Where will Our Children go? A Study on the Impact of Children’s Day Care Services on Working Parents

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ABSTRACT

Working parents in Bangladesh are facing tremendous challenges to be self-dependent both socially and economically in addition to raise and to educate their children in a sound and secure way. Regarding the issue, caring for the children has been appeared as a vital social demand due to the increasing number of working parent’s attachments to a variety of economic and social activities which displays timely Day Care service requirements. To find out the present condition of the daycare centres in Bangladesh and to know the impact of daycare centres on working parents in Dhaka city, a research has been carried out in Dhaka city based on qualitative data. In this rigorous process, data has been gathered from 30 respondents, which includes working parents who have babies, experts, owners of Day Care service centre, and staff. The study found that almost all the respondents are satisfied with the services are providing by the private sector's daycare centres and the working parents who keep their babies in Daycare service centre, they can continue their work and job unworriedly by keeping their babies in Day Care Centres. Both father and mother are contributing to their family, their standard of living is increasing, and economically working parents are getting solvent. Findings revealed that the enhancement of working parents creates the demand of healthy daycare centres exponentially. The endorsement has been made to augment the services provided by these daycare centres with the aid of proper amenities. Lastly, these types of services can play a significant role in promoting a suitable, healthy, and secure childhood environment for our children, and even it can be the essential stakeholder of Sustainable Development if it is flourished and patronized properly.

Keywords: Children, Childhood, Development, Daycare, Family, Working Parents.

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1. Introduction

The increasing literacy rate has augmented the rate of women's participation at the workplace being engaged in various professions. This situation forces working mothers to be separated from their young children that creates anxiety among them about their taking care. It becomes more difficult when both partners are working parents and they do not have options of keeping their elderly parents with them (Karim, 2019a). Moreover, traditional system of keeping maidservants has been in differently identified with the scarcity of women because their engagement in structured unskilled labour market like readymade garments. The total situation forcefully permits working mothers to accept the daycare centres as the best solution. They accept the system for their children during the working period. Daycare centre refers to in which the kids are being cared for all through the absence of their parents, and it can start from an early age until the child is old enough to care for him/herself. It is found that many countries have laws that it is illegal to leave children who are underage and unsupervised without the presence of an adult. To attain a children's psychological and intellectual development, a parent must ensure stabilized and high-quality surroundings. There are three types of non-parental child care that parents can look into; whether it is a family member, a friend, or a daycare setting, the most important factors are which non-parental child care would be the best for their children's development (Non parental child care and working parents, 2018)

As the young children infants in particular are separated from mothers for a quite long time when the need of mother’s care is very crucial and urgent, mothers feel psychological pressure that produces guilt, worrisome about child’s growth. Tension between childrearing and working at office is primarily minimized, the daycare system in Bangladesh has not been much popularized and practiced. Nevertheless, the scenario is found continuously changing and the number of daycare centres is increasing in Bangladesh because of organisational involvements from both public and private sector. The study aims at measuring the impacts of daycare centres on working parents in capital city and finding out problems faced by the benefit takers and the centres.
The purpose of this study is to understand the effects of the children's daycare services on working parents in Dhaka city. This study has been designed to explore answers of critical questions like; What is the current condition of daycare centres in Bangladesh? Moreover, what services do the private sector daycare centres provide for the working parents in Bangladesh? What are the impacts of daycare centres on working parents?

2. Literature Review

In conducting research, reviewing the literature is significant to know the previous facts and findings about the research problem. It helps to draw the understanding and perceptions of various research’s to establish the logicality of the taken research alongside some terms of the definitions need to be understood in order to grab the research concept properly. Which helps to smooth the complicated research’s terms to the researchers and to readers also for developing the study properly.

2.1. Terms of the definition:

**Working Parents:** A working parent refers to a parent who is accountable to raise his/her children going parallel with his/her career. A working parent is a father or a mother or both who are engaged in work life, alongside their duties as a childcare provider. There are specific structures like single father, a single mother, and also married parents who dual-earner of the family. A number of family structures are found within families, but it does not stick to single, working mothers or single, working fathers. There are also married parents who are dual-earners, in which both parents provide income (Williams et al. 2012).

**Daycare:** Daycare refers to the group of young children that include toddlers, preschoolers and school-aged children. Care provided in their homes, or in the home of relative or care giver or a place where the service is available (Health of Children, 2013). Daycare, by definition, is usually run at daytime at a place outside of their homes for taking care of their preschool children, the elderly, and those having chronic disabilities of working parents. Thus, daycare expands it horizon of definition as it appears to be an beneficial facility of caring disabled or dependents children and adults. It is an alternative services provided to
the people who need it. Typically it is two kinds of daycares which are characterized as adult daycare centre and childcare centres. The adult daycare centre is meant for daycare service to the adults which is specialized non-residential facility provided for the elderly and physically challenged people. Researchers found that these are mostly run 10-12 per day with a provisions of meals, recreational facilities, general supervision and medication. This type of daycare is operated as social and healthcare model. Shonkoff et al. (2000) mentioned that adult daycare centers offer social, recreational, and health-related services to individuals in a protective setting who cannot be left alone during the day because of health care and social need, confusion, or disability.

**Child Day care centres:** Child care, alternatively known as daycare, is the place where children are taken care of during day by someone other than family members. This system as usually provided by the organisation or government with a broader objective of both better nourishment of young children and better services from the working mother without the mental agony of their children. Thus, the daycare runs daylong as long as the office time practiced in a country. (Leach et al. (2008) pointed out service provided by someone outside of the legal guardians. He explained daycare centre as the care of a child for the day by someone aside from the child's legal guardians, typically executed by a person external to the child's instantaneous family. Here comes the explanation of legal guardian. A legal guardian is entrusted person with the legal authority for taking care one's personal property and interest. Apparently, there are three situations where this term can be used: guardianship for a disabled senior (due to old age or illness), protection for a minor, and guardianship for developmentally debilitated grownups (Larson & Aaron 2016).

**Child development:** Child development refers back to the biological, psychological, and emotional modifications that arise in people between the start and the give up of adolescence, as the person progresses from dependency to increasing autonomy (Smith et al. 2011). It is a continuous system with a foreseeable collection but having a completely unique path for each child. It does no longer develop at the same proportion and the
preceding sorts of development torment every stage. Some age-related
development periods and examples of defined intervals are newborn
(ages 0–4 weeks); infant (ages four weeks – 1 year); toddler (ages 1–3
years); preschooler (ages 4–6 years); school-aged child (ages 6–13
years); adolescent (ages 13–19) (Kail 2011). However, organizations like
Zero to Three and the World Association for Infant Mental Health use the
term infant as a broad category, including children from birth to age 3.

**Early childhood education:** Early childhood training is an important
branch of education theory relating to teaching the young children of
maximum eight years either formally or informally (Powel 1989). As the
daycare is concern where child's mother cannot give time for caring,
early childhood is an important issue in this regard. Early childhood
training usually denotes the schooling of children from birth to age two.
Researchers identified in recent time that early childhood schooling has
ended up an everyday public coverage issue, as municipal, state, and
federal lawmakers do not forget investment for pre-school (Barnett and
Frede 2010). Parents can pick two types of child care alternatives. Either
they can go for center-based care (inclusive of crèches, daycare, and
pre-schools) or home-based care, also referred to as nanny or family
daycare.

**Licensed home daycare or family childcare:** Licensed home daycare is
maintained as family child care. Basically, licensed and regulated
providers take-care children in their homes. This type of daycare center is
not so much large bestowed upon with safety and security like home. It
has several advantages, such as lower expenses, spending more hours on
child care, flexibility. Working parents seem it very satisfied if children
would be nurtured with special care (Licensed Home Day Care n. d.).

**In-home care:** Under the in-home care, a child/toddler is nursed inside
the home of their own or in the home of caregivers. Here, exposure to
outside kids or ailments is restricted under the caregivers' supervision.
These in-home services are being furnished by way of nannies, au pairs,
or associates and family (Custom University n. d.). The child forms a
close relation or bond with the caregivers and enjoys the interface or
connection he/she has made with the care provides under in-home care.
**Informal care:** Informal care denotes childcare where family members are involved in the system like grandparents and siblings. It is mostly an inexpensive form of childcare services preferred by relatively poor. A variety of reasons exist behind the utilization of informal daycare by the parents. Usually, informal childcare is for those families with insufficient funds to spend for their children to be kept in quality daycare service. The study revealed that a group of working people with special characteristics opts to adopt the childcare facility. They include low income earning households, working people of utilizing long working hours, having rigid schedule that forced them to accept this system for their children. Several studies shown that children having the quality daycare facility are likely to have future success which means daycare has a long term positive effect on children mental development (Rochman 2012). Furthermore, individuals who spent their younger years in a high-quality setting had more natural transitions to elementary school and beyond. Traditionally, parents were found more involved in children's primary and secondary school programs, those with their children stayed in daycare. Faber (2017) found that children who attended a prominent daycare were more likely to move on to college, have a job, and shelve having children. It has a clear link with the demographic transition and social structure. Women's involvement in the paid labour force has increasingly been observed in the past 30 years resulting in dual-earner families replacing traditional father-provider families (Bonny et al. 1999; Karim, 2019b). It is noted that increase of women’s participation in the labour market, including Bangladesh has fostered the growth of daycare system both in private and public sectors. Thus, the development of children’s physical and mental state has been an important issue to emphasize. Vandell (2010) recognized that standardized cognitive score, language skills, task completion and preparation for schools have found improved in preschoolers who are educated with better educated teachers. This findings contradicts with the children nourished in childcare. However, it has become a mandatory option for a good number of mothers with an increasing rate in Bangladesh because of the growth of nuclear family, career-consciousness and better outward career benefits. These social and individual issues greatly impacted and forced to adopt the daycare facility (Wasia 2008). In addition, this facility is strengthened by the medical care and feeding during the daytime used as an alternative to hospitalization.
The Government currently runs 32-day care centres across the country, including seven centres opened in July, 2016. The 1995 labor laws urge the organizations to set up daycare centres for working mothers' babies if they at least 25 women. However, the Government is planning to lower the number to 20 (Islam and Khan 2015). In the United States, as the percentage of women in the workforce has grown over time — in 1974, it was just 47%, and by 20017 was nearly 71% (Islam and Khan 2015). As a result, the demand for affordable childcare options has gained vast media and public attention. Making daycare arrangements is now one of the primary economic and logistical concerns for working parents, with profound career implications, especially for women. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 28% of mothers with young children, worked in 1975, with that more than doubling to 60% by 2013. Over the same period, the number of daycare industry employees increased by nearly 250%. According to Feldman (2015), it indicates that parental satisfaction with daycare is a significant predictor of parental stress and that low quality of care moderates the relation between low family income and high parental stress. The results underline the importance of daycare quality and of parental satisfaction in regulated daycare and the significance of interventions designed to enhance quality in daycare settings where levels of quality are low. These results are particularly important in a context where a regulated nonprofit childcare services network is mostly funded by the government to ensure equal opportunities for all (Bigras et al. 2012)

The ABS conducted a survey and found that a significant amount of time used by the young children in childcare comparing with the time spent in school. It shows that 14% children had 12-hour long daycare followed by 8% children 8-hour-car (Baxter 2015). The reasons of choosing childcare centre varies among the parents which are usually location, cost, availability and staff of the centres. The prefer whether the location of daycare is close to home or work, the cost includes charge; these are available day time and even until parents reaching from workplace, the qualities of staff to suitably supervise children. The following diagram explains the factors that led to working mothers in terms of choosing the daycare which also dictates them to decide on their career as well:
Figure-1: Factors Behind Working Parents and Child Day Care Centers
(Developed by authors based on field study)

2.2. Bangladesh scenario

In Bangladesh, daycare centers did not establish overnight. It took a long
time to establish and gaining popularity of daycare centers in Bangladesh.
Following is the phase to show the development of the daycare center in
Bangladesh. Traditionally Bangladesh society follows a culture of
extended family that includes father, mother, grandfather, grandmothers,
aunts, uncles, cousins and even distance cousins. This extended family
culture spared no scope of thinking about children to leave in other’s
place for their caring. This culture automatically works as the care giver
and mothers of young children could easily utilize their time for
productive purposes. As the globalization hits, development elevates and
urbanization expands, the need for child caring has emerged. Apart from
this increased number of women in the work place and dual earner
concept has forced to find the system of caring children. Now-a-days, it
is becoming a popular system among the working mothers particularly in
the city area like Dhaka.
Women in Bangladesh are a long way behind than men in outside activities. But for the time being, with the spread of education, many women a taking part in jobs which also includes reputed jobs in the society. As a result of families becoming nuclear over time, it is difficult to run joint families in the cities. Now, the problem arises when these working women become mothers and do not have scope of taking care of their infants. Although, government has introduced six-month maternity leave, after that they are still young and require mother’s care. This situation forced them to adopt the facility of daycare. Besides, government and private organisation are providing the facility for children eventually for the organisations in order to get the better service from mother.

Not everyone in Bangladesh welcomes daycare centres for babies. Daycare centres in our country are still seen as the last resort when working parents have absolutely no other option available. However, with the emergence of more and more nuclear families, and with the busyness of city life seeping into every aspect of our lives, it will not be long before the popularity of the daycare centers shifts to top gear. However, still, we are unaware of the time of picking this trend up. Prof. A.H. Mohammad Feroz, former Director at National Mental Health Institute, says: "Daycare centers are good for working mothers. Nevertheless, they are bad for babies." (Care for Kids 2014) "Such children can suffer from an inferiority complex," he observes. Mohammad Shawkat Ali, an official in charge of the daycare centre project at Women Affairs Ministry, disagrees with the mental health experts. “This is a great advantage for working mothers. They can leave their children in the care of dependable people and work with fewer worries." The knowledge gap of this study, according to the past researches, is there is less focus on the parent's impact on the daycare centres.

3. Study method

This is an empirical study. The study, by its nature, gathered in-depth information from the study field. This study is based on social context and developed through both primary and secondary data. The approach of the study was qualitative in nature and conducted through various data collection methods like case study, interview, observation and document analysis. The study location was daycare centres in Dhaka city, focusing
a Case Study approach to incorporate data gathering strategies like document collection, surveys, participant or non-participant observation, interviewing. Respondents were working parents who send their children to daycare centres, authority of daycare centres, and experts. Sample size was 30 numbers, and sampling method followed using purposively and snowball technique. Secondary data was collected from books, research reports, Journals, Newspapers and relevant studies.

4. Study findings & analysis:

Daycare centres emphasized on children of working mothers in Dhaka city, both from public and private sectors where latter one is much noted because of class. The need for a well-knack childcare becomes inevitable. Age of children is usually from six months to six year. The cost of daycare varies based on the time and duration and the ownership of the centre. It is found that middle class women do not feel much comfortable to use daycare facility because of the poor service. Researchers findings approve the notion of unwillingness of middle class working women because of quality childcare centre with improved amenities. This is discouraging although government are increasing the number with the provisions in the city areas and private organsaitons are joining together. Apart form the above mentioned key reasons, poor nursing and unaccepted behvour of maids working in the daycare centre is deemed as important cause (Islam & Khan 2015). Researcher comments,

"If a child is kept in the care of a quality daycare centre instead of a maid, he or she will stay much better both physically and mentally."

The notion mentioned above is surprising as the age of children keeping in the centre is the age of growing and mental development who need a pleasant environment with their cohorts. Keeping children near to mom’s workplace brings the happiness to working mother feeling that they are close to them. It is also important for children so that they can get their mother in case of any emergency. Considering the both mother’s mental support and children’s wellbeing, daycare centres are set near to workplaces. This situation helps maintain auto supervision. Department of Women and Children Affairs, the advocating this system, identified that daycare centre has positive effect on working women and thus brings welfare of their kids too. Here comes the issue of human rights as well where the Human Rights Implementation Organization has pointed out
the establishment of daycare centre in either public or private organisations as a mandatory option in order for betterment of mothers and children. Thus, the initiatives are popularized among the parents and organization to use the talents of working mothers.

The necessity of daycare centre seems quite significant which is exponentially increasing. Apparently, apparels industries are the key areas where establishing daycare centres are felt necessity. There are some organisations too facing the difficulty with working women having young children. It means to understand the problem and handle it well. Considering the contribution of women folk, setting up and maintaining quality of daycare centres are demanded so that working mother feel comfortable and encouraged to work with full devotion without agony of their children. It is noted that daycare centres are located inside the Bangladesh Secretariat, Khilgoan, Mirpur and Mohakhali area, plus in divisional towns for both middle class and lower middle class people. The nature of jobs, lack of support from relatives for taking care of children create the situation for working mothers of private sectors to utilize daycare centres. This scenario prevails among those areas where garment industries are located including Narayanganj and the industries which are women-labour intensive.

The study revealed that BRAC bank is the only bank having the facility provided to their working mothers whereas Bangladesh Bank enforced policies to make arrangement of this facility. In this regard, Bangladesh bank issue a circular on 20th March of 2013 with an immediate effect in each bank. It is mentionable here that bank are treated as the organisations of using long working hour which means children of bank workers suffer a lot. Bangladesh has great contribution, Deputy Governor mentioned:

"We have repeatedly requested the other banks to set up similar centres under their CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) program, but we are yet to get any response."

At the Bangladesh Bank, the Bank bears 65 percent of the cost. Furthermore, the center has residential facilities for 30 children. There are four maids, three teachers, and two cooks for their welfare. Every mother has to pay a monthly fee of Taka one thousand and seven hundred for each child. Hosne Ara of Bangladesh Bank says that because of the daycare centers, she can work peacefully.
"Besides, I can check on the child, whenever necessary. At the end of the day, I can pick her up and go home."

Besides, there are many other children there, where they receive their first lesson in socialization. It is very imperative to rear a child with utmost care in order to ensure proper development of every aspect of a child. Many women have found to surrender their jobs as they do not find any appropriate caregivers for their children. This is a hindrance to the progress of women as well as the economy of the country, which is a national loss and should be treated as such. Furthermore, daycare centres should be set up across the country to cope with it.

In Bangladesh, the number of working mothers, dual earners are increasing with the faster speed with the increasing number of educated women. The working environment and life of working people are encircled by the number issues which are also modified time to time in line with the external and internal demand. Once they are in the service and family is formed, adopting childing and their rearing and caring becomes important issue. Thus, it creates the necessity of setting daycare centres in workplace in Bangladesh. Daycare centres, where working mothers can leave their babies on payment, are coming up - both in government and private sectors. A significant number of this labor force is working in the garment sector, the country's highest foreign currency earner. Over 90 percent of the garment workers are women. There is a massive prospect for working women in cities. Many of the working women have small children. They have to rely on housemaids to look after their kids while they are away. Therefore, it is necessary to set up an adequate number of quality daycare centres both at government and private levels so that women can get to work without concern for their kids. Unfortunately, this matter has got little attention. As per the National Labor Act 2006, there should be a daycare centre for children in an organization where 40 women work. However, few organizations do have any daycare centre. Then again, most of the centres already established at government and private levels are based in capital Dhaka.

The study found that most of the garment factories do not have the daycare facility although a considerable number of women are employed in this sector. In June 2007, an NGO had surveyed 55 offices and found daycare centers only in 15 of them. Working women barely feel it encouraged to keep their kids in the existing daycare centres, and many of them are being compelled to give up their jobs to take care of their
children. According to psychologists, a child needs a mother's company more than dad for his or her proper mental growth. If there is a daycare centre in one's workplace, it is good for both the child and mother, as the mother gets mental peace for being close to the kid and can be more attentive to her work. This also makes the child happy. The kids who are taken care of by maids develop various problems Human Rights Implementation Organization has pointed out establishing daycare centres in every government, and private organization will have to be made mandatory for protecting the interests of mothers and children. So, initiatives need to be taken to resolve the problem to make the best use of women's potentials and talents in nation-building activities. During the survey, 15 parents were asked from respondents to have answers for some specific questions. This study identified that 46.66% are taking services for the last 6-12 months; at the same time, only 33.33% of customers are taking services for the last 2-3 years. Moreover, the number of daycare centres rises, which clearly indicates the growth of the daycare centre.

![Figure 2. Duration of taking services from daycare centers](image)

Again looking at the age of the children revealed that mostly 3+ years children are kept in these daycare centers (60%)

**Table- 1:** Age distribution of children kept in daycare centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of the children</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between 1 and 2 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 3 and 4 years</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4+ years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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There are some reasons for utilizing daycare centres such as 1) no one in their home to take care of the children 2) lack of trustworthiness on their maids and 3) daycare centres provide better treatment. About 50% respondents agreed with the first one where 30% working mother are with the second one and only 15% are with the treatment purpose.

![Figure 3. Reason for keeping children in daycare](image)

Every parent is conscious of his/her child's developmental growth. Pre-school age is the best time for the development of children. Everyone tries to give his/her child excellent care. It is easy to look after the child at home. Then parents can ensure if their children are getting proper care or not. They can notice and correct every single activity of their children. Nevertheless, for the working parents, who have to send their children to daycare centers, it is not possible all the time to check if their children's developmental growth is going on the right track or not. Most of the parents agreed on a point that a well-organized, careful daycare center always tries to give the best care to the children. While talking with the parents who have been receiving services from the daycare centers, it was found that almost all of them are satisfied with their children's growth. They said that they might not send their children if they saw adverse effects on their developmental growth. In order to know the experiences and the impact of daycare centers on working parents in Dhaka city, quite a few questions were asked regarding their expectations, getting services, their satisfaction level, etc. When asked what attracted them mostly to picked daycare services was the security provided by the centers. Some of them also said about educational activities, recreational facilities, and healthful meals. Only a few said that they had chosen their daycare center for a good reputation.
Service receivers were also asked about the provided meals, educational facilities, developmental activities, cost, and so on. Most of them are satisfied with the services provided by the daycare centers. It is evident that the daycare centers are trying to meet the consumer's satisfaction level to keep their reputation reasonable.

Respondents parents were asked that by taking the day care services, is their economic state of the family improved or not? All respondents replied that in past there was only an earner for their family. Most of the time they had to struggle to meet the needs of the family. Now both mothers and fathers of the babies have been working and earning money. That is why economic betterment has reached to their family alongside they are unconcernedly working by keeping their babies in a day care center.
For certain, daycare centers of Dhaka city have positive impacts on the parents. Maybe the private sector is doing good as they charge much money too. On the contrary, the government sector daycare centers might not be as good as the private sectors, according to the journals and other research papers. The study was conducted mainly to understand the experience and impact of daycare centers on working parents in Dhaka city and found that the result positive. Yes, there are a few negative sides that are obvious. Daycare centers cannot meet all the expectations of the parents regarding their children. Nevertheless, the respondents accept the limitations and great-full to the daycare center's authority for taking care of their children during their work. This study also reveals that the condition of the daycare center in Bangladesh is getting better day by day. Services provided by the centers are satisfactory in the private sector. However, the public sector needs to be more developed to meet customer's expectations.

7. Conclusion and recommendation

Childcare at the early stage brings numerous benefits that serves as better outcome for his whole life and contribute their whole life. The base of child development is seemed the early child care that helps children to grow mentally and physically fit person. As working mothers keep them busy with their office and hardly get time to engage fully with their children, daycare becomes an option for them. A daycare which has become an mandatory necessity for working mothers, is specialized arrangement for the infants for their pre-schooling, developing peer group learning development. More importantly, this framework serves as an extension of home care, although this can not treated as substitute to home care. The inbuilt framework gives the chance of being supervised by someone other than the parent or guardian that necessarily lacks of home care, the kind of parenting from a system. Although it can’t be substitute to home caring provided by parents and grandmothers, grand mothers, the increasing number of women employment and dual earners, scarcity of maidservants, daycare system has been popular among the working parents particularly in cities. Aligning the necessity of the employment conditions, international demands, need for the society, government has taken initiatives which are still inadequate. The study suggests taking proper steps to implement the Labour Law 1995 in both structured and unstructured private organisations. In taking this steps
government has a major role to materialize. Apart from the government’s enforcement, organisations, irrespective of public and private, should practice standard norms and abide by the rules relating to the family friendly policies so the benefits are enjoyed by the organisation and its employees, mothers in particular. Maintaining family friendly policies is the prime issue for growing happy babies and their development. It is also recommended that the existing daycare centers enter should also improve their services with ensuring security for toddlers, hygienic and healthy environment, pre-schooling facilities through trained nannies or employees.

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