reiterated by the head teacher in the private preschool.

> The policy makers and authorities of preschool schools think that the present structure and facilities of preschool schools are sufficient for us to deliver

> quality teaching practices in the classrooms of schools. They want to change our teaching styles and advise us to involve children in joyful activities but how can we do these with big classrooms, and insufficient furniture and resources (HPP).

The teachers also addend their voices to the issue in the following comments:

> The number of average children is 65 in my classroom. It is impracticable to look at each child. It is impossible for me to teach systemically and ensure quality. We face many problems with the large number of children. For example, we cannot check their exercise books properly and regularly…cannot engage all the children in the classroom activities…cannot control the classroom…cannot properly evaluate all students (PTG).

> We have to write comments in every child's diary; it becomes hard for us to write every day as the number of children is high. We cannot involve all the children in activities and they feel sorrowful. We also feel a lot of pressure when we are preparing for teaching large classes and due to this pressure we cannot teach satisfactorily in the classroom (PTN).

The above opinions conveyed that the teachers of the preschool and their head-teachers knew well about the optimum settings of their classrooms and although they wanted to provide quality education to children they are not able to do so because of the high number of children they have to teach. The policy on teacher-child ratio, although a laudable move, failed on implementation level as government did not support the initiative with commitment to increasing resources and support for teachers. This situation appears to lead to othering and exclusion of some children from meaningful participation in classroom activities. This is similar to colonialism because under colonialism the tendency is the survival of the fitters and authorities do not see themselves as morally obliged to serve the interest of all people (Prasad, 2003). With

high child-teacher ratios only few children's interest can be served by the teachers at the preschool.

The committee on the Operational Framework for Bangladesh has initiated quality moves to change teachers' teaching strategies and recommended in the document that teachers engage children in joyful activities through rhymes, song, and play yet they did not consider the practical implication of the teachers' ability to do this in crowded classroom situations. From the participants' comments it seemed that the committee members of the Operational Framework for Preschool Education are only playing the role of superior persons who made policies and rules that they transferred to head teachers and teachers as their subordinates to implement without due consideration for ability and workload issues. From a postcolonial view, the relationship existing between the policy making body and the implementation body is conflicted with institutional power (Prasad, 2003). The teachers and head teachers of these schools thus become objectified, colonized and subjected to the authoritative demands of the policy making body (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2011). Since the teachers and the head teachers are on the receiving end just to implement education policy they thus become invisible voices lacking in agency. This form of colonial representation of head teachers, the program organiser and teachers would make the process of quality slow in preschool in Bangladesh.

4.3.3 Educational concepts and practice.

The Operational Framework for Preschool Education in Bangladesh, 2008 contains items on curriculum. It specified that:

A curricular framework must indicate learning objectives, content, outcomes,

> sequence and assessment approach for preschool program appropriate for children (MoPME, 2008, p. 8).

Observation and interview data revealed that there is no established or consistent curriculum for preschool education. Different types of schools use different categories of contents, resources, teaching strategies and assessment procedures. The government and non-government preschools that participated in this study were found to follow the contents and materials of various international organisations such as the educational resources of UNICEF and PLAN International Bangladesh. In addition, the private preschool followed similar Western curricula and materials, such as the British or American contents and often uses foreign textbooks for children. On this particular issue the teachers of both government and private preschools, and the program organiser of the NGO preschool said:

> We do not have any particular government curriculum, textbook or evaluation guidelines to assess the children. We follow the contents and use books produced by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board with the help of UNICEF. The education officer from government office and respective persons from two non-government organisations regularly visit us and give training and feedback on teaching though (PTG)

> Our school follows the curriculum and textbook of the United Kingdom (PT1)

> The materials development unit of head office makes the curriculum, contents and teaching with international consultants and people of UNICEF which we use (PO).

These statements showed that, although Bangladesh is a sovereign country it still depends heavily on Western curriculum, materials and foreign persons of

international organisations to set up its preschool education program and contents. Furthermore, the policy makers and educators did not recognize the importance of local educators and teachers in making curriculum or syllabuses, further marginalizing their participation. The head teachers of the government and private preschools vividly illustrate this point:

> There is a rule to include us as school representatives in the committee but it actually exists only on paper. Most of the times we do not get invitations to go to the meetings... However, if we do get a chance to go then we are only allowed to sit with wise and scholarly persons there, not permitted to present our voices or share our experiences (HGP)

> Some teachers feel happy and proud to sit beside of their managers and think it will be an offence if they say any words or disagree with anything in front of them (HPP).

This situation was an example of power relation issues in Bangladeshi education system where dictatorial policy persons looked at teachers as unqualified and weak persons to speak in curriculum making meetings. For this practice, head teachers, the program organiser and teachers became habituated to accept the managers, education officers and policy makers as the greatest and supreme learned persons who only had the power and right to set contents and lessons for children in preschool education.

Some non-government organisations and preschools were taking advantage of the government's failure to establish uniform curriculum, contents and evaluation process to use foreign materials and others use contents, teaching methods and evaluation techniques which they thought is right for their schools. The authorized body of non-government preschools and the management committee of the private preschool

were the persons that fixed the learning objectives and teaching methods for their schools in a way that the teachers or children had no say in what is taught, and what children would like to learn.

The preschools I observed in Bangladesh either followed the prescribed contents of the curriculum document without modification for different children, including text books and teaching guidelines of international organisations. They also gave foreign organisations the power to make lesson plans and books for their schools. Foreign educational experts often formulated syllabus and teaching strategies from their own perspective, not from the contexts of Bangladesh. Curriculum contents based on foreign ideology and practices are likely to further marginalize children in Bangladesh because the schools often apply teaching approaches which they found in books from other countries without considering their own contextual factors, which often lead to unproductive outcomes. This dependency syndrome is may still be considered as self-imposed colonisation. They seemed not to take into account the physical infrastructure, student numbers and teaching facilities of Bangladeshi classrooms. Regarding this issue, some teachers said the following:

> I received training from an international organisation where I learned about the sand pit and art corner but I cannot understand how I would apply that in my classroom. We cannot provide children a little space to sit in our classroom and it is impractical thinking to arrange an art corner or sandpit for children. I think before making curriculum or contents, the consultants or people of international organisations need to visit the school to see the poor condition of the classroom then they could find appropriate learning objectives, teaching strategies and assessment processes for us (PTN)

> Our classroom environment is not developed and resourceful like USA or UK as our country is poor and the policy and curriculum specialists need to consider this when they make contents and guidelines to teach (PTP3)

> The contents are a lot in quantity and as we have many limitations we cannot finish our teaching properly and timely in the classrooms. We think that they should reduce the volume of lessons and provide us materials for teaching (PTG).

Their opinions showed that teachers were concerned about following Western curriculum and teaching approaches as they noticed that these could not be adapted favourably to their own context. Moreover, they did not have suitable environment and resources to apply those strategies in their classrooms in Bangladesh. They were also worried about their limited skills in following the instructions of the Western curriculum. As a result they felt pressured to teach in the classrooms and failed to use quality approaches in their classrooms.

Although the Operational Framework for Preschool Education indicated building appropriate curriculum and contents for the development of children, the situation in the field placed them in precarious and vulnerable learning conditions. During classroom observations in the private preschool, I noticed that children had to learn the lessons of three subjects in the preschool classes, such as, Bangla, English and Mathematics. The contents of these subjects were difficult for the children because most of the contents were not age appropriate and the approach to teaching was abstract and rote. For example, in the private preschool, the teacher taught odd and even numbers to young children who were between 4 and 5 years old. This was done because it was a learning competency of children in the curriculum book for preschool education of that school. Though this skill was not suitable for five-year olds children they were forced to

learn the odd and even numbers by rote. In the government preschool classroom one teacher taught new English vocabulary to the children without using any real objects or materials. Some of these words include; *paring, ordering, transferring and classifying*. These words could be easily taught by using real object to assist children classify different types of fruits, or pair children for games and so on, but because no real objects were used children had great difficulty making meaning of the words.

Observation data from all the three preschools showed that it was mandatory for children to learn complex words, sentences, rhymes in Bangla and English, addition, subtraction and multiplication at age five. These practices in the preschools made children fearful and uninterested in the class. As teachers conceptualized that the objective of preschool education was to make children efficient in words, sentences, numbers, addition, subtraction they always paid attention to teaching these in the classrooms and often punish or humiliate children who find it difficult to cope with the preschools' tradition. They did not consider children's age, interest and ability to achieve these skills. The situation in the preschools and curricula strongly reflected the largely disempowering nature of education for children. It can be argued that at the preschool level, the program heavily emphasized academic skills. From one point of view, the school authorities were on a fervent campaign to use academic prudence at these early years as a vehicle to promote the smart and the idiot. From another point of view the government, reflecting on education generally thinks that to compete or be suitable to enter into primary school, children should be able to pass prescribed tests to validate their place.

In a postcolonial critique this situation mirrors subjective representations that allow some to claim knowledge of, about, and over others (Jack & Westwood, 2006).

Using foreign curriculum in preschool classrooms often has also ignored the influence of culture on the successful implementation of quality preschool teaching in the developing world. For education systems to be regarded as quality they must avoid foreign dominance and be culturally relevant. This means a culturally dependent strategy of quality preschool education must be implemented so that its success will be affected by the cultural characteristics of the country in which it is implemented. By attempting to offer curriculum for preschools that do not work for the cultural context in Bangladesh little or nothing could be achieved in terms of its quality.

It can also be argued that instead of bringing teachers and policy makers to the table to make a sensitive analysis on how to develop and implement quality pre-school education in Bangladesh which will bring about congruence between reform strategies and practices and Bangladeshi culture, what is actually given to teachers is a ready-to-use packaged framework and foreign materials about the quality of preschool education. The inability to invite teachers to actively participate in decision making about what concerns them is an issue of power. In societies and school systems characterized by high power distance and the lack of tolerance and acceptance of their education system would still bear the hall-mark of colonisation and nothing is unlikely to be challenged and improved because the “distribution of power discourages subordinates from questioning authority” (Pillay, 2008, p. 383). Thus one can understand Bangladeshi education system as a high power distance culture that makes pre-school reform to achieve quality difficult.

4.3.4 Interaction and processes.

The government document on preschool education recognized the availability of teaching and learning materials as essential for quality teaching practices. This is documented in the operational document for primarily education which states:

> In the Preschool program, children will not receive any book or printed material to take home. By the middle of their preschool course, a literacy book with only words, letters and numbers will be introduced in the classroom…Children should have adequate play materials, real objects, educational blocks and items from the natural habitat in the locality (MoPME, 2008, p. 12).

Despite these laudable prescriptions in the document the results of the study indicated a contradictory situation as all children of the observed three preschools had textbooks and exercise books for home and class for each subject. Children of these schools were compelled every day to bring their textbooks and exercise books to school which they take home after the class. Most of the textbooks the children brought to school were foreign, further marginalizing and colonizing their identity. Furthermore, teachers had no access to local materials, such as, real objects or play items for early age children as the authorized organisation or schools did not provide those to use in the classrooms. The teachers were rather concerned with how the children could memorize words, sentences or numbers rather than play, draw or do hands-on activities.

> The program is not about interaction with the children, we know that interaction is important but that is not the main responsibility from us. We are keen to prepare these children to go to primary school and if your children don't pass the test to go parents will say our school is not good or the teachers are not teaching anything. So we have to choose between interaction and coaching the children for the exams (PTP1).

This form of teaching contrary to the guidelines in the operational document is the direct result of the focus on preparing children to enter into the best primary schools. Coupled with this situation is the lack of rigours monitoring of teachers to comply with the framework leading to teaching practices that are distant from quality preschool education which is foundational on play-based learning. As a result, children often felt bored, leading to irregular attendance.

4.3.5 Evaluation and transition methods.

In relation to the evaluation strategies, the Operational Framework for Preschool Education stated that, “participatory methods using standard tools (to be developed) should be used for assessment” (MoPME, 2008, p. 13). However, the data showed that no standard tools had been made yet by the government to evaluate children’s progress. As a result different preschools used different types of evaluation techniques though none of the school used participatory methods which the government referred to in the document. In the government preschool, teachers generally took verbal examination of children on Bangla, English and Mathematics where children are not awarded any marks apart from comments on their knowledge and skills. On the other hand, the private and non-government preschools had their own guidelines for taking written examinations. The private preschool often takes three examinations in a year and the non-government preschool administers written tests after fifteen classes, and follows the rules and questions of teacher’s guidebook of this organisation. About this aspect, the teachers said:

> We usually ask children verbal questions and sometimes give questions to write on in classrooms which they have been taught in the current or previous classes. After each term of four months we take verbal examinations to evaluate children’s learning improvements (PTP2)

> In the classroom we ask verbal questions and also ask them to write answers in their exercise books. There are three examinations in an academic year and we make question papers according to the annual lesson plan of the school (PTP4)

> We ask children verbal and written questions from the teacher's guide book and after fifteen classes conduct an examination according to the evaluation book (PTN).

The above comments indicated that teachers of all schools were very serious about regularly testing children's learning outcomes. Throughout the classroom observation, I noticed that all teachers gave more importance to asking questions rather than teaching. While a number of children were being unresponsive and inattentive when teachers ask questions, the teachers only wanted to get answers from children and they did not give attention whether they gave right or wrong answers. In one classroom, the teacher asked one child to write the spelling of the word *month* and the child wrote *mnoth* on the blackboard. Interestingly, the teacher did not notice the misspelt word and therefore did not correct that answer. The teacher again called another child to write another word, *crocodile*. The child struggled for more than a minute not knowing what to write and the teacher asked her to go and stood at the back of the class as a form of punishment. During the classroom observation in the government preschool, I noticed that one child could not give the right answer to the teacher's question when the teacher asked, *what is the meaning of rotten?* The teacher scolded the child by saying:

> You are a naughty boy so cannot say the correct answer. Tell me now what is the correct meaning of this word otherwise you will get a hard punishment (PTP3).

This type of harsh tone of teachers on children and fear of getting punishment in the classroom by the teacher could have harmful impact on children's behavioural and

cognitive development, as well as their psychological and emotional wellbeing. The teacher's harsh approach to children could make them aggressive, destructive and inconsiderate and destroy the foundation for implementing quality preschool education in Bangladesh. Generally, the positions of the teachers were like dictatorial persons who forced children to say right answers in the classrooms whether they understand what they were saying or not. The rule of thumb here is not about understanding but about forceful pedagogy or what Paulo Freire conceptualized as the pedagogy of the oppressed (Freire, 2007).

The methods of assessing children's learning and development in the three preschools appeared to be informed by traditional developmental understanding of child development. The approaches of testing young children in examinations appeared to focus on biology which presupposes a line of pathology in which there is a search for causation of poor development for that matter, poor performance that needs remediation (Fleer, Agbenyega, Blaise, & Peers, 2008). For example some of the teachers indicated that:

> We compare the children with others, some are really good but for others you have to struggle with them…it is not easy to teach them…they don't get the understanding like others (PTN)

> Some of the children have to repeat their preschool class because compared with others they are not good at that stage to go to primary school (PTP1).

The statements from the teachers demonstrate a medico-biological stage and age theories that compare a child's development with others and reject the interactive relationships between each child's unique home environment and their biology (Fleer, 2005; Hatano, 1998; Malaguzzi, 1993; Rogoff, 2003; Sleeter & Grant, 2007). Because

the teachers failed to see from this perspective, the inability of a child to meet their expectations on the universal testing in their classrooms which are based on the teachers' beliefs lead to a negative labelling of the children as less intelligent. This view of children leads to a denial of how the preschool system and its practices impose restrictions on children. Perceived through a postcolonial lens, children in the three preschools are rather positioned as institutional slaves and are evaluated simply as consumers of selective adult designed and managed knowledge (Freire, 2007). This is consistent with aspects of Piaget's pre-operational stage for instance, which assumes a negative position for the child as egocentric, fragile, unsociable, selfish and self-centred who is not able to share with others (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999; Loreman, 2007). Such child constructions consequently, make children failures on their tests because the ways the children are assessed tacitly suggest a theoretical positions that ask the wrong questions, which imply all children must perform at the same levels. This often excludes a consideration of individual interests, needs and cultural settings (Hatch & Grieshaber, 2002).

Relying exclusively on testing of young children to determine their potential for primary school is oriented towards mapping some universal and objective social reality as is the case with traditional child assessment techniques (Fleer et al., 2008). It is argued that traditional approaches to observing and assessing children's psychological development are tailored to:

> Already predetermined categories produced from developmental psychology and which define what the normal child should be doing at a particular age. The focus in these observations is not children's learning processes, but more on the idea of classifying and categorizing children in relation to a general schema of developmental (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999, p. 146).

This position explains that the teachers in this study have been captured by stages and ages frameworks which assumes perspectives that seem to explain children's development in terms of subjectivity, where they tailored their practices into colonial relationships with the children, and stretch their practices to fit the predetermine preschool system, which distorts reality itself (Grieshaber & Hatch, 2003). The comments from the head teacher of the preschool replicate this point:

> The issue is, we have an existing system…the preschool is under government control and we must work with government directives. If you do not test the children in your preschool if they go to primary school they will be tested and they stand at a disadvantage so you must work according to the system even if you do not like the system (PTG).

The above comments suggest that the preschools have little opportunity to innovate in the face of imposing forces that compel them to adopt the status-quo. It is important that educators in Bangladesh consider the alternative, and that is, to perceive child development as constitutive of culture and biology. This notion assumes a social constructivist perspective in which educators use broad and multiple assessment approaches that do not compare one child to the other but rather it is used to understand each individual child in terms of their competence in the preschool classroom and beyond. Such a view is aligned with postcolonial theory where value is placed on each child and families. A postcolonial perspective does not see knowledge as absolute and unchangeable and as facts to be transmitted to the child. It sees knowledge as political and socially constructed and thus cannot be universally measured (Dahlberg et al, 1999). Working from a postcolonial perspective would mean that children are encouraged to think and create alternative understandings "before encountering scientifically accepted constructions" (Dahlberg et al, 1999, p. 55).

The government document on preschool education also gave importance to transition program from preschool to primary school by declaring that transition "should be considered as a critical element to ensure enrolment and retention of all children in grade-1" (MoPME, 2008, p. 5) but it did not include the process of home transition to preschool. I asked teachers in the interview sessions how they helped children to adjust into the preschool but their responses indicated that there is no such program to support children.

> We don't really think about transition. Parents come and find a place for their children in the school. Parent will come to the school again when we invite them or if their child misbehave and we want to discuss this with the parents (HGP)

> But for transition, I don't think we have anything like that or any support for the children when they are not with us here in school (PTG)

> Transition is not on our agenda as such…we have not developed any policy yet on how to do this but you have pointed out an important thing which we will consider (PO).

The importance of transition in preschool education system is thus ignored by the government of Bangladesh which was also not given any serious attention by head teachers, the program organiser and teachers of preschools. The neglect of this essential component of quality dimension could obstruct the process of ensuring quality in preschool education in Bangladesh. Research evidence suggests that transition services for children in preschool prepare them to be ready for school as well as support children's success in school (Bohan- Baker & Little 2004; Clyde, 2001). Because the characterizations of school readiness are multi-dimensional preschools need to incorporate transition services into their operational programs. When transition services

connect teachers and preschools to families, and also to primary schools it would reduce the tension often associated with children entering primary school. This would also ensure that both a social domain and academic readiness domains are essentially catered for. Transition services also would ensure that social and self-regulatory abilities are developed for young children, which would lead to a strong foundation for academic success and future learning. It is argued that children experience school success when transition services focus on developing positive relationships, and sensitive and stimulating family processes, in quality preschool environments (Bohan- Baker & Little, 2004).

4.4 Document Two- The Annual Lesson Plan, 2010

The second document analysed for this study was the Annual Lesson Plan (2010) of the private preschool which was made by the head teacher and teachers. This lesson plan was made for five year old children. The document contained the name of the preschool with the educational symbol of Bangladesh, grade name and the address of the publishers. The document provides directions and guidelines for educational practices and evaluation techniques of children of this school. It also outlined the content of subjects to be taught for the full one year in three subjects and the assessment procedures the teachers should adopt in evaluating the subjects taught.

4.4.1 Educational concept and practice.

In relation to educational concept and practice dimension, the document stated the contents of Bangla, English and mathematics for each term which teachers needed to teach in the classroom. The duration of each term was four months. From the classroom

teaching observation and interview, I noticed that the teachers rigidly followed the contents specified in the documents. Interviews with them revealed the following:

> In classrooms we always teach those contents which will be in the examination and we constantly try to help every child so that they can pass the examination of each subject. We always follow the fixed pattern of the lesson plan and also practice the contents of this document in the classroom. So children get an idea of what might be the questions and how to give answers (PTP2).

> Teaching these subjects is very important to our preschool…because our preschool is private and we charge fees, if the children do not pass the primary entrance tests in their numbers parents will not send their children to our school…you know what will happen if our enrolment falls, we will lose our job (PTP3).

> It looks strange that these children are learning these things but need to do it this way to help them pass the exams (PTP1).

It can be explained in relation to these comments that the teachers' practices are induced by external forces over which they have limited control. The teachers may wish to adopt flexible ways to teach the children but it appears this is not possible under the current climate where the education system focuses on examinations to allow young children enter primary schools. Population issues in Bangladesh may also be a factor. As more children compete for limited places in good primary schools, examinations would necessarily become a mechanism for weeding out 'unwanted' children. Besides these implied reasons, the comments from the teachers appear to construct the curriculum document as an object and authority to be transmitted to children irrespective of their differences and abilities (Freire, 2007).

A mechanistic notion of curriculum is located in a colonial construction of teaching in which the curriculum becomes the object of oppression and teachers the channel of oppression (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2012; Freire, 2007). Just as the paper fixed the rules and patterns, teachers of that preschool were strict about the academic learning of children. The Annual Lesson Plan influenced them to think that students should learn words, sentences, rhymes, numbers, addition and subtraction to get good scores in examinations. Moreover, they thought that they did not need to provide any activity for children's physical, mental or social progress as there were no contents for these in the curriculum document. This finding indicated that the document did not allow teachers and children to represent themselves as unique individuals. The teachers of this preschool had no opportunity to choose the content and teaching strategies or modify them and children had no voice about what they would like to do or learn in the classroom. This situation thus reduces both the teachers and the children to colonized agents in educational practice.

4.4.2 Evaluation and transition methods.

Further, in the document, there were guidelines for taking examinations after each term which were fixed by the school management committee. It mentioned that three examinations would be administrated in one year. Each exam would take place after one term of four months, and the subjects for the test should be in Bangla, English and Mathematics. The total mark in each subject was 100 and the duration of each test was two hours for each subject. The observation data demonstrated that to fulfill the target of achieving high marks in each subject, teachers used oppressive methods to teach and get answers from the students. For example, the children, prior to their daily lessons have to do some dictations and recite their times-tables. Children needed to get

pass marks in each subject in every examination of the year while they did not have any right to choose questions which they knew well. From a postcolonial point of view, the document could be recognized as an instrument of power that dominated the agency, voice and representation of the teacher and the children (Viruru & Cannella, 2001; Walshaw, 2007). In a colonial classroom, there is no choice, no freedom to act with intension. In contrast, in a postcolonial classroom the atmosphere is different because children and teachers are in pedagogical relationship and knowledge from the child and the teacher are valued and celebrated (Dei, & Opini, 2007). Children are given voice and opportunity to construct knowledge together with teachers and peers. The teacher is not a transmitter in a postcolonial classroom but a facilitator, not a dictator but a liberator, preparing children to be critical thinkers (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001; Dei & Shahjahan, 2008).

4.5 Document Three - Research Report, 2008 (Shahjamal & Nath, 2008)

The third document that was valuable to this research was the NGO Research Report collected from the non-government preschool. This report was completed by Shahjamal and Nath of that organisation in 2008. The report explored teacher preparation, their performances and classroom teaching-learning processes to evaluate the preschool education program of this organisation which were closely related to this study. The specific areas of the document related to this study are the process of making curriculum, textbooks, materials and teacher's guidebooks.

4.5.1 Educational concepts and practice.

In relation to educational concept and practice, this document revealed that power is vested in the head office of the NGO to develop the textbooks and materials for the schools in its jurisdiction. The document states:

> The material development unit develops the textbooks, the teacher's guide, training modules…and policies are mainly made at the head office (Shahjamal & Nath, 2008, p. 11).

According to the research report, the head office of this organisation made the policies and curriculum, text books, and teacher's guidebook and there was no place for the program organisers and teachers who were the most important persons who run the preschool education program to make any input or modifications. Interview with the program organiser and preschool teacher revealed that they were not involved in any curriculum, text books or the guidebook writing processes. In connection with this the Program Organiser of the NGO preschool said:

> I work in an area office and there are five program organisers in this office under the area manager. In our general meetings he informs us about rules or regulations of this organisation. We received information about teaching content and methods from the printed books which come directly from the head office and also in training sessions which are conducted by the people of head office. Sometimes, the respective persons from head office visit schools and discuss with us about our weaknesses and those of the teachers and also give feedback. So these are all about our involvement. We do not know if they take our suggestions seriously or not, also take actions or not according to our recommendations (PO).

Similar to the program organisers, teachers of this preschool did not have power to be involved in curriculum or textbook making processes. During an interview I asked the teacher about plans or future programs for ensuring quality classroom teaching practices. She was silent on this particular topic for a while, and later indicated that as she was not involved with the procedure of making curriculum, text books or with planning in any way, there is little she could do to improve on the present practices. She even could not hide her inefficiency in implementing some of the subject contents handed down to them by the Program Organisers to teach the children.

> Sometimes I have trouble in teaching some contents which are not easy for me and students. Some guidelines are hard to understand but we can only tell the Program Organisers how we feel about this but this does not materialized into anything because the persons of the head office do not seek any feedback or comment from us (PTN).

Other issues impacting on the quality of teaching in the non-governmental preschool relates to the duration of class and evaluation system. The organisation's document regulated that:

> The teaching period should be two and a half hours for a day. The course contents of Bangla, English and Mathematics are divided into 150 lessons and after completing each of the 15 lessons, the teacher administers a test to the students (Shahjamal & Nath, 2008, p. 10).

In respect to these directives the interviewees argued that sometimes they faced problems to finish the class works as the duration of class time was not sufficient for them to complete all the tasks in classrooms. They suggested that the persons who made textbooks and guidelines needed to consider the workload of teachers in classes.

> What they ask us to do is not realistic…there is limited time to complete one activity before you move on to the next one…it is like you are skipping topics here and there…this is not my fault though, because we must meet certain requirements, what I mean is do a number of subjects a day, which makes children very tired…I don't have the power to change anything, I just do what I am told to do…if I must keep my job then I have no option (PTN).

There is a common belief in Bangladesh that the non-government schools are not domineering like the government schools and that they give importance to the voice of teachers and local persons. But the existing situation showed that the Program Organiser and teacher had no agency in planning the education program and activities. Their voices appeared to be subjugated by the authorized body of that organisation and the participants had no rights to represent their ideas and knowledge for improving the quality in the classrooms of preschool.

The next section of this data presentation and analysis is related to data collected through classroom observation in the three preschool in Bangladesh. I have divided this section into seven sub-sections according to the seven dimensions of quality and have also analysed the data in the light of postcolonial theory. Before presenting and analysing the data I provide some brief information on the three preschools that participated in the study.

4.6 Non-participant Classroom Observation

One of the important methods of my study was classroom observation. I spent a total of 45 hours in classroom observation in the three schools. For each school, I spent 15 hours as a non-participant observer and focused on teaching approaches. The seven dimensions of quality in preschool education (EAPQECEC, 2009; OECD, 2006),

formed the basis of collecting data for this study and these dimensions guided me to observe the schools and teaching practices of the classrooms. In the research field, my observation was focused on the extent to which elements of these dimensions were present or not present in the preschool in Bangladesh. As the main objective was to explore teaching practices in the classrooms, I paid a particular attention to the teacher's teaching methods, interactions between teacher and children, and the participation of children in activities. I also paid attention to what the teacher was teaching and how she/he presented the topic and engaged children in her/his class.

The following table describes the general information of the three preschools in Bangladesh which I observed. The details of classroom observation are discussed after the table.

Table 4.1

General information of the three preschools in Bangladesh

Vital Characteristics	Government Preschool	Private preschool	Non-government preschool
Physical infrastructure	One classroom in a three-storey building which is part of a building for primary classes and office. The building is made of brick.	One room in a brick made one-storey building.	One room school made with a corrugated iron sheet and bamboo.
Classroom condition	Small in size for 95 children, dark and hot, no windows and fans, a little sunlight came through the door. Five or four children sat on benches made for accommodating two children	Small, no fan or light, hot and humid in the room. The classroom became dark when it rained. The classroom contains 35 with 3 children on a bench made for two children	Medium size, no fan or light inside. There were three little windows so air and light came through, children sat on mat woven with 'Hogol leaves', 30 children are crowed on these mats
Teaching materials	Mainly textbooks, blackboard and chalk	Mainly textbooks, blackboard and chalk	Textbooks, charts on letters, sticks for counting
Involvement of children	Occasionally	Rarely	Occasionally
Interaction between teacher-child	Teacher interacted with some of the children who sat on front benches and not all.	Teacher interacted with children who sat on front benches, and not with all.	Teacher interacted with all children but at a superficial level.

Although some of the observation data has been used to support document analysis earlier in this chapter, in the following sub-sections, I present and analyse more data from classroom observation and field notes according to the dimensions of quality of the three preschools.

4.6.1 Policy and legislation.

This dimension is about the awareness that the various staff have about the policies and procedures that inform their practice. This is an important dimension for ensuring quality of preschool practice. After going to each school I wanted to look at the policy or regulations for that school but no school was able to show any documents on these. Although the head teachers of the government and private preschools, and the Program Organiser of the NGO preschool, and the teachers were the prime persons to implement policies and rules in their schools for the development of children, they had no copy on policy or curriculum documents. The head teacher of the government preschool and the Program Organiser of the non-government preschool commented that:

> The committee of government did not distribute any document to the head teachers. The officer from the Directorate of Primary Education informed me by letter or verbally in the meetings about policy, new program, rules etc (HGP).

> I am not engaged with any of the process of policy or curriculum making. I just follow the policy of the organisation and inform teachers about those. I and my teachers have got written curriculum, textbooks and teaching guidelines which were made by the specialists of the head office (PO).

The teachers of the government and non-government preschools added that:

> We are not involved, we get information from the head teacher about policy, program (PTG)

> I am not occupied with the process and I get verbal information about policy or program from program organiser or area manager (PTN).

The situation was different in the private preschool as the head teacher and teachers made the policy and curriculum by themselves. In the private preschool there was a committee which was run by the owner of the school, head teacher, teachers and parents, and this committee designs and plans for the school. The head teacher and teachers commented:

> We have a school management committee where I am the secretary, the owner is president, teachers and two parents are members and this committee makes policies for the school. We generally follow the curriculum of government but the committee takes the decisions about the contents to teach in a term, the date of examinations and results (HPP)
>
> We are involved with the policy and curriculum making process for this school. The Head teacher and committee members ask for opinions and help from all of us (PTP1)
>
> Although the head teacher asks us to make some contribution the final decision is reached by the head teacher and the owner of the school (PTP4)
>
> I don't think even the head teacher has the authority as such…the owner of the preschool is the boss here and can decide finally above the head teacher and the teachers (PTP2 & PTP3).

The comments of the head teacher, program organiser and teachers of government and non-government preschools revealed that the preschool education system of government and non-government organisations in Bangladesh were colonized by the power of authorities. From the interviews it demonstrated that as the head teachers and teachers of these schools were not part in policy or curriculum making process they were not aware of any legislation or policy of preschool education. They thought that they did not need to know what government or non-government

organisations were doing for quality improvement in preschool education because they perceived their role as teaching only to children.

The three participating schools of this study agreed that for quality purposes, they needed to make effective plan for preschool education. However, in the real sense of it, the head teachers, program organiser and teachers of government and non-government preschools had no power to make any plan or program, as these were controlled and powered by their organisations' authorized bodies. The teacher of the government preschool reacted frankly:

> I have ideas on how to teach these young children and I have attended trainings and workshops from where I have learned that we need to involve children in play and activities for their learning. It is not a good way to teach them only by books and exercises. But I cannot apply my ideas as I need to follow the rules of the school that children should learn from their text books to pass in the examinations and so that they can achieve some fixed competencies after finishing their preschool education (PTG).

The voice of this teacher represented the position of all teachers in the preschool education that they only had the right to receive orders from the authorized bodies who formulated policies and regulations without consulting with teachers. The powerful bodies seemed not to care much about what issues confront the head teachers, program organiser and teachers in implementing new policy or legislation in the schools. They simply forced them to implement whatever they planned. So with regard to this quality dimension of preschool education the agency and representation of head teachers and teachers were neglected and not supported.

4.6.2 Structure and resources.

The structural dimension of a school is important for its quality. With regard to preschool education, it is important that the structure of the school meets the needs of children, that is, there is sufficient space for children to play, move around and participate in different indoor and outdoor activities without undue restriction. This contributes to their overall development. In this study the nature of the school environment is presented. Data on this situation was obtained through observation.

School and classroom environment

The first preschool on my observation list was attached to a government preschool which was located in a crowded and narrow street of Dhaka city. The school was surrounded by residential houses and shops. The sound of transports and hawkers interrupted the learning activities of the school. The main school building is a three storey structure with small sized classrooms. There was no uniform classroom size of government preschools; however the Operational Framework for Pre-primary Education suggested that the classrooms would have at least 250 square feet space for 20-30 children (MoPME, 2008). The real situation conflicts with this regulation as most of the classrooms have 80-90 children.

There was an extended classroom in the ground floor which was a wing of the main building. It was used for preschool children in the morning hours and for primary students in the afternoon hours. The school had boundary walls and an iron gate but it was always opened so any strangers could easily come inside to the school. Similarly, students often go out from the school to the neighbouring communities. The situation

therefore depicted unsecure school site for children against intruders which significantly affected the quality of teaching and learning.

The second school was a private preschool (preschool) catering for children aged five and six. It was situated in a residential area where the environment was quiet and not crowded. The school building was one storey building and barricaded by walls with an iron-gate which was always locked. Visitors attempting to enter the school could only come in by knocking or ringing the bell on the gate. There was a little garden in front of the school and yet the school had no playgrounds or play equipment for children. In the building, there were four classrooms, one office, which was also used as staff room for the head teacher and teachers. The classroom of the preschool was small in size with insufficient benches and educational resources. There is no instruction about the classroom size of private preschools so the variation in class size is highest and the average classroom size in the private preschools are smaller (Nath, 2006).

The third school which was involved in this study was the preschool of a non-government organisation which operated a number of different types of educational programs in Bangladesh. The school was situated in an area where very poor people lived. According to the procedure of BRAC Education Program, a preschool house should have minimum 306 cubic feet of space (length 24 feet, width 12.75 feet and height 8 feet) (Shahjamal & Nath, 2008). However this is not the case in this preschool. The school was made of corrugated iron sheets and bamboo, and children sat on a mat on the floor. There were a lot of residential houses around the school from where smoke of cooking and smell from toilets ‘invaded’ the classroom. As the school building was in an open space and there was no fence, wall or gate, local people and children who were not part of the school could view the classroom through windows and doors. This

situation often disrupted the attention of the children and hampered the school activities. Each child at this school had books, pencils and exercise books which were provided by the NGO. The classroom was decorated with a lot of children's paintings, calendars, words and number charts in Bangla and English.

The condition of educational materials was generally poor in all three preschools. Most of the teachers used blackboards, chalk and dusters as the only teaching materials. In the government and private preschools the teachers had no resources, like blocks, puzzles, toys or real objects to use for teaching in their classrooms. However, I observed some blocks, sticks, marbles and charts in the non-government preschool which were used to teach the children sometimes. From the interview it became clear that some teachers were convinced that they should change their teaching methods and needed to use interesting materials to improve children's learning. However, they could not do this as they have been positioned in a master-servant relationship with education authorities. That is, they had minimal agency to ask their bosses for essential materials to provide quality preschool education for the children because the focus was on examinations.

> We know we must engage the children… we must take them outside to look at nature and explore their environment but the issue is that we will not have the time to teach the real things for them to pass the examinations (PTG)

> Parents wouldn't like the schools…the pressure is from everywhere (PTP3).

The interview data of this study also demonstrated that the head teachers and teachers of the government and non-government preschools were not satisfied with the present situation of their schools and classrooms as this quotes demonstrate:

> The classrooms need enough light and air and school needs playground for children. The physical infrastructure of my school is not good at all. Our classrooms are very small and crowded with children (HGP)

> The resources which we have are not sufficient for the children and teachers (PTG)

> Our classrooms are very small and crowded with children. We do not have enough materials, play items and teaching aids for them. Teachers are not qualified to teach in preschool classes and they have no facilities to receive training. There are no alphabet cards, number cards, word charts, blocks and play items for the children in my school. This school has little outdoor space but we do not have any outdoor game equipment (HPP).

Others were quite appalled by the structural situation in their schools.

> I am not satisfied because we have not got good environment for teaching so I cannot apply the proper strategy to teach children. The classroom is too small to make small groups of children. We do not have blocks, corners, materials like sand, water for children, so we cannot encourage children to create anything from their imagination. I cannot make corners to play or to involve them in joyful activities (PTP1)

> In our school we need more tables and benches as these are not enough for the children. They have to sit very closely which is a big problem for teaching and learning. As teachers we also need teaching materials (PTP3).

For the weak structural and resource conditions of the preschool, the participants blamed the authorities for the lack of coordination and concern for the children that they teach. They remarked that if the poor situation of the classrooms and the lack of facilities do not improve they could not deliver quality preschool education even if they wanted to do so.

Apart from the weak structural resources, another barrier to quality that emerged from this research is the lack of material support for the work of preschool teachers in the government and private preschools. The participants in this study relate a dismal picture in relation to access, availability, and quality of instructional materials and facilities available to them. They describe their resources as limited to chalk and talk and in rare cases use books that lack local focus. According to one the preschool teachers of the government preschool:

> We do not have material supplies from the authorities to teach the children. We often use chalk, slate and the blackboard. The few books that we have cannot be shared to each child so five to six children must be crowded around one book and often you see the children struggling and fighting for the book. They sometimes tear off pages in the book in the process (PTG).

The head teacher of the private preschool agrees by stating:

> Our resources are just deplorable when I inform the owner of this preschool that we need this or that to help the children the usual answer is, there is no money. But we collect fees from parents and we need to provide good services to their children. It is not a good idea to just use chalk and talk all the time but in this circumstance all we can do is to make use of the little books that we have (HPP).

These comments above are further evidence that the main teaching approach being used, particularly in the government and private preschools are teacher transmission approach. This approach is unlikely to help children to develop critical thinking they would need in their lives in future. Using books that are alien to the children also have serious implications in terms of conceptual understanding. Children need to connect to what they are learning to be able to make sense of it.

Teachers' qualifications

This study revealed that the preschool teachers had minimal qualification and basic understanding of child development. There is also the lack of interest to utilise abundant local resources to influence quality teaching. It is argued that teachers' "deficiency in their knowledge of teaching content and basic pedagogic techniques" (Mullick & Sheesh, 2008, p. 79) could not lead to quality education even if good structures and resources are given them. What is the qualification of the participants? The data explored that head teacher of government preschool had Master's Degree in Social Science and Diploma in Education, and he received Basic in-service trainings on primary education and management skills but had no professional training on preschool education. The teacher of this school had Higher Secondary Certificate and Certificate-in- Education, and she received Basic in-service training and, curriculum and subject based trainings in preschool education. The teachers of the private preschool had Bachelor Degrees in different subjects though they had no specific training on preschool education. However, the head teacher of this preschool had Higher Secondary Certificate and Diploma-in Education with some training on teaching and professional development skills in preschool education. The program organiser of the NGO preschool had Master's Degree in Political Science and received a number of trainings on professional skills from the organisation. The teacher of this preschool passed the Secondary School Certificate Examination and received six days basic training before recruitment and three days orientation training after appointment, and also got one day refresher training in each month from this institution.

The participants agreed that teachers need to have proper knowledge and skills on child development to teach the children of preschool classes as they were the key

persons of the education system. However, they were unable to provide any suggestions as they did not have any power and voice to give advice to the authorities for recruiting teachers and also on the nature of their professional development. From the observation and interview data, it appeared that the government, non-government and private preschool authorities were not seriously concerned about how to improve the existing qualification of teachers which was the main factor for improving the quality of preschool education in Bangladesh.

Training of teachers

In government and non-government preschool, most of the teachers depended on their head teachers and the Program Organiser for their professional development. They were the persons who continuously gave feedback and advice to the teachers for their teaching improvement. About the training facilities, the head teachers and program organiser indicated:

> Representatives from government and different non-government organisations regularly come to visit our preschool classes. They give advice and support on the teacher's teaching approaches, specifically on how to use the supplied teaching materials. I also observe the teaching process in the class very often and try to find out the problems. I informed them about their weaknesses and demanded from them to be more sincere to use quality teaching methods in the classrooms (HGP)

> The teacher receives refresher training each month from the organisation which plays a good role in the teacher's development. I also visit the school four days in a week and give feedback and advice on how to develop her skills (PO).

Regarding training issues, the preschool teachers said:

> We have opportunities from the school to develop our professional skills. Every two months the school sends teachers for sub-cluster training for increasing quality and each teacher has to undergo that training (PTG)

> Every month I receive refresher training from the organisation and the program organiser visits my school four days in a week and gives feedback, advice to develop my skills (PTN).

The findings from the research site in Bangladesh also showed that the private preschool does not provide any training to their teachers to enhance their professional knowledge and capabilities. They only depend on the head teacher's feedback and advice for improving the quality of their teaching methods. The head teacher of the private preschool remarked in reaction to issues on training:

> In my school, teachers have no opportunities to receive trainings because this involves a lot of financial commitment which we do not have but personally, I observe their teaching processes in the class and give them feedback and try to correct their wrong activities. It is true that their teaching is weak in certain areas and they do not know how to make their teaching interesting for children in Nursery classes. In future I will try to arrange some training for them (HPP).

One teacher of the private preschool made a comment regarding the support she receives from the head teacher:

> From the head teacher we get a lot of help and guidelines to improve our teaching skills, such as, how we have to teach children, how we need to use the teaching materials etc. Sometimes the members of the committee give us advice to improve our teaching skills. However, it would be helpful if we get training from the professional trainers of preschool education (PTP1).

From the classroom observations, it became obvious that there was significant gap between what constitute quality teaching and what the teachers of the government and private preschools were doing in their classes. Teaching essentially revolved around the teachers only and completely excluded the children's active participation and knowledge. Therefore, in the interview sessions I wanted to know why teachers' practices did not incorporate children's perspectives. The teachers of the government and non-government preschools agreed that they received several trainings from different national and international non-government organisations on the teaching techniques on preschool education. However, they argued that the high number of children, the lack of educational resources and work pressure prevented them from applying the quality approaches for teaching in the classrooms. One teacher of the private preschool reported:

> I have knowledge about play corners, drama and story time from the trainings. But I cannot apply my knowledge as the classroom space is small in size and I have no materials to involve children in these activities (PTP4).

The above comments suggest that different issues were responsible for providing quality teaching in the preschools in Bangladesh. For example, the head teacher and teachers of the preschools had limitations in adopting appropriate teaching techniques in teaching the young children because of the lack of their professional knowledge and skills. However, they had no power to take initiatives for developing themselves by getting training from experts. Whereas the teachers of the government preschool received trainings they could not apply their knowledge and skills because of the high number of students, weak classroom settings and environments, and the lack of resources. The data also indicated that the head teachers, program organiser and teachers were conscious enough to be critical about the structural dimension of the

preschool and classrooms. They wanted to use quality teaching approaches for children but could not do so as they did not get appropriate support from their governing authorities. Moreover, their ideas and voices were ignored by the authorities, which discouraged their inspiration to provide quality preschool education in their classrooms.

4.6.3 Educational concept and practice.

Findings from the classroom observation revealed that the participants thought that the main objective of preschool education was to make children skilled in words, numbers, sentences and rhymes which they would use in future for their primary education. As a result, every class teacher of these three preschools consistently followed a lecture method and forced children to memorize words, sentences and numbers from textbooks at the early stage of their education. The books were full of unfamiliar words, long sentences, stories and rhymes which children needed to learn in order to obtain good marks in their examinations.

From the observation findings, it seemed that in all the three preschool, teachers used their voice and power to teach, and students were constructed as passive audience in the classrooms. None of the teachers of any of the schools use child centred methods. They applied one-way teaching methods in the classrooms where most of the time they read from textbooks and children listened. Sometimes they wrote words on the blackboards and asked children to copy those in their notebooks. They did not use any pictures or charts to facilitate the lessons. This kind of classroom teaching practices raised concern that when children were only allowed to listen, not to ask questions or express their opinions, then it was difficult to ensure quality teaching and learning. These teaching practices also created question about the teaching approaches of these

schools towards agency for children where they had no power or right to construct ideas to supplement those of the teachers.

4.6.4 Interaction and processes.

One of the major objectives of this study is to explore the teacher's interaction process with children in their classrooms. Classroom observation, therefore focused on the teaching methods they applied, how they involved children in activities, what questions they asked and how they used educational materials in the classrooms. As mentioned above, all teachers of the three schools used lecture methods where the children always closed their mouths to listen to teachers and not seen to ask questions or express their thoughts. Most of the teachers could not make eye-contact with all children and did not notice whether all of the children gave attention to the lesson or not. I observed that when teachers were asking questions, only the children in the front benches gave answers. The children at the rear of the classrooms were non-responsive and non-attentive and some of them were working on other subjects, while some were drawing in their books.

In the government and private preschools, the way of engaging children was based only on content with no arrangements for play or interactive activities in the classrooms. All of the time, children were occupied to read and write by using their text-books, exercise books and slates. The classroom conversation was didactic and usually one way as captured in the following statements:

> Preschool teacher: Today we are going to learn about math, have you all brought your books?
>
> Children: Yes; two children stood up and told the teacher they could not find

their books.

Preschool Teacher: You must go back home and get your books, if you don't find it don't come back

Preschool teacher: Turn your books to page 13. I will show you two examples and you must pay attention (the teacher worked out addition problems 2+7=9, 3+3=6 using counters to demonstrate this to the young children)

Preschool Teacher: Ok take your exercise books and do numbers 1-10. (You must do your own work, do not look at your friend, the teacher instructed)

This demonstrates a colonial way of organizing pedagogical practice where the children are handed down with pre-packaged knowledge (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2011; Dei & Opini, 2007). In a postcolonial classroom children are given opportunity to work with teachers, contribute their knowledge and use a variety of approaches such as investigation, exploration and projects to develop their mental capacities (Agbenyega & Deku, 2011; Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2011). But when children learn only through rigid approaches they lack the opportunity from to accentuate their physical, mental or social development. In the non-government preschool classroom, however, the children had few facilities to do some activities.

The same forceful approach to learning was applied when children learnt rhymes and songs in Bangla, and also acted role plays and dance. Although the contents were not the same in these three preschools the teachers used similar questioning styles to evaluate children's learning skills. All the teachers frequently asked questions from the text books, such as, *"What is this word?"* or *'What number is this?"* They asked these types of questions to the whole class directly, so children replied in chorus. In my

observation, I found that some teachers did not have time to explain their lessons thoroughly although some of the children faced problems in understanding the lesson contents. For example, in one classroom, one student wanted to know the difference between *'launch and ship'* and the teacher said, *"Both of these are same but launch is smaller than a ship"*. Her clarification was not right and she was not conscious that she transferred the wrong meaning to the child. In this way, children at their initial stage of education received erroneous knowledge which was precarious both for their development and the quality of preschool education these children were receiving in Bangladesh.

The classroom observation data further showed that the teachers were colonizing in their attitudes in interaction process. The relationship between the teachers and children exemplifies a master-servant relationship. In the real sense of it, the teachers dominated the children and subjected them to humiliation whenever they got answers wrong as this conversation depicts:

> Preschool Teacher: Why did you get your entire math wrong? *Gadha* (meaning the child has nothing in the head)! Is your head dead or something? Look at your friend, he got all right. You are not serious, if you don't work hard you will repeat this class and you can't go to class one next year (The child starts to feel dejected in front of other classmates).

It seemed that they were not interested in involving children in classroom activities and they did not allow the children to talk or ask question during their teaching times. During interviews, teachers said that they had good relationships with students and they were friendly to them. They believed that if they engaged children in activities they would enjoy the work but were concerned that allowing children to make contribution would prevent them from gaining the right knowledge. They also thought

that it would not be good practice to permit children to ask questions or to express their views as they came to school for learning, not to share or generate any knowledge of their own. Regarding this issue, the preschool teachers commented:

> I have good relations with children. They like me and my teaching style so they do not feel bored. I do not involve children in activities more because they will not give attention to learning from books or blackboards and the situation of classroom would be disorganized, unmanageable. If we allow children to talk or to ask questions then they will become naughty and disrespectful (PTG)

> We have good relations with children and we look at all children equally. When we find any child is weak or shy we try to motivate him/her to participate in classroom activities. However, we always do not allow children to talk too much otherwise they will become disobedient (PPT1)

> The relationship is very good with me. I always give attention to the development of children and help them if they need. It becomes hard to control them if I engage them to do anything in the classroom (PTN).

The views expressed by the teachers situate their thinking in modernist and colonial epistemology. Modernist epistemology locates knowledge only in the teacher (Dei & Opini, 2007; Freire, 2007). In the similar way the colonial epistemology rejects the knowledge of children as simplistic that must be ignored (Dirlik, 1994). Rejecting children's knowledge constructs them as the "other' in their own learning situations because agency, rights of voice and representation are silent. As the data showed children are identified as objects in the classrooms that needed to be controlled by the teachers. This colonial view of children in the preschools was a harmful signal which has the capacity to disrupt the quality of preschool education in Bangladesh.

In the research site, I interviewed those teachers whose classes I observed and found that teachers did not behave in the classrooms as they said to me during the interview. There were mismatch between their actual acts and comments. For example, the teacher of the government preschool noted:

> I believe that a teacher's friendly behaviour is very much important for the quality. Although our environment is not developed and resource rich, like USA or UK, as our country is a poor country, we can develop the environment and ensure quality by becoming sincere and cordial to teaching process and also to children. If the environment is appropriate for teaching but teacher is not sincere and warm to all children then the quality will not come. The teacher should be equal to all children; otherwise his/her discriminatory behaviour will affect children's development. If the teacher is friendly to all types of children then he/she can make them easier and adaptable with other children and the environment (PTG).

Although this teacher indicated in the interview that she attends to individual differences as part of her practice my observation showed that, this teacher did not pay equal attention to all children and most of the time she gave attention to the children in front benches. When she engaged children to do activities she always called the same three or four students whom she identified as the brilliant students in her class.

The observation data indicated that most of the teachers used discriminatory language and behave erroneously to some of the children. In the classroom, the teacher of the government preschool called some students naughty and disobedient. She also said to the whole class:

> Look, this boy is excellent in behaviour and his hand writing is very nice so one day he will be a brilliant person in society and you, who are naughty will never get a chance to be good students and not get fine jobs in future (PTG).

This comment made some children sad and some of them after school shared with me that they could not be good students in future as their teacher had cursed them for being naughty. The facial expressions and disrespectful words of teachers to children indicated that teacher's power always existed in the classrooms of the preschool in Bangladesh to control every task. In the classroom environment, children did not have the right to say anything and the teacher's judgment was considered to be right and final all the time.

One of the classrooms I observed in the NGO preschool also included a child with a disability (deaf). However, the school and teachers of this classroom did not make any special arrangement for him to be fully included in activities. Observation showed that none of the teachers gave attention to his presence in the classroom, asked him any questions or invited him to write on the blackboard like other students often did. I also observed that the boy's hand writing and drawing skill were nice but these were neglected by the teachers because of his sensory disability. During the interview session, I asked his teachers regarding how they support him and their response was:

> This boy is always shy, not sociable and spontaneous like others so it is difficult for me to involve him in activities…I don't feel he is comfortable working with other children. As you can see I have large numbers too, so it is not an easy thing to cater to individual differences or disabilities (PTN).

All classroom situations depicted domineering practices of teachers though they claimed that they treat all children equally and gave special attention to the disadvantaged or diverse children. These types of attitude and perception of teachers to disadvantaged children raised concern about the identity, right, agency and representation in the preschools. The above comments of teachers also explored that

they knew about the influences of their apposite behaviour on child development and quality preschool education, however, they did not change their practices to meet the needs of all children in the classrooms.

4.6.5 Leadership and management.

Another aspect of preschool quality related to this study is operational dimension. Connected to this are leadership and management. My observation focused on this dimension in the three preschools and on the relationships between head teachers and teachers. In this section I discuss the management system and the relationships of head teachers, program organiser and teachers of the three preschool on the basis of observation and interview data.

Government preschool

The government preschool is part of the primary school which is governed by the Directorate of Primary and Mass Education in Bangladesh. The head teacher of the participant school was the responsible person for the total activities of this school. He received instructions and orders from the relevant officers of the directorate and then informed his teachers in the school. The other teachers of the school had to obey the rules of government under the control of the head teacher. Teachers were appointed through the regulations and processes of the Directorate of Primary and Mass Education of Bangladesh. For school activities, teachers were accountable to the head teacher. For any wrong task or activity, they are required to explain to the head teacher who has the right to give them warning for their inefficiencies.

> I have only the right to warn the teacher and to give suggestion to the officers to ask them to show cause from the responsible teacher but the authority above me

> takes the decisions. These types of rules exist in regulation papers and the authority rarely takes proper action (HTG).

The head teacher further mentioned that sometimes he faced problems to run and manage the educational activities in the school because the teachers know very well that the final decision on any matter in the school rests on the shoulders of the superior authority, which is the Directorate of Primary and Mass Education. For example, some senior teachers always made excuses and requested him to give them early leave. Moreover, several of them frequently wanted to take casual leave, so he had difficulties to operate the teaching processes in their classrooms. The head teacher also argued that he needed to ask permission from the authority to take action which sometimes created challenging situations in the schools.

> Although I am the head teacher, I cannot make decisions some decisions on my own. If I have some brilliant ideas to improve something in the school I have to obtain permission from the higher authorizes. This may take several months so by the time I get approval it is too late (HGP).

This statement confirms although on paper, the head teacher is positioned as a powerful figure to make decisions in the preschool; in reality he had no power to make strategic decisions that would make the school an effective one.

The Private Preschool

The private preschool was owned by a rich local leader of the community and the school was on his land. The school had a committee with three familiar, rich and respectable persons of the community, the owner, the head teacher, teachers and two parents. The owner was the chairman and the head teacher is the secretary of this

committee. This committee made the policy and regulations for the school and also appointed the teachers from the local community. In employing teachers they gave importance to the quality of the applicants, but the chairman had the ultimate power to decide who is finally recruited to teach in the school. The head teacher was accountable to the committee in all school matters, and teachers were responsible to the chairman and head teacher for their works. If any complaint or problem occurred from teachers, the chairman and head teacher first made contact with the person and try to resolve the issue by asking the liable person to explain his or her error.

Arguably, the head teacher and teachers were given the right to be involved in the committee; however, they were obliged to listen to the owner as he was the chairman of the preschool. During the interview sessions, the head teacher and teachers said that occasionally, the chairman took some decisions and actions with which they could not agree. But they needed to accept those decisions in order to save their jobs.

> It is not always easy for us in this school, you have to teach in a particular way to make sure children pass their exams (PTP1)

> If children get low marks you may be approached to explain how you are doing your job (PTP3)

> We do not agree that children at this stage should be forced to learn like this but our voice does not go anywhere as you are often told your duty is to teach and make sure many children as possible get to their favourite primary schools…if you are on the defensive side you may not have a job the next day so you have to go with the owner's decision, after all, it is business (PTP4).

The comments above suggest that the voices of the teachers in the private preschool did not get space due to the oppressive role of the chairman who thought of

himself as the superior person of the school to take final decisions. Also, the preschool is run on a business model and to maintain profit they need to keep their enrolments stable which they could only do in this situation by ensuring more and more children from this private preschool pass the entry examinations of their favourite primary schools. During observation, I noticed that some teachers I interviewed were the owner's relatives who had the power to recruit teachers. These teachers held the most important positions of the school which presented a picture of misappropriation of power and ascribing positions to non-qualified persons in the private preschool. This had a great implication on the quality of classroom teaching and also on children's learning and progress as the owner could not sanction his own relatives for poor teaching in the school.

The Non-government organisation preschool

Preschool education was a part of the education program of the participating non-government organisation. Educational specialists, mainly from the head office of this organisation, were responsible for executing the education program at the field level. The material development unit of the head office developed textbooks, the teacher's guide and training modules. The Regional Managers (RMs) operated and managed the field-level activities of schools. The following diagram shows the executive positions of staff of this organisation's preschool education program (Shajamal & Nath, 2008; Chabbott, 2006).

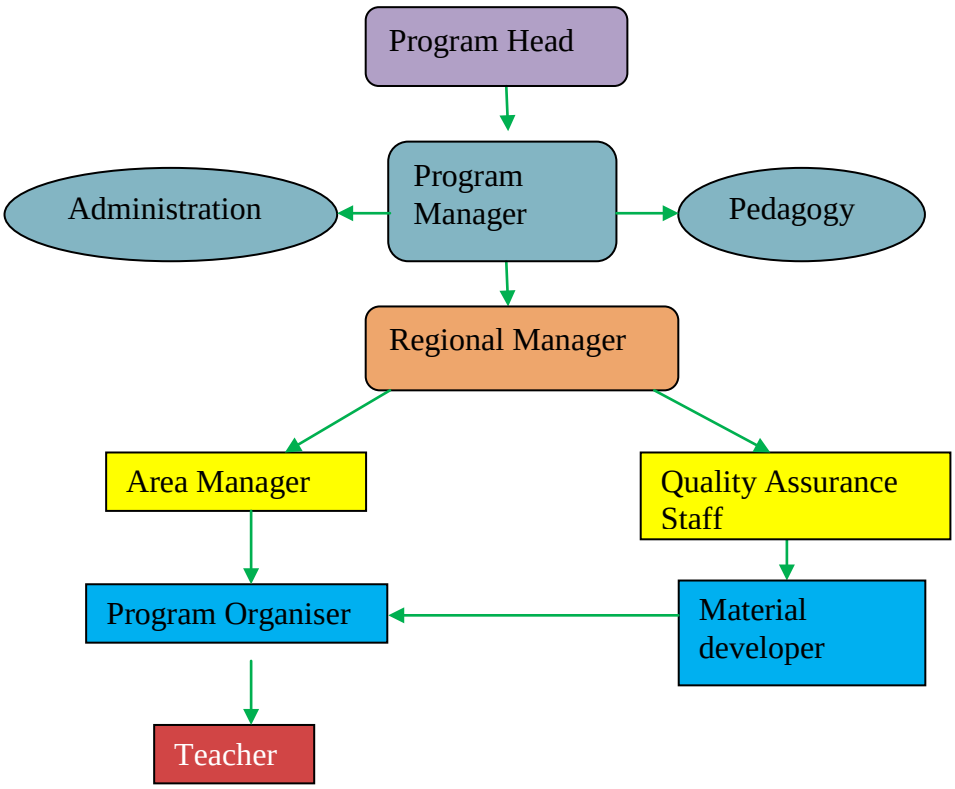

Figure 4.1 Organisation structure of the NGO preschools

The program organisers were directly linked with the teachers of the preschools. The head office of this organisation made the policies although the implementation strategies were discussed and decided in the monthly RM meetings. The Regional and Area Manager of the organisation recruited teachers by administering written and oral tests, and the Regional Manager set the questions of the test. Female persons who passed the Secondary School Certificate Examination (ten years education) could apply and needed to pass in both tests to be a teacher.

Teachers of this organisation were accountable to the program organisers as they supervised them. Teachers verbally notified the Program Organisers about their problems and the Program Organisers tried to solve those problems. If they failed to

find solution then they reported to the Branch Manager, who took action after discussing the issue with the Area Manager.

The management system of the NGO preschool was centralized. The Program Organisers and teachers had no access to share their opinions and thoughts with the Area or Regional Managers. As the Program Organiser and teacher were not involved significantly with the educational designing and programming activities they did not feel interested in answering the interview questions about the curriculum, teaching methods and materials, future plans of this organisation for ensuring quality of preschool education.

4.6.6 Evaluation, transition and, health and wellbeing of children.

In relation to evaluation and transition, the classroom observation findings demonstrated that the teachers of the three preschools were sincere and regular to evaluate children's learning outcome. The priority and right of children to get a healthy and secure life was neglected in these preschools in Bangladesh. From the observation, I noticed that none of the three schools had adequate facilities for the health and safety of the children and teachers. Though the Operational Framework gave importance to children's health the schools did not provide proper guidelines and facilities to schools or parents about this issue. I also observed that, although the head teachers, Program Organiser and teachers were sincere, careful and gave feedback about their teaching environment and resources but none of them were concerned about the condition of their toilets and health facilities for children. All of the participants replied in such a voice which seemed that it was not an important factor for the schools. They commented that:

We have problem with toilets and I have already reported this to the department. We have a first aid box in the school to give primary treatment to students but it is not in good condition (HGP)

I do not have any First Aid materials in my school but I try to give some information about health and safety to children during school assembly and while teaching in classrooms (HPP)

We do not have any First Aid materials but we give information about health and safety to children and parents in parents' monthly meetings. We also tell children in class to wash their hands after toileting and to eat fruits and vegetables (PO).

Their opinions indicated that they did not feel the necessity to make any claims for better water and toileting system or for a safe environment although they talked about their salaries, the high numbers of students, the lack of resources and facilities. It can be argued that the teachers who were the agents and potential advocates for children's development were silent about this vital issue of their growth. The head teachers, Program Organiser and teachers of these preschool in Bangladesh only thought about children's academic progress and did not give importance to their physical and health improvement. A large body of studies on quality in early childhood care and education settings, in particular, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) which follows 1364 American children from birth, focusing on child care experiences and outcomes and on child care quality provided convincing conclusion that sensitivity to children's needs, emotional attachment, stimulation of cognitive development, and children's interactions, exploratory behaviour and involvement lead to higher quality outcomes such as higher cognitive growth, social development and school readiness (Brooks-Gunn, Han & Waldfogel, 2002; NICHD,

2000). Poor quality preschool which is associated with poor hygiene and the lack of care for children seriously impacts on children's health and their ability to learn effectively (NICHD, 2000). This requires that serious attention be paid to environmental and health issues of children in preschools.

4.6.7 Parent and community involvement.

Parent and community involvement in school activities was the last dimension of quality in this study. Through this dimension I present the findings and discuss connections of preschools with parents and communities. During observation, I noticed that all of the three preschools had a committee for school management where parents had opportunity to be included and participate in activities of schools. However, in practice, parents were not interested and engaged enough to come to the monthly meetings regularly or to present in the school programs. In response to how parents are involved in preschool programs the teacher of the government preschool said the following:

> Most of the parents of my class do not come regularly in monthly parent's meeting as they are busy with work…Parents do not come to parents' meeting regularly and do not want to join in school activities. We send letters and notes regularly to parents about their children and rarely get response from them about their children (PTG).

The policy of preschool education allowed the place and rights for parent involvement but the existing situation in the schools did not support the policy. Both parents and schools were accountable for this circumstance. Parents did not participate actively in the school activities for their children's holistic development. This situation arose because the schools did not encourage or construct parents as authentic players

enough to develop their interest to participate. This is evident in the comments made by the teachers of the private preschool.

> We know it is the responsibility of parents to send their children to school but I don't see the point that they should have much to be involved in the school itself apart from parent teacher meetings (PPT1)
>
> If the children frequently see their parents they may not be serious about their learning (PPT2)
>
> School is different from home that is why the children leave home and come to school (PPT3)
>
> I do agree that we should connect with parents but this must be done cautiously (PPT4).

Although the teachers have some relationships with parents, it appears this only happens during teacher-parent meeting which is usually formal. In this regard, it could be argued that some parents may find these meetings intimidating and therefore unable to contribute effectively to the development of the schools. Less formal meetings could encourage parents to participate in school activities. Contrary to what was happening in the government and private preschools the NGO preschool is more positive in terms of connecting and working with families which is stated succinctly by the Program Organiser.

> We consider families as our strategic partners, we try to encourage them to come to the school and see what their children are doing…In this way they would understand our program. We also visit parents in their homes and encourage them to send their children to the school…our goal is capacity building for the community to reduce or eliminate chronic poverty and disadvantage (PO).

According to the comments made above, the NGO preschool viewed the local community as powerful role players in the environment and program of schools. Therefore, it attempts to maintain a focused community relationships so that parents are empowered to play a leading role in the school management committee. The head teachers and Program Organiser indicated that:

> The school management committee has positions for community leaders. We always try to maintain good relation with community persons. We invite them in the school management committee meetings to inform them about school activities and also to involve them in the school programs…Through the school management committee we involve the community in our school programs. We have good relationships with community persons. They help us to arrange different programs and give suggestions about teachers, teaching methods and activities of school…We get lands for school houses from the local or community persons. We have good relation with the community; they help us to arrange meetings and different programs (PO).

The observation and interview data showed that, most of the community members of school committees were rich and some were political leaders who donated land or money for the school. Therefore, they consider themselves powerful persons to take decisions about the program and even influence recruitment of teachers. Some of the interviewees were of the opinion that although the role of community was important, their powerful actions and behaviour were not good for the schools. The head teachers and teachers of the government and non-government preschools said that they faced challenges in working with the community. They claimed that the challenges were related to the misuse of political and economic power by some of the community and political leaders who thought of the schools as their local property and wanted teachers to work according to those persons' orders. These data revealed that in Bangladesh,

these schools faced the challenges of power, influence of money as well as people who were not teaching or connected with the work for children's development but hold key positions. This situation also supported the view that the manipulation and control symbolizing colonisation is being reproduced in the preschool education system in this country.

The data of this study showed that parental involvement in the three preschools were not all that strong. Achieving preschool quality is difficult without parents' involvement in program activities (Garcia & Hasson, 2004; Hill & Taylor, 2004). The relationship parents and teachers develop is important for children's cognitive development and preschool achievement. Parents play significant roles in their children's education (Epstein & Sanders, 2000; Grolnick & Price, 2005; Hartas, 2008; Jeynes, 2003; Pomerantz, Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). Parents can be involved in different ways in their child's education. For instance, they can be involved in the preschool activities, support the child at home on what they have learnt at school, provide the necessary encouragement to the child's personal life and engage the children in cognitive activities such as play. If teachers recognize that parents are the primary influence in their children's lives they will establish a strong relationship with them (Fan & Chen, 2001; Pelletier& Brent, 2002).

The last tool used for data gathering for this research was semi-structured interviews of head teachers, Program Organiser and teachers. Most of the interview data have been incorporated into the previous sections of this chapter to support the documentary and observation data analysis. In the following sections I present and analyse the rest of the interview data and how this replicate a postcolonial issues of identity, power, voice, agency and representation.

4.7 Semi-structured Interview

Before starting the interview process, I assured the participants of the confidentiality of their information, so there was no possibility of recognizing them through this study. According to the research method of this study I did semi-structured interview with two head teachers, one Program Organiser and six teachers. The quality dimensions and theoretical framework were used together as a basis for formulating interview questions. There were fourteen interview questions for each participant (see Appendix 1 & 2).

As I observed the classrooms first, and the findings of observation also helped me to ask some new questions to the teachers which were not in my primary interview protocol. For example, from my observation in one school I noticed a boy with hearing impairment who was weak in writing letters and words but drew nice pictures, so I asked the teacher how they help this boy with his drawing and also for his learning. In the sub-sections that followed I presented and analysed the dialogues of the participants under the various dimensions of quality.

4.7.1 Educational concept and practice.

During interview sessions, I wanted to know the head teachers', program organiser's and teachers' concept regarding the quality of preschool education. The reason for this question was to gain insight into how the teachers' concepts of quality influence their practice. Surprisingly, the participants conceptualized quality in terms of academic merit; which is the ability of children to learn and reproduce subject matter in Bangla, English and Mathematics at this preliminary phase of education. The head

teacher of the private preschool and the Program Organiser of the NGO preschool illustrated this vividly:

> When children of preschool education achieve terminal competencies and subject based competencies then we are achieving the quality of classroom teaching practices of preschool education. To achieve quality preschool education we need to develop the quality of the text-books. Moreover, teachers need to get proper trainings and enough teaching materials to teach children (HPP)

> In our school, children regularly come and teachers teach well. Most of the children can pass the examination. So I think we are maintaining quality (PO).

There were further opinions from two teachers on this same issue:

> When teachers apply some interesting strategies in classroom and all children are able to learn letters, words, numbers correctly then the quality will come (PTG)

> If all children can learn the lessons accurately and get good marks in the tests of each subject then the quality of preschool education will be improved (PTP2).

Despite the majority locating quality in terms of young children's ability to show academic competency, the head teacher of the government preschool gave importance to play and interesting activities for children to gain quality preschool education.

> When we can teach children in a different, modern and scientific methods where children not only get subject knowledge but also get chance to play and do co-curricular activities like song, poem, rhymes then quality will come (HGP).

These comments from the participants demonstrated that most of the teachers of the preschools where this study was conducted believed that quality in preschool education mainly depended on children's academic achievement. These teachers emphasized more on memorization of contents rather than play-based learning and child-centred activities. This conceptualization to a large extent influenced the way the teachers taught their lessons, using oppressive pedagogical methods (Freire reference). For example, the teachers were mainly concerned with forcing the children to get good scores in tests and this exercise of power and oppression on children was a threat to their quality learning and holistic development.

Still with regard to the concept of quality I wanted to know the future programs and initiatives the head teachers, the Program Organiser and the teachers have towards ensuring quality preschool education in their schools. Unfortunately, they were not interested to say anything about their upcoming arrangements as they were not involved in any planning processes regarding quality. There was also an evidence of apathy from the teachers mainly as they knew well that they had no agency, power and voice to make their own plans or take any steps in improving the quality of their preschool. They only have jobs to do and this job is to teach according to existing frameworks whether they like it or not. This means there was no reason for them to think about future programs or strategies to ensure quality programs. In view of this the head teacher of the government preschool and the Program Organiser of the NGO preschool said:

> I am not interested to make plans because I know that I have no power or right to take initiatives. Once I planned that all children in my school should wear uniform as I think that uniform is a symbol of their identity but I could not implement that as the government education officers and members of school management committee did not allow me to do that. I can only do those works

> which the preschool education department of government and committee want (HGP)

> I am not involved in any planning process so I cannot say what the organisation is thinking and planning for improving the quality (PO).

These comments indicated that the head teacher and the Program Organiser of their respective preschools had little power, agency and voice to represent their ideas and thoughts for the development of preschool education. However, the head teacher of the private preschool thought that there were still some opportunities for them to work for the benefit of children.

> We have planned to check that all students and teachers are coming to school on time regularly. We will also make sure that all of us will have good preparation and teaching materials to teach children in classrooms (HPP).

The classroom situations and opinions of the head teachers, the Program Organiser and the teachers showed that they were interested in working to enhance quality in preschool education but they could not go ahead as they had no power and representation in the education system. The head teacher and teachers of the private preschool had few opportunities to express their opinions and plan for future activities. However, the chairman and some powerful teachers, particularly those affiliated to the owner often disagreed with plans and ignored their ideas. It seemed that power relation issues compound problems and played destructive role in all the three preschools.

4.7.2 Leadership and management.

The data of this sub-section discusses the interactions between head teachers, the Program Organiser and teachers of the three preschool. It also presents data on the

teachers' remuneration and facilities in the preschools which played important role in the quality of classroom teaching practices.

In the interview sessions, all of the head teachers, the Program Organiser and teachers of the three participant schools mentioned that they had cordial relations. They reported that although some teachers faced problems with other teachers, they often resolve these through negotiation and through the head teachers for the goodwill of their schools. Regarding this issue, the head teachers and the Program Organiser said:

> The nature of interaction between teachers and me is very nice. I always keep good communication with them because when the teachers have good relation with the head teacher and other teachers they will feel happy and teach in the classroom cheerily. If they have any problem with me or other teachers or staff then they could misbehave with children and do not teach accurately. Teachers spend more time in school than home so I feel that they need joyful environment in school to teach to the little children merrily. It is true that in every school, the head teacher sometimes faces problem with teachers and it happens in my school too. However, all teachers are cooperative and they try to keep good relation with the head teacher and other teachers (HGP).
>
> All teachers are very cooperative and they have good relation with me and other teachers. We are working in this school as a team so we need to maintain good relationship among us. If the relation becomes bad then teachers will come to school but they will not teach children with joyful mind and warmly. I always take information about teachers, such as, whether they well or not, have any physical, mental or financial problems and sometimes they also feel free to discuss with me about any matter (HPP).
>
> For running the school properly I always maintain good relation with teachers. Because if they feel bad or uncomfortable with me then it will affect her teaching works which can interrupt children's development. I always try to give

> them support for teaching; even sometimes I help them with their personal problems (PO).

Teachers also commented that they always maintained good relation with the head teachers, the Program Organiser, other teachers and parents.

> I have good relations with other teachers of this school otherwise I cannot work here. I have also good relations with parents and I am always concerned to keep good relations with them. Every day I talk with parents about the problems and successes of each child (PTG).

> We have good relations and we always try to help other teachers. If we find any pressure or any problem of any teachers, we help them. If we do not keep good relations then it will affect our teaching. We also always maintain good relations with students and parents and want to know about their problems. If we see that any student is absent we call his/her parents by phone or go his/her house to seek information. Sometimes parents share their personal or family problem with us and we try to give them good suggestions (PTP3).

> To keep good relations with children, I try to behave well to them. I also maintain good relation with the program organiser. I share problems and take suggestions regularly from her (PTN).

Although the head teachers and teachers were sincere to keep good relations between them, children and parents, there were some issues which interrupted their good relations and teaching practices in their classrooms. Some of the head teachers and teachers were dissatisfied with the policies of recruitment of teachers as the authority appointed some teachers who did not have minimum qualification for teaching. They felt dishonoured and irritated when they found that unqualified people played important roles in school activities and in management decisions.

> We have noticed that several teachers of this school are not teaching properly but we cannot say anything as they were appointed by powerful person and we are concerned about our jobs (PTP1).

Most of the participants expressed their anxiety concerning remuneration and facilities. They indicated that they did not get living wages and respect from the authorizing bodies, including their society although they provided the noble service to children and the nation. The salary scale of head teachers, Program Organiser and teachers failed to meet their basic living costs. In view of this the head teacher of the government preschool said:

> I need to speak about the policy and salary scales. As policy, the head teacher needs to have a Bachelor or Master's Degree; however the salary scale of a head teacher is equal to the salary of government driver, office assistant or waiter who has lower educational qualifications than us. As our financial status is not good, we feel unhappy with our profession which affects our teaching practices. Very often many head teachers and teachers leave their jobs due to this financial discrimination and crisis (HGP).

Remuneration of teachers has effect on children's achievements, because it allow schools to retain better quality teachers, and may improve the overall quality of teachers in preschools. Haq and Haq (1998) claimed that the salary for primary school teachers in Pakistan is less than that received by a cook, gardener or even a driver and this situation is similar in Bangladesh. The average salary of primary school teachers as a multiple of per capita income in Bangladesh is 3.2 which is less than that in India, Pakistan and Bhutan (Bray, 2002). As of June, 2005, the salary of government primary schools teachers in Bangladesh was 4000 Taka (US$50) per month and teachers of NGOs preschool received only five to six hundred Taka per month which was equivalent to US$ 8-10 (Haq & Isalm, 2005). There is no permanent salary structure for

private preschool teachers in Bangladesh and different private preschools pay different remuneration to teachers, however, there is no available data about the wages of private preschool teachers.

Teachers agreed that their friendly and sincere behaviour were very important for quality in preschool education. However, they argued that if they had to think about the ways of earning money for their families, then they could not give adequate time for preparation and quality teaching. They acknowledged that they were involved in private tutoring because their salary from preschool work was not sufficient for the living expenditures of their families. The data indicated that the poor remuneration of teaching in preschool contributed to the head teachers', program organiser's and teachers' disappointment and created obstacles for quality of classroom teaching practices. Such obstacles included lateness, apathy and the lack of motivation to make innovations to teaching.

4.7.3 Evaluation and transition methods.

The data on evaluation system of the preschools in Bangladesh have been discussed in section 5.3.5 and 5.4.2. In this sub-section I present and analyse the findings on teachers' perception on transition. Although transition from home to preschool was an important aspect in children's life, none of the participants of this study were familiar with this. Transition was rather superficial without much work with families to ensure children's emotional stability, health and wellbeing.

> When children come to school my teachers and me welcome them warmly and make a funny environment so they do not feel scared to come to school. In classrooms we sing songs, dance, and draw pictures to make them easier with the new environment. Some children feel upset and cry during their first days in

> school. We give them toys, chocolates and take them in our lap which makes them happy and later they feel comfortable to come to school (HPP).
>
> Whenever I come to school I welcome children cordially and try to make friendly relations with them which help them to adjust to the new environment. I always collect information about children's physical, financial or family problem then I try to help them (PTP2).
>
> After coming to school the teacher and I welcome children warmly. In classrooms we sing songs, dance and tell rhymes to make them feel at ease with the new environment. Sometimes mothers visit for two or three days with their children (PO).

During interview, none of the participants of these three preschools agreed that children and teacher's background, beliefs, knowledge and attitude had an effect on the teaching practice in classrooms. They thought that even if a child had come from different religions and socio-economic status backgrounds there was no impact of those aspects on their school activities. I consider this view to be a lack of ignorance of the nature and nurture influence on child development. Teachers also had different values and beliefs but they indicated that they were neutral and equal in their approach to classrooms teaching. From their comments it could be understood that children's identity, agency and representation as social beings were not recognised in the preschool. Areas such as health and safety, wellbeing and relationships that could be focused on during transition programming were ignored. As these areas were not considered important in transition services for children, evaluation of children's competency was solely based on what happened in the preschools without strong link with home situations. Children's beliefs, attitudes and knowledge as unique persons were discarded in evaluations. They needed to leave all of their thoughts and desires at

home before coming to school, and once in school, they were only to listen to teachers and be evaluated on what they heard from them. It can be argued that the children's identities as unique individuals are lost to the school culture which forced them to adopt the stances and morals of schools and teachers.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings which was analysed from a postcolonial perspective under seven dimensions of quality. From the analysis of data it became clear that the quality dimensions of preschool education in Bangladesh were mostly related to the socio-economic condition of this country. Moreover, postcolonial issues of identity, agency, power, voice and representation are implicated in the data when reflecting on these dimensions regarding the quality in classroom teaching practices. While Bangladesh is a self-governing country the holistic development of children appeared to be compromised with the exercise of power and money, and the field of preschool education depicted a site of postcolonial struggle. In Chapter Five I will discuss the results in relation to the research questions drawing out inherent issues to establish the postcolonial turn which preschool education has to take in Bangladesh to ensure quality practices for all young children.

Chapter Five
Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This research study sets out to investigate the quality of classroom teaching practices of preschools in Bangladesh. This chapter is an extensive explanation of the themes of this research which are discussed in relation to the research questions, theory and related literature of the study.

5.2 Perceptions of Head Teachers, Program Organisers and Teachers on the Quality of Preschool Education

An important aim of this study was to gain insights into the perceived concepts of head teachers, program organiser and preschool teachers on quality practice. Insights into teachers' beliefs and perception about quality are important because these factors are closely associated with how teaching and learning take place, and whether they constitute quality preschool education or not (Moss & Pence, 1994). The following is a discussion based on the first research question. This question has sought to find out the knowledge and concept of head teachers, program organiser and teachers on quality teaching practices of preschools in Bangladesh.

Research question 1:

The first research question asks: how do preschool head teachers, program organiser and teachers in Bangladesh conceptualize quality in preschool education? In

addressing the first research question, I investigated participants' views in terms of their knowledge of subject matter, teaching context, teaching and learning practices in the classrooms. This question requires engaging the participants in interviews, and analysis of classroom observations to gain insights into their thoughts and understandings about quality preschool education. In relation to this research question, the results indicated that the head teachers, the program organiser and the teachers' concept of quality of classroom teaching practices in the three preschools were mainly associated with the ability of children to memorize subject matter in 'Bangla', English and Mathematics. According to the participants, quality is when "children demonstrate outcomes by getting good marks on tests in the subjects we teach them" (Interview transcripts). The participants also believed that quality preschool education happens when teachers "deliver good knowledge to children" (Interview transcripts).

Interestingly, all of the participants in this study appeared to be more concerned about children's academic work and discipline in the classrooms, and neglected child-initiated activities, collaborative and participatory learning environment in the preschools. During interview sessions, the head teachers, the program organiser and teachers commented, "the main aim of preschool education was to make good students who would achieve better academic results and get a chance to enrol in the good primary schools" (Interview transcripts). In Bangladesh, to be enrolled in so called good primary schools is difficult for most children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This is due to high population compared to available primary schools.

It is noted in some earlier studies conducted in Bangladesh that because of competition children are pressured into achieving high marks on the admission tests in order to gain admission into highly regarded primary schools (Ahmed et al., 2005;

Hasan, 2011). This situation appears to influence the teachers to think that their original responsibility as preschool teachers was to make children knowledgeable and skilled in specific subjects so that they could obtain top scores in primary school admission tests. The results also suggest that parents were instrumental in the push for academic readiness for their children, which in many important respects, influenced the teachers' concept of quality. For example, the teachers remarked: "parents and communities expected us to focus on children's academic results rather than their physical, social or emotional progresses as they are required to be ready for the competition to get access into good primary schools" (Interview transcripts). From their comments it appeared that both teachers and parents gave importance to their desires and imposed their power on children to fulfil teachers' and parents' aspirations rather than attend to the unique developmental needs of children. They ignored children's ability, agency and voice and pressured them to learn a lot of things by rote. These findings are consistent with other research studies conducted in Ghana on early childhood learning, which showed that some teachers believe they are the custodians of knowledge, and by transmitting this knowledge to children, they are practising quality (Agbenyega & Deku, 2011; Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2011).

The results demonstrated that overall, the participants' concept of quality preschool education and expectations of young children's learning and development, are not considered from a holistic perspective, across several dimensions, such as wellbeing, involvement, active learning environment and relationships which are key to learning (Kagan & Britto, 2005). A critical postcolonial perspective of quality preschool education is that it must be rooted in the cultural and national expectations of what children of a given age, residing in a given country, should know and be able to do. This does not mean that cultural norms which violate children's rights should be upheld.

Instead, a postcolonial perspective must be utilised to disentangle children from a narrow educational conceptualizations that are premised only on testing. Research supports this notion and that when the concept of quality is situated in practices that consider, the cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic differences, as well as children with additional education needs, such practices indeed, lead to quality educational outcomes (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2011).

Also, nearly all of the head teachers, program organisers and teachers believed that they are practising quality teaching approaches in their classrooms of the preschools in Bangladesh because they were enthusiastic about their work. They argue that they always tried to finish the prescribed syllabuses on time and the majority of their students often gain admission into good primary schools. They thought that their qualifications and training as teachers, and the practising methods they use were promoting quality as children learned the contents on time and got good marks in tests. The teacher participants argued that there was no need of joyful environment and friendly relationship with the children in the schools because “school is for learning, and not for playing or enjoyment” (Interview transcripts). These views regarding the quality of preschool education completely contradicts other research findings which suggest that enjoyable learning environments, child-initiated activities, qualified teachers, child centred teaching approaches and positive interactions are important factors for ensuring the quality of preschool education (DEEWR, 2009; Howes & Lee, 2007; Lamb, 1998; Phillips & Howes, 1987; UNICEF, 2000; Vandell & Wolfe, 2000). Previous research has also indicated that in classrooms where teaching and learning adopts rote and obligatory approaches children are limited in acquiring conceptual knowledge but rather develop basic ideas about what they learn, which often defeats the purpose of quality preschool education (Jones, Evans & Renken, 2001).

The study results also demonstrated that most of the teachers were not familiar with how to use play as a leading activity to involve children in exploratory activities. This situation had resulted in the children becoming spectators in their classrooms. In this sense, the classroom environments appeared to be colonised by the teachers and the children as the captives. The teachers' concept of quality therefore positioned them as dictators and the children as mere receptacles. The teachers in this study thought that by engaging children in play and other activities was a risky thing in the maintenance of discipline in classrooms. Agbenyega and Klibthong (2011), and Agbenyega and Deku (2011), found similar trends in their study in some Ghanaian preschools where children were subjected to robotic situations; teaching was controlled with excessive power, manipulation and forceful compliance to rigid classroom rules. Some research on quality preschool education also suggest that providing opportunity and using play as a leading activity for children's learning enables them to develop their motor, intellectual and social skills (Ailwood, 2003; Degotardi, 2005; Dockett & Fleer, 1999; NAEYC, 2009).

It is surprising that only one teacher participant suggested that a child-centred and co-curricular activity based teaching is the surest way of improving the quality of preschools in Bangladesh. The idea of this teacher is linked with the opinions of several preschool education academics (Fleer, 2009; Prochner, 2002). Vygotsky (1987) argues that everyday concepts taught through play provide the foundations for further learning, which is important for children's development (see also Fleer, 2009). However, it can be argued that most of the teachers of the preschools which participated in this research study ignored children's daily life experience and knowledge. As a result, they always focused on text-books instead of children's concepts, and followed the traditional rote learning method in teaching children rather than using the activity grounded approaches.

The findings also draw attention to the head-teachers, Program Organiser and teachers' attribution of quality of preschool education to individual child's abilities. For example, some teachers remarked: "If you get quality children you will get quality outcomes…but if the children are not good then you will struggle with them" (Interview transcripts). It can be argued that conceptualising quality in this way may result in teachers preferring the use of conventional methods based on lecture from textbooks with few explanations that force children to memorize contents properly instead of engaging them in constructivist approach to discover meanings through different activities. In classrooms where learning is textbook dependent, children's active participation is excluded leading children to develop timid, submissive and reactive learning dispositions (Li, 2004; Rahman, 2011). Classrooms which exclude children's active participation are also found to be associated with frequent behaviour problems and teachers may use most of their contact hours correcting misbehaviour rather than teaching (Li, 2004). Such situations defeat the purpose of quality.

The findings of this study have signalled that the head teachers and teachers of the preschools in Bangladesh thought of themselves as the most knowledgeable facilitators in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, they always attempted to use this power by pushing children to memorize the lessons and completing the tasks on time in the classrooms (Agbenyega, 2009; Friere, 1998; Li, 2004).

To sum up the discussion of the data in response to the first research question there are two main points to be made:

Firstly, the present concept of quality of preschool education held by the participants in this research is mainly based on three factors: – to deliver the contents of prescribed curriculum or lesson plans on time, maintain proper discipline in the

classrooms and prepare children to get the required pass marks in primary entry examinations. Such narrow conceptualisations of quality appeared to prevent the teachers from focusing on processes and knowledge that children bring into the educational process. Children's background knowledge is vital to their holistic development. The failure of teachers to take children's contribution into operation in the classroom is an example of a colonizing educational process. This is so because the teachers identify their children only as content learners who have no voice and representation in the ways teaching and learning are delivered (Agbenyega, 2009; Agbenyega & Deku, 2011).

Secondly, the head teachers, program organisers and teachers of the preschools in this study were mostly concerned with learning outcomes of children, and not about the process of learning. This perception and practice is associated with teaching as a technical exercise (Li, 2004). It has seemed that the concept and knowledge of the participants about children, their agency and how they learn, was limited. Looking at the product of learning without considering the process of learning can be oppressive educational practice for many children. The process of teaching is not concerned with the end product but how learning actually occurs. Focusing on the process of learning enables teachers to devise and utilise innovative approaches that engage all children to dispense their efforts according to their potentials rather looking at specific measurable outcomes at an early age. It can be argued from a postcolonial discursive perspective that the teachers had a tendency to accept children as objects in the classrooms who should listen to teachers and copy what they are told to do. These types of teachers' approach to teaching in preschools and narrow epistemological positioning of preschool quality cannot recognize children as social agents but rather ignore their voice and

representation (Smith, 2007a). This is detrimental for ensuring the quality of classroom teaching practices of preschools in Bangladesh.

Teachers of preschools are the focal persons in students' life and are directly involved with teaching process. They are responsible for assisting children to develop their physical, intellectual, social, and emotional capabilities (Mullick & Sheesh, 2008). Rote learning and regimented teaching strategies in the classrooms of preschools would only block children from enjoying the classroom environment, and from developing critical thinking and problem solving capabilities. Arguing from a postcolonial perspective one would suggest that such approaches the teachers were deploying to teach children could lead to the creation of feelings of inferiority and problematic behaviour in children. The children could become noncompliant, aggressive, destructive and disrespectful in future (Langone & Glickman, 2002).

Thirdly, the remarks of the head teachers, program organisers and teachers have revealed that the weak conditions of preschools and classrooms, the lack of teaching facilities and high ratio of teacher and children influenced their perception of quality of classroom teaching practices of preschools in Bangladesh. It is true that these factors have significant impact on the quality but other dimensions, such as teachers' concept and teaching approaches, their qualification and experiences, their interaction with children, management system of preschools, and parents' involvement are also important for ensuring the quality of preschools in Bangladesh (EAPQECEC, 2009; OECD, 2006; Phillipsen et. al, 1997; Sylva et. al, 2006). The structural issues, for example, played a part in the teachers' concepts and attitudes to change their self-centred teaching strategies in the classrooms.

The teachers of the preschools in Bangladesh depended on the authorities to supply them with adequate materials and facilities in classrooms whereas they could arrange materials from local and natural environment to support the children to explore concepts and gain in-depth understanding of lessons. Instead, the teachers clamoured for foreign materials, such as, blocks, puzzles, art equipment to use in classroom activities. From a postcolonial theoretical view, the dependency syndrome has prevented them from utilising their knowledge and ideas to create teaching materials from local resources from the local environment. For example, they did not acknowledge abundance sticks, empty cans, marbles, and traditional fruits, leaves of trees or flowers, sand or soil in Bangladesh as educational aids which they would use in teaching the children. Interestingly, the participants of this study often complained many times of the lack of materials and often demanded increase in the facilities of their schools. However, during interview sessions, they could not mention any plan or intention to launch child appropriate play and co-curricular activity-based teaching practices in the classrooms. From their arguments it can be understood that most of the head teachers, Program Organiser and teachers were confident and happy with their current teaching practices and they did not consider changing their concept and practice of what constitute the quality of classroom teaching practices in Bangladesh.

5.3 Teaching Practices in the Preschools

The focus of the discussion in this section is on teachers' classroom teaching practices in preschools in Bangladesh. Teachers' work is very important in children's lives. It is very important to observe and interview teachers about their work in order to understand what they do, how they do it and the reasons that form the basis of their daily work. The second research question was formulated on these ideas.

Research question 2:

How do the head teachers', program organiser's and teachers' concept influence their teaching practices?

From the theoretical perspective four areas of teachers' teaching practices were central to the exploration of this research question. These were – teachers' teaching methods, interaction with children, attitude to educational materials, and assessment techniques of children's learning process and outcomes.

Teachers' teaching methods

Teachers' beliefs and conception of educational quality influence their teaching approaches in classrooms (Ernest, 1988). Drawing from the discussion on the first research question in this study it was found that the head teachers, program organisers and teachers thought that the quality of classroom teaching depends on providing specified contents to children in scheduled time for children to memorize and pass prescribed tests. During observations in the preschool classrooms, it was evident that the teachers did not create flexible opportunity for children to think, reflect or use their ideas. The classroom practices demonstrate a belief of good teaching to be depended on lecturing and explaining contents to children. As such most of the teachers used one-way communication and controlled every aspect of children's everyday experiences in class. The teachers' process of relying exclusively on transmission approach and test results to define quality teaching, promoted rote and passive learning in all the classrooms observed. Generally, the teachers often read texts from books to children without explaining the concepts they intend children to learn from the contents of the stories.

Other teachers engaged children in copying dictated notes and answering questions either from books or tasks written on blackboards into their exercise books. Even in these circumstances the teachers did not often check the works of all children and rarely identified wrong answers and corrected their mistakes during the process of learning. Supervision of children's work in progress was usually equivalent to 'police inspection.' That is, the teachers were not aimed at supporting the process of learning, but were somewhat reactive and punitive in their practice. Children were often scolded for poor work or asked to stand up in a corner and raise their hand for several minutes for poor work and misbehaviour. Rarely is the learning process considered but the focus was on product or outcomes. There is evidence to suggest that apart from focusing on contents and examinations for young children, the participants also mentioned structural dimension as a facilitator of quality preschool education. They believed that the classroom settings, adequate furniture and materials were the most influential factors regarding quality classroom teaching practices. In addition, the teachers claimed that the teacher-student ratio was a problematic issue in relation to their capability to deliver quality preschool education. The teachers argued that they had enough knowledge and skills to apply quality teaching practices in the classrooms but they could not do so for the poor condition of the above mentioned factors. They blamed the government and the school authorities of preschools for not providing the adequate facilities in the schools they teach.

The teacher participants expressed their concern that government and different national and international organisations advised them to change their teaching strategies and involve children in play based activities. However, it would not be possible for teachers to bring changes in their teaching approaches considering the large number of children in one small size classroom without suitable and sufficient equipment. They

added that initially, the authorities needed to provide facilities, such as, toys and resources for play and child activities which could enhance the quality of classroom teaching practices of preschools in Bangladesh. They also argued that the government and authorizing bodies should take steps to increase the number of classrooms and reduce high student-teacher ratios if they were to achieve quality preschool education.

The concept and teaching approaches of the teachers in the three preschools concurred with the findings of other studies conducted in Bangladesh (Ahmed et al., 2005; Haq, 2006). According to Haq, teachers in Bangladesh often prefer "the conventional teaching method" in classrooms (2006, p. 33). Moreover, Ahmed and others have demonstrated that in Bangladesh, most teachers mainly use "lecture and read out from the textbook with occasional explanation of the text" (Ahmed, et al., 2005, p. 94). These teaching approaches often lead to negative effect on children's cognitive development because lecture and rote learning prevent children from engaging in critical thinking. Critical thinking is useful for problem solving. Pramling (1995) argued for children's thoughts, ideas, reflections, play, problem solving and other activities as educational principles (as cited in Cullen, 1999) to be incorporated into children's teaching plan.

In addition, one practice that was common to all the preschools is that throughout this study it was discovered that the head teachers and teachers of the preschools where the data were collected induced parents to send their children to teachers' home for private tutoring in order to get pass-marks in the examinations.

It is argued in previous research that a good way to ensure quality is by listening to children and incorporating their ideas and thoughts (Cheeseman, 2010). However, current teaching approaches in the preschools observed were far from this concept. The

hegemonic classroom teaching practices occurring in the preschools in Bangladesh had similarities with the practices observed in Kenya in the late 1990s where teachers used to keep children silent rather than encourage them to ask and answer questions, or to speak about their ideas, thoughts and feelings (Said, 1997, as cited in Prochner, 2002). From the observation data of the three classrooms, it has seemed that the teachers' approach to teaching and their relationship with children in the preschools have no optimism for children's contribution to knowledge (Haq, 2006, as cited in Mullick & Sheesh, 2008).

The process of teaching must involve listening to children as an important aspect (Carpenter & Fennema, 1992; Crespo, 2000; Davis, 1997). Yet, the existing practices in the preschool classrooms conflict with the views of these teachers who thought that children should not talk when teachers were in the classrooms. During interviews, seven of the nine participants expressed opinion that listening too much to children often brings disorder to the classroom as most of the time their views are unrelated and baseless. These perceptions of teachers in the preschools of Bangladesh seemed to ascribe a colonial characteristic that identified children as unknowledgeable persons without agency and rights (Agbenyega & Deku, 2011).

This attribution has led the teachers to employ strategies and rules that prevented children from talking or asking for further clarification. It was also evident from the classroom observation data that the rigid classroom rules made children frightened of their teachers. For instance, children of the preschools were afraid to ask questions as the teachers often scolded them for their mistakes in front of the whole class. During interview sessions, teachers agreed that they did not permit children to ask questions or to play when learning is in progress. They did this in order to control them and

maintaining discipline in classrooms. These types of behaviour and actions of teachers replicate classroom power relations that submerged the identity of children as capable learners (Deppeler, Moss & Agbenyega, 2008; Kanpol, 1994). Moreover, the teachers' acts indicated that they "perceived their role as managerial rather than scaffolding" to children (Li, 2004, p. 344).

The situation cannot be blamed solely on teachers but may be attributed partly to the fact that most group sizes and ratios of children to teachers are high, for example the average class size is 60 to one teacher, and partly to the colonial dominant way of teaching in most developing countries. Despite the recognition that systemic issues such as class size influenced the ways the teachers approach teaching it can be argued that the colonial way of teaching which is replicated by the teachers in this study does not consider teaching as reform, equity pedagogy, and societal equity. All children do not learn in the same way but the approaches the teachers adopted implied that every child is the same. This approach provides a culturally deviant vision for improving preschool pedagogies. A postcolonial theory and practice of preschool education has provided a clear alternative to mono-pedagogical discourses of preschool education. This is moving from oppressive views and practices of education to approaches that can inspire children and give them opportunity to exert their influence in the development of knowledge and insights for social change (Sachs & Poole, 1989).

As a field, preschool education has room for improvement to achieve quality when it becomes broadened by specific postcolonial perspectives. Preschool pedagogies informed by postcolonialism can fashion intellectual and attitudinal tools to help redress the pedagogical deficiencies and inequities that deepen social injustices in classrooms. By utilising postcolonial theory we can gain insights into why the curriculum practices

of these Bangladeshi classrooms appear still so far away from reaching or even recognising children's knowledge and contributions. Thinking in this way is an initial step for working out strategies for quality improvements in preschool education. Arguably, we should not be defining our preschool classroom practice on the basis of teacher dominated initiatives but in terms of the experiences of children in relation to their culture and family circumstances. Willinsky (1999) points out, the educational legacies of imperialism live on strongly within some school systems, because teachers continue to place boundaries between their knowledge and those that they teach (Willinsky, 1999) as is evident in this research findings. The teachers' practices also mirrored the constructions of "Other' (Crowley, 1998). In this sense the children are the 'Othered identities' in their own classrooms – they do not belong. This othering came about as a result of the teachers putting children under 19th century lines of educational practice where subject fragmentation and psychological manipulation is the dominant norm with little or no opportunity to explore alternative epistemologies (Hickling-Hudson, 2002). I would argue that a postcolonial lens involves us in developing teacher practices that help to fade away constricting colonial dominant ideas and practices. During interview sessions, head teachers, Program Organiser and teachers raised some other issues which had a significant effect on their teaching approaches in the classrooms of preschools in Bangladesh. They claimed that normally they felt pressured with the daily teaching routine, large number of children and cognitive load in classrooms, which had implications for giving attention to every child's learning skills and development. According to their opinions, the low remuneration of head teachers, program organisers and teachers; the lack of opportunities to get appropriate training on teaching techniques in preschool education; discrimination in recruiting teachers; and disregard to their identity, agency, power, representation and voice have obstructed the improvement of their teaching quality in the preschools in Bangladesh.

Based on the above discussions of this study the existing classroom teaching practices of the preschools in Bangladesh cannot be said to be satisfactory to produce quality outcomes for the holistic development of preschool children. It appears the head teachers, program organisers and teachers had limited understanding of the meaning and concept of quality in preschool education and this has influenced their teaching practices in classrooms. As they thought that the main goal of preschool education was to deliver content based knowledge to children, they always tried to fulfil that target and imposed their power on children to memorize and achieve those skills which they wanted.

Relationship between teacher and children

In preschool classrooms teachers need to be friendly and supportive to children because most of the children feel unsecure, panic and depressed, particularly for the first time they have to stay outside of home for a long time. Children can learn better when they have positive interaction with teachers and also get appreciation and recognition from them (Dean, 2003). The findings of this study however, show contrary situations as nearly all of the teachers in the three preschools were unable to keep good relation with every child. The teachers usually made eye-contacts with children in front benches and did little to pay attention to the activities of those in the back benches. The learning environments are frequently marked with teacher outburst. During classroom observation, I noticed that, most of the teachers tended to scold children for their mistakes and for poor learning achievements on subjects. It was observed that several teachers appreciated those children who academically performed better and who normally sit in the front benches of the classroom. Teachers of the participant preschools expected that all of the children would perform at the same level. Therefore,

they did not feel to respect the different levels of strengths and competencies of different children. They tended to focus only on the better performed children, and neglected or even verbally abused the weaker children. Thus, the teacher-child relations are based on whether a child is identified as good or bad according to their academic results. Previous studies on children's learning have shown that when teachers use ability as the reference point to establish positive or destructive relationships the quality of the school often decreases (Ahmed et al., 2005; Brown, 2003; Haq, 2006).

A positive relationship between the student and the teacher is difficult to establish, but can be found for both individuals at either end. The qualities for a positive relationship depend on learning experience that teachers are approachable and inviting of their students to learn. A teacher and student who have the qualities of good communications, respect in a classroom, and show interest in teaching from the point of view of the teacher and learning from a student will establish a positive relationship in the classroom. The communication between the student and the teacher serves as a connection between the two, which provides a better atmosphere for a classroom environment. Of course a teacher is not going to understand every problem for every child in his or her classroom, but will acquire enough information for those students who are struggling with specific tasks. Research indicates that "academic achievement and student behaviour are influenced by the quality of the teacher and student relationship" (Jones & Jones, 1981, p. 95). The more the teacher connects or communicates with his or her students, the more likely they will be able to help students learn at a high level and achieve quality outcomes. Therefore, those teachers who demonstrate respect towards their children automatically win favour by having active learners in their classroom. The arrogant or offensive teacher will lack these positive qualities due to his or her lack of control over the children. Teachers should expect that

they would also be treated in the same way they treat their students, thus teachers need to show kindness in their practice. According to Jones & Jones (1981), “teachers are encouraged to blend their warmth and firmness towards the students in their classroom, but with realistic limits” (p. 111).

Perception and use of educational materials

It is recognized that instructional materials, constructive models, and dramatic play expand children’s knowledge and foster their physical and intellectual abilities (New Jersey State Department of Education, 2004). Educational resources are important for teachers to run meaningful teaching approaches and also to plan activities for children in the classrooms of preschools (Susuwele-Banda, 2005). The observation data of this study have identified chalk, duster, blackboard, and textbook as important teaching learning aids which teachers use in the classrooms of the two of the three preschools observed in Bangladesh. Teachers of the non-government preschool used letter cubic, charts, sticks, dolls, balls as the organisation which owned this preschool supplied and instructed the teachers to use those items in the classrooms. During interviews, all of the teacher participants argued that in order to maintain classroom discipline, they were not interested in using pictures, charts or real objects. They claimed that if they used those items or allowed children to draw and play, or sent children outside of the classrooms; learning would become disorganized, noisy and uncontrolled. The negative attitude of teachers to using instructional materials and play items have succeeded in restricting children’s right to choose interactive activities to share their feelings and thoughts. In addition, both classroom and teacher became the frightening features to children at their starting period of education life. So it can be realized that the lack of “multiple instructional activities and inadequate use of teaching

aids" (Mullick & Sheesh, 2008, p. 79) and teachers' dictatorial behaviour in the classrooms make learning situation daunting, boring and uncomfortable to children. This has grave implications for achieving the quality in classroom teaching practices of preschools in Bangladesh.

Assessment strategies

Assessment of children's learning in the classroom is an important aspect of teaching and learning process as it provides information about children's knowledge and skills to teachers (MacGilchrist, Myer & Reed, 1997). According to Susuwele-Banda (2005), "information from assessment should help the teacher to discover areas where students have difficulties and can, therefore, be used to modify teaching methods and strategies in order to support students' learning" (p. 132). One of the key findings of the second research question in this study was the range and nature of the questioning strategies of preschool teachers in Bangladesh. The study has identified that the assessment techniques of the preschools in Bangladesh were not working as the above scholars stated and the questioning strategies were not supportive of children's thoughtful thinking. From classroom observation it has been found that, in the participating preschools, teachers used subject based questions which were used to recall children's knowledge and these did not offer any opportunity to children to explain, think or imagine about the content. Teachers asked the questions to all children together and they gave answers in choruses. It was difficult to understand who gave the right answer and who did not. Teachers used both verbal and written questions to evaluate children's learning outcome and the objective of this types of assessments was for ranking children according to their academic results, which did not help children to identify their individual capabilities or weaknesses. Nearly all of the participants

perceived the assessment system as a method to judge children's competence and knowledge in different subject matters and also to promote children from preschools to primary schools. As the teachers wanted that all students should get good marks in the examinations they forced children to memorize the answers correctly. They were conscious to assess them regularly and scolded a lot of the children who failed to provide correct answers. From the postcolonial perspective the current assessment techniques of teachers in the classrooms neglected the agency of each child. Through this process teachers of preschools used their power to identify children as bad or good students which are not helpful for them to improve their knowledge and skills (MacGilchrist, Myers, Reed, 1997; Susuwele-Banda, 2005).

5.4 Forms of Knowledge in Preschool Education

In education system, the teaching and learning approaches are constantly determined and practiced by the philosophy, pedagogy and curriculum (Heaslip, 1997, as cited in Haynes, 1999). The third research question in this study is related with the analysed data of curriculum documents of preschool education in Bangladesh which influenced teachers' knowledge and practices significantly.

Research Question 3:

What forms of knowledge are prescribed by the curriculum documents?

This is an important practice question. This question attempts to locate teachers' pedagogical practices. Curriculum documents serve the purpose of guiding teachers in their daily activities. It is like the steering wheel of a motor car that directs it to its desired destination.

To get the answer to this question I selected three different documents from three preschools. Among them, are the Operational Framework for Pre-primary Education and the Annual Lesson Plan which described the curriculum and contents of preschool education, expected learning outcomes, duration of programs and assessment strategies of children's learning. The third document I selected and examined was the preschool curriculum of the non-governmental organisation preschool. The document data analysis has shown that the curriculum documents actually prescribed structured teacher-transmitted knowledge which was book-based. This knowledge was opposed to constructivist knowledge because in constructivist curriculum, "children are active partners within their socio-cultural environment, including teachers and peers" (Kagan & Kauerz, 2006, p. 1). On the other hand, most of the curriculum of the preschools in Bangladesh did not offer appropriate child-level activities to enable them explore and develop their understandings. For instance, there is limited connection between new knowledge with children's prior experience. A critical analysis of the curriculum documents indicated that they were all based on foreign ideals. It is argued by some researchers that curriculum documents that do not place children at the centre of learning turn to have little effect in terms of quality (Dean, 2003; Kagan & Kauerz, 2006; The Curriculum Development Council of Hong Kong, 2006). On the one hand, placing children at the centre of curriculum enables teachers to practise deep-level teaching which leads children to develop deep understandings. On the other hand, when curriculum is teacher centred the curriculum is considered an object to be transmitted to some novices which leads to surface learning (Brown, G., 2003; Brown, K., 2003).

Generally, the curriculum documents analysed in the three schools suggest that the main objective of preschool education in Bangladesh is to prepare children to get good marks in examinations. This is because all of these documents place emphasis on

the assessment of children's learning outcome (high score in tests) and not on the process of learning (how children learn and develop comprehension). In addition, different types of curriculum of different preschools mentioned dissimilar assessment strategies as no standard curriculum was developed for use by government and non-government preschools. As a result, teachers of various preschools used those techniques they considered appropriate according to their knowledge and concepts on preschool education.

One of the documents, 'The Annual Lesson Plan of Preschool' firmly set the rules of three examinations which the children must take in a year and contained the fixed contents of textbooks for each exam, marks of each item and duration of tests of three subjects. My reading and analysis of a research report of the non-government organisation preschool classroom, coupled with observation in this school indicated that this preschool also conducted prescribed examination for young children to assess their learning. In this report the whole curriculum of this non-government preschool was divided into 150 lessons and they used four books in teaching children. During interviews with the teachers they said that after teaching 15 lessons they administered one examination. Overall, children needed to sit for 10 examinations and pass those tests to graduate from the preschool education course. Indeed, these curriculum documents portrayed the concept of quality preschool education as solely cognitive which can be measured only through traditional tests. In addition to testing, the curriculum documents of the preschools in Bangladesh induced teachers to assess children's performance through verbal interviews which made the children memorised facts without actually understanding what they were saying.

The knowledge and practices prescribed by the curriculum documents and assessment system are completely opposed to the perceptions of other researchers who valued children's physical, emotional and social development as important factors in quality preschool education and focused on assessing these factors as well as cognitive factors (Dwyer, Sallis, Blizzard, Lazarus, & Dean, 2001; Evans et al., 2000; Piek, Dawson, Smith & Gasson, 2008; Tremblay, Inman & Willms, 2000; UNICEF, 2006;). According to Bagnato and Ho (2006), children could not show their academic performances only by sitting on benches and write answers on papers.

A comprehensive curriculum works as a blue print to direct plans and implementation strategies of preschool education. It also gives guidelines to teachers about what to teach and how to teach in the classrooms (Dodge, 2004; Weikart, 1986). In Bangladesh, the preschool curriculum documents gave importance to children's memorization skills of contents and created the concept of rote learning among the teachers. During interviews, the head teachers, program organisers and teachers remarked: "the documents gave us directions that we should teach children to be able to recall and reproduce those lessons and contents" (*Interview transcripts*). The participants also informed that the authorities ordered them to follow the instructions strictly for helping children to get pass marks in the examinations and be able to enrol in primary schools. These regulations and teacher-centred commands of the documents influenced the teachers to use lecture method as their main strategy of teaching.

To provide information about "selection of teaching and learning materials is an integral part of curriculum planning" (Department of Education and Children's Services, 2004, p. 4), however, the Annual Lesson Plan of Preschool Document which I analysed in Bangladesh did not mention any instructions about teaching materials to use

in classrooms. The Operational Framework for Pre-primary Education referred to toys, blocks, charts, pictorial books, story cards and audio-visual materials as core and additional materials without considering the contexts in which the preschools operate, and that it would be hard for these preschools and their teachers to acquire and use these teaching aids. It would have been better and practicable for teachers if the curriculum documents included local materials, such as, marbles, sands, soil or leaves which are in abundance in Bangladesh rather than relying on exotic materials from the market place. The situation is slightly different in the NGO preschool. In this preschool, their curriculum document instructed teachers to use local and supplied materials of this organisation which was observed to be followed by some of the teachers. This different classroom practice in the NGO preschool suggests that because the curriculum is flexible, it motivated some of the teachers to use the locally-made materials.

As a summary of the discussion on third research question, it can be argued that the teachers of the three preschools in Bangladesh, which participated in this research study, only followed those instructions which the curriculum mentioned and they had no intention to change their teaching strategies. As the curriculums fixed the contents, time frame, examination techniques and marking strategies of preschools, teachers in this study seemed to always force children to achieve competencies of those contents within the right time. The curriculum documents were very directional and not flexible to allow children to be active participants in their classrooms. The documents perceived children as learners who only needed to sit quietly in the classrooms and listen to teachers, copy teachers' works into exercise books and on slates. These practices of the preschool in Bangladesh appeared to have decreased the teachers' responsiveness to children's individual needs. When curriculum is prescriptive and mechanical teachers have a tendency to ignore children's needs, prior knowledge, interests, and abilities; they tend

to focus on chapters or contents of textbooks (Brown, 2003; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1993). As children's achievement was at the leading position in these curriculums, the teachers of preschools expected that all children would learn the same lessons at the same period. Moreover, they did not respond to individual needs of children and even not allowed them to bring their own understandings into what they were learning as teachers appeared to think that they had all the knowledge. Interestingly, the teacher-transmitted curriculum gave power to the teachers to control children's learning and activities in the classrooms of the preschools in Bangladesh.

5.5 Grounds to Use Postcolonial Theory

In this study I applied a postcolonial theoretical perspective to explore the quality of classroom teaching practices of the preschools. In the following section I discuss the usefulness of this theory in researching and analysing quality preschool in a developing country Bangladesh.

Research question 4:

How can postcolonial theory be used to analyse and critique the quality of classroom teaching practices of preschools in Bangladesh?

Theory is important in every research but the choice of theory must be based on the objectives of the research. The main objective of this research is to gain insights into practices that constitute quality or otherwise in a postcolonial developing country. This warrants a radical theory in order to question existing practices. As the study is not comparing other systems to what is happening in preschool systems in Bangladesh, the choice of postcolonial theory is considered here. This consideration has led to the fourth

research question above. In addressing this question I employed a postcolonial discursive lens with a focus on identity, agency, power, voice and representation of children and teachers in the preschools as these issues are closely related with the quality of classroom teaching practices. Dirlik (1994) provides some useful ways of doing a postcolonial critique. The third lens is related to how discourse is embedded in everyday practice of schools. Since quality is a socially constructed discourse, a postcolonial critique does not support a universalisation of quality but rather quality is context and culturally specific. Therefore the curriculum and teaching practices of the preschools, dominated and restricted practices, issues of children's identity, agency, power, voice and representation cannot be viewed from foreign eyes but must be looked upon from within the context in which the educational practice is taking place (Agbenyega & Deku, 2011). This internal critique and analysis is important for understanding internal issues and to give place to children in the curriculum and classroom activities to ensure quality of preschool education system in Bangladesh.

Theorising from a postcolonial perspective, it appears that the overall existing situation and practices of the three preschools in Bangladesh involved in this study are fully controlled by the oppressive power of authorities and teachers of these preschools. Although the seven dimension of quality that were reviewed in the literature review section of this thesis provided some direction for the observation and interviews these were not necessarily used to critique what is happening in these preschools. Doing so would be tantamount to imposition of universal dimensions. What the postcolonial theory offers in this research study is a critical lens to analyse systemic issues and practices in their own right, taking into consideration the cultural context in which the schools are located. From this insider perspective, it can be argued that the practices the teachers, program organisers and head teachers privilege provided examples of how

colonial practices in different forms are still prevalent in these preschools. These are not impositions from outside per se, but internal imposition from educators on children which created barriers to communities of learning and thus reducing the quality of teaching for children's holistic development. For example, the documentary analysis on the dimension of policy and legislations indicated that - the policies and regulations on the learning outcomes, educational materials, duration of course and classroom organisation, evaluation techniques for children in preschool education were completely teacher-centred and ignored children's agency, voice and representation. Through this study the application of postcolonial discursive framework raised questions regarding how such transmitted approaches to teaching could provide quality teaching in the classrooms. Is it possible to enact quality when teaching approaches disregard each child's need, identity, agency, voice and representation? This is an important question to think about in light of how teachers of the preschools only gave attention to finishing the contents of prescribed curriculum on time as ordered by policy and regulation documents.

The classroom observation data in this study has shown that the teaching practices of the preschools was hegemonic, that is, children were silenced by teacher authority. This mirrors colonisation in its new formation (Agbenyega, 2009). Although Bangladesh is an independent country, the head teachers, program organisers and teachers of preschools did not allow children to talk or move freely in the classrooms. Teachers controlled children's knowledge and activities, and 'pushed' them to complete those tasks which teachers ordered. The imposing relationship of teacher on children in the preschools can be explained as "simply a novice receiving knowledge from a superior authority" (Agbenyega, 2009, p. 6). This relationship was unable to develop children's skills of "creativity and critical thinking" (Agbenyega, 2009, p. 6). By and

large, by applying a postcolonial theory enabled the uncovering of seemingly contested educational space where individuals within that space struggle for power and recognition.

In similar fashion, education policy makers also seemed to have colonised the agency, voice and representation of the head teachers, program organisers and teachers by handing down to them prescribed curriculum materials which they had no opportunity to contribute to its development. This has significant effect on the quality of preschool education. During interviews the participants retorted: “it is unfortunate and regrettable that the superior persons of education departments or organisations never asked us head teachers, program organisers and teachers to share our opinions and voices when it comes to major decisions or planning for preschools” (Interview transcripts). As teachers are the key agents that implement any educational plan or policy in schools it is important that their agency, representation and voices are given space in policy and curriculum matters (Overton, 2009). From a postcolonial perspective, exclusion of teachers and those at the grassroots of the implementation process can be likened to ascribing excessive power and dominance to education policy actors who force their workers to “balance their knowledge, beliefs, feelings and values against the expectation of employers” (Overton, 2009, p. 1). The oppressive power relationship in preschool education system in Bangladesh replicates a servant-master relationship an example of colonisation where freedom of choice to set up classroom settings, select contents or materials for teaching in the classrooms had no place. Instead teachers had to follow the rules and instructions from curriculum and teachers’ guidebooks. In this way the teachers consider themselves only as servants of school authorities. The perception of preschool teachers about themselves is consistent with the findings of Haq and Islam, which has shown that teachers in Bangladesh are viewed as

“robots, a disinterested mechanical labour force for educating children in the school machine” (Haq & Islam, 2005, p. 29). According to Nias (1989, as cited in Overton, 2009), preschool teachers “invest so much of themselves in their job” (p. 4) whereas the colonial exercises of power in Bangladesh made teachers to treat themselves as valueless and slave to their organisations. The postcolonial critique assumes that this perception of preschool teachers is a barrier to improving the quality of classroom teaching practices of preschools in Bangladesh.

The data has also found that most of the head teachers, program organisers and teachers of the preschools were generally not empowered. Although each school had School Management Committee, teachers did not have equal positions and rights in regards to managing financial and human resources in the school. In addition, it was frequently noted that these committees were excessively influenced by the education authorities, chairman, and local political people. The overall impression of the existing situation of the preschool education process in the three research sites in Bangladesh appeared to mirror a top down educational system. In this respect, a postcolonial interpretive approach as applied in this study is a useful way of interrogating preschool educations systems to ascertain their fundamental principles and practices. It is through such theorising that a case can be made for transforming the school practices to embrace new forms of consciousness that lead to quality preschool education. Quality preschool education would respect children’s identity and resist practices that turn children into objects. I would instead define children as subjects and competent learners in their own right, supports their agency, voice and representation in the classrooms of preschools in Bangladesh.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have deconstructed the concepts of head teachers, program organisers and teachers about the quality of classroom teaching practices of the three preschools in Bangladesh. I also attempted to draw the links between their beliefs and teaching practices in the light of postcolonial perspectives. From the overall discussions, it can be concluded that in Bangladesh, the head teachers, program organisers and teachers of the preschools carried somewhat basic concept of quality located in colonial epistemology. In this respect, policies, regulations and the curriculum documents of the preschools were similarly located in colonial perspectives. These factors contributed to educators perceiving children narrowly as objects that require adult transmitted knowledge. When children are viewed as such, their identity, agency and representation are submerged in coercive authority. A postcolonial discursive perspective thus, provides a refreshing signposts and new consciousness to challenge actions and practices that tend to violate the fundamental rights of children to participate freely in their learning settings without intimidation and fear. It is only when preschool classrooms are free from fear, intimidation and domination that children would be on the pathway to achieving quality education.

In the following chapter implications of this study and conclusions have been made regarding how to ensure the quality of classroom teaching practices of the preschools in Bangladesh.

Chapter Six
Summary, implications and conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter of this study discussed the main findings in relation to the research questions and literature on the quality of preschool education. This final chapter presents the summary, implications and limitations of this study. It has also made recommendations for establishing culturally relevant preschool education in Bangladesh. Directions for future research in the field of preschool education are also made. Achieving early childhood quality is a complex and difficult endeavour that requires an overall determination of what the processes and practices should look like in particular contexts, as well as how policy makers, teachers and families would support it to ensure policy aspirations become a reality.

The purpose of this study was to examine the quality of preschool classroom practices in Bangladesh through a postcolonial lens in an effort to shed light on what is currently occurring at this level of education to augment national efforts in making preschool education a national priority. My aim was not to make generalisations based on the limited data collected in this research but provide some signposts between current standards and those that are articulated in the literature as ultimately representing quality preschool education. The findings from this study highlight several tensions between what the international literature suggested are the components of preschool quality and what currently persists in the classrooms I observed. It is to these tensions that this study attempts to provide these summary and recommendations.

6.2 Summary and Implications of this Study

This study set out to explore the quality of preschool classroom practices in Bangladesh. The study uses a postcolonial theory in an effort to explore and explain what is currently occurring at this level of education in light of Bangladeshi government's push to provide quality preschool for all children. The aim was not to make generalisations based on the limited data collected in this research but to provide insights into current practice standards, and those that are articulated in the literature as ultimately representing quality preschool education. The study involved a government, a private and a non-governmental organisation (NGO) preschool, and adopted qualitative data collection approaches of document analysis, classroom observation and semi-structured interviews with two head teachers, a Program Organiser and six teachers who were purposefully selected from these schools. As a result of the complex and varied conceptualisations of quality, and also for the fact that this study was situated in a postcolonial country, first, it was important to understand how the teachers, program organiser and head teachers conceptualise preschool quality. This is an ontological pursuit because concepts drive practice. The knowledge, beliefs and thoughts of educators generally, have significant effect on teaching-learning processes. The study also sought to ascertain the nature of classroom practices and factors that impinge upon it such as, policy, structure of preschool and classroom, interaction with children, and assessment techniques of children's learning outcome. Finally, on a theoretical level, the study deemed it important to find out the usefulness of a postcolonial discursive perspective in studying and analysing preschool quality in a developing country.

A postcolonial analysis of the data according to seven dimensions of quality indicators suggests that the research represents a substantial and significant contribution

to knowledge, in three domains. First, it contributes to the knowledge and understanding of how the participants in this study conceptualised quality based on academic merits. This understanding of quality was found to influence the preschool teachers' pedagogy. In this regard young children are subjected to teacher directed teaching, coaching, memorising of facts through rote learning, and frequent testing to prepare them to pass primary school entrance examination and get a chance to enter their favourite primary schools.

Secondly, the study contributes to our knowledge of the curriculum documents in use in these preschools to inform teaching practices in Bangladesh. Such knowledge helps to improve an understanding of the curriculum making processes which currently exclude the teacher's and the community's inputs. This is important for the future by noting that quality preschool depends on policies and programs that adopt a consultative approach rather than top-down model.

Thirdly, the study contributes to knowledge about the consequences of poor structural resources, and colonial relationships that the teachers develop with children, and how the wellbeing of children is often not given serious attention and therefore, compromising the quality of preschool programs being delivered to young children in Bangladesh. Based on these findings the study identified some implications and proposed a transformative postcolonial model for developing quality preschool systems in Bangladesh.

The puspose of this is to dealineate a pathway for tranformational teaching practice to occur to bring about quality in preschool education in Bangladesh.

Implication One: When teachers are tranformed in their thinking they would lead a change for children's goals and aspirations of preschool education, and use play and child-centreed teaching approaches instead of the traditional methods. Therefore, teacher training that incorporates transformative pedagogies is warranted.

Implication Two: Failure to develop a quality preschool system would lead to ill-preared children who may enter school without critical thinking capabilities. This also has major future implications for Bangladesh in terms of development and productivity. I would like to argue that if children are educated to be critical thinkiners they are better placed to move their country from dependecy to self-reliance.

Implication Three: Quality preschool education is expensive to establish and to operate, mainly because it requires human and material capital costs. To ensure quality involves ongoing staffing and material costs. This implies that there is need for micro and macro-level engagement of citizens in Bangladesh to view preschool education as a national priority and to bring together various departments that work in the interest of the child to enact quality, and flexible preschool system with the aim of reducing the substantial poverty-linked disadvantages experienced by many families and children in Bangladesh.

6.3 Key Recommendations

6.3.1 Reconceptualising the quality of classroom teaching practices in the light of postcolonial theory.

This study demonstrated the potential offered through a postcolonial theory in examining the quality of teachers' classroom teaching practices in three preschools in

Bangladesh. In particular, it articulated teachers' beliefs and attitude concerning the concept of quality, which in many important respects, influenced their teaching practices in classrooms of the preschools. It also examined how the existing curriculum and teaching approaches of the presschools dominated children's identity, agency, power, vocie and representation. These are important findings which require urgent attention from all actors in education in Bangldesh. I hope that the findings of this research will motivate the authorities and teachers of preschools to think about the issues raised regarding quality, and support students' construction of knowledge and understandings. Another crucial contribution that this study seems to make to knowledge is the possibility for creating new perspective among teachers on quality teaching approaches of preschool education in Bangladesh. As it is found in this research that the systematic application of child-initiated activities and programs that take children's interests into consideration are virtually absent, there is the need to focus attention on teacher preparation programs that incorporate constructivist learning and transformative pedagogy.

Also, parental participation is at best weak and at worst, absent. In addition to this, is the parochial conceptualisation of quality in terms of academic productivity required from young children, and measured in terms of only passing rigid tests. With these caveats in mind, it is important to move away from definitions of quality in terms of outcomes to definitions of quality focussed on the structures and processes that characterise comprehensive preschool services and programs for young children. Comparable work in this area has been done which showed that conceptualising quality in postcolonial perspective re-directs preschool teachers from practising the status-quo to educational practice that value and celebrates children's contributions. Such preschool programs must link characteristics of programs to the whole child, and must

incorporate culturally significant goals (Agbenyega, 2009). Thinking from a postcolonial perspective also makes it inappropriate to attribute a universal notion to ‘quality’. A composite definition of quality based on culturally relevant resources and the right of children, need to be developed. In this way I have developed a model that could be utilised by preschools in Bangladesh to transform preschool education.

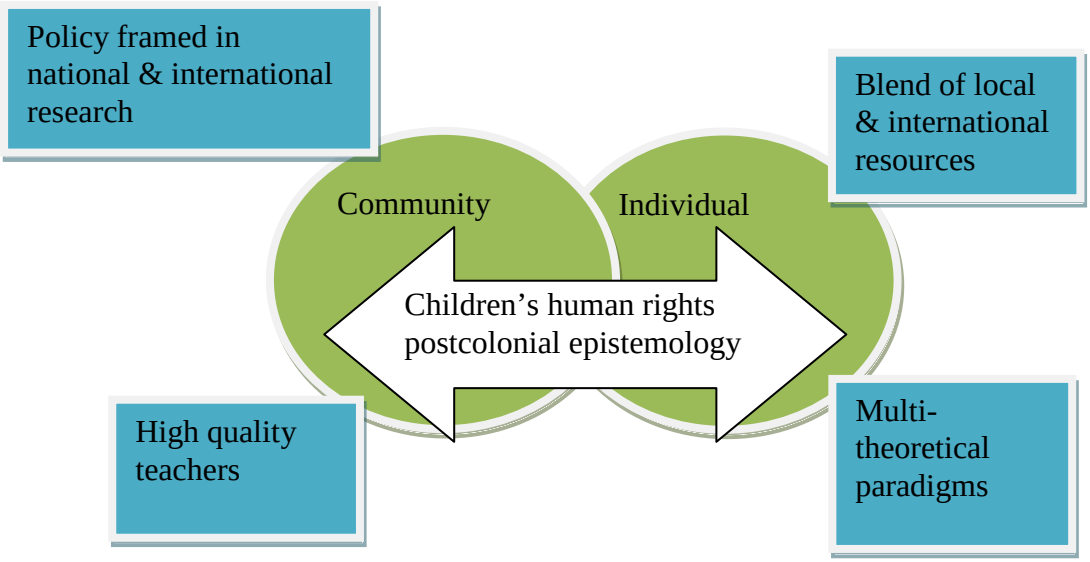

Figure 6.1 Preschool quality model based on postcolonial epistemology

This model is not based on the seven dimensions that I have drawn upon in this research but on a new thinking underscored by a postcolonial epistemology. Postcolonial theory provides a space for ‘quality’ to be construed not in terms of universality or a unitary outcome to be measured using the other’s lenses. If quality is defined and measured in universal terms this would mean political, social and educational subjugation rather than an avenue of contextual framing and knowing. Further, a universal framing of quality would replicate the hegemonic borders a postcolonial theory tries to demolish. In a postcolonial exploration of quality ascribing some static notion to the term quality, is ludicrous. An important aspect of postcolonial

theorisation as this study portrayed is an ongoing expansion of boundaries with regard to the construct of the quality of preschool education. This notion considers quality as discursive practices derive from the constructs of language embodied in discourse (Kumar, 2000). Gee (1990), posits that discourse is 'a combination of "saying-doing-thinking-feeling-valuing" (p. xv) something. It can be derived from this statement that language is collective expression of what people or society values. In this sense the term quality can be understood in postcolonial sense to mean a socially constructed discourse which is essentially subjective. Therefore, quality as a discourse, is always open to contest and redefinition with transformations in discursive context (Derrida, 1976). This is consistent with de Saussure (1974) who classifies language and for that matter discourse as assorted mass of speech facts that can only exist by virtue of a collected agreement by the members of a community. In this perspective, the socially determine nature of the term quality in preschool education becomes apparent, which leads to the conclusion that a postcolonial theorisation of preschool quality must be link to the purpose it serves in a particular community with children's right at its core. This requires considering quality as a process rather than quality as product.

Therefore the model I am proposing in Figure 6.1 places emphasis on respect and value for local resources/materials and multi-theoretical paradigms, including indigenous knowledge with child right at the centre of practice for quality to occur. This is augmented by teacher education that incorporates these perspectives to develop high quality teachers. There is also emphasis on community engagement as well as a strong focus on the individual child's potential rather than comparing them to a group norm. This model is important because for a preschool learning environment and process to achieve quality, it should reflect the aspirations of the community in which the children live and socialise. Preschool programs that do not consider the cultural environment and

children's right to participate may be failing in this quality imperative. This means the preschool process must involve children, respect their rights, diversity and foster creativity by utilising not only international resources abut also local ones. Policies are critical to the success of every education system therefore, it is imperative that policies for preschool education in Bangladesh utilize both local and international research to inform its policy framing. This is because all children are global citizens and no country can claim to be an island. The new global order and developments in communication technology, coupled with rapid movement of people from one country to the other suggest that the local alone cannot survive on its own without connecting to the global. This situation provides strong argument for developing preschool systems that incorporates both local and international perspectives.

Another recommendation drawn from this thesis is that it will not be easy for the preschools which are still practising colonial pedagogy to transform themselves into constructivist postcolonial schools that systematically promote involvement and respect for children's agency. There is the need for a great deal of support from the government departments of preschool education and the universities to collaborate in training and re-training of teachers. This must be provided with financial assistance for teachers to undertake in-service programs focused on decolonisation of thinking and new modes of teaching in preschools. This is sound policy, but at the same time, we need to ask: is transformation into cultural relevant practice enough? From a postcolonial perspective I argue that even if a cultural philosophy is embedded in the culture of the preschools, the preschools might still be operating in a constrained way that limits the involvement and creativity of children if there is focus on subject-related curriculum, rigid testing, and hierarchies within the classrooms. Preschools arguably, need to have a vision of the future for all children and this vision should be that which respect every child's rights

and unique capabilities as well as prepare them to respect their own culture and at the same time be able to participate effectively in the global competitive field.

Exploring and developing preschools based on new paradigms such as postcolonial perspectives would support educational change that prepares children to be more likely to tackle both cultural and economic problems that the old fragmented and teacher transmitted paradigms of colonial approaches are not able to do. Theorising from a postcolonial view, the practices of the preschools in Bangladesh can be described as an out-dated educational practice because it promotes a curriculum steeped in the belief that teachers are the only source of knowledge. According to Aviram (1996), this form of education is obsolete and only produces dysfunctional citizens. It is therefore recommended that the most fundamental aspects of preschool education should aimed at decolonising, teaching, children's mind and curriculum in order to promote effective learning and equity (Hickling-Hudson, 2002; Ladwig 2000).

The findings of this study has also shown that head teachers, program organisers and teachers of preschools in Bangladesh carried traditional conception of the quality of classroom teaching practices. An important way of dealing with this is by helping educators to deconstruct their perception of what constitutes quality teaching approaches and that, quality is far more than rote learning of children, but also intricately intermingled and interconnected with the development of children's physical, social, emotional, personal, spiritual, creative, and linguistic aspects (DEEWR, 2009). Preschool teachers of Bangladesh need to view children as subjects in the classrooms who can actively construct knowledge by using their previous knowledge and experiences. Teachers should believe that their support and encouragement to children play a significant role for "helping them to make links between their prior knowledge

and new learning, and making implicit knowledge explicit" (The States of Queensland, 2006, p. 11).

The postcolonial perspective implies that teachers of preschools in Bangladesh should provide opportunities to children to be part of the classroom teaching and learning process for valuing their agency (DEEWR, 2009; The States of Queensland, 2006). Children have strong sense of identity and rich cultural knowledge, including value and beliefs which are important for the quality of preschool education (DEEWR, 2009). Therefore teachers have to give importance to children's voice and allow them to represent their ideas and thoughts in classrooms. Teachers also have to remember that "children can adapt and have the ability to develop freely" (Montessori, 1995, p. 36) but which can be blocked if teachers use their oppressive power on them. In order to ensure the quality of classroom teaching practices in preschools in Bangladesh, children's free participation is very important (DEEWR, 2009; The States of Queensland, 2006; Tuzo, 2007). The focus should not only be on control for maintaining discipline in classrooms but to realise that good teachers lead children to behave mostly normally.

An important recommendation is that traditional practices of preschool education that subjugate children are unsuitable to child development because such approaches drill the bodies of children into a rigid and deadened approach to learning which are predetermined by top-down academic curriculum (Tait, 2000). It is argued that because traditional approaches are seriously flawed (Ninnes, 2001) they prepare children in ways that their skills become irrelevant to their personal and societal development (Henry, 2000; Taylor, 2000).

A new form of quality preschool education should challenge and dismantle hierarchical relationships between teachers and children, individualism and

competitiveness of young children on tests and encourage team work and collaborative learning to bring about quality development in children. Quality preschool education, I argued, cannot be built on classroom antagonisms and teaching without care (Ellyard, 1999). Teaching with care involves ensuring the wellbeing of all children which is realised when children are respected and involved in their learning. Postcolonial educators argue that it is important to teach young children to critique and think beyond the old modernist binaries of culture and development (Agbenyega, 2009; Ellyard, 1999). Willinsky (1999, p. 101) observes, educators must "work hard at helping the young imagine themselves within a world of nations, cultures and races, they now need to afford the young a place to stand apart from this legacy of divisions and boundaries" (p. 101). This implies that a quality preschool should help children become active individuals to question issues and develop new modes of consciousness. It would be a worthwhile endeavour for Bangladeshi educators to take a postcolonial perspective in developing a new curriculum which should be analytical and activist in nature to enable children learn and challenge preconceived boundaries, and practices. This kind of curriculum needs teachers' and parents input, and would help children to learn how to identify cultural and social problems and how these have come to be the fundamentals of the ongoing and deepening problems in their own society and globally (Hickling-Hudson, 2002). When curriculum is analytical and activist oriented, it would encourage both children and teachers to engage in dialogic learning and contribute to the positive and holistic development by becoming involved in national issues at an early age that promote social justice (Hickling-Hudson, 1999) rather than learning test-based materials that often do not lead to critical engagement with local issues. As a matter of agency, there is the need for a national quality framework to guide preschool practitioners in their day-today work.

6.3.2 The necessity to develop quality in different dimensions.

Bangladesh has achieved a number of successes in pre-primary education during the past decade but the findings of this study support earlier calls that some important developments are still needed in order to deliver quality education to all children (UNICEF, 2009b). For example, over the last five years the number of preschools in Bangladesh has grown from 26,299 to 29,804 (UNICEF, 2009b) and the number of children of preschool education age has increased from 1.1 million to 4.9 million. According to UNICEF (2009b), one of the major challenges of preschool education in Bangladesh is its "poor quality" (p. 2), which this study also confirmed. Therefore, the study recommends that the government and non-government oraganizations in Bangladesh now need to pay attention to the improvement of the following dimensions in order to ensure quality of classroom teaching practices in preschools.

Focus 1: Structural dimension

It is rcognized that safe, warm, spacious and stimulating environments offer opportunities for children's exploration, imagination and enjoyment (Catron & Allen, 2008; Lau, 2006). The research findings in this study have shown that the physical condition and facilities of the preschools researched, and their classrooms in Bangladesh were not satisfactory. Most of the classrooms were unhygienic, crowded and hazardous for child development. The government and non-government authorities have to pay attention to this dimension to ensure children make the best out of their school environment for their holistic development. The study results highligt the need for education authorities and communities to create needed open and free space for children as they require this for their physical and intellectual improvement. This spaces need to be equiped with local materials which can easily be made by local artisans, and

craftmen and women. They also need to monitor the cleanliness and healthy condition of classrooms and toilets.

The high teacher-child ration in the classrooms of preschools in Bangladesh is a disadvantage when it comes to terms with quality. This has significant impact on classroom teaching practices. In this study, nearly all of the teachers argued that they could not conduct quality teaching for the large number of children. They also claimed that they could not involve all children in activities or be able to pay attention to individual needs and response to children as one teacher had to supervise approximately 60 to 65 children at a time. The study suggests that the authorities of preschools should increase the number of teachers and classrooms. They may utilise local materials such as bamboos to build descent spaces for children to use as preschools instead of waiting years for huge sums of money to provide concrete buildings. A preschool levy could be imposed on the rich to finance teacher education programs to increase the number of teachers in preschools. As increasing the supply of classroom facilities and the number of teachers alone would not necessarily lead to quality practice, it is important that preschool monitors are trained and a preschool quality board set up to monitor quality assurance process in Bangladesh.

The research findings have an implication for preschool teachers in terms of the use of educational resources in their teaching. The situation of teaching aids of preschools in Bangladesh is not satisfactory and teachers find it difficult to arrange materials for teaching and engage children actively in the classrooms. In the preschools, nearly all of the teachers used the lack of wooden blocks, puzzles, paint materials and toys as excuse and conducted teacher transmitted teaching. In this regard there is the need for training in how teachers themselves can make teaching and learning aids from

scrap materials instead of relying on supply from government. This requires that, head teachers and teachers of preschools change their perceptions about teaching aids and pay attention to “the local environment rather than rely on sophisticated aids as one way of counteracting the weak financial situation of their schools” (Hafiz, 2011, p. 251).

Focus 2: Transforming teacher- centred curriculum

The preschool curriculum of Bangladesh identified by this study seems to be teacher-centreed which did not offer any opportunities for children to discover, experiment and explore. The government and no-government authorities need a new approach to curriculum development that is foundational on constructivist theory. The onus lies with educators to construct new curriculum that focus more on engagement and involvement. The curriculum should be nonthreatening to teachers and children which means, teachers must have flexibility to modify it according to the needs of children. Rather than using a change model, the curriculum must be based on transformational growth model. If a change model is applied this can often be trendy and superficial, whereas transformation is gradual, positive and deep (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2012). The process of cultivating this curriculum through transformational process should include key members of the preschool community; and the first step to this initiative is a dynamic reconceptualization of what constitute preschool quality. The old habit of preschool education where teachers are the sole authority figures need to be altered to match the dynamic and shifting time in which children live and function (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2012). This requires examining and decolonizing some traditional attitudes and assumptions prevalent in Bangladeshi communities which look down on children and in teachers prior to taking on the task of designing new curriculums and new preschools.

As children are the central part of the teaching and learning process their agency and representation should be pressent in the curriculum and policies of preschools for ensuring its quality. In addition, teachers of preschools have to be involved in the curriculum making process as they are those who implement programs and policies of education.

Focus 3: The need for professional development of teachers

In Bangladesh, the study found that some of the preschool teachers have low educactional qualifications for teaching children and it is difficult to arrange educational facilities for the large number of teachers. Providing appropriate training can enhance teachers' knowldege and skills in teaching children of preschools. Research suggests that the quality of pedagogy are related to the richness and appropriateness of staff interactions with children and their scaffolding strategies, especially guiding, modeling and questioning strategies (Elliot, 2006). Importantly, children's developmental outcomes are also linked to staff knowledge of children's learning needs and their knowledge and understanding of curriculum (Jordan, 1999; Lamb, Sternberg, Hwang, & Broberg, 1992). Other research findings suggest that specialised training of teachers contributes to quality interactions and rich child-centred contexts (Almy, 1982; Jordan, 1999; Lamb, Sternberg, Hwang, & Broberg, 1992; Mould, 1998). Quality teachers are able to deliver quality pedagogy by structuring environments for children that promote optimum engagement for all. Therefore key indicators of quality at the preschool level are related to teachers' ability to structure holistic, creative playfocused child-centred environments (Mould, 1998), which impact positively on children's competence (Pramling, 1996). Quality teachers are effective in their classrooms, and they have strong influence on their children that removes children's background effects on

academic performance (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ferguson, 1991; Hattie, 2003; Ingvarson, 1998, 2002; Ramsey, 2000; Rowe, 2004). In this regard there is copelling evidence for Bangladesh education authorities to take serious steps to enace teacher quality in preschools and have positive impact on preschool education nationally. There should be a minimum qualification standard set for headteachers, teachers and managers of preschools. Given the close links between quality pedagogy and staff competence, the clear associations between staff qualifications and specific pedagogic content knowledge should be seriously considered. Some researchers caution that it is not the qualification per se alone that affects outcomes but the ability of the teacher to create a better pedagogic environment that makes the difference (Sammons et al., 2003). Therfore pedagogic quality in early childhood is complex and interconnected with the nature of the construction of the learning environment (Agbenyega, 2011).

It appears judicious for preschool administartors and head teachers to ensure that teachers under their authority have enough opportunities and actively participate in training. The study recommends that the government should implement policies and plans regarding training, which they mentioned in the Opearational Framework for Pre-Primary Education in 2008. They also need to provide training facilities for the preschool teachers and should monitor the regularity and quality of training programs. Working towards preschool quality requires teachers to have foundation knowledge in child development in addition to knowledge of various teaching strategies that will enable them to enact appropriate practices (Lobman, Ryan & McLaughlin, 2005). Importantly, teacher development opportunities must be closely linked to practice and must incorporate collaborative inquiry approaches (Lieberman & Miller, 2001), including on-site learning experiences in various preschool centres. In order to optimize preschool teachers' learning, training should be tailored to individual needs and

coordinated so that teachers build on their learning experiences. Training of teachers should incorporate courses on how to involve and support families and children who often live in disadvantage circumstances. Other areas to focus training on include children's physical and psycho-emotional well-being and safety. Crucial to training, is the need to prepare teachers as effective communicators who possess interpersonal skills and are able to work effectively with children, other teachers, administrators and families. Training should have high expectations of teachers with set standards prior to their certification as early childhood teachers (Lobman, Ryan & McLaughlin, 2005).

Focus 4: Creating space for teachers' voice, agency and representation in leadership and management

In this study, it was found that in Bangladesh, corruption and manipulation of rules and regulations regarding the recruitment of preschool teachers are the major impediments to the improvement of quality in preschool education. In all types of the preschools included in this study, the authorities employ some teachers who were not qualified to be teachers but have power to dominate the other teachers. Some of these unqualified teachers were relatives of school managers and powerful members of the community in which the schools are situated. Therefore, this study suggests that a unified system regulating the employment of teachers be instituted as a matter of urgency with guidelines for sanctioning preschool authorities when they violate the authorised procedures. Teaching is a complex process and only those teachers who attained minimum qualification standards set by authorities should be certified and employed to teach young children. This is one way to contribute to quality preschool programs in Bangladesh.

It is also noted that head teachers, program organisers and teachers interviewed in this study were indeed, highly dissatisfied with their remuneration, the lack of financial benefits and general conditions of service. They argued that their salaries are not adequate and do not meet either the demands of the job or teachers' basic needs considering present market situations. If teachers come to the preschools with the tension of job dissatisfaction, then it is not rationale to expect quality teaching practices from them in classrooms. Therefore, through this research it is imperative to increase teachers' salary and other facilities which could influence them to use quality teaching and learning approaches in the classrooms of preschools in Bangladesh. This increase could be paid for through a minimal preschool or educational levy system on the whole population. But the pay should match the qualification.

Focus 5: Implications to change the assessment techniques of children's learning outcomes

Another area of concern articulated throughout this study was the prevailing assessment strategies of teachers in preschools which were found to be rigid, made children bored and scared children from going to school. There is need for rethinking assessment policy of preschools from assemment practices that intimidate children to those that recognise and value children's potential and unique differences. Subject based assessment, I presume should be erradicated and replaced with the following forms of assessment as suggested by Fleer, Agbenyega, Blaise and Chris (2008), which include:

- *Ethical assessment*: In this form of assessment, preschool system and staff select relevant assessment methods and tools which provide children with opportunities to confidently demonstrate their capabilities. The focus is not on

comparing one child to the other but what each child can confidenlty do within a particular learning situation and context.

- *Dynamic assessment*: In this form of assessment, preschool systems and staff select relevant assessment methods and tools where interactions between the assessor and the assessed are in the context of meaningful, supportive and respectful interactions. This means the assessment should focus on children's engagement with other children and their staff as they work through a particular task. This means the assessment is not aimed at victimizing or humiliating the child learner but to ascertain ways of further support to enhance the child's learning. The process of learning is the key measurement variable in this situation.

- *Forward measuring assessment*: This form of assessment involves preschool systems and staff selecting relevant assessment methods and tools which include the ability to assess children's potential rather than just their actual development and learning. This means the focus is not on age-specific accomplishments, rather the child's capabilities are pivotal.

- *Child oriented assessment:* This form of assessment is when preschool systems and staff select relevant assessment methods and tools where children can assess themselves. In this process children are given opportunity to comment on their peers' work. The teacher listens attentively and write down comments which he/she can use later to inform further areas of the curriculum to enhance children's learning.

It is important when assessing children in preschools that teachers must ensure assessment matches the curriculum. In this regard, the teacher needs to ask: What is the emphasis of this assessment? What are the important understandings that can be easily assessed in this learning situation? Is some context specific valued knowledge being represented in this learning situation? Are the tools I am going to use to assess this learning situations the most appropriate and valid? Does the assessment tool I am going to use disadvantage the child? These are important reflective questions that provide useful direction for assessing the quality of preschool education.

Focus 6: Transformative preschool education practice

Generally, quality preschool matters. It is through quality preschool education that children would gain the necessary skills and positive dispositions to continue learning into the future. Therefore, to ensure quality in preschool education in Bangladesh policy makers, educators, teachers and parents need to begin to think about a transformational perspective as quality in preschool education depends on how children are perceived by teachers, educators and parents. The findings of the study suggest that transformation preschool education, which is informed by postcolonial theory is useful in dismantling existing othodox practices that disengage children from meaning making. In this research a transformational perspective is conceived as an ongoing process which brings continuous revolutions in people's thinking, beliefs, behaviours, attitudes and views. It is not a product; it is a process which brings new challenges and is able to help teachers to meet challenges in everyday classroom practices. It can help teachers to think about transforming their views about children and processes of pedagogy in classrooms. The approach which are being used by teachers now in the classrooms and the interactions between teacher and students exemplify a

colonial pedagogy, where teachers are considered more knowledgeable persons and that only they have rights to speak in their classrooms. Such colonial perespectives orient children to developing dependency mentanlities that do not lead to creativity and self actualization. If children are only listeners who sit in front of teachers without voice and active participation in teaching-learning processes then the purpose of preschool education is defeated. To counter such ill-founded practices, transformative pedagogy values the knowledge of children and motivate teachers to view children as active participants in the teaching and learning process.

There is no doubt that the current system of preschool education in Bangladesh faces multiple challenges as can be seen by the results of this study. The issues uncovered in this study could be the basis for further studies in the field of preschool education in Bangladesh. The following discussions are about the propsed arears for future research.

6.4 Areas for Future Research

This study may contribute to future research in four ways. First, it highlights the importance of employing child centreed teaching approaches in preschools of Bangladesh for enhancing its quality. Future research can focus on the dialectic relationship between the child-particpated practices and teachers' power in the classrooms of preschools, and also about the impact of such approaches on children's learning.

Secondly, this study indicates ways in which future research can address teaching improvements. For example, studies can address the problem of how teachers' professional qualification affects the teaching approaches and children's achievements.

Another example will be to explore the role of policy, curriculum or pedagogy of preschools.

Third, the study suggests the need of further exploration of how comprehensive and conceptual understanding, and mechanical/rote memorisation may be integrated to benefit student learning (Sfard, 2000). Moreover, further research can investigate the role of play for the holistic development of children and may incorporate children and parents' view of play as teaching-learning strategy in the classrooms of preschools in Bangladesh.

Fourth, the study seems to evoke ideas for applying a postcolnial theory to investigate the power positions at the different levels in the government and non-government preschool education system. Such explorations may focus on how agency and representation of children or teachers correspond to the education system; the policy and curriculum making process, who has influence, who is invited to participate and has power to take decisions for implementing the plans; and how and why the authorities of preschools ignore the voice and rights of teachers, children and parents to be involved in how preschools function.

6.5 Limitations of this Study

This research study has several limitations. Firstly, the representativeness of the preschools was a limitation. Only three preschools of the capital city in Bangladesh were involved in this study as such this could not provide a broad picture regarding the quality of classroom teaching practices in Bangladesh as a whole. The study did not consider many of the supporting and hindering internal and external influences on the quality of preschool education in Bangladesh. Moreover, the study could not include

children and parents' view about the quality of classroom teaching practices of preschools due to the scope of the research.

Also, the diverse issues of preschool teachers were not fully represented in this study. The study has only focused on teachers' concept and perception about quality of preschool education which were mainly based on curriculum documents and teaching practices in the classrooms without considering gender, age, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, or experience as these variables could also play a part in preschool quality. Despite these limitations the study provided relevant snap-shot information on what is currently going on in preschool classrooms in Bangladesh. The findings therefore are signposts for stimulating further debate and research into quality preschool practices in Bangladesh.

6.6 Concluding Comments

By embarking on this study I came to the realisation that quality in preschool education is difficult to measure. This difficulty is associated with the shifting nature of the term quality as discussed previously in this thesis. Yet, I consider this work important because of its potetial to spark more debate and initiatives into quality preschool provision in Bangladesh. From the findings of this study it appears little has changed in the ways children are taught in colonial times through teacher transmission approach and what is currently occurring. The Bangladeshi government appeared to care very little about preschool teacher training and hence has no universal standard for qualification for teachers to teach in preschools. According to the findings of this study, some Bangladeshi preschool teachers are still starved for resources even though they operate in a postcolonial state. I acknowledge that Bangladesh faces numerous

economic challenges and high population issues, which adversely affect resource deployment to preschools and their teachers. Yet there is no justification for providing substandard education to children if the goal of education is to lift them from poverty.

The existing classroom situations of preschools in Bangladesh has motivated me to investigate the quality of teaching processes of these schools. My visit to the preschools in Bangladesh to collect data for this study registed images of the poor faces of children who became the victims of the power of policy makers, educators, head teachers and teachers in these preschools. These circumstances have raised question regarding how quality could be ensured in these preschools of Bangladesh when children's emotions demonstrated the lack of interest and joy to come to school. I consider this study timely, crucial, and as the starting point for transforming the attitudes to children's identity, agency, power, voice and representation.

Quality preschool education no matter where it takes place hinges on a positive working relationship with teachers, policy makers and families, in addition to teachers ability to innovate freely and use local resources. This also requires that preschool teachers are higly trained to be suitable for teaching in the preschool education. As the beliefs of teachers could have an influence on their teaching, it is also important that preschool teachers are supported to decolonise their thinking and desist from constucting themselves as the only source of knowledge to children. The quality of learning in preschool is compromised especially in the situation when power differential is inherent in pedagogical relationship with children. Quality should also not be seen as a a static product emanating from the preschool but as a social conditioning, poltitical, economic and ideological discourse which is marked endlessly with institutional changes, systemic structures of expectation within a particular period.

Therefore, our goal as preschool teachers is not to ‘copy quality from one country and paste on another’; this would not work properly in my view. What I am advocating for in this concluding comments of this thesis is that as preschool educators, we must strive to provide opportunities for all children to develop their unique potentials and reach their maximum capabilities by orchestrating learning environments where there is active involvement of all children. This means Bangladeshi Education Ministry must take care in developing pragmatic policy guidelines for appropriate training and supervising of preschool teachers, with teacher wellbeing also given the needed attention.

Quality preschool education also for it to be realised, should be framed in understandings of human rights and social justice. Every child has a fundermental human right to quality preschool education. When quality is framed in this perspective preschool teachers and education policy makers would no longer see quality preschool education as the reserve for only the rich in society but as what every child derves. This new conciousness would position preschool teachers strongly to work better with children even in the face of challenging circumstances. The lack of receources and curriculum would no longer be a hindrance as social justice often leads to innovation service to the most vulnerable children in society.

The data I presented in this thesis is limited in that it is drawn from three preschools with nine participants, but the evidence is compelling, and gives us some starting point for thinking about quality preschool in postcoloinal terms. I hope that the findings of this study would help educators and teachers of preschools in Bangladesh to change their views and motivate children to be active rather than passive learners. It is time Bangldeshi educators move away from colonial practice and embrace methods that

value children, which will remarkably change and enhance the quality of classroom teaching, and learning situation in preschools in Bangladesh. In addition, by applying postcolonial theory, I have learned a lot about how children's identity, agency, power, voice and representation are implicated in teaching pratices in classrooms. I conclude this study with the view that all children irrespective of their nature and background have rights to quality education. All children look to us teachers to make a positive difference in their lives for a better future. That difference is realised through quality education that we provide to serve their interests.

References

Aboud, F. E. (2006). Evaluation of an early childhood preschool program in rural Bangladesh, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *21*, 46-60.

Aboud, F. E., & Hossain, K. (2011). The impact of pre-primary school on primary school achievement in Bangladesh, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 26,* 237-246.

Achchillage, M. R. H. R. (2002). *EFA national plans of action* (Country Report). Sri Lanka: Provincial Department of Education.

Agbenyega, J. S. (2009). The Australian early development index, who does it measure: Piaget or Vygotsky's child? *The Australasian Journal of early Childhood, 34* (2), 31-38.

Agbenyega, J. S. (2011). Institutional practices in early childhood teachers' construction and management of learning spaces: an encounter for inclusion or exclusion?, *International Journal of Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood, 9* (1), 62-76.

Agbenyega, J. S., & Deku, P. K. (2011). Building new identities in teacher preparation for inclusive education in Ghana, *Current Issues in Education, 14* (1), 4-36.

Agbenyeag, J. S., & Klibthong, S. (2011). Early childhood inclusion: a postcolonial analysis of pre-service teachers' professional development and pedagogy in Ghana, *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 12* (4), 403-414.

Agbenyeag, J. S., & Klibthong, S. (2012). Transforming selves for inclusive practice: Experiences of early childhood preservice teachers, *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 37* (5), 65-77.

Ahmad, M., & Nath, S. R. (2005). Quality with equity: The primary education agenda, *Education Watch Report 2003/4*, Dhaka: Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE).

Ailwood, J. (2003). Governing early childhood education through play, *Contemporary issues in early childhood education, 4* (3), 286–99.

Al-Quaderi, G. G., & Mahmud, M. M. (2010). English literature in English medium schools in Bangladesh: The Question of post-colonial pedagogy, *Asiatic, 4*(2), 121-154.

Almy, M. (1982). Day care and early childhood education. In E. Zigler & E. Gordon (Eds), *Daycare: Scientific and social policy issues* (pp. 476–495). Boston, MA: Auburn House.

Amett, J. (1989). Caregivers in day-care centers: Does training matter?, *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 10,* 541-552.

Andersson, B-E. (1989). Effects of public day care: A longitudinal study, *Child Development,* 60.

Andersson, B-E. (1992). Effects of day care on cognitive and socioemotional development of thirteen-year-old Swedish children, *Child Development,* 63.

Anderson, C., Nagle, R., Roberts, W., & Smith, J. (1981). Attachment to substitute' caregivers as a function of centre quality and caregiver involvement, *Child Development, 52* (1), 53–61.

Apple, M. W. (1996). *Cultural politics in education.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Arksey, H., & O'Malley, L. (2005) Scoping studies: towards a methodological framework, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 8* (1), 19-32.

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (1989). *The Empire writes back: Theory and practice in post-colonial literatures*. London: Routledge.

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (1998). *Key concepts in post-colonial studies.* London: Routledge.

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (2006). General introduction. In B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths & H. Tiffin (Eds.), *The post-colonial studies reader.* (2nd ed., pp. 1-4). Oxford: Routledge.

Ashleigh, D. A. (2005). *A study of successful implementation and management of educational technology in three New South Wales primary schools.* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) Australian Catholic University, Victoria Australia.

Ashton, P. T. (1990). Editorial, *Journal of Teacher Education, 44* (1), *2.*

Ashton, P. T., & Webb, R. B. (1986). *Making a difference: Teachers' sense of efficacy and student achievement.* New York: Longman.

Aviram, A. (1996). The decline of the modern paradigm in education, *International Review of Education, 42* (5), 421 - 443.

Avoke, M. K., & Avoke, S. K. (2004). *Inclusion, rehabilitation and transition services in special education*. Winneba: Department of Special Education.

Bagnato, S. J., & Ho, H. Y. (2006). High-stakes testing with preschool children: Violation of professional standards for evidence-based practice in early childhood intervention, *KEDI Journal of Educational Policy, 3* (1), 23-43.

Baker, L., Allen, J., Shockley, B., Pellegrini, A. D., Galda, L., & Stahl, S. (1996). Connecting school and home: Constructing partnerships to foster reading development. In L. Baker, P. Afflerbach & D. Reinking (Eds.), *Developing engaged readers in school and home communities* (pp. 21-41). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Baker, C. D., & Luke, A. (eds). (1991). *Towards a critical sociology of reading pedagogy*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Balaguer, I., Mestres, J., & Penn, H. (1992). *Quality in services for young children*. Brussels: European Commission Equal Opportunities Unit.

Ball, S. (ed.). (1990). *Foucault and education.* New York: Routledge.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory.* Englewood Cliffs: NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS). (2010). *Educational structure of Bangladesh.* Dhaka: Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Retrieved from http://www.banbeis.gov.bd/es_bd.htm.

Bangladesh Education Sector Review Report No. 1. (2002). *Overview of the basic education sector.* Basic education and policy support (BEPS) activity, Washington D.C.: United States Agency for International Development.

Banister, P., Burman, E., Parker, I., Taylor, M., & Tindall, C. (1994). *Qualitative methods in psychology: a research guide.* Buckingham England; Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Barnett, W.S. (1995). Long-term effects of early childhood programs on cognitive and school outcomes, *The Future of Children*, 5 (3), 25-50.

Barnett, W.S. (1997). Long-term cognitive and academic effects of early childhood education on children in poverty, *Preventive Medicine*, 27, 204-207.

Bartlett, K., Arnold, C., & Sapkota (2003). *What's the difference? The impact of early childhood development programs Kathmandu.* Nepal: Save the Children (US).

Baxter, C. (1997). *Bangladesh: from a nation to state.* Boulder, Colo: Westview Press.

Beatty, B. (1995). *Preschool education in America: The culture of young children from the colonial era to the present*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Belsky, J. (2001). Emanuel Miller lecture—developmental risks (still) associated with early child care, *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, *42* (7), 845–859.

Berthelsen, D., & Brownlee, J. (2005). Respecting children's agency for learning and rights to participation in child care programs, *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 1-14.

Bhabha, B. (1994). *Location of culture*. London: Routledge .

Biggs, J. B. (1993). From theory to practice: A cognitive systems approach, *Higher Education Research and Development*, *12*, 73-85.

Birch, S., & Ladd, G. (1996). Interpersonal relationships in the school environment and children's early school adjustment: The role of teachers and peers. In K. Wentzel & J.H. Juvonen (Eds.), *Social motivation: Understanding children's school adjustment* (pp. 199-225). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Birch, S., & Ladd, G. (1997). The teacher-child relationship and children's early school adjustment, *Journal of School Psychology, 35,* 61-80.

Bohan- Baker, M., & Little P. (2004). *The transition to kindergarten: A review of current research and promising practices to involve families.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project.

Boocock, S.S. (1995). Early childhood programs in other nations: Goals and outcomes, *The Future of Children, 5* (3), 94-115.

Borg, M. (1998). Teachers' pedagogical systems and grammar teaching: A qualitative study, *TESOL Quarterly, 31* (1), 9-38.

Borg, M. (2001). Teachers' beliefs, *ELT Journal, 55* (2), 186-188.

Bourdieu, P. (1992). *Language and symbolic power.* Polity Press, Cambridge.

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method, *Qualitative Research Journal, 9* (2), 27-40.

Bracey, G., Montie, J. E., Xiang, Z., & Schweinhart, L. J. (2007). *The IEA preprimary Study: Findings and policy implications.* High/Scope Educational Research Foundation.

Bray, M. (2002). *Costs and financing of education: Trends and policy implication.* Manila: Asian Development Bank.

Bredekamp, S. (2008). Foreword. In M. Hyson (Ed.), *Enthusiastic and engaged learner* (pp. ix–x). New York, NY: Teachers College.

Bredekamp, S., & Copple, C. (Eds.). (1996). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs* (Rev. Ed.). NAEYC, Washington.

Brennan, D., (1998). *The politics of Australian child care: Philanthropy to feminism and beyond* (Rev. Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University press.

Brookhart, S. M., & Freeman, D. J. (1992). Characteristics of entering teacher candidates, *Review of Educational Research, 62,* 37-60.

Brooks-Gunn, J., Han, W. J., & Waldfogel, J. (2002). Maternal employment and child cognitive outcomes in the first three years of life: the NICHD study of early childhood care, *Child Development, 73,* 1052–1072.

Brophy, J. (1999). *Teaching*. Educational practices series-1. International Academy of Education and International Bureau of Education. Switzerland: UNESCO.

Broström, S. (2000, August-September). *Communication & community in the transition from kindergarten to school in Denmark.* Poster Symposium presented at the EECERA 10th European Conference on Quality in Early Childhood Education, London University.

Brown, D. M. (2003). Learner-centered conditions that ensure students' success in learning, *Education, 124* (1), 99-107.

Brown, K. L. (2003). From teacher-centered to learning-centered curriculum: improving learning in diverse classrooms, *Education, 124* (1), 49-54.

Brown, K., & Sumsion, J. (2007). Voices from the other side of the fence: Early childhood teachers' experiences with mandatory regulatory requirements, *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 8* (1), 30-49.

Brownlee, J., & Chak, A. (2007). Hong Kong student teachers' beliefs about children's learning: Influences of a cross-cultural early childhood teaching experience, *Australian Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology,* 7, 11-21.

Bryant, D., Peisner-Feinberg, E., & Miller-Jonson, S. (2000, April). *Head Start parents' roles in the educational lives of their children.* Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Buchmann, M. (1984). The use of research knowledge in teacher education and teaching, *American Journal of Education, 93,* 421-439.

Bureau of Non-Formal Education. (2009). *Mapping of non-formal education activities in Bangladesh*, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Burns, R. B. (1990). *Introduction to research methods*. (4th edition). Melbourne : Longman Cheshire.

Cahan, E. D. (1989). *Past caring: A history of U.S. preschool care and education for the poor, 1820-1965*. New York: National Centre for Children in Poverty.

Campbell, F. A., & Ramey, C. T. (1994). Effects of early intervention on intellectual and academic achievement: a follow-up study of children from low-income families, *Child Development,* 65 (2), 684 - 698.

Cannella, G. S., & Viruru, R. (2004). *Childhood and postcolonization : Power, education and contemporary Practice.* London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Caoli-Rodriguez, R. B. (2008). *Asia and the Pacific Education for All (EFA) mid-decade assessment: Insular South-East Asia sub-region synthesis report*. Bangkok, Thailand: UNESCO Bangkok.

Carpenter, T., & Fennema, E., (1992). Cognitively guided instruction: Building on the knowledge of students and teachers. In W. Secada (Ed.), *Researching educational reform: The case of school mathematics in the United States, A special issue of International Journal of Educational Research* (pp. 457-470).

Carron, G., & Chau, T.N. (1996). *The quality of primary schools in different development contexts.* Paris: UNESCO.

Carton, C. E., & Allen, J. (2008). *Early childhood curriculum: A creative-play model.* New Jersey: Pearson Education.

Cavana, R. Y., Delahaye, B. L., & Sekaran, U. (2001). *Applied business research: Qualitative and quantitative methods.* Sydney: John Wiley & Son.

Ceglowski, D. (2004). How stake holder groups define quality in child care, *Early Childhood Education Journal, 32* (2), 101-111.

Chabbott, C. (2006). Meeting EFA: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) primary schools, *Educational quality improvement program 2.* Washington: United States Agency for International Development.

Chaturvedi, E., Srivastava, B. C., Singh, J. V., & Prasad, M. (1987). Impact of six years' exposure to the ICDS scheme on psychosocial development, *Indian Pediatrics, 24,* 153-64.

Cheeseman, J. (2010). *Challenging children to think: An investigation of the behaviours of highly effective teachers that stimulate children to examine their mathematical understandings.* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation). Monash University, Victoria, Australia.

Chen, J. Q., & McNamee, G. D. (2011). Positive approaches to learning in the context of preschool classroom activities, *Early Childhood Education Journal, 39,* 71-78.

Choi, S-H. (2006). Pre-primary education: A valid investment option for EFA. *UNESCO Policy Briefs on Early Childhood, 31*.

Clark, C. M. (1988). Asking the right questions about teacher preparation: Contributions of research on teaching thinking. *Educational Researcher, 17* (2), 5-12.

Cleveland, G., & Krashinsky, M. (1998). *The benefits and costs of good childcare: The economic rationale for public investment in young children.* Toronto: University of Toronto.

Cloke, C. I., Crang, P., Goodwin, M., Painter, J., & Philo, C. (2004). *Practising human geography.* London: Sage.

Clyde, M. (2001). Children's responses to starting school: some Victorian studies, *Journal of Australian Research in Early Childhood,* 8 (1), 23-32.

Coady, M. M. (2001). Ethics in early childhood research. In Naughton, G. M., Rolfe, S. A. & Siraj-Blatchford, I. (Ed), *Doing early childhood research: International perspectives on theory and practice* (p. 64- 72). Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Coady, M. M., & Page, J. (2005). Continuing commitments: the early childhood sector and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, *International Journal of Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood, 3* (2), 45 – 53.

Cobb, P., Wood, T., & Yackel, E. (1990). Classrooms as learning environments for teachers and researchers. In R. Davis, C. Maher, & N. Noddings (Eds.), *Constructivist views on the teaching and learning of mathematics, Journal for Research in Mathematics Education Monograph* (pp. 125-146). Reston, VA: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

Cochran, M. (2011). International perspectives on early childhood education, *Educational Policy, 25* (1), 65-91.

Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development (CGECCD). (2010). Cornerstone 3: Schools ready for children! *4 cornerstones to secure a strong foundation for young children* (revised ed.). Toronto.

Cooter, R. B., Jr., Mills-House, E., Marrin, P., Mathews, B. A., Campbell, S., & Baker, T. (1999). Family and community involvement: The bedrock of reading success, *Reading Teacher, 52* (8), 891-896.

Crespo, S. (2000). Seeing more than right and wrong answers: Prospective teachers' interpretations of students' mathematical work, *Journal of Mathematics Teacher Education, 3* (2), 155-181.

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry, *Theory into Practice, 39* (3), 124-130.

Crowley, V. (1998) Reading in the Antipodes: Postcolonialism, pedagogy and racism, *Discourse Studies in the Cultural Studies of Education, 19* (3), 291-299.

Cullen, J. (1999). Children's knowledge, teachers' knowledge: Implications for early childhood teacher education, *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 24* (2), 13-27.

Dahlberg, G., & Moss, P. (Eds.). (2005). *Ethics and politics in early childhood education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Dahlberg, G., Moss, P., & Pence, A. (1999). *Beyond quality in early childhood education and care. Postmodern perspectives*. Philadelphia: Falmer.

Dahlberg, G, Moss, P., & Pence, A. (2007). *Beyond quality in early childhood education and care: Languages of evaluation.* London: Routledge.

Dahlberg, G., Lundgren, U. P., & Åsén, G. (1991), *Att utvärdera barnomsorg* (To evaluate early childhood care and education). Stockholm: HLS Förlag.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence, *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 8* (1), 1–49.

David, M., & Lezine, I. (1974), *Early childcare in France*. New York & London: Gorbon and Breach.

Davis, B. (1997). Listening for differences: An evolving conception of mathematics teaching, *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education, 28* (3), 355-376.

Dean, K. T. H. (2003). Foundations for learner-centered education: A Knowledge base, *Education, 124* (1), 5-16.

Degotardi, S. (2005). Exploring children's play: Development and contexts. In A. Talay-Ongan and E. A. Ap (Eds.), *Child Development and Teaching Young Children* (pp. 131-147). Victoria: Thomson Social Science Press.

Dei, G. J. S., & Asgharzadeh, A. (2001). The Power of social theory: Towards an anti-colonial discursive framework, *Journal of Educational Thought*, 35 (3), 297–323.

Dei, G. J.S., & Opini, B. M. (2007). Schooling in the context of difference: The challenge of post-colonial education in Ghana (International Handbook of Student Experience in Elementary and Secondary School). Netherlands: Springer.

Dei, G. J. S., & Shahjahan, R. (2008). Equity and democratic education in Ghana: Towards a pedagogy of difference (pp.49-69). In J. Zajda, L. Davies & S. Majhanovich (Eds.), *Comparative and Global Pedagogies* (2nd Ed.). Netherlands: Springer.

Denton, K., & West, J. (2002). *Children's reading and mathematics achievement in kindergarten and first grade.* Washington, DC: National Centre for Educational Statistics.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research in Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp 105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Department of Education and Children's Services. (2004). *Choosing and using teaching and learning materials*. Hindmarsh: Department of Education and Children's Services, The State of South Australia.

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments. (2009). *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia.* ACT: Commonwealth of Australia.

Department of Education and Skills. (2007). *The early years foundation stage.* Nottingham: DfES.

Deppeler, J., Moss, J., & Agbenyega, J. S. (2008). The ethical dilemma of working the visual and digital across space. In J. Moss (Ed.), *Researching education visually, digitally and spatially* (pp. 209-227). Amsterdam: Sense Publications.

Derrida, J. (1976). *Of grammatology* (trans. G. Spivak). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Desforges, C., & Abouchaar, A. (2003). *The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment: A literature review*. London: Department for Education and Skills.

Desimone, L. (1999). Linking parental involvement with student achievement, *Journal of Educational Research, 93,* 11-49.

Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think.* Boston: D. C. Heath.

Dinham, S. M., & Stritter, F. T. (1986). Research on professional education. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed., pp. 952-970). New York: Macmillan.

Dirlik, A. (1994). The post-colonial aura: Third world criticism in the age of global capitalism. In P. Mongia (Ed.), *Contemporary Post-colonial Theory* (pp. 294-319). London: Arnold.

Dockett, S., & Fleer, M. (1999). *Play and pedagogy in early childhood.* Marrickville, NSW:Harcourt Brace.

Dodge, D. T. (2004, January-February). Early childhood curriculum models: Why, what, and how programs use them, *Child Care Information Exchange*, 71-75.

Doherty-Derkowski, G. (1995). *Quality matters: excellence in early childhood programs*. Sydney: Addison-Wesley Publishers.

Draper, L., & Duffy, B. (2006). Working with parents. In G. Pugh & B. Duffy (Eds.), *Contemporary issues in the early years* (4th Ed., pp. 151-162). London: Sage Publications.

Drury, R., Miller, L., & Campbell, R. (Eds.). (2000). *Looking at early years education and care.* London: David Fulton.

Dunn, L., & Kontos, S. (1997). What have we learned about developmentally appropriate practice? *Young Children, 52* (5), 4–13.

Dwyer, T., Sallis, J. F., Blizzard, L., Lazarus, R., & Dean, K. (2001). Relation of academic performance to physical activity and fitness in children, *Pediatric Exercise Science, 13,* 225–238.

Eccles, J. S., & Harold, R. D. (1993). Parent-school involvement during the early adolescent years, *Teachers College Record, 94* (3), 568-587.

Education Commission. (1999b). *Education blueprint for the 21st century: review of academic system – aims of education.* Hong Kong: Government Printer.

Edwards, A. (2001). Qualitative designs and analysis. In Naughton, G. M., Rolfe, S. A. & Siraj-Blatchford, I. (Ed), *Doing early childhood research: International perspectives on theory and practice* (pp. 117-135). Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Eisner, E. (1979). Recent developments in educational research affecting art education, *Art Education, 32,* 12-15.

Elliott, A. (2006). *Early childhood education: Pathways to quality and equity for all children*. Camberwell, Victoria: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Ellyard, P. (1999). *Ideas for the new millennium.* Carlton South, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Epstein, A. S. (2011). *All about High Scope- FAQs.* HighScope Educational Research Foundation. Retrieved from http://www.highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=291.

Epstein, J. L., & Sanders, M. G. (2000). Connecting home, school, and community: New directions for social research. In M. T. Hallinan (Ed.), *Handbook of the sociology of education* (pp. 285-306). New York: Kluwer Academic.

Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M.C. Wittrock (Ed.), H*andbook of research on teaching* (3rd Ed.; 119-161). New York: Macmillan.

Ernest, P. (1988, August). *The Impact of beliefs on the teaching of mathematics.* Paper presented at the 6th International Congress of Mathematical Education, Budapest.

European Commission Childcare Network (1996). *Quality targets in services for young children*. Brussels: European Commission Equal Opportunities Unit.

Evans, J. (1996). Quality in ECCD: Everyone's concern, *Coordinators' notebook, 18,* 1-26.

Evans, J.L., Myers, R. G., & Ilfeld, E. M. (2000). *Early childhood counts: A programming guide on early childhood care for development.* Washington D.C.: The World Bank.

Expert Advisory Panel on Quality Early Childhood Education and Care. (2009). *Towards a national quality framework for early childhood education and care.* Report from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments. Retrieved from http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/OfficeOfEarlyChildhood/agenda/Documents/EAP_report.pdf.

Fan, X., & Chen, M. (2001). Parental involvement and students' academic achievement: A meta-Analysis, *Educational Psychology Review, 13* (1), 1-22.

Fang, Z. (1996). A review of research on teacher beliefs and practices, *Educational Research, 38* (l), 47-65.

Fantuzzo, J. W., Bulotsky-Shearer, R., McDermott, P., McWayne, C., Frye, D., & Perlman, S. (2007). Investigation of dimensions of social-emotional classroom behavior and school readiness for low-income urban preschool children, *School Psychology Review, 36* (1), 44–62.

Farquhar, S. (1990). Quality in early education and care: What do we mean?, *Early Child Development and Care, 64*, 71–83.

Farquhar, S. (1993). *Breaking new ground in the study of quality*. Paper presented at the NZARE annual conference, Hamilton, New Zealand.

Feiman-Nemser, S., & Floden, R. E. (1986). The cultures of teaching. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed., pp. 505-526). New York: Macmillan.

Fennema, E., & Loef Franke, M. (1992). Teachers' knowledge and its impact. In D. A. Grouws (Ed.), *Handbook of research on mathematics teaching and learning* (pp. 147–164). New York: Macmillan.

Fenstermacher, G. D. (1979). A philosophical consideration of recent research on teacher effectiveness. In L. S. Shulman (Ed.), *Review of research in education* (Vol. 6, pp. 157-185). Itasca, IL: Peacock.

Fenstermacher, G. D. (1986). Philosophy of research on teaching: Three aspects. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed., pp. 37-49). New York: Macmillan.

Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods 5* (1), 1-11.

Ferguson, R. (1991). Paying for public education. New evidence in how and why money matters, *Harvard Journal of Legislation*, 28 (2), 465–498.

Ferry, B. (2010). Applying cognitive load theory to improve the efficiency of constructivist-based teaching, *Asian Journal of Educational Research and Synergy, 2* (1).

Fleer, M. (2000). *An early childhood research agenda: Voices from the field.* Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. Commonwealth of Australia.

Fleer, M. (2005). Developmental fossils – Unearthing the artefacts of early childhood education: The reification of 'child development', *Australian Journal of Early Childhood, 30* (2), 2–7.

Fleer, M. (2006). *Early childhood learning communities: sociocultural research in practice*. Frenchs Forest, N.S.W.: Pearson Education Australia.

Fleer, M. (2009). Understanding the dialectical relations between everyday concepts and scientific concepts within play-based programs, *Res Science Education, 39,* 281-306.

Fleer, M. (2011). 'Conceptual play': foregrounding imagination and cognition during concept formation in early years education, *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 12* (3), 224-240.

Fleer, M., Agbenyega, J., Blaise, M., & Peers, C. (2008). *Assessment within the early years: Assumptions, beliefs and practices: a literature review for DECS.* Research Node for Furthering Early Childhood Research and Learning, Faculty of Education Monash University: Melbourne.

Foote, L., & Ellis, F. (2010, September-October). *Environments – Is learning potential lost when children don't have a voice?* Paper presented at the Australian Early Childhood Association Conference, Adelaide.

Foote, L., & Ellis, F. (2011, May). *Children's voice in early childhood settings.* Paper presented at the Creche and Kindergarten Association conference, Brisbane, Australia.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews, 1972–77*. C.

Frede, E., & Barnett, S. W. (1992). Developmentally appropriate public school preschool: A study of implementation of the High/Scope curriculum and its effects on disadvantaged children's skills at first grade, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 74* (4), 483–499.

Freeman, C., & Nairn, K. (2000). Children, young people and their environments: Changing themes, *Childrenz Issues 4* (2), 7-12.

Freeman, M. (1998). The sociology of childhood and children's rights, *The International Journal of Children's Rights, 6* (4), 433-444.

Freire, P. (1998). *Teachers as cultural workers: Letters to those who dare teach*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Freire, P. (2007). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: Continuum.

Friedman, S. L., & Amadeo, J. A. (1999). Assessments of the child care environment and experience. In S. L. Friedman & T. D. Wachs (Eds.), *Assessment of the environment across the lifespan.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press.

Fullan, M. G. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change* (2nd Ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Gaag, J. V., &Tan, J. (1998). *The Benefits of early child development programs: An economic analysis.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

Gandini, L. (1997). Foundations of the Reggio Emilia approach. In J. Hendrick (Ed.), *First steps towards teaching the Reggio way* (pp 14-25). New Jersey: Merrill.

Garcia, D., & Hasson, D. (2004). Implementing family literacy programs for linguistically and culturally diverse populations: Key elements to consider, *The School Community Journal,14* (1), 113-137.

Garcia, M., & Pence, A. (2010). Developing an international network to support early childhood development (ECD): Results from experience in Africa, *Journal of International Cooperation in Education, 13* (2), 119-137.

Garcia, L., & Quek, F. (1997, May/June). *Qualitative research in information systems: Time to be subjective?* Paper presented at the Proceedings of the IFIP TC8 WG 8.2 International Conference on Information Systems and Qualitative Research, Philadelphia, PA.

Gay, G. (1995). Mirror images on common issues: parallels between multicultural education and critical pedagogy. In C. E. Sleeter & P. L. McLaren (Eds.), *Multicultural education, critical pedagogy, and the politics of difference (*pp. 155-189). New York: SUNY Press.

Gee, J. (1990). *Social linguistics and literacies. ideology in discourses*. London: The Falmer Press.

Glewwe, P., & Jacoby, H. G. (1993). *Delayed primary school enrolment and childhood malnutrition in Ghana: An economic analysis, living standards measurement study (LSMS) working paper no. 98*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Gelfer, J. I. (1991). Teacher-parent partnerships: Enhancing communications, *Childhood Education, 67* (3), 164-169.

Giroux, H. (1992). *Border crossings: Cultural workers and the politics of education*. New York: Routledge.

Goodman, J. (1988). Constructing a practical philosophy of teaching: A study of preservice teachers' professional perspectives, *Teaching & Teacher Education, 4*, 121-137.

Goodwin, W. L., & Goodwin, L. D. (1993). Young children and measurement: Standardized and nonstandardized instruments in early childhood education. In B. Spodek (Ed.), *Handbook of research on the education of young children* (Vol. 28, pp 441-465). New York: Macmillan.

Gootman, J, A., & Smolensky, E. (Eds.) (2003). *Working families and growing kids: Caring for children and adolescents.* Committee on Family and Work Policies, Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

Government of Australia. (2008). *Submission to the* n*ational quality framework for early education and care: a discussion paper.* Retrieved from http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/pdf/submissions/Joint-Submission-to-the-National-Quality-Framework.pdf.

Government of Australia. (2009). *National quality standard for early childhood education and care and school age care*. Council of Australian Governments.

Government of Bangladesh. (2006). *Early childhood development in Bangladesh: a policy paper*. Retrieved on 2nd November 2011 from http://www.ecdbangladesh. net/ecd_bangladesh.pdf.

Government of India. (2009). *Integrated child development services (ICDS) scheme*. Retrieved from http://wcd.nic.in/icds.htm.

Grantham-McGregor, S., Cheung, B. C., Cueto, S., Glewwe, P., Richter, L., & Strupp, M. (2007). Developmental potential in the first 5 years for children in developing countries, *The Lancet, 369*, 60-70.

Grieshaber, S. (2001). Ethics in early childhood research. In Naughton, G. M., Rolfe, S. A. & Siraj-Blatchford, I. (Ed), *Doing early childhood research: International perspectives on theory and practice* (p. 136-146). Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Grieshaber, S. J., & Hatch, J. A. (2003). Child observation and pedagogical documentation as effects of globalisation, *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, 19* (1), 89-102.

Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gupta, A. (2006). *Early childhood education, postcolonial theory, and teaching practices in India: Balancing Vygotsky and the Veda.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Haddad, W.D. (1995). *Education policy-planning process: an applied framework.* Paris: UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning.

Hall, C. M., & H. Tucker. (Eds.). (2004). *Tourism and postcolonialism contested discourses, identities and representation*. Oxford: Routledge.

Halle, T., Vick, J. E., & Anderson, R. (2010). *Quality in early childhood care and education settings: A compendium of measures* (2nd Ed.) Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Hamre, B. K., & Pianta, R. C. (2001). Early teacher–child relationships and the trajectory of children's school outcomes through eighth grade, *Child Development, 72*, 625–638.

Hamre, B. K., & Pianta, R. C. (2007). Learning opportunities in preschool and early elementary classrooms. In R. C. Pianta, M. J. Cox, & K. Snow (Eds.), *School readiness, early learning and the transition to kindergarten* (pp. 49 – 84). Baltimore: Brookes.

Haq, M. N. (2006). *Quality education needs quality teacher*. Dhaka: Campaign for Popular Education.

Haq, M. N., & Islam, M. S. (2005). *Teacher motivation in Bangladesh: A situation analysis*. Dhaka.

Haq, M., & Haq, K. (1998). *Human development in South Asia.* Karachi: Oxford University Press.

Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2001). *Empire*. Cambridge, MASS: Harvard University Press.

Härkönen, U. (2002). Defining early childhood education through systems theory, *Scientific Articles of the 3rd International Conference*, 77-88.

Harms, T., & Clifford, M. (1980). *Early childhood environment rating scale*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Hartas, D. (2008). Practices of parental participation: a case study, *Educational Psychology in Practice, 24* (2), 139-153.

Hasan, N. (2011). Mental stress & nervous breakdown of children: A general phenomenon, Retrieved from http://naimhasan.hubpages.com/.

Hatch, J. A., & Grieshaber, S. (2002). Child observation and accountability in early childhood education: Perspectives from Australia and the United States. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 29* (4), 227–231.

Hattie, J. (2003, October). *Teachers make a difference: What is the research evidence?* Keynote address at the ACER Research Conference, Melbourne.

Havita, N. (2000). Teacher thinking, beliefs, and knowledge in higher education: An introduction, *Instructional Science, 28*, 331-334.

Haynes, M. (1999, July). *Quality in teacher education: learning for early childhood through the New Zealand Curriculum Framework.* Paper presented at HERDSA Annual International Conference, Melbourne.

Heckman, J. J. (2006). Skill formation and the economics of investing in disadvantaged Children, *Science, 312*, 1900-1902.

Hegde, A. V., & Cassidy, D. J. (2009). Kindergarten teachers' perspectives on developmentally appropriate practices (DAP): A study conducted in Mumbai (India), *Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education, 23* (3), 367-381.

Heitzman, J., & Worden, R. L. (Eds.). (1988). *Bangladesh, a country study.* Washington, D. C.: Federal Research Division,The Library of Congress.

Helburn, S. W. (1995). *Cost, quality, and child outcomes in child care centres, technical report.* Denver: University of Colorado.

Henry, M. (2000). It's all up to the individual, isn't it? Meritocratic practices. In D. Meadmore et al, (Eds.), *Practising education: social and cultural perspectives* (pp. 47-58). Riverwood, NSW: Prentice Hall.

Heron, J. (1996). *Co-operative inquiry: Research into the human condition.* London: Sage.

Hickling-Hudson, A. (1999). Globalisation, postcolonialism and educational change. In D. Meadmore et al (Eds.), *Understanding education: Contexts and agendas for the new millennium.* Australia: Prentice Hall.

Hickling-Hudson, A. (2002). Re-visioning from the inside: Getting under the skin of the World Bank's Education Sector Strategy, *International Journal of Educational Development, 22* (6), 565-577.

Hickling-Hudson, A. (2003). Multicultural education and the postcolonial turn, *Policy Futures in Education, 1* (2), 381-401.

Hill, N.E., & Taylor, L.C. (2004). Parental school involvement and children's academic achievement: Pragmatics and issues, *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 13* (4), 161-164.

Hirsh-Pasek, K., Hyson, M., & Rescorla, L. (1990). Academic environments in preschool: Do they pressure or challenge young children? *Early Education and Development, 1* (6), 401–423.

Hole, R. (2007). Working between languages and cultures issues of representation, voice, and authority intensified, *Qualitative Inquiry, 13* (5), 696-710.

Holmes, R., Farrington, J., Rahman, T., & Slater, R. (2008). *Extreme poverty in Bangladesh: Protecting and promoting rural livelihoods.* Overseas Development Institute, UK.

Howes, C. (1988). Relations between early child care and schooling, *Developmental Psychology, 24* (1), 53-57.

Howes, C. (1990). Can the age of entry into child care and the quality of child care predict adjustment in kindergarten? *Developmental Psychology, 26* (2), 292-303.

Howes, C., & Hamilton, C.E. (1992). Children's relationship with child-care teachers: Stability and concordance with parental attachments, *Child Development, 63,* 867-878.

Howes, C., & Lee, L. (2007). If you're not like me, can we play? Peer Groups in preschool. In O.N. Saracho & B. Spodek (Eds.), *Contemporary perspectives on social learning in early childhood education* (pp. 259-277). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Howes, C., & Stewart, P. (1987). Child's play with adults, toys and peers: An examination of family and child care influences, *Developmental Psychology, 23* (3).

Hughes, P., & MacNaughton, G. (2000). Consensus, dissensus or community: The politics of parent involvement in early childhood education, *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 1* (3), 241-258.

Humphries, E., & Senden, B. (2000). Leadership and change: A dialogue of theory and practice, *Australian Journal of Early Childhood, 25*(1), 26-31.

Hyson, M. (2005). Strengthening young children's positive approaches to learning, *Young Children, 60* (6), 68–70.

Hyson, M. (2008). *Enthusiastic and engaged learners.* New York, NY: Teachers College.

Ingvarson, L. (1998). Professional development as the pursuit of professional standards: The standards-based professional development system, *Teaching and Teacher Education, 14* (1), 127–140.

Ingvarson, L. (2002). *Building a learning profession*, Canberra: ACE.

Irwin, L., Siddiqi, A., & Hertzman, C. (2007). *Early childhood development: A powerful equalizer*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

Isenberg, J. (1990). Teachers' thinking and beliefs and classroom practices, *Childhood Education, 66* (5), 322-327.

Ishimine, K., Tayler, C., & Bennett, J. (2010). Quality and early childhood education and care: A policy initiative for the 21st century, *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy, 4* (2), 67-80.

Islam, Y (2011).Tertiary education in Bangladesh – Brief history, problems and prospects, I*nternational Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, 5(2),* 1-6.

Jack, G., & Westwood, R. (2006). Postcolonialism and the politics of qualitative research in international business, *Management International Review, 46*, 481-501.

Jacobs, J. K., Yoshida, M., Stigler, J. W., & Fernandez, C. (1997). Japanese and American teachers' evaluations of mathematics lessons: A new technique for exploring beliefs, *Journal of Mathematical Behaviour, 16*, 7–24.

Jacobs, E., Selig, G., & White, D.R. (1992). Classroom behaviour in grade one: Does quality of preschool experience make a difference?, *Canadian Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education,* 3 (2).

Jane, B. L. (1995). *Technology in the primary curriculum: A teacher's perceptions and students' learning.* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) Monash University, Victoria, Australia.

Jaramillo, A., & Mingat, A. (2006, March). *Early childhood development in Sub-Saharan Africa: What would it take to meet the millennium development goals?* Paper presented at the ADEA Biennale, Gabon, France.

Jeynes, W. H. (2003). A meta-analysis: The effects of parental involvement on minority children's academic achievement, *Education and Urban Society, 35*, 202-218.

Jin, X. (2011). *Chinese middle school mathematics teachers' practice and perspectives viewed through a western lens.* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) Monash University, Victoria, Australia.

Jinnah, H. A., & Walters, L. H. (2008). Including parents in evaluation of a child development program: relevance of parental involvement, *Early Childhood Research and Practice, 10* (1).

Johansson, E. (2004). Learning encounters in preschool: Interaction between atmosphere, view of child and learning, *International Journal of Early Childhood,* 36, 9–26.

Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. (2004). *Educational research: quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Jolayemi, C. O. (2011). *Use of analogy in the teaching of Biology concepts.* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) Monash University, Victoria, Australia.

Jones, V. F., & Jones, L. S. (1981). *Responsible classroom discipline: creating positive learning environments and solving problems.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Jones, E., Evans, K., & Renken, K. S. (2001). *The lively kindergarten: Emergent curriculum in action.* National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington D.C.

Jordan, B. (1999). Co-construction and scaffolding of learning in ECE, supported by technology, *New Zealand Research in Early Childhood Education, 2.*

Jordão, M. C. (2008). A postcolonial framework for Brazilian EFL teachers' social identities, *Revista Electrónica Matices en Lenguas Extranjeras, 2.*

Kagan, S. L., & Britto, P. R. (2006). *Listening to the countries: Results from the going global program.* Paper presented at the Child Development Indicators Round Table Meeting of UNICEF, New York.

Kagan, S. L., & Kauerz, K. (2006). Preschool programs: Effective curricula. In: Tremblay R. E., Barr R. G. & Peters, R. DeV (Eds.), *Encyclopedia on early childhood development* [online]. Montreal, Quebec: Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development. Retrieved from http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/documents/Kagan-KauerzANGxp.pdf.

Kagan, S. L., & Reid, J. L. (2008). *Advancing ECE2 policy: Early childhood education (ECE) and its quest for excellence, coherence, and equity (ECE).* Washington, D.C.: The Centre on Education Policy.

Kagitcibasi, C., Sunar, D., & Bekman, S. (2001). Long-term effects of early intervention: Turkish low-income mothers and children, *Applied Developmental Psychology, 22,* 333–361.

Kahn, A. J., & Kamerman, S. B. (1987). *Child care: Facing the hard choices.* Dover, MA:Auburn House.

Kamerman, S. B. (2006). A global history of early childhood education and care, *Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007, Strong foundations: early childhood care and education*. Paris: UNICEF.

Kanpol, B. (1994). *Critical pedagogy: An introduction.* Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Karol, J. (2010). *Climate change demands culture change: Primary schooling and environmental capital after Bourdieu*. (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) Monash University, Victoria, Australia.

Kaul, V., & Sankar, D. (2009). *Education for All – Mid decade assessment: Early childhood education and care in India.* New Delhi: National University of Educational Planning and Administration.

Keeley, B. (2007). *Human capital: How, what you know shapes your life*. Paris: OECD.

Kember, D. (1998). Teaching beliefs and their impact on students' approach to learning. In B. Dart, & G. Boulton-Lewis, *Teaching and learning in higher education* (pp.1-25). Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Kember, D., & Kwan, K. P. (2000). Lecturers' approaches to teaching and their relationship to conceptions of good teaching, *Instructional Science, 28,* 469-490.

Kenny, K. (2008). 'Arrive bearing gifts...' postcolonial insights for development management. In Dar, S and Cooke B (Eds.), *The new development management: critiquing the dual modernization* (pp. 56-73). New York: Palgrave McMillan.

Kincheloe, J. L. (2008). *Knowledge and critical pedagogy an introduction.* London: Springer.

Klein, H. K., & Myers, M. D. (1999). A Set of principles for conducting and evaluating interpretive field studies in information systems, *MIS Quarterly, 23* (1), 67-94.

Koegel, R. L., Koegel, L. K., & Schreibman, L. (1991). Assessing and training parents in teaching pivotal behaviors. In R. Prinz (Ed.), *Advances in behavioral assessment of children and families,* (pp. 65-82). London: Jessica Kinsley.

Kulinna, P. H., Silverman, S., & Keating, X. D. (2000). Relationships between teachers' belief systems and actions towards teaching physical activity and fitness, *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education, 19,* 206-221.

Kumar, M. (2000). Postcolonial theory and crossculturalism: Collaborative 'signposts' of discursive practices, *Journal of Educational Enquiry, 1*(2), 82-92.

Kuyini, A. B., & Desai, I. (2006). Principals' and teachers' attitudes toward and knowledge of inclusive education in Ghana, *IFE PsychologIA, 14* (2), 225-244.

Kuyini, A. B., & Desai, I. (2009). Providing instruction to students with special needs in inclusive classrooms in Ghana: Issues and challenges, *International Journal of Whole Schooling, 4* (1), 22-39.

Kvale, S. (2005). The dominance of dialogical interview research. A critical view, *Barn,*3.

Kwek, D. (2003). Decolonizing and re-presenting culture's consequences: A postcolonial crituq of cross-cultural studies in management. In Prashad, A (Ed.), *Postcolonial theory and organisational analysis: A critical engagement* (pp.121-148). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ladd, G. W., & Burgess, K. B. (2001). Do relational risks and protective factors moderate the linkages between childhood aggression and early psychological and school adjustment?, *Child Development, 72,* 1579–1601.

Ladwig, J. (2000). World Institutions, world dispositions: curriculum in the world cultural institution of schooling. In R. Mahalingam & C. McCarthy (Ed.), *Multicultural curriculum: New directions for social theory, practice and policy.* New York: Routledge.

Lamb, M. (1998). Nonparental child care: Context, quality, correlates, and consequences. In W. Damon (Series Ed.) & I. E. Spiegel & K. A. Renniger (Vol. Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Child psychology in practice* (5th ed., pp. 73 – 134). New York: Wiley.

Lamb, M.E., Hwang, C-P., Broberg, A., & Bookstein, F.L. (1988). The effects of out of-home care on the development of social competence in Sweden: A longitudinal study, E*arly Childhood Research Quarterly, 3* (4), 279-402.

Lamb, M., Sternberg, K. J., Hwang, P., & Broberg, A. (1992). (Eds). *Child care in context.* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Lambert, E.B., & Clyde, M. (2000). *Re-thinking early childhood theory and practice*. Katoomba, New South Wales: Social Science Press.

Langone, K. G., & Glickman, R. M. (2002). Problem behaviours in the classroom: what they mean and how to help functional behavioural assessment, *The Child Study Centre Letter, 7* (2).

Lau, M. W. C. (2006). *Strategies kindergarten teachers use to enhance children's musical creativity: Case studies of three Hong Kong teachers.* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) Queensland University of Technology, Australia.

Lassiter, L.E. (2005). *Ethics and moral responsibility. The Chicago guide to collaborative ethnography*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Leung, F. K. S. (2001). In search of an East Asian identity in mathematics education, *Educational Studies in Mathematics, 47*(1), 35-51.

Levacic, R. (1998). Local management of schools in England: results after six years, *Journal of Educational Policy, 13* (3), 331-350.

Li, Y. L. (2004).The culture of teaching in the midst of western influence: the case of Hong Kong kindergartens, *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 5* (3), 330-348.

Lieberman, A., & Miller, L. (2001). *Teachers caught in the action: Professional development that matters.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Li-Grining, C. P., Votruba-Drzal, E., Maldonado-Carreno, C., & Haas, K. (2010). Children's early approaches to learning and academic trajectories through fifth grade, *DevelopmentalPsychology, 46* (5), 1062–1077.

Lobman C., Ryan, S., & McLaughlin, J. (2005). Reconstructing teacher education to prepare qualified preschool teachers: Lessons from New Jersey, *Early Childhood Research and Practice, 7* (2). Retrieved from http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v7n2/lobman.html.

Lofland, J. (1971). *Analyzing social settings*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Lord, A., & McFarland, L. (2010). Pre-service primary teachers' perceptions of early childhood philosophy and pedagogy: A case study examination, *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 35* (3), 1-13.

Loreman, T. (2007). How we view young children with diverse abilities: What Canada can learn from Reggio Emilia, *Exceptionality Education Canada, 17* (1), 5-26.

Love, J. M., Schochet, P. Z., & Meckstroth, A. L. (1996). *Are they in any real danger? What research does—and doesn't—tell us about child care quality and children's well-being.* Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research Inc.

Lusk, M. D., Hashemi, R. C., & Haq, M. N. (2004). Early childhood education, context and resources in Bangladesh. *Basic education and policy support (BEPS) activity*. Washington D.C.: United States Agency for International Development.

Lynch, R. (2004). *Exceptional returns: Economic, fiscal, and social benefits of investment in early childhood development.* Washington: Economic Policy Institute.

Lynch, M., & Cicchetti, D. (1992). Maltreated children's reports of relatedness to their teachers. In R.C. Pianta (Ed.), *Relationships between children and non-parental adults: New directions in child development* (pp. 81-108). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Macdonald, D., Kirk, D., Metzler, M., Nilges, L. M., Schempp, P., & Wright, J. (2002). It's all very well, in theory: Theoretical perspectives and their applications in contemporary pedagogical research, *QUEST, 54*, 122-156.

MacGilchrist, B., Myers, K., & Reed, J. (1997). *The intelligent school*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Malaguzzi, L. (1993). For an education based on relationships, *Young Children, 49* (1), 9-12.

Mannigel, D. (1998). *Young children as mathematicians: Theory and practice for teaching mathematics* (2nd ed.). Sydney: Social Science Press.

Marshall, P. J. (1987). *Bengal, the British bridgehead 1740-1828*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mashburn, A. J., & Pianta, R. C. (2010). Opportunity in early education: Improving teacher-child interactions and child outcomes. In A. Reynolds, A. Rolnick, M. Englund, & J. Temple (Eds.), *Childhood programs and practices in the first decade of life: A human capital integration* (pp. 243–265). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Mashburn, A. J., Pianta, R. C., Hamre, B. K., Downer, J. T., Barbarin, O. A., Bryant, D., Howes, C. (2008). Measures of classroom quality in prekindergarten and children's development of academic, language, and social skills, *Child Development, 79* (3), 732-749.

Mashford-Scott, A., & Church, A. (2011). Promoting children's agency in early childhood education, *Novitas-Royal (Research on Youth and Language), 5* (1), 15-38.

Maxwell, J. A. (2008). Designing a qualitative study. In L. Bickman and D. J. Rog (Eds.), *The handbook of applied social research methods,* (2nd Ed., pp. 214-253). Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications.

Mayall, B. (2000). The sociology of childhood in relation to children's rights, *International Journal of Children's Rights, 8,* 243 - 259.

McLean, M. (2001). Can we relate conceptions of learning to student academic achievement, *Teaching in Higher Education, 6* (3), 399-413.

McNay, L. (2000). *Gender and agency: Reconfiguring the subject in feminist and social theory.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

McNeal, R. (1999). Parental involvement as social capital: differential effectiveness of science achievement, truancy and dropping out, *Social Forces, 78* (1), 117-144.

McLaren, P., & Farahmandpur, R. (2003). The globalization of capitalism and the new imperialism: notes towards a revolutionary critical pedagogy. In Carlson, D. and dimitriadis, G. (Eds.). *Promises to keep: cultural studies, democratic education and public life.* New York and London: RoutledgeFalmer, 39-76.

Meighan, R., & Siraj-Blatchford, I. (2003). *A sociology of educating* (4th Ed.). London: Continuum.

Melhuish, E.C., Mooney, A., Martin, S., & Lloyd, E. (1990). Type of childcare at 18 months-II. Relations with cognitive and language development, *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry, 31* (6).

Mellor, J. E. (1990). *Stepping stones – The development of early childhood services in Australia*. Sydney: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers.

Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, Calif: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Miller, K. (2002). Motivating adults to learn, *Child Care Information Exchange, 143* (1), 76-79.

Mingers, J. (2001). Combining IS research methods: Towards a pluralist methodology, *Information System Research, 12* (3), 24-259.

Ministry of Human Resource Development, Education & Cultural Affairs. (2004). *Education for all national action plan.* Ministry of Human Resource Development, Education & Cultural Affairs, Sri Lanka.

Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. (2008). *Operational framework for pre-primary education*. Dhaka: Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. (2009). *Comprehensive early childhood care and development policy framework.* Dhaka: Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Ministry of Religious Affairs. (2008). *Introduction of the islamic foundation of Bangladesh.* Retrieved from http://www.mora.gov.bd/islamicfound.html.

Ministry of Education. (1996). *Te whariki*. NZ: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2006) *Ngā arohaehae whai hua: The self review guidelines.* Wellington. Learning Media.

Montessori, M. (1995). *The absorbent mind* (Rev. ed.). New York: Owl Books.

Mooney, C.G. (2000). *Theories of childhood: An introduction to Dewey, Montessori, Erikson, Piaget, & Vygotsky*. St. Paul, MN: Red Leaf Press.

Moore, A., C., Akhter, S., & Aboud, F., E. (2008). Evaluating an improved quality preschool program in rural Bangladesh. *International Journal of Educational Development, 28*, 118-131.

Morgan, G., & Smircich, L. (1980). The case for qualitative research, *The Academy of Management Review, 5*(4), 491-500.

Morris, P. (1985). Teachers' perceptions of the barriers to the implementation of a pedagogic innovation: A South East Asian case study, *International Review of Education, 31* (1), 3-18.

Morrow, V. (1999). Conceptualising social capital in relation to the well-being of children and young people: a critical review, *Sociological Review, 47* (4), 744-765.

Moss, P., & Dahlberg, G. (2008). Beyond quality in early childhood education and care – Languages of evaluation, *New Zealand Journal of Teachers' Work, 5(1), 3-12.*

Moss, P., & Pence, A. (1994). *Valuing quality in early childhood services*. London: Sage.

Mould, C. (1998). The influences of researcher–teacher collaboration on the effectiveness of early learning of four year olds in schools in England, *European Early Childhood Education Research, 6* (1), 19–35.

Motzafi-Haller, P. (1997). You have an authentic voice: Anthropological research and the politics of representation, *Teoriyah U'bikoret, 11*, 81-99.

Mprah, K. (2008). *University of Ghana: shadow of a collapsing nation*. Retrieved from http://www.modernghana.com/news/175908/1/university-of-ghana-8211-shadow-of-acollapsing-na.html.

Mullick, J. I., & Sheesh, S. (2008). Teachers' quality and teacher education at primary education sub-sector in Bangladesh, *BRAC University Journal, 5* (1), 77-84.

Munby, H. (1982). The place of teachers' beliefs in research on teacher thinking and decision making, and an alternative methodology, *Instructional Science, 11,* 201-225.

Munby, H. (1984). A qualitative approach to the study of a teacher's beliefs, *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 21,* 27-38.

Munton, A., Mooney, A., & Rowland, L. (1995). Deconstructing quality: A conceptual framework for the new paradigm in day care provision for the under eights, *Early Childhood Development and Care*, 114, 11-23.

Mutua, K., & Swadner, B. B. (2004). Introduction. In K. Mutua & B. B. Swadener (Eds.), *De colonizing research in cross-cultural contexts: Critical personal narratives* (pp. 1-23). Albany: SUNY Press.

Myers, R. G. (2004). *In search of quality in programmes of early childhood care and education (ECCE).* Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005, The Quality Imperative. Paris: UNESCO.

Nagda, B. A., Gurin, P., & Lopez, G. E. (2003). Transformative pedagogy for democracy and social justice, *Race Ethnicity and Education, 6* (2), 165-190.

Nath, S. R. (2006). Children's access to pre-school education in Bangladesh. *BRAC Research Report.* Dhaka: BRAC.

Nath, S. R., & Chowdhury, A. M. R. (2008). *State of primary education in Bangladesh: Progress made, challenges remained* (Education Watch 2008). Dhaka: Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) Bangladesh.

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2009). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth*

through age 8. A position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington D.C.: NAEYC.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Early Child Care Research Network. (2000). The relation of child care to cognitive and language development, *Child Development, 71* (4), 960–989.

Nespor, J. (1987). The role of beliefs in the practice of teaching, *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 19,* 317-328.

Neuman, W. L. (1997). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

New Jersey State Department of Education. (2004). *Preschool teaching & learning expectations: Standards of quality.* New Jersey: State Board of Education.

Newmann, F. M., & Wehlage, G. G. (1995). *Successful school restructuring.* Madison: University of Wisconsin, Center on Organization and Restructuring of schools.

Nias, J. (1989). *Priamry teachers talking: A study of teaching as work.* London: Routledge.

Ninnes, P. (2001). Representations of ways of knowing in junior high school science texts used in Australia, *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education, 22* (1), 81 – 94.

Nisbett, R., & Ross, L. (1980). *Human inference: Strategies and shortcomings of social judgment.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Ocloo M. A., & Subbey, M. (2008). Perception of basic education school teachers towards inclusive education in the Hohoe district of Ghana, *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 12,* 639-650.

OECD. (2004). *Starting strong curricula and pedagogies in early childhood education and care: Five curriculum outlines.* Paris: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

OECD .(2005). *Education at a glance.* Paris: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

OECD. (2006). *Starting strong II: Early childhood education and care.* Paris: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

OECD. (2009). *Creating effective teaching and learning environments: First results from TALIS.* Paris: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Office of Childcare (2002). *NSW curriculum framework for children's services. The practice of relationships: Essential provisions for children's services.* Sydney: NSW Department of Community Services.

Opel, A., Ameer, S., & Aboud, F. E. (2009). The effect of preschool dialogic reading on vocabulary among rural Bangladeshi children, *International Journal of Educational Research, 48,* 12–20.

Orlikowski, W. J., & Baroudi, J. J. (1991). Studying information technology in organizations: Research approaches and assumptions, *Information Systems Research 2* (1), 1-28.

Ou, S. (2003) *Mechanisms of effects of an early childhood intervention on educational attainment* [dissertation]. (Madison, Wis, University of Wisconsin).

Overton, J. (2009). Early childhood teachers in contexts of power: Empowerment and a voice, *Australian Journal of Early Childhood, 34* (2), 1-10.

Page, J. (2008). The convention on the rights of the child in context. In E. Masinsi (Ed.), H*uman resources systems challenge*. Oxford: Developed under the auspices of UNESCO & EOLSS publishers.

Pairman, A., & Terinni, L. (2001). *If the environment is the third teacher what languages does she speak.* Wellington: Early Childhood Development.

Pajares, F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct, *Review of Educational Review, 62* (30), 307-332.

Papatheodorou, T. (2010). Being, belonging and becoming: Some worldviews of early childhood in contemporary curricula (Report), *Forum on Public Policy: A Journal of the Oxford Round Table.*

Pascal, C., Bertram, A., & Ramsden, F. (1994). *The effective early learning research project: The quality, evaluation and development process*. Worcester, UK: Worcester College of Higher Education.

Patrikakou, E. N., & Weissberg, R. P. (2000). Parents' perceptions of teacher outreach and parent involvement in children's education, *Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community, 20*, 103-119.

Patterson, C. (2005). Daily decision making in early childhood. In A. Talay-Ongan and E. A. Ap (Eds.), *Child development and teaching young children* (pp. 291-312). Victoria: Thomson Social Science Press.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Peisner-Feinberg, E. S. (2004). Child care and it's impact on young children's development. In: Tremblay, R.E., R.G. Barr and R. DeV. Peters (Eds.), *Encyclopedia on early childhood development* (pp. 1-7). Montreal, Quebec: Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development. Retrieved from http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca.

Peisner-Feinberg, E. S., & Burchinal, M. R. (1997). Relations between preschool children's child care experiences and concurrent development: The cost, quality, and outcomes study, *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* , *43*(3), 451-477.

Peisner-Feinberg, E. S., Burchinal, M., Clifford, R., Culkin, M., Howes, C., & Kagan, S. (2001). The relation of preschool child-care quality to children's cognitive and social development trajectories through second grade, *Child Development, 72*(5), 1534-1553. doi. 10.1111/1467-8624.00364.

Pelletier, J., & Brent, J. (2002). Parent participation in children's school readiness: The effects of parental self-efficacy, cultural diversity and teacher strategies, *International Journal of Childhood Education*, 45-60.

Pence, A. (1992). *Quality care: Thoughts on r/rulers.* Paper presented at a workshop on Defining and Assessing Quality, Seville, Spain.

Penn, H. (2011). *Quality in early childhood services an international perspective.* Maidenhead : McGraw-Hill International UK Ltd.

Phillips, D., & Howes, C. (1987). Indicators of quality in child care: Review of the research. In D. Phillips (Ed.), *Quality in child care: What does the research tell us?* (pp. 1 – 19). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Phillipsen, L. C., Burchinal, M. R., Howes, C., & Cryer, D. (1997). The prediction of process quality from structural features and child care, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 12* (3), 281- 303.

Pianta, R.C. (1994). Patterns of relationships between children and kindergarten teachers, *Journal of School Psychology, 32,* 15-31.

Pianta, R. C., & Cox, M. J. (2002). Transition to kindergarten, *Early Childhood Research & Policy Briefs, 2* (2), 1-4.

Pianta, R. C., Cox, M. J., & Snow, K. (2007). *School readiness, early learning and the transition to kindergarten*. Baltimore: Brookes.

Pianta, R.C., & Nimetz, S.L. (1991). Relationships between children and teachers: Associations with classroom and home behaviour, *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology,* 12, 379- 393.

Pianta, R. C., Steinberg, M. S., & Rollins, K. B. (1995). The first two years of school: Teacher–child relationships and deflections in children's classroom adjustment, *Development and Psychopathology, 7*, 295–312.

Piek, J. P., Dawson, L., Smith, L. M., & Gasson, N. (2008). The role of early fine and gross motor development on later motor and cognitive ability, *Human Movement Science, 27,* 668–681.

Pillay, S. (2008). A cultural ecology of new public management, *International Review of Administrative Sciences September, 74* (3), 373-394.

Pistillo (1989). Pre-primary education and care in Italy. In P. Olmsted and D. Weikart, (Eds.), *How nations serve young children*. Ypsilanti, MS: HighScope.

Pomerantz, E.M., Grolnick, W.S., & Price, C.E. (2005). The role of parents in how children approach achievement: A dynamic process perspective. In: A. Elliot & C. Dweck (Eds.), *Handbook of motivation and competence*. New York: Guilford.

Power, M. (1997). *The audit society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pramling, I. (1995). Phenomenography and practice, *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies, 30,* 135-148.

Pramling, I. (1996). Understanding and empowering the child as a learner. In *Handbook of education and human development* (pp. 565-592). Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Prasad, P. (2003). The return of the native: Organizational discourses and the legacy of the ethnographic imagination. In Prasad, A. (Ed.), *Postcolonial theory and organizational analysis: A critical engagement* (pp 149-170). New York: Palgrave.

Press, F. (2006). *What about the kids? Policy directions for improving the experiences of infants and young children in a changing world.* NIFTeY & Commission for Children and Young People.

Prior, L. (2003). *Using documents in social research*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Prochner, L. (2002). Preschool and play way in India, *Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research, 9,* 435-453.

Raab, C. D. (2000). The devolved management of schools and its implications for governance. In M.A. Arnott & C.D. Raab (Eds.), *The governance of schooling: comparative studies of devolved management*. London: Routledge.

Rahman, S. M. H. (2011). *Professional learning of secondary science teachers in Bangladesh.* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) Monash University, Victoria, Australia.

Raine, A., Mellingen, K., Liu, J., Venables, P., & Mednick, S. A. (2003). Effects of environmental enrichment at ages 3-5 years on schizotypal personality and anti-social behavior at ages 17 and 23 years, *American Journal of Psychiatry, 160,* 1627-1635.

Ramsey, G. (2000). *Quality matters. Revitalising teaching. Critical choices. Report of the review of teacher education.* Sydney: NSW Department of Education.

Rao, N., & Sun, J. (2010). *Early childhood care and education in the Asia Pacific region: Moving towards Goal 1.* UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific.

Ravens, J. V. (2010). *Expanding ECCE in Bangladesh: It can be done.* Dhaka: UNESCO.

Reynolds, A. J., Temple, J. A., Robertson, D. L., & Mann. E. A. (2001). Long-term effects of an early childhood intervention on educational achievement and juvenile arrest: A 15-Year follow-up of low-income children in public schools, *Journal of the American Medical Association, 285* (18), 2339-2346.

Richardson, V., Anders, P., Tidwell, D., & Lloyd, C. (1991). The relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices in reading comprehension instruction, *American Educational Research Journal, 28,* 559-586.

Rich-Orloff, W. (2010). *Mainstreaming pre-primary education in Bangladesh: Bringing it together (Adding PPE into the Prog3 Arrangement).* Final Report for Directorate of Primary Education. Dhaka: Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Rimm-Kaufman, S. E., Paro, K. M. L., Downer, J. T., & Pianta, R. C. (2005). The contribution of classroom setting and quality of instruction to children's behaviour in kindergarten classrooms, *The Elementary School Journal, 105* (4), 377-394.

Rivas, A. (2005). *Postcolonial analysis of educational research discourse: Creating (Mexican) American children as the "Other"*. (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) Texas A&M University, United States of America.

Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Rokeach, M. (1968). *Beliefs, attitudes, and values: A theory of organization and change.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ross, E. D. (1976). *The kindergarten crusade: The establishment of preschool education in the United States*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Rowe, K. (2004). In good hands? The importance of teacher quality, *Educare News, 149*, 4–14.

Sachs, J., & Poole, M. (1989). Multicultural education policies in Australia and Britain: social transformation or status quo?, *Education and Society, 7*(1), 9 – 19.

Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Saini, A. (2000). Literacy and empowerment: An Indian scenario, *Childhood Education*, International Focus Issue.

Sammons, P., Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B., Elliot, K., & Marsh, A. (2004). *The effective provision of pre-school education (EPPE) project: Technical paper 9 - Report on age 6 assessment.* London: Institute of Education University of London.

Sammons, P., Sylva, K., Melhusih, E. C., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B., & Elliot, K. (2002). *Measuring the impact of pre-school on children's cognitive progress over the preschool period. Technical paper 8a*. London: Institute of Education, University of London.

Sammons, P., Sylva, K., Melhuish, E. C., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B., & Elliot, K. (2003). *The effective provision of pre-school education project (EPPE), technical paper 8b: Measuring the impact of pre-school on children's socio-behavioural development over the pre-school period*. London: DfES/Institute of Education, University of London.

Santos, B. de S. (2004). Interview with Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *globalisation, societies and education, 2* (2), 147-60.

Santos, B. de S. (1995). *Towards a new common sense: Law, science and politics in the paradigmatic transition*. London: Routledge.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research methods for business students* (5th ed.). Harlow: Pearson Education.

Saussure, F. De. (1974). *Course in general linguistics.* London: Fontana.

Save the Children, Sweden. (2012). *Children's situation in Bangladesh.* Retrieved from http://sca.savethechildren.se/sca/Countries/Bangladesh/Childrens-situation-in-Bangladesh/.

Schapiro, T. (1999).What is a child? *Ethics, 109*, 715-738.

Schendel, W. V. (2009). *A history of Bangladesh.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Schlieker, E., White, D.R., & Jacobs, E. (1991). The role of day care quality in the prediction of children's vocabulary, *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 23 (1).*

Schwandt, T. A. (1994). Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 118-137). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Schweinhart, L. J., Barnes, H. V., & Weikart, D. P. (1993). Significant benefits: The High/Scope Perry preschool study through age 27, *Monographs of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 10.*

Sells, H. (2012). *History of the development of early childhood education.* Retrieved from http://www.ehow.com/about_6632547_history-development-early-childhood-education.html.

Shahjamal, M. M., & Nath, R. S. (2008). *An evaluation of BRAC pre-primary education programme. Dhaka:* BRAC.

Sharfuddin, A. M. (1996). *Amadder shikkha kon pathey (Which direction is our education system headed?).* Dhaka: University Press Limited.

Sharma, R. K. (1997). *Sociological methods and techniques*. New Delhi: Atlantic.

Shier, H. (2001). Pathways to participation: Opening, opportunities and obligations, *Children & Society, 15,* 107 - 117.

Skanfors, L. (2009). Ethics in child research: Children's agency and researchers' 'ethical radar', *Childhoods Today, 3* (1), 1-22.

Sleeter, C. E. (1996). Multicultural education as a social movement, *Theory into Practice*, 35, 239-247.

Sleeter, C. E., & Grant, C. A. (2007). *Making choices for multicultural education: Five approaches to race, class, and gender* (5th Ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Smith, A. B. (2002). Interpreting and supporting participation rights: contributions from sociocultural theory, *International Journal of Children's Rights, 10,* 73 -78.

Smith, A. B. (2003). *Public policy and public participation: Engaging citizens and the community in the development of public policy*. Halifax: Health.

Smith, A.B. (2007a). Children's right and early childhood education: links to theory and advocacy, *Australian Journal of Early Childhood, 32* (3), 1-8.

Smith, A.B. (2007b). Children's and young people's participation: Rights in education, *International Journal of Children's Rights*, *15*, 147-164. doi:10.1163/092755607X181739.

Smith, A. B., & Hubbard, P. M. (1988). The relationship between parent/staff communication and children's behaviour in early childhood settings, *Early Child Development and Care, 35*, 13-28.

Smith, T. L. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: research and indigenous peoples*. London & New York :Zed Books Ltd.

Soodak, L.C., & Erwin, E.J. (2000). Valued member or tolerated participant: Parents' experiences in inclusive early childhood settings, *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 25* (1), 29-41.

Spivak, G. C. (1985). Can the subaltern speak? In Nelson, C. & Grossberg, L. (Eds.). *Marxism and the interpretation of culture.* London: Macmillan.

Staub, F. C., & Stern, E. (2002). The nature of teachers' pedagogical content beliefs matters for students' achievement gains: Quasi-experimental evidence from elementary mathematics, *Journal of Educational Psychology, 94* (2), 344-355.

Steinberg, S., & Kincheloe, J. L. (1997). *Kinderculture: The corporate construction of childhood*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Stoler, A. L., & Cooper, F. (1997). Between metropole and colony: rethinking a research agenda. In Cooper, F. and Stoler, A.L. (Eds.). *Tensions of empire: colonial cultures in a bourgeois world* (pp.1-58). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Strong-Wilson, T., & Ellis, J. (2007). Children and place: Reggio Emilia's environment as third teacher, *Theory into Practice, 46* (1), 40-47.

Subedi, B. (2006). Theorizing a 'halfie' researcher's identity in transnational fieldwork, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 19* (5), 573–593.

Susuwele-Banda, W. J. (2005). *Classroom assessment in Malawi: Teachers' perceptions and practices in mathematics.* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, United States of America.

Sylva, K., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B., Sammonsc, P., Melhuish, E., Elliot, K., & Totsika, V. (2006). Capturing quality in early childhood through environmental rating scale, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 21* (1), 76-92.

Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Taggart, B. (2004). *The effective provision of pre-school education (EPPE) project: Final report*. London: DfES/Institute of Education, University of London.

Tabachnick, B. R., Popkewitz, T. S., & Zeichner, K. M. (1979). Teacher education and the professional perspectives of student teachers, *Interchange, 10* (4), 12-29.

Tait, G. (2000). From the panopticon to the playground: disciplinary practices. In D. Meadmore et al. (Ed.), *Practising education: Social and cultural perspectives* (pp. 7-18). Riverwood, NSW: Prentice Hall.

Taiwo, A. A., & Tyolo, J. B. (2002). The effect of pre-school education on academic performance in primary school: a case study of grade one pupils in Botswana, *International Journal of Educational Development, 22,* 169–180.

Talay-Ongan, A., & Ap, E. A. (2005). Cognitive development. In A. Talay-Ongan and E. A. Ap (Eds.), *Child development and teaching young children* (pp. 57-77). Victoria: Thomson Social Science Press.

Tayler, C., Wills, M., Hayden, J., & Wilson, C. (2006). *A review of the approach to setting national standards and assuring the quality of care in Australian childcare services,* A project commissioned by the Children's Services Sub-Committee of the Community Services Ministers' Advisory Council.

Taylor, S. (2000). Still a problem: gendered schooling practices. In D. Meadmore et al (Eds.), *Practising education: social and cultural perspectives* (pp. 59-72). Riverwood, NSW: Prentice Hall.

The annual lesson plan. (2010). Dhaka.

The Centre for Community and Child Health. (2000). A *review of the early childhood literature.* The Department of Family and Community Services: AGPS.

The Curriculum Development Council of Hong Kong. (2006). *Guide to the pre-primary curriculum.* Hong Kong: The Curriculum Development Council.

The State of Queensland (Queensland Studies Authority). (2006). *Early years curriculum guidelines.* Brisbane: Queensland Government.

The World Bank. (2004). *World development indicators*. The World Bank.

Thompson, A. G. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and conceptions: A synthesis of the research. In D. A. Grouws (Ed.), *Handbook of research on mathematics teaching and learning* (pp. 127–146). New York: Macmillan.

Thornton, K., Wansbrough, D., Clarkin-Phillips, J., Aitken, H., & Tamati, A. (2009). Conceptualising leadership in early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand, *New Zealand Teachers Council, 2,* 1-23.

Tobin, J. J. (Ed.) (1997). *Making a place for pleasure in early childhood education.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Tobin, J. J. (2005). A right to be no longer dismissed or ignored: children's voices in pedagogy and policy-making, *International Journal of Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood, 3* (2), 4-18.

Tomanovic, S. (2003). Negotiating children's participation and autonomy within families, *International Journal of Children's Rights, 11*, 51-71.

Tonkiss, F. (1998). Analysing discourse. In Searle, C. (Ed.), *Researching society and culture* (pp. 245-260). London: Sage.

Torjman, S. (2005a, June). *Policy dialogue*. Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

Torjman, S. (2005b). *What is policy? Caledon institute of social policy.* Ottawa Ontario, Canada. Retrieved from http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/544ENG.pdf.

Torres, R. M. (2001). What happened at the world education forum? *Adult Education and Development, 55.*

Toulmin, S. (1990), Co*smopolis: The hidden agenda of modernity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Tremblay, M. S., Inman, J. W., & Willms, J. D. (2000). The relationship between physical activity, self-esteem, and academic achievement in 12-year-old children, *Pediatric Exercise Science, 12*, 312–324.

Trigwell, K., Prosser, M., & Waterhouse, F. (1999). Relations between teachers' approaches to teaching and students' approaches to learning, *Higher Education, 37*, 57-70.

Türkmen, S. (2003). Identity in the colonial lands: A critical overview of the postcolonial studies, *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations, 2* (3 & 4), 188-203.

Tzuo, P. W. (2007). The Tension between teacher control and children's freedom in a child-centered classroom: Resolving the practical dilemma through a closer look at the related theories, *Early Childhood Education Journal, 35* (1), 33-39.

UNESCO. (1990). *World conference on Education for All: Meeting learning needs*. New York: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

UNESCO. (2000). *The Dakar framework for action: Education for All: Meeting our collective commitments.* Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

UNESCO. (2003). *National case study on the early childhood care and education in Indonesia.* Jakarta: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation office in Jakarta.

UNESCO. (2005). *Policy review report: Early childhood care and education in Indonesia.* Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

UNESCO. (2006). *Bangladesh: Early childhood care and education (ECCE) programmes.* Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

UNICEF. (2000, June). *Defining quality in education*. Paper presented by the United Nations Children's Fund at the meeting of The International Working Group on Education, Florence, Italy.

UNICEF. (2006). *Early learning development (ELD) in Bangladesh.* New York: United Nations Children's Fund.

UINCEF. (2009a). 33 million children in Bangladesh live in poverty. *UNICEF study on child poverty and disparities in Bangladesh press release*. Accessed20/04/2011 from http://www.unicef.org/media/media_51925.html.

UNICEF. (2009b). *The second primary education development programme (PEDP-II).* Retrieved on 25 January 2012 from http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/Quality_Primary_Education_(PEDP-II).pdf.

UNICEF. (2010). *Early learning for development in Bangladesh.* Dhaka: United Nations Children's Fund.

Van der Gaag, J., & Tan, J. P. (1998). *The Benefits of early childhood development programs: An economic analisis.* Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

Vandell, D. L., & Wolfe, B. (2000). *Child care quality: Does it matter and does it need to be improved?* Institute for Research on Child Poverty: University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Vandell, D.L., & Powers, C.P. (1983). Day care quality and children's free play activities, *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 53* (3).

Vargas-Barón, E. (2009, November). *Conference concept note.* Paper presented at Fourth African International Conference on Early Childhood Development, Dakar, Senegal.

Vartuli, S. (2005). Beliefs: The heart of teaching, *Young Children, 60* (5), 76-86.

Viruru, R. (2002). Postcolonial ethnography: an Indian perspective on voice and young children. In Cannella, G. S., Anijar, K. and Kincheloe, J. L. (Eds), *Kidworld: global perspectives, cultural studies and education.* New York: Peter Lang.

Viruru, R. (2005). The impact of postcolonial theory on early childhood education, *Journal of Education, 35,* 7-30.

Viruru, R., & Cannella, G. S. (2001). Postcolonial ethnography, young children, and voice. In S. Grieshaber & G. S.Cannella (Eds.), *Embracing identities in early childhood education: Diversity and possibilities* (pp. 158–172). New York: Teachers College Press.

Viruru, R., & Cannella, G. S. (2004). *Childhood and postcolonization: Power, education and contemporary practice.* London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1987). *The collected works of L.S. Vygotsky: Vol. I. Problems of general psychology.* In R. Rieber & A. Carton (Eds.) (N. Minick, Trans.). New York: Plenum Press.

Walshaw, M. (2007). *Working with Foucault in education.* Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Walter, M. (2010). *Social research methods.* South Melbourne, Vic: Oxford University Press.

Watkins, D. (2004). Teachers as scholars of their students' conceptions of learning: A Hong Kong investigation, *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 74,* 361-373.

Watkins, D. A., & Biggs, J. B. (2001). The paradox of the Chinese learner and beyond. In A. W. David & B. B. John (Eds.), *Teaching the Chinese learner: Psychological and pedagogical perspectives* (pp. 3-26). Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong.

Webb, J., Schirato, T., & Danaher, G. R. (2002). *Understanding Bourdieu.* Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Weikart, D. (1989). *Quality pre-school programs: A long-term social investment.* Occasional Paper 5. Ford Foundation.

Weinstein, C. S. (1988). Preservice teachers' expectations about the first year of teaching, *Teaching & Teacher Education, 4,* 31-40.

Weinstein, C. S. (1989). Teacher education students' perceptions of teaching, *Journal of Teacher Education, 40* (2), 53-60.

White, D. (1989) *Day care quality and the transition to kindergarten: What we can learn from research on children in day care settings.* Paper presented to the National Day Care Conference, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Whitebook, M., Howes, C., & Phillips, D. (1990). *Who cares? Child care teachers and the quality of care in America.* Final report of the National Child Care Staffing Study. Oakland, CA: Child Care Employee Project.

Williams, P. (1994). *Making sense of quality: A review of approaches to quality in early childhood services*. London: National Children's Bureau.

Willinsky J. (1999). Curriculum, after culture, race, nation, *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 20* (1), 89 – 112.

Wilson, S. M. (1990). The secret garden of teacher education, *Phi Delta Kappan, 72,* 204-209.

Woodhead, M. (1996). *In search of the rainbow: Pathways to quality in large scale programmes for young disadvantaged children*. The Hague: Bernard van Leer Foundation.

Woods, D. (1996). *Teacher cognition in language teaching.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

World Bank (2003). Strategies for maximizing the benefits of kindergarten expansion. *Education sector working paper for the United Arab Republic of Egypt*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

Yarboi, T. D. (2008, 23 July). Review entry requirement of teacher training colleges, *The Ghanaian Times*.

Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case study research, design and methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Young, R. (2001). *Postcolonialism: An historical introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Zaslow, M., & Tout, K. (2010). *Measuring the quality of early care and education programs at the intersection of research, policy, and practice,* OPRE Research-to- Policy, Research-to-Practice Brief OPRE 2011-10a. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview questions for preschool teachers

This interview protocol is divided into six quality components

Component 1: Structural

● How should a standard physical environment and space of quality preschools look like? How satisfied or unsatisfied are you with the physical environment and equipments of your preschool?

● What qualification do you have? How do you perceive your current level of qualification? What professional development opportunities there are for you to improve your professional practice?

● How does child-teacher ratio influence your work as an preschool teacher?

Component 2: Educational concept and practice

● What is your concept on the quality of preschool education? How do you ensure that children are experiencing quality preschool education?

● How are you involved in policy-making process in your school/ department? How do you make curriculum decisions for preschool education?

● What continuous development plan do you implement to ensure quality preschool education? What processes do you adopt to evaluate the effectiveness of your development plans?

Component 3: Interaction or process

● What is the nature of interaction in classroom between you and the children?

●What approaches do you adopt to develop teacher-students, teacher-teacher and teacher-parents relationships?

Component 4: Operational

● How are parents involved in the management and school programs? What are their responsibilities and how do they participate?

● How does the school recruit staff? What measures does the school use to ensure accountability?

Component 5: Child-outcome quality or performance standards

● What indicators do you use to measure quality in terms of children's development and learning? What is the transition program for children between the family and the school?

● Describe how children's funds of knowledge, socio-economic class, gender, ethnicity, religion affect their development?

● What health and safety policy/programs do you implement for the children?

Component 6: Standards pertaining to parent/ community outreach and involvement

- How do you involve the community in leadership and management of the schools? Describe the challenges you face in promoting quality preschool through parental/community engagement?

Appendix 2: Interview questions for preschool head teachers

This interview protocol is divided into six quality components

Component 1: Structural

● How should a standard physical environment and space of quality preschools look like? How satisfied or unsatisfied are you with the physical environment and equipments of preschools?

● What qualification do teachers have? How do teachers perceive their current level of qualification? What professional development opportunities there are for teachers to improve their professional practice?

● How does child-teacher ratio influence the work of an preschool teacher?

Component 2: Educational concept and practice

● What is your concept of quality preschool education? How do you ensure that children are experiencing quality preschool education?

● How are you involved in policy-making process in your department? How do you make curriculum decisions for preschool education?

● What continuous development plan do you implement to ensure quality preschool education? What processes do you adopt to evaluate the effectiveness of your development plans?

Component 3: Interaction or process

- What is the nature of interaction between teachers and managers?

- How does your relationship with teachers influence their quality professional practice?

- What measure do you adopt to improve school and family relations?

Component 4: Operational

- How are parents involved in the management and school programs? What are their responsibilities and how do they participate?

- How does the school recruit staff? What measures does the school use to ensure accountability?

Component 5: Child-outcome quality or performance standards

- What indicators do you and the teachers use to measure quality in terms of children's development and learning? What is the transition program for children between the family and the school?

- What health and safety policy/programs to you implement for the children?

Component 6: Standards pertaining to parent/ community outreach and involvement

- How do you involve the community in leadership and management of the schools? Describe the challenges you face in promoting quality preschool through parental/community engagement?

Appendix 3: ECERS-R for Classroom observation

ECERS-R Profile

Center/School: _____ Observation 1: __ __ / __ __ / __ __ (m m d d y y) Observer(s): _____

Teacher(s)/Classroom: _____ Observation 2: __ __ / __ __ / __ __ (m m d d y y) Observer(s): _____

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I. Space & Furnishings (1–8) Obs. 1 [ ] Obs. 2 [ ] average subscale score								1. Indoor space
								2. Furn. for routine care, play & learning
								3. Furn. for relaxation
								4. Room arrangment for play
								5. Space for privacy
								6. Child-related display
								7. Space for gross motor
								8. Gross motor equipment
II. Personal Care Routines (9–14) [ ] [ ]								9. Greeting/departing
								10. Meals/snacks
								11. Nap/rest
								12. Toileting/diapering
								13. Health practices
								14. Safety practices
III. Language-Reasoning (15–18) [ ] [ ]								15. Books and pictures
								16. Encouraging children to communicate
								17. Using language to develop reasoning skills
								18. Informal use of language
IV. Activities (19–28) [ ] [ ]								19. Fine motor
								20. Art
								21. Music/movement
								22. Blocks
								23. Sand/water
								24. Dramatic play
								25. Nature/science
								26. Math/number
								27. Use of TV, video, and/or computers
								28. Promoting acceptance of diversity
V. Interaction (29–33) [ ] [ ]								29. Supervision of gross motor activities
								30. General supervision of children
								31. Discipline
								32. Staff-child interactions
								33. Interactions among children
VI. Program Structure (34–37) [ ] [ ]								34. Schedule
								35. Free play
								36. Group time
								37. Provisions for children with disabilities
VII. Parents and Staff (38–43) [ ] [ ]								38. Provisions for parents
								39. Provisions for personal needs of staff
								40. Provisions for professional needs of staff
								41. Staff interaction and cooperation
								42. Supervision and evaluation of staff
								43. Opportunities for professional growth
Average Subscale Scores								SPACE & FURNISHINGS
								PERSONAL CARE
								LANGUAGE-REASONING
								ACTIVITIES
								INTERACTION
								PROGRAM STRUCTURE
								PARENTS & STAFF
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Appendix 4: Explanatory Statement for Director General of DPE in Bangladesh

MONASH University

Date to be inserted when approved

Explanatory Statement – For the Director General of Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) in Bangladesh

Title: Exploring the quality of classroom teaching practices in preschools in Bangladesh.

This information sheet is for you to keep

My name is Mahmuda Shaila Banu and I am conducting a research project with Dr Kerith Power, Senior lecturer and Dr Joseph Agbenyega, Lecturer in the Department of Education towards a PhD degree at Monash University. This means that I will be writing a thesis which is the equivalent of a 300 page book.

Why did I choose this particular person/group as participants?

I am looking for 8 preschool teachers of 4 preschools understand their teaching-learning strategies and approaches in classrooms. Preschool education is foundational to children's development but this can only be achieved if the child's learning spaces are constructed and managed effectively by teachers. I obtained a list of schools' contact

details from the Ministry of Education database in the hope of finding volunteer teachers for this study. I am also looking for 2 preschool education managers to take interview. Their contact details will be collected from the Ministry of Education database in the hope of finding volunteer participation in this study.

The aim/purpose of the research

The proposed study aims to explore the similarities and differences of classroom teaching practices in preschools in Bangladesh and Victoria to ascertain how these are affected by culture, knowledge and resources, and their implication for quality educational provision.

Possible benefits

This study is concerned with the ways in which preschool is organised in Bangladesh and what counts as quality preschool education. It attempts to explore classroom practices of the two settings (Victoria & Bangladesh) in order to make sense of the concept of preschool education quality and how the experiences and practices in the Australian context may or may not be applied to the Bangladeshi situation to improve preschool education for all children.

What does the research involve?

The study is a qualitative research. It involves classroom observation, interview and focus group discussion. The teachers will be invited for classroom observation and focus group discussion. I will observe the classrooms and complete the Preschool Environmental Rating Scale. Then I wish to conduct focus group discussion up to a

maximum of 8 teachers. I will also take semi-structured interview of 2 managers. Discussions and interview sessions will be audio-recorded.

How much time will the research take?

The time needed to complete the preschool Environmental rating Scale is up to 40-45 minutes. The focus group discussion will require approximately 1 hour. The researcher will take 30 minutes for interview.

Inconvenience/discomfort

I do not anticipate any level of inconvenience and/or discomfort to the participant. I will not assess teachers' knowledge or teaching performance; rather I will try to understand teachers' interpretation of and teaching approaches. The participants can avoid answering questions in focus group discussion which are felt too personal, sensitive or uncomfortable to them.

Payment

No payment will be offered to the respondents.

Can you withdraw from the research?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participate. Any data collected from you will be destroyed upon your withdrawal.

Confidentiality

Collected information, such as individual teacher's teaching practice or approach will not be communicated to anyone else. Participant's identity will not be disclosed in writing a thesis or a book or a journal article. Pseudonyms or codes will be used in such reporting.

Storage of data

Storage of the data collected will adhere to the University regulations and kept on University premises in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet for 5 years. A report of the study may be submitted for publications, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. The data will not be used for any other purposes.

Results

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact Mahmuda Shaila Banu on [redacted] or [redacted] The findings are accessible for five years.

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:	If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research < project number: CF09/3641 – 2009001961> is being conducted, please contact:
Dr Kerith Power Senior Lecturer Faculty of Education Building A Monash University Peninsula, Victoria 3199 Australia Phone: [redacted] E-mail: [redacted] AND Dr Joseph Agbenyega Lecturer Faculty of Education	Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 Tel: +61 3 9905 2052, Fax: +61 3 9905 3831 Email: muhrec@adm.monash.edu.au In Bangladesh Miron Kumar Bhowmik Head of Schools and Sports British Council 5 Fuller Road Dhaka 1000

Building A Monash University Peninsula, Victoria 3199 Australia Phone: [redacted] E-mail: [redacted]	Bangladesh Phone: [redacted] Mobile: [redacted] E-mail: [redacted]

Thank you.

Mahmuda Shaila Banu

Appendix 5: Explanatory Statement for Director General of DEECD in Victoria

MONASH University

Date to be inserted when approved

Explanatory Statement – For the Director General of Department of Education and Preschool Development in Victoria

Title: Exploring the quality of classroom teaching practices in preschools in Bangladesh.

This information sheet is for you to keep

My name is Mahmuda Shaila Banu and I am conducting a research project with Dr Kerith Power, Senior lecturer and Dr Joseph Agbenyega, Lecturer in the Department of Education towards a PhD degree at Monash University. This means that I will be writing a thesis which is the equivalent of a 300 page book.

Why did I choose this particular person/group as participants?

I am looking for 8 preschool teachers of 4 preschools understand their teaching-learning strategies and approaches in classrooms. Preschool education is foundational to

children's development but this can only be achieved if the child's learning spaces are constructed and managed effectively by teachers. I obtained a list of schools' contact details from the Department of Education and Preschool Development database in the hope of finding volunteer teachers for this study. I am also looking for 2 preschool education managers to take interview. Their contact details will be collected from the Department of Education and Preschool Development database in the hope of finding volunteer participation in this study.

The aim/purpose of the research

The proposed study aims to explore the similarities and differences of classroom teaching practices in preschools in Bangladesh and Victoria to ascertain how these are affected by culture, knowledge and resources, and their implication for quality educational provision.

Possible benefits

This study is concerned with the ways in which preschool is organised in Bangladesh and what counts as quality preschool education. It attempts to explore classroom practices of the two settings (Victoria & Bangladesh) in order to make sense of the concept of preschool education quality and how the experiences and practices in the Australian context may or may not be applied to the Bangladeshi situation to improve preschool education for all children.

What does the research involve?

The study is a qualitative research. It involves classroom observation, interview and focus group discussion. The teachers will be invited for classroom observation and

focus group discussion. I will observe the classrooms and complete the Preschool Environmental Rating Scale. Then I wish to conduct focus group discussion up to a maximum of 8 teachers. I will also take semi-structured interview of 2 managers. Discussions and interview sessions will be audio-recorded.

How much time will the research take?

The time needed to complete the preschool Environmental rating Scale is up to 40-45 minutes. The focus group discussion will require approximately 1 hour. The researcher will take 30 minutes for interview.

Inconvenience/discomfort

I do not anticipate any level of inconvenience and/or discomfort to the participant. I will not assess teachers' knowledge or teaching performance; rather I will try to understand teachers' interpretation of and teaching approaches. The participants can avoid answering questions in focus group discussion which are felt too personal, sensitive or uncomfortable to them.

Payment

No payment will be offered to the respondents.

Can you withdraw from the research?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participate. Any data collected from you will be destroyed upon your withdrawal.

Confidentiality

Collected information, such as individual teacher's teaching practice or approach will not be communicated to anyone else. Participant's identity will not be disclosed in writing a thesis or a book or a journal article. Pseudonyms or codes will be used in such reporting.

Storage of data

Storage of the data collected will adhere to the University regulations and kept on University premises in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet for 5 years. A report of the study may be submitted for publications, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. The data will not be used for any other purposes.

Results

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact Mahmuda Shaila Banu on [redacted] or [redacted] The findings are accessible for five years.

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:	If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research < project number: CF09/3641 – 2009001961 > is being conducted, please contact:
Dr Kerith Power Senior Lecturer Faculty of Education Building A Monash University Peninsula, Victoria 3199 Australia Phone: [redacted] E-mail: [redacted] AND Dr Joseph Agbenyega	Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 Tel: +61 3 9905 2052, Fax: +61 3 9905 3831 Email: muhrec@adm.monash.edu.au In Bangladesh Miron Kumar Bhowmik Head of Schools and Sports

Lecturer Faculty of Education Building A Monash University Peninsula, Victoria 3199 Australia Phone: [redacted] E-mail: [redacted]	British Council 5 Fuller Road Dhaka 1000 Bangladesh Phone: [redacted] Mobile: [redacted] E-mail: [redacted]

Thank you.

Mahmuda Shaila Banu

Appendix 6: Explanatory Statement for preschool head teachers in Bangladesh

MONASH University

Date to be inserted when approved

Explanatory Statement – For preschool head teachers in Bangladesh

Title: Exploring the quality of classroom teaching practices in preschools in Bangladesh.

This information sheet is for you to keep

My name is Mahmuda Shaila Banu and I am conducting a research project with Dr Kerith Power, Senior lecturer and Dr Joseph Agbenyega, Lecturer in the Department of Education towards a PhD degree at Monash University. This means that I will be writing a thesis which is the equivalent of a 300 page book.

Why did I choose this particular person/group as participants?

I am looking for 2 preschool education managers who will talk about the present teaching-learning strategies and approaches in classrooms, the educational resources, curriculum and also about the future policies and plans to improve the quality of preschool education. I obtained a list of managers' contact details from the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) database in the hope of finding volunteer participation for this study.

The aim/purpose of the research

The proposed study aims to explore the similarities and differences of classroom teaching practices in preschools in Bangladesh and Victoria to ascertain how these are affected by culture, knowledge and resources, and their implication for quality educational provision.

Possible benefits

This study is concerned with the ways in which preschool is organised in Bangladesh and what counts as quality preschool education. It attempts to explore classroom practices of the two settings (Victoria & Bangladesh) in order to make sense of the concept of preschool education quality and how the experiences and practices in the Australian context may or may not be applied to the Bangladeshi situation to improve preschool education for all children.

What does the research involve?

The study is a qualitative research. It involves classroom observation, interview and focus group discussion. The researcher will invite preschool education managers for semi-structured interview and it will be audio-taped.

How much time will the research take?

The interview with preschool managers will take 30 minutes.

Inconvenience/discomfort

I do not anticipate any level of inconvenience and/or discomfort to the participant. I will not assess teachers' knowledge or teaching performance; rather I will try to understand teachers' interpretation of and teaching approaches. The participants can avoid answering questions in focus group discussion which are felt too personal, sensitive or uncomfortable to them.

Payment

No payment will be offered to the respondents.

Can you withdraw from the research?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participate. Any data collected from you will be destroyed upon your withdrawal.

Confidentiality

Collected information, such as individual teacher's teaching practice or approach will not be communicated to anyone else. Participant's identity will not be disclosed in writing a thesis or a book or a journal article. Pseudonyms or codes will be used in such reporting.

Storage of data

Storage of the data collected will adhere to the University regulations and kept on University premises in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet for 5 years. A report of the study may be submitted for publications, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. The data will not be used for any other purposes.

Results

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact Mahmuda Shaila Banu on [redacted] or [redacted] The findings are accessible for five years.

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:	If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research < project number: CF09/3641 – 2009001961> is being conducted, please contact:
Dr Kerith Power Senior Lecturer Faculty of Education Building A Monash University Peninsula, Victoria 3199 Australia Phone: [redacted] E-mail: [redacted] AND Dr Joseph Agbenyega Lecturer Faculty of Education Building A Monash University Peninsula, Victoria 3199 Australia Phone: [redacted] E-mail: [redacted]	Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 Tel: +61 3 9905 2052, Fax: +61 3 9905 3831 Email: muhrec@adm.monash.edu.au In Bangladesh Miron Kumar Bhowmik Head of Schools and Sports British Council 5 Fuller Road Dhaka 1000 Bangladesh Phone: [redacted] Mobile: [redacted] E-mail: [redacted]

Thank you.

Mahmuda Shaila Banu

Appendix 7: Explanatory Statement for preschool teachers in Bangladesh

MONASH University

Date to be inserted when approved

Explanatory Statement – For preschool teachers in Bangladesh

Title: Exploring the quality of classroom teaching practices in preschools in Bangladesh.

This information sheet is for you to keep

My name is Mahmuda Shaila Banu and I am conducting a research project with Dr Kerith Power, Senior lecturer and Dr Joseph Agbenyega, Lecturer in the Department of Education towards a PhD degree at Monash University. This means that I will be writing a thesis which is the equivalent of a 300 page book.

Why did I choose this particular person/group as participants?

I am looking for 8 preschool teachers to understand their teaching-learning strategies and approaches in classrooms. Preschool education is foundational to children's development but this can only be achieved if the child's learning spaces are constructed and managed effectively by teachers. I obtained a list of schools' contact details from the Ministry of Education database in the hope of finding volunteer teachers for this study.

The aim/purpose of the research

The proposed study aims to explore the similarities and differences of classroom teaching practices in preschools in Bangladesh and Victoria to ascertain how these are affected by culture, knowledge and resources, and their implication for quality preschool educational provision.

Possible benefits

This study is concerned with the ways in which preschool is organised in Bangladesh and what counts as quality preschool education. It attempts to explore classroom practices of the two settings (Victoria & Bangladesh) in order to make sense of the concept of preschool education quality and how the experiences and practices in the Australian context may or may not be applied to the Bangladeshi situation to improve preschool education for all children.

What does the research involve?

The study is a qualitative research. It involves classroom observation, interview and focus group discussion. The teachers will be invited for classroom observation and focus group discussion. I will observe the classrooms and complete the Preschool Environmental Rating Scale. Then I wish to conduct focus group discussion up to a maximum of 8 teachers. Discussion sessions will be audio-recorded.

How much time will the research take?

The time needed to complete the preschool Environmental rating Scale is up to 40-45 minutes. The focus group discussion will require approximately 1 hour.

Inconvenience/discomfort

I do not anticipate any level of inconvenience and/or discomfort to the participant. I will not assess teachers' knowledge or teaching performance; rather I will try to understand teachers' interpretation of and teaching approaches. The participants can avoid answering questions in focus group discussion which are felt too personal, sensitive or uncomfortable to them.

Payment

No payment will be offered to the respondents.

Can you withdraw from the research?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participate. Any data collected from you will be destroyed upon your withdrawal.

Confidentiality

Collected information, such as individual teacher's teaching practice or approach will not be communicated to anyone else. Participant's identity will not be disclosed in writing a thesis or a book or a journal article. Pseudonyms or codes will be used in such reporting.

Storage of data

Storage of the data collected will adhere to the University regulations and kept on University premises in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet for 5 years. A report of the study may be submitted for publications, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. The data will not be used for any other purposes.

Results

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact Mahmuda Shaila Banu on [redacted] or [redacted] The findings are accessible for five years.

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:	If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research < project number: CF09/3641 – 2009001961> is being conducted, please contact:
Dr Kerith Power Senior Lecturer Faculty of Education Building A Monash University Peninsula, Victoria 3199 Australia Phone: [redacted] E-mail: [redacted] AND Dr Joseph Agbenyega Lecturer Faculty of Education Building A Monash University Peninsula, Victoria 3199 Australia Phone: [redacted] E-mail: [redacted]	Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 Tel: +61 3 9905 2052, Fax: +61 3 9905 3831 Email: muhrec@adm.monash.edu.au In Bangladesh Miron Kumar Bhowmik Head of Schools and Sports British Council 5 Fuller Road Dhaka 1000 Bangladesh Phone: [redacted] Mobile: [redacted] E-mail: [redacted]

Thank you.

Mahmuda Shaila Banu

Appendix 8: Explanatory Statement for parents in Bangladesh

MONASH University

Date to be inserted when approved

Explanatory Statement – For parents of preschool children in Bangladesh

Title: Exploring the quality of classroom teaching practices in preschools in Bangladesh.

This information sheet is for you to keep

My name is Mahmuda Shaila Banu and I am conducting a research project with Dr Kerith Power, Senior lecturer and Dr Joseph Agbenyega, Lecturer in the Department of Education towards a PhD degree at Monash University. This means that I will be writing a thesis which is the equivalent of a 300 page book.

Why did I choose this particular person/group as participants?

I am looking for 8 preschool teachers of 4 preschools understand their teaching-learning strategies and approaches in classrooms. Preschool education is foundational to children's development but this can only be achieved if the child's learning spaces are constructed and managed effectively by teachers. I obtained a list of schools' contact details from the Ministry of Education database in the hope of finding volunteer teachers for this study.

The aim/purpose of the research

The proposed study aims to explore the similarities and differences of classroom teaching practices in preschools in Bangladesh and Victoria to ascertain how these are affected by culture, knowledge and resources, and their implication for quality educational provision.

Possible benefits

This study is concerned with the ways in which preschool is organised in Bangladesh and what counts as quality preschool education. It attempts to explore classroom practices of the two settings (Victoria & Bangladesh) in order to make sense of the concept of preschool education quality and how the experiences and practices in the Australian context may or may not be applied to the Bangladeshi situation to improve preschool education for all children.

What does the research involve?

The study is a qualitative research. It involves classroom observation, interview and focus group discussion. The teachers will be invited for classroom observation and focus group discussion. I will observe the classrooms and complete the Preschool Environmental Rating Scale. Then I wish to conduct focus group discussion up to a maximum of 8 teachers.

How much time will the research take?

The time needed to complete the preschool Environmental rating Scale is up to 40-45 minutes. The focus group discussion will require approximately 1 hour.

Inconvenience/discomfort

I do not anticipate any level of inconvenience and/or discomfort to the participant. I will not assess teachers' knowledge or teaching performance; rather I will try to understand teachers' interpretation of and teaching approaches. The participants can avoid answering questions in focus group discussion which are felt too personal, sensitive or uncomfortable to them.

Payment

No payment will be offered to the respondents.

Can you withdraw from the research?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participate. Any data collected from you will be destroyed upon your withdrawal.

Confidentiality

Collected information, such as individual teacher's teaching practice or approach will not be communicated to anyone else. Participant's identity will not be disclosed in writing a thesis or a book or a journal article. Pseudonyms or codes will be used in such reporting.

Storage of data

Storage of the data collected will adhere to the University regulations and kept on University premises in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet for 5 years. A report of the

study may be submitted for publications, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. The data will not be used for any other purposes.

Results

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact Mahmuda Shaila Banu on [redacted] or [redacted] The findings are accessible for five years.

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:	If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research < project number: CF09/3641 – 2009001961> is being conducted, please contact:
Dr Kerith Power Senior Lecturer Faculty of Education Building A Monash University Peninsula, Victoria 3199 Australia Phone: [redacted] E-mail: [redacted] AND Dr Joseph Agbenyega Lecturer Faculty of Education Building A Monash University Peninsula, Victoria 3199 Australia Phone: [redacted] E-mail: [redacted]	Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 Tel: +61 3 9905 2052, Fax: +61 3 9905 3831 Email: muhrec@adm.monash.edu.au In Bangladesh Miron Kumar Bhowmik Head of Schools and Sports British Council 5 Fuller Road Dhaka 1000 Bangladesh Phone: [redacted] Mobile: [redacted] E-mail: [redacted]

Thank you.

Mahmuda Shaila Banu

Appendix 9: Consent form for preschool head teachers in Bangladesh

MONASH University

Consent Form – for preschool head teachers

Title: Exploring the quality of classroom teaching practices in preschools in Bangladesh.

NOTE: This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records

I agree to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

interviewed by the researcher	Yes	❑	No	❑
allow the interviewed to be audio-taped	Yes	❑	No	❑

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview / focus group / questionnaire / survey for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

I understand that I will be given a transcript of data concerning me for my approval before it is included in the write up of the research.

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

I understand that data from the observation and focus group discussion will be kept in a secure storage and accessible to the research team. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period unless I consent to it being used in future research.

Head teacher's name

School's name

Signature

Date

Appendix 10: Consent form for preschool teachers in Bangladesh

MONASH University

Consent Form for preschool teachers

Title: Exploring the quality of classroom teaching practices in preschools in Bangladesh.

NOTE: This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records

I agree to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

participate in focus group discussion by the researcher	☐ Yes	☐ No
allow the discussion to be audio-taped	☐ Yes	☐ No
my class be observed by the researcher	☐ Yes	☐ No
I am agreed to distribute the explanatory statements and consent forms to parents	☐ Yes	☐ No

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview / focus group / questionnaire / survey for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

I understand that I will be given a transcript of data concerning me for my approval before it is included in the write up of the research.

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

I understand that data from the observation and focus group discussion will be kept in a secure storage and accessible to the research team. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period unless I consent to it being used in future research.

Participant's name

School's name

Signature

Date

Appendix 11: Consent form for preschool head teachers in Bangladesh

MONASH University

Consent Form – for parents/guardians of students

Title: Exploring the quality of classroom teaching practices in preschools in Bangladesh.

NOTE: This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records

I agree for my child to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have read the Explanatory Statement explaining the project, which I keep for my records. I understand that agreeing for my child to take part means that s/he is willing to:

Be in the classroom when it is being observed by the researcher ☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that participation of my child is voluntary, that I can choose not to allow him/her participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw my child prior to having approved the group discussion transcript without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the focus group discussion for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

I understand that any information my child provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

I understand that data which my child provide will be kept in a secure storage and accessible to the research team. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period unless I/my child consent to it being used in future research.

Participant's name:

Parent's name:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 12: Invitation letter for preschool head teachers in Bangladesh

MONASH University

Invitation letter to recruit the head teachers as participants

Date:

To

Preschool Head Teachers

Name and address of the school…

Subject: Invitation to participate in a research project

Sir/Madam,

My name is Mahmuda Shaila Banu and I am conducting a research project under the supervision of Dr Kerith Power, Senior Lecturer and Dr Joseph Agbenyega, Lecturer in the Faculty of Education towards a PhD degree at Monash University. Please read the Explanatory statement and Consent form attached with this letter. Please sign the Consent form and return that in the attached envelope if you wish to participate in this research.

Thank you
Sincerely
(Signature)
Mahmuda Shaila Banu

Appendix 13: Consent form for preschool teachers in Bangladesh

MONASH University

Invitation letter to preschool teachers

Date

To

Teacher

Name and address of the Organization

Subject: Invitation to participate in a research project

Sir/Madam,

My name is Mahmuda Shaila Banu and I am conducting a research project under the supervision of Dr Kerith Power, Senior Lecturer and Dr Joseph Agbenyega, Lecturer in the Faculty of Education towards a PhD degree at Monash University. Please read the Explanatory statement and Consent form attached with this letter. Please sign the Consent form and return that in the attached envelope if you wish to participate in this research.

Thank you
Sincerely
(Signature)
Mahmuda Shaila Banu

Appendix 14: Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date:	**22 March 2010**
Project Number:	**CF09/3641 – 2009001961**
Project Title:	**Comparative study on classroom teaching practices in pre-primary schools between Bangladesh and Victoria**
Chief Investigator:	**Dr Kerith Power**
Approved:	**From: 22 March 2010 To: 22 March 2015**

Terms of approval

1. **The research is approved to start at the Dover Street Pre School Centre Incorporated only. Approval for the other schools in Australia will be given after permission from each of these schools is collected and forwarded to MUHREC.**
2. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. **Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research**.
3. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
4. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
5. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
6. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
7. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
8. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
9. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
10. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
11. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
12. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

[redacted]

Professor Ben Canny
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Dr Joseph Seyran Agbenyega; Dr Mahmuda Shaila Banu

Postal – Monash University, Vic 3800, Australia
Building 3E, Room 111, Clayton Campus, Wellington Road, Clayton
Telephone +61 3 9905 5490 Facsimile +61 3 9905 3831
Email muhrec@adm.monash.edu.au www.monash.edu/research/ethics/human/index/html
ABN 12 377 614 012 CRICOS Provider #00008C

Appendix 15: Permission Letter of DEECD

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Department of Education and
Preschool Development
GPO Box 4637
Melbourne
Victoria 3001

22 February 2010

Mrs Shaila Banu
Monash University
54 Beddoe Avenue
Clayton
Vic 3168

Dear Mrs Banu

RE: Application to undertake research involving the Department of Education and Preschool Development

I write to you concerning your application to the Preschool Research Committee (ECRC) to undertake research entitled *"A comparative study on classroom teaching practices in pre-primary schools between Bangladesh and Victoria"*.

I am pleased to inform you that the Department of Education and Preschool Development ECRC will support the research subject to the following conditions:

- The research is conducted in accordance with the documentation you provided to the ECRC;
- The provision of a copy of formally constituted Human Research Ethics Committee approval letter;
- The provision of a final report to the ECRC at the completion of the research;
- The provision of a one page summary of the outcomes of the research and how this relates to the Department of Education and Preschool Development;
- That you provide the ECRC with the opportunity to review and provide comment on any materials generated from the research prior to formal publication. It is expected that if there any differences of opinion between the ECRC and yourself related to the research outcomes, that these differences would be acknowledged in any publications, presentations and public forums;
- That you acknowledge the support of the Department of Education and Preschool Development in any publications arising from the research; and
- The project is commenced within 12 months of this approval letter, after this time the approval lapses and extensions will need to be considered by the ECRC.

If you have any further enquiries, please don't hesitate to contact the ECRC Secretariat on [redacted] or via email [redacted] The

ECRC wishes you the best in your research and we look forward to seeing the results in due course.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Joyce Cleary

Chair, Preschool Research Committee