

# Original Research Article

## Exploring the role of libraries in promoting child mental health in Bangladesh

### ABSTRACT

**Aims:** The research aims to figure out the existing roles of libraries in promoting child mental health. The study also focuses on the child's mental health importance, the warning sign of children, common disorders and promotional strategy of child mental health.

**Methodology:** To figure out these roles' researcher adopted **qualitative research paradigm**. For this study, the researcher collects data by a schedule interview, the respondents were chosen mostly from public library and one from Shishu academy library. In line, the text analysis technique was used to identify the different types of roles.

**Results:** The study's key findings are presented from three perspectives: firstly, the socio-economic determinants of **child mental health such as Poverty and income inequality**, Neighborhood or community and parental mental health. Secondly, libraries' role as services provider, as bibliotherapist and as motivator which affect child mental health and create a child mentally healthy, developed their thinking capability. Finally, libraries can flourish their role in school-going child by adequate books, health equipment, collaborate with school library and organize workshop.

**Conclusion:** The implication of the study is to seek the attention of the key stakeholders regarding the importance of child mental health and the librarian's role in promoting child mental health. In line with that **propagate such kinds of roles in different aspects of libraries of Bangladesh in the form of socio-political concern.**

**Keywords:** Public Library, Child Mental Health, School, Bangladesh

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Child mental health is a vital aspect of a child's overall well-being and plays a crucial role in their cognitive, social, and emotional development [1]. In low- and middle-income countries like Bangladesh, where resources for mental health care are limited, it is essential to explore innovative and cost-effective approaches to promote the mental health of children. One potential avenue for promoting child mental health is through the services provided by libraries. Libraries are not just repositories for books and information; they are also community hubs that can support a wide range of services, including health and well-being initiatives [2]. This paper aims to explore the role of libraries in promoting child mental health in Bangladesh, by examining the various ways in which libraries can contribute to the mental health of children and the unique challenges faced by libraries in this context. Existing research has shown that libraries can play a significant role in supporting the mental health of children and their families by providing access to educational resources, promoting early literacy, fostering social connections, and offering safe spaces for children to explore their interests [3]. Libraries can also serve as platforms for the delivery of evidence-based mental health interventions, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy and psychoeducation programs, which have been shown to be effective in improving mental health outcomes for children [4,5]. By collaborating with local schools, health care providers, and community organizations, libraries can help to bridge the gap between mental health services and the children who need them, thus addressing one of the primary barriers to mental health care in low-resource settings [6].

Despite the potential for libraries to contribute to child mental health promotion in Bangladesh, there are several challenges that must be addressed. These include insufficient funding and resources, limited awareness about mental health issues, and cultural stigma surrounding mental illness. To overcome these obstacles, it is essential to invest in capacity building for library professionals, develop culturally appropriate mental health resources, and engage in community outreach and advocacy efforts to raise awareness about the importance of child mental health.

In summary, libraries hold great promise as platforms for promoting child mental health in Bangladesh. By leveraging their unique position as community hubs, libraries can play a critical role in providing resources, interventions, and support to children and their families. This paper will explore the various ways in which libraries can contribute to child mental health promotion, as well as the challenges and opportunities they face in this endeavor.

Child mental health, the complete well-being and optimal development of a child in the emotional, behavioral, social, and cognitive domains. Children's mental health is often defined as different from adult mental health and more multifaceted because of the unique developmental milestones that children experience. Characteristics of the child (e.g., gender, genetics) are important determinants of that child's well-being. However, child mental health also includes those conditions that directly affect or modify mental health, including aspects of a child's family, community, and broader society [7]. The mental health problems children may experience may be reflected as difficulties in psychological and emotional development, social relationships, and behavior. When problems are persistent, are severe, and cause impaired functioning, they are defined as mental health disorders. Well-designed mental health promotion and prevention programs and interventions can enhance the well-being of children and mitigate the escalation of problems[8].

Public libraries help local communities by encouraging creative thinking, imagination, and personal growth, as well as by strengthening local culture and identity, social cohesion, and community involvement[9]. The public library plays an important role to provide and exploring the children mental health. Public Libraries welcome children from the very earliest months of life, helping parents and caregivers to support them as they grow and learn. Working with schools and other partners, libraries provide a range of activities, programs and initiatives which introduce, extend and refresh the library experience for children[10]. Children's mental health is essential for every country. Now there is many children's mental health care in Bangladesh. One of them is libraries, especially Public Library. How do public libraries help children, and what is the public library's role in developing children's mental health? It should figure out how public libraries can provide better services for children's mental health [11].

Comment [HN1]: More explain?

### 1.1 Statement of the problem

Without identifying the gaps, it is impossible to find the real solution to the problem. So, the first and foremost task of any research work is to identify the research problem correctly. Generally, we know a research problem is on which topic the researcher continues his research. Therefore, the researcher must formulate a clear and focused problem that is researchable. In Bangladesh, 10–20% of children and adolescents have a mental health problem of some type. Manifestations such as attention deficits, cognitive disturbances, lack of motivation, and negative mood adversely affect educational development. It is often unclear what school-related factors affect children's mental development and effective preventive measures and interventions [12].

Good mental health allows children to think clearly, develop socially and learn new skills. Additionally, good friends and encouraging words from adults are essential for helping children develop self-confidence, high self-esteem, and a healthy emotional outlook on life. Through this research, we would like to find out how public libraries explore and promote children's mental health.

### 1.2 Research question

- What is the key determinant of child mental health?
- What are the existing roles of the public library as well as their affect in promoting school going child mental health?
- How can public libraries flourish their role in promoting school-going child mental health?

### 1.3 Objective of the Study

- To figure out the role of public libraries in promoting children's mental health.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Child mental health

Mental health is a key component in a child's healthy development; children need to be healthy in order to learn, grow, and lead productive lives. The mental health service delivery system in its current state does not sufficiently meet the needs of children and youth, and most who are in need of mental health services are not able to access them. With the addition of effective treatments, services, and supports, the mental health system can become better equipped to help children and youth with mental health problems, or those who are at risk, to thrive and live successfully[13].

Mental health disorders in children are generally defined as delays or disruptions in developing age-appropriate thinking, behaviors, social skills or regulation of emotions. These problems are distressing to children and disrupt their ability to function well at home, in school or in other social situations[14].

Comment [HN2]: What will the author explore?

### 2.2 Key determinants of child mental health

Recently, there has been an increase in mental health issues among children around the world. Some key determinant of child mental health describes below:

#### 2.2.1 Poverty and income inequality

Poverty is one of the social determinants of mental health that affects children and teens. According to the American Psychological Academy, living in poverty can be associated with negative conditions such as food insecurity and substandard housing. Also, it is linked to problems such as inadequate nutrition, limited health care and unsafe neighborhoods[15].

### 2.2.2 Food insecurity

Food insecurity and malnutrition affect millions of infants, children, and teens around the world. An increase in the number of children and youth who suffer from hunger. Food insecurity and malnutrition are associated with poorer mental health outcomes among children and teens[15].

### Neighborhood or community

In addition to factors such as poverty and food insecurity, a child or adolescent's neighborhood or community can significantly affect their mental and behavioral health. This includes environmental factors and geographical factors[15]

### Racism

Racism is defined as a belief that race (that is, how one looks) is the primary determinant of human traits, abilities and rights and that racial differences (such as skin color) produce an inherent superiority of a particular group. Racism has increasingly been viewed as a social determinant affecting child mental health[15]

### 2.3 Parental mental health

Children of parents who are mentally ill or who have the history of mental disorders are at increased risk of mental disorders. Fathers and mothers' poor mental health was associated with a diagnosed mental disorder among children. While father's poor mental health was significantly associated with depression and anxiety problem, mother's poor mental health was significantly associated with all the mental disorders examined: ADHD, depression, anxiety problem, and behavioral and conduct problem[16].

### 2.3 Prevalence of mental disorders in children

There have been few epidemiological studies of the prevalence of child and adolescent psychiatric disorders in Bangladesh. The prevalence of childhood disability in Bangladesh is increasing with the improvements in child survival [17]. Now a day's behavior problems form an increasing proportion of the presenting complaints[18].

**Table 1. The Studies Reported Prevalence of Mental Disorders in Children**

| Author's and Publication Year | Year of Data Collection | Setting                     | Place of the Study | Average (Years), Sexes | n (Sample Size) | Outcome Measures Instruments  | Prevalence |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| Rabbani and Hossain, 1999     | 1994                    | Urban School                | S                  | NA (both)              | 1,288           | Rutter's Scale                | B2 13.4%   |
| Kelkar, 2004                  | 1997-1998               | Urban Slum                  | S                  | 10-16 (both)           | 210             | Semi-Structured Questionnaire | 22.9%      |
| Mullick <i>et al.</i> , 2005  | 2002-2004               | Rural, Urban and Urban Slum | C                  | 5-10 (both)            | 922             | SDQ D A WBA                   | 15.2%      |
| Khan <i>et al.</i> , 2008     | 2001-2003               | Rural                       | C                  | 2-9 (both)             | 453             | TQ                            | 14.6%      |
| Jahan <i>et al.</i> , 2009    | 2009                    | Rural Urban                 | C                  | 5-17 (both)            | 3,564           | RQC                           | 18.4%      |

Source: BMC Psychiatry

NA= Not Available, both= Male and Female, C= Community Based Study, F=Facility Based Study, S= School Based Study, UCEP=Under Privileged Children's Education Programme, Rutter's B2 Scale= Rutter's Behavior Scale (B2), SDQ= Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, DAWBA= Development and Well-Being Assessment, TQ= Ten Questions, RQC= Reporting Questionnaire for Children.

Another recent study shows that, the estimate the prevalence of mental health problems and its associated factors in school going children at the age of 5-11 years in Bangladesh. The problems are equally prevalent in both sexes. More than one in five (20.9%) children was found to have emotional and behavioral disorders, another 41.8% were with borderline difficulty score and 37.1% were with of normal range. Domain wise difficulty prevalence suggests emotional problem in 23% children, Conduct problem in 20.9% children, Hyperactivity in 1.5% children, Peer problem in 22.4% children

Comment [HN3]: Year??

and Pro-social behavior in 54.1% children. None of the age, sex, and family income, number of children, father's level of education and mother's education appeared as a significant predictor of emotional and behavioral disorder in children of Dhaka city. However, Mother's occupational status appeared as a significant predictor of child's emotional and behavioral disorder[18].

#### **2.4 Common disorders among children**

According to the World Health Organization, [1] "10-20% of children and adolescents experience mental disorders." Mental health disorders in children — or developmental disorders that are addressed by mental health professionals — may include the following:

- 2.4.1 Anxiety disorders:** Anxiety disorders in children are persistent fears, worries or anxiety that disrupt their ability to participate in play, school or typical age-appropriate social situations.
- 2.4.2 Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD):** Compared with most children of the same age, children with ADHD have difficulty with attention, impulsive behaviors, hyperactivity or some combination of these problems[19].
- 2.4.3 Eating disorders:** These are defined as a preoccupation with an ideal body type, disordered thinking about weight and weight loss, and unsafe eating and dieting habits[20].
- 2.4.4 Depression and other mood disorders:** Depression is persistent feelings of sadness and loss of interest that disrupt a child's ability to function in school and interact with others[19].
- 2.4.5 Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD):** PTSD is prolonged emotional distress, anxiety, distressing memories, nightmares and disruptive behaviors in response to violence, abuse, injury or other traumatic events[19].

#### **2.5 Warning signs of mental illness in children**

Warning signs that your child may have a mental health disorder include:

Having frequent anger, nervousness, unusual behavior, avoiding social interactions, talking about death or suicide, out-of-control behavior that can be harmful, drastic changes in mood, behavior or personality[21], changes in eating habits, loss of weight, frequent headaches or stomachaches, difficulty concentrating, changes in academic performance, avoiding or missing school.

#### **2.6 Importance for promoting child mental health**

Promoting children mental health is a key part of keeping them safe, helping them develop and ensuring they have positive outcomes into adulthood [22]. The importance of psychological well-being in children and adolescent, for their healthy emotional, social, physical, cognitive and educational development, is well-recognized. There is now increasing evidence on the effectiveness of interventions to improve children's and adolescent's resilience, promote mental health and treat mental health problems and disorders. Mental health problems will contribute significantly to the global burden of disease in the 21st century[23].

All children, adolescents and their parents require access to information and supportive environments to ensure that the child or adolescent's mental health is promoted. Specific activities such as tackling bullying, provision of education to increase awareness of mental health issues and to improve the recognition of children's emerging needs, and provision of support for those children with particular needs, have a vital role to play in improving the chances for children and adolescents. Everyone in a community has a role to play in ensuring that the environment in which children are growing up promotes their mental health.

For children with learning difficulties and their parents or careers, the provision of special education, training and promoting need for early intervention may make a significant difference in overall development[23].

#### **2.7 Child mental health promotional strategies**

For promoting child mental health public library follow some promotional strategies such as:

**2.7.1 Building healthy policy for children:** Libraries are an open door for every child to uncounted opportunities - to have fun, to learn, to discover and to share. They are fundamental to reading, learning, to exploring their identity, and to participating in a society that increasingly values knowledge and depends upon being able to find and use information. So, it is important to create a good policy for children.

**2.7.2 Creating supportive environments:** Examples include anti-bullying programs in schools and workplaces, strengthening families, mentoring and peer support for young people.

**2.7.3 Providing interesting reading materials:** The use of books can develop a child's mental health. Non-fiction books help children better understand complex ideas and their own emotions. Meanwhile, fiction books often weave these topics into their storylines, including picture books for younger children.

**2.7.4 Encouraging children to speak out:** Library is always doing this. In the library, children can talk to other children, and library staff can help to encourage them to speak out.

**2.7.5 Make space and time to talk:** It's essential to create an open environment where children can discuss their feelings without judgment. The library creates this space.

**2.7.5 Bibliotherapy:** The librarian in bibliotherapy selects appropriate literature in diverse formats and uses them to guide and encourage depressed patients to read to the point of experiencing insight and understanding, accompanied by healing or increased ability to cope better. Bibliotherapy can assist children in overcoming problems by having them read stories about characters who have successfully resolved a dilemma similar to their own. Identification with a literary model can foster thought and possible resolution to a problem such as dealing with a separation, illness, death, poverty, disability, alienation, disaster, war[24].

#### **2.7.6 Library's role and its affect**

"Libraries have always been a resource for their communities, but the contemporary library can also support health and wellbeing by provision of physical spaces, digital access, information, and library programmes."

There are some services used by libraries to promote children mental health, which are mention below:

**2.7.6.1 Promoting and resourcing a variety of wellbeing initiatives:** such as games, Lego, Toybricks, jigsaws, and craft activities for children. When children engage in these sorts of activities, they relax, socialize, and have fun. These enjoyable, informal activities provide children with a sense of belonging and foster a sense of wellbeing.

**2.7.6.2 Celebrating the national days and weeks:** When all children are celebrating national days like Library Day, Victory Day, Independence Day, etc. together this can help the child's mental health. All public Libraries are organized on this day and children can easily participate.

**2.7.6.3 Having supportive library staff:** Supportive library staff is always helpful for children. Children can easily talk to library staff about any kind of topic and library staff help them with books, stories, etc. That's helping the child's mental health[25].

**2.7.6.4 Read-aloud programs:** For elementary school children, there are variations of the read-aloud and storytelling hours. These often include discussions and presentations by the children themselves, as well as summer reading programs.

**2.7.6.5 Young adult programs:** For middle and junior high school kids, there may also be book talks, summer reading programs, creative writing seminars, drama groups, and poetry readings.

**2.7.6.6 Books and other materials:** The age's six to nine are an especially critical time for children. These are the years when they normally make the transition from just hearing and looking at picture books to reading independently for enjoyment and for schoolwork. A story that will make them laugh or want to know what happens next will motivate them to read even though it's difficult[25].

**2.7.6.7 Group activities:** By the time children are five to ten years of age, they usually enjoy participating in group activities. Popular activities include reading aloud, storytelling, films, puppet shows, arts and crafts, and reading programs[26].

**2.7.6.8 Audiovisual materials:** Almost all libraries also offer recordings of children's stories and songs. Many also offer cassette tapes, compact discs, videotapes, book/cassette kits, and even puppets and educational toys[25].

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The research described in this document is based solely on qualitative research methods. The title "Exploring the Role of Libraries in Promoting Child Mental Health": A study on some selected Libraries" suggests detailed research on the Role of Libraries in Promoting Child Mental Health. A qualitative approach has been adopted. As we know, the descriptive study covers a lot of information. This will help to get in-depth information.

#### **3.1 Interviews**

The sources of data were used in this study: interview data. For this study, qualitative interviews were the primary method of data collection for three reasons. Qualitative interviewing is appropriately used when "studying people's understanding of the meaning in their lived world" [27].

For this study, **two** of the interviews were conducted by over zoom meeting; the remaining **one** interview was conducted by face to face of the participant. The interviews were audio-recorded and notes were taken during all interviews. The average interview range is 35-45 minute. The audio recordings were carefully transcribed.

A **schedule** interview approach was used to carry on conversations. Schedule interviews give participants more room to answer in terms of what is important to them. The question was framed in

**Comment [HN4]:** Please check and deepen the purpose of this research

**Comment [HN5]:** what is the reference of this exposure?

**Comment [HN6]:** Does the researcher use deep interviews? Phenomenology? or Build a trusting relationship with the respondent?

this manner to provide participants with the flexibility and freedom to explore the phenomenon in depth. Mostly open-ended questions.

### 3.2 Sampling

In the current study, the sample members who were selected had a special relationship with the phenomenon under investigation, sufficient knowledge and relevant work experience in the field of library, active involvement in Promoting Child Mental Health.

All the Public libraries in Bangladesh have been regarded as the sample population for this study. From the sample population, only 2 Public libraries and one Special child public library are selected as a sample in this study purposively. The sample public libraries are:

- Divisional Public Library, Rajshahi
- Dhaka Public Library
- Bangladesh Shishu Academy (Special child public library)

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS

**Text analysis** was utilized in the present study for the purposes of organizing and analyzing the interview data. Textual analysis is an important way for researchers to gather information about a topic.

Interview transcripts were reviewed multiple times, searching for recurring regularities. The researcher highlighted quotes and phrases from the interviews that were significant to the study.

### 4.1 Ethical Considerations

In conducting this research study, a significant part of the focus has been put on ensuring that the entire research process has been fully ethical and unprejudiced. To achieve this, the researcher has stuck to a number of different ethical considerations that guarantee that none of the ethical principles are violated during the course of the research study and data collection.

Following are some of these ethical considerations made in this research study:

- All the participants will be told that the participation is entirely in a voluntary manner.
- The researcher personally conducted research and wrote their own research.
- All sources used are properly attributed (cited), where used, in the text to avoid plagiarism
- The sources cited were personally reviewed, without relying on another researcher's interpretation of the cited source.
- All data and associated findings are real and were not fabricated.

### 4.2 Findings

To answer the questions properly, an effort has been made by using the question: who are the respondents of the study?

#### Who are the respondents of the study?

As per the research, the study selected librarian as respondents (L=3) from public library context.

**Table 2. Characteristics of the respondents from library**

| Respondents        | Age group |         | Total | Grand total |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|-------|-------------|
|                    | 30-35     | Over 35 | 1     | 3           |
| Head of Library    |           | 1       |       |             |
| Assistant director | 1         | 1       | 2     |             |

**Table 3. Informants' characteristics**

| Professional of child mental health promotion professional |                           |        |           |                    |                 |
|--|---------------------------|--------|-----------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Id   | Educational qualification | Gender | Age range | Title              | Work experience |
| R1   | Master degree in LIS      | Female | Over 35   | Head of Library    | 18 years        |
| R2   | Master degree in LIS      | Male   | Over 35   | Assistant director | 11 years        |
| R3   | Master degree in LIS      | Male   | 30-35     | Assistant director | 3 years         |

To figure out the answer to research objective 1, top indicators, aspects of each indicator as categorizations, and the variables from coding to put in the categories about each indicator while analyzing interviews, were fixed in the following manner.

**Objective 1: To figure out the role public of libraries in promoting children's mental health.**

**Comment [HN7]:** Process from recording to text? with what template? What is the process of qualitative analysis with? the results will greatly affect the validity of the librarian's role in promotion of mental problems in children

**Table 4. Roles of public libraries**

**The roles of libraries in promoting children's mental health.**

| Roles  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Public library as resources provider</li> <li>2. Public library as campaigner</li> <li>3. Public Library as Collaborator</li> <li>4. Public library as a Bibliotherapist</li> <li>5. Public library as services provider</li> <li>6. Public library as a motivator</li> <li>7. Public library professionals as counsellors and observer</li> </ol> |

**Comment [HN8]:** Need to pay attention to the role of the librarian in a way that promotes children's mental problems?

The role of public library for promoting children's mental health changing time of the need. By interview we found some roles that are played by public library for promoting child's mental health. Roles are analysis below:

**4.2.1 Public library professionals as resources provider**

**Table 5. Analysis Public Library Professionals as Resources Provider**

| Role                  | Categorization   |   |
|-----------------------|--|---|
|                       | Higher level   | Lower level                                     |
| As resources provider | Toybricks+ craft activities+Books+Cartoons, Braille book+ Furniture (R1+R2+R3) | Kano Computer(R3) Audio-video materials (R1+R2) |

Library is the storehouse of knowledge. Now library provides fiction and non-fiction books and provides many mental health-related resources. In addition, public libraries offer many resources which help the children's mental health.

**Comment [HN9]:** The interview grid, stages, and resolutions in qualitative techniques need to be explained properly by the researcher

*According to respondent 1: "We provide toy bricks for the mental development of many children. Here we give different concepts, that you make it, then it creates creativity in them, and they get emotional support."*

*"We decorate the library with a variety of beautiful furniture for children. So that the children enjoy the library and they are more cheerful mentally."(R3)*

Book is not only for academic purpose but also books can carte healthy life. In the interview, the data respondent said that they provide many children's books which is helpful for child mental health.

*"We provide children with colorful large font books that appeal to children." (R1)*

*"We usually have all kinds of books for children, especially stories, fairy tales, scrapbooks, translation books, more cartoons."(R2)*

Cartons can make a child happy. They can quickly learn by cartons. It is also helpful for child mental health.

*"Sometimes when kids feel a lot of loneliness or need to be taught something, we show them some educational cartoons. Such as: Mina Raju and some more foreign cartoons."(R3)*

In an interview, one of the respondents in an interview said they provide kano computers that help build up child knowledge.

*According to respondent 3: "we are taught programming with computer program (Kano Computer). They are taught how to open and install computer parts. This increases the children's knowledge of different types."*

**4.2.2 Public library professionals as campaigner**

**Table 6. Analysis of Public Library Professionals as Campaigner**

| Top Indicators | Categorization |             |
|----------------|----------------|-------------|
|                | Higher level   | Lower level |

|                  |  |   |
|------------------|--|---|
| As<br>campaigner | Organize large scale campaigns(R1)<br>National day Celebration,(R1+R2+R3)<br>Film-making workshop+mini writer workshops.<br>(R1) | do not organize<br>large-scale<br>campaigns (R1+R2) |
|------------------|--|---|

From the table, we can see that the library hosts a variety of workshops, filmmaking, mini-author workshops, National day Celebration.

Different types of workshop campaigns are significant for the mental development of children. When children participate in other library-based workshops, it brings a beautiful, emotional development to them. From the interview respondent, we learned that the public library conducts various campaign workshops to meet the different needs of the children. Which was expressed by two of the respondents in a way:

*"Competitions are organized on the occasion of different national days. Such as drawing competitions, recitations, storytelling, etc. Which play an unprecedented role in a child's mental development." (R3)*

*"We do a lot of library-based workshops events, like some filmmaking workshops, drawing workshops with colors, Children's films, program-making workshops, and mini-writer workshops where 6 to 9-year-old children participate." (R1)*

#### 4.2.3 Public library as collaborator

Public libraries are collaborating with school libraries at multiple levels through Librarian. To share resources and expand services to the local school's public library collaborates with the school, which would enhance their lesson plans on a variety of topics. For many competitions, the public library collaborates with the school library. Respondent statement:

*"We are in school, Essay competition, Handwriting competition, we do recitation competitions and various other programs so that we have a collaboration with the school." (R2)*

*"Whenever we want to do a competition, we collaborate with the head teacher of the school through the librarian." (R1)*

#### 4.2.4 Public library as a bibliotherapist

Bibliotherapy can assist children in overcoming problems by having them read stories about characters who have successfully resolved a dilemma similar to their own. If children become emotionally involved with literary characters, they can verbalize, act out, or draw pictures describing their innermost thoughts. which was expressed by one of the respondent in a way:

*"We let them read books in proportion to what they want according to the needs of the children, what they want to read. For those who are deaf and dumb, I sometimes tell stories, and for those who are visually impaired, we sometimes read a lot of books and stories. This is the type of bibliotherapy we use" (R1)*

We find another example of bibliotherapy being offered in public libraries in Bangladesh from the following respondents. He said that they do not usually provide psychological services in that way. However, they do a variety of books, storytelling for emotional transcendence.

*"We usually suggest different types of books according to the emotional needs of the children. Sometimes we try to keep them mentally healthy by telling stories" (R1)*

#### 4.2.5 Public library as services provider

**Table 7. Analysis of Public Libraries as Services Provider**

| Top<br>Indicators | Categorization |             |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------|
|                   | Higher level   | Lower level |

|                     |   |                                  |
|---------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| as service provider | supportive environment + Books + brail corner + child encyclopedia + Lesson room service+Opportunity to participate in the competition+supportive library staff (R1+R2+R3) open shelf(R1) | Wheelchairs for the disabled(R2) |
|---------------------|---|----------------------------------|

Public Libraries offer various services designed to help families extend children's interests, often for free or at very low cost. Good mental health allows children to think clearly, develop socially and learn new skills. Additionally, good friends and encouraging words from adults are important for helping children develop self-confidence, high self-esteem, and a healthy emotional outlook on life. In our interview data, we see public libraries offer a variety of services that are helpful to children to develop new skills and self-confidence.

*"We arrange their various sessions on how a child can develop life, develop leadership. By doing this, they easily get many new skills and education." (R1)*

Every child wants a good supportive environment. In this case, the public library helps them. The public library is always for the people; doors are open and provide a safe free place. To develop mental health well decorated and supportive environment is essential.

*"We have decorated our library according to the needs of the children. Here we have created a supportive environment for children. For example, suppose there is adequate light and air, fans, specially made low furniture. And most importantly supportive staff." (R3)*

Playing games is a very important part of a child's mental health. Public libraries create opportunities for children. Children can easily play many games in the library space.

*"We may not provide children's mental health services directly in the library, but children can play using our library space. We organize various competitions. For example, recitation competitions, storytelling, through which the development of mental health occurs, even if not directly." (R2)*

*"We have a variety of game-based services here which makes the kids more cheerful and happy. For example, we have chess here, and various sports are arranged, high jump, long jump etc." (R1)*

The role of public libraries as service providers is highly promoting child mental health.

#### 4.2.6 As a motivator

Every Librarian strives to motivate their employees to more excellent and higher performance towards achieving library mission. Motivation, however, is not about manipulation. It is about understanding the urges and. To provide better services librarian motivates 1stly his staff.

*"Mentally depressed children often behave violently in the library. Tearing up books, shouting, and the staff often gets angry, which is an obstacle to achieving our main goal. That's why we try to motivate the staff, that these can't be done, we have to be more patient and serve the children properly." (R1+R2)*

*"Since there is still a behavioral problem in the library. This is why we motivate employees to provide better services. So that the quality of our service is further improved" (R1)*

Children need praise, encouragement, and at times a reward for helping their motivation with general day-to-day tasks, especially when they are achieving new goals. Public libraries not only motivate their staff but also motivate children, and motivation and reward can help develop a child's mental health.

*"We organize various competitions for children. We reward them for participating in the competition so that they are more motivated and oriented towards the library" (R2)*

*"Mentally depressed children often do a lot of unexpected things. Then, as a librarian, I call them and tell them stories, or love them. Then there's a peace of mind between them." (R1)*

#### 4.2.7 Public library professionals as counsellors and observer

To understand child mental problem counselling is essential. In other countries, public libraries counsel the parent to understand the problem. Still, in Bangladesh, this concept is not popular, but library professionals try to advise them using a different method.

*"In our modern library management system, we occasionally have a monthly chat called Red Tea Chat to engage the community. Here we sometimes try to ask what the children want, whether their mood is improving or if you as a parent, what you want for children?" (R3)*

At present, in Bangladesh, there is no direct counselling. That is why library professionals observe the children and try to understand the problem.

*"Since there is no system of direct counselling yet, we usually observe. We provide mental health services to children based on some of the symptoms. Some people are angry, and some people feel very lonely and depressed, they are not talking, they are not behaving normally" (R1)*

### **4.3 The challenges of public libraries in promoting child mental health**

The problems and challenges identified from the respondent's statement in different aspects of public libraries' roles regarding child mental health promotion. These are as follows:

- 4.3.1 Environmental challenges:** The children hope that the environment where they will be located will be beautiful, developed but we have not been able to fill it appropriately in the library yet. (R1)
- 4.3.2 Infrastructural problems:** Children want an environment that will be secluded; they will be able to live in the joy of a comfortable mind. (R1)
- 4.3.3 Lack of skilled manpower:** There is not enough manpower support for the special care of children. (R2)
- 4.3.4 Lack of adequate training facilities:** No special training is yet provided for mental health care to children. (R3)
- 4.3.5 Budget challenge:** According to the background of Bangladesh, the budget in the public library is less. (R2)
- 4.3.6 Behavior problems:** The staff at the library sometimes do not have child-friendly behaviors. (R1)

### **4.4 Recommendations**

- 4.4.1 Make space and time to talk:** It's essential to create an open environment where children can discuss their feelings without judgment. The library creates can this space.
- 4.4.2 Promotion and marketing:** Since the concept of providing mental health services to children has not been developed in Bangladesh yet. Therefore, public libraries should promote and market more and more children's mental health.
- 4.4.3 Increase special training facility:** Public libraries need to provide more specialized training to provide mental health services for children.
- 4.4.4 Skilled manpower:** Skilled manpower can fulfil the mission of a library. For this, adequate skilled manpower has to be recruited in each library.
- 4.4.5 Fund allocation:** there should be enough budget. In this case, the public library can allocate funds by planning according to their own needs.
- 4.4.6 Building healthy policy for children:** A public library is a place where a child has access to opportunities for mental health development. A health policy needs to be formulated to properly provide mental health services to children in the library.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

Finally, the study has come up with a summary of findings as per its Question:

### **Question-1: What are the key determinants of child mental health?**

In the literature review, the key determinants of child mental health are identified and discussed. It can be seen that there are different types of determinants for determining the mental health of a child, e.g., Poverty and income inequality, Food insecurity and malnutrition, Neighborhood or community, Household income, Parental mental health, and Racism.

### **Question-2: How does the role of public library affect the child's mental health?**

Every public library's role affects child mental health, but in the present study, we see that the library provides child-friendly books, toy bricks, encyclopedia, reading room facility, braille books etc. these kinds of services are not new; it is expected. However, they do not provide any extra benefits to promote child mental health.

Respondent 1 said they provide bibliotherapy, but the therapy is significantly lower. Public libraries collaborate with school libraries, but it is not for child mental health. Respondent 2 said they are sometimes rewarded to children, but all public libraries are not doing this: it is disappointed. According to Respondent 2, they do not yet consult directly with parents. But counselling is essential for promoting child mental health.

**Question-3: How can public libraries flourish their role in promoting school-going child mental health?**

At present, the mental health of the child is a very important issue. In this case, the public library can be a medium to promote children's mental health. At the time, the public library is not doing enough to promote the child's mental health. In this case, the public library can do a variety of work to improve the mental health of school-going children. The first step is to increase the quality of child mental health services. Adequate mental health care equipment for children, such as books and sports equipment, should be added. In addition, more work can be done. For example: to collaborate with different schools, organize workshops and seminars.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The overall finding shows why child mental health is essential and the library's services for children's mental health. Although promoting child mental health by the library is not popular today, the library plays a vital role in this section. In Bangladesh library doesn't provide child mental health directly, but they provide many services which promote child mental health. There are a lot of challenges, but if the right policy is integrated, the library can highly promote child mental health. Libraries can play a crucial role in promoting child mental health in Bangladesh. Libraries offer a safe and supportive environment for children to explore their emotions, learn coping skills, and access resources related to mental health and wellbeing. By partnering with mental health professionals and community organizations, libraries can provide targeted programming and services to support children's mental health needs. Additionally, libraries can serve as a hub for disseminating information about mental health and reducing stigma surrounding mental illness. However, there are also challenges that need to be addressed to fully realize the potential of libraries in promoting child mental health. These include the need for increased funding and resources, as well as training for library staff to effectively support children's mental health needs. Overall, libraries have the potential to be powerful allies in promoting child mental health in Bangladesh, and it is important for policymakers, community leaders, and other stakeholders to recognize and support the important role that libraries can play in this area. By investing in libraries and leveraging their unique strengths, we can help ensure that all children in Bangladesh have access to the resources and support they need to thrive mentally, emotionally, and academically.

### **6.1 Limitations**

**Cultural and contextual factors:** The cultural and contextual elements unique to Bangladesh may have an impact on the function that libraries play in fostering children's mental health there. The generalizability of the findings to other areas or nations may be restricted by several factors.

**Lack of resources and infrastructure:** Due to its inadequate infrastructure and resources, Bangladesh is faced with a number of difficulties, such as a lack of accessible library facilities, not an abundance of skilled librarians, and insufficient funding. The use and efficacy of library-based remedies for children's mental health may be affected by these restrictions.

**Limited research evidence:** It's possible that there aren't sufficient studies explicitly looking at how libraries in Bangladesh affect children's mental health. The reliability and validity of the results could be compromised by the limited scope, methodology, or sample size of the available literature.

**Stigma and cultural barriers:** In Bangladesh, seeking assistance or support for mental health concerns may encounter cultural resistance. Libraries might not be considered typical settings for dealing with mental health issues, and social hurdles might make it difficult to use library services to support children's mental health.

### **6.2 Further area of research**

**Longitudinal studies:** To further understand the long-term effects of library-based interventions on child mental health outcomes, longitudinal research that follows children over a prolonged period is necessary. Such studies could evaluate whether the advantages of library programs are maintained over time and investigate potential variables affecting the preservation of favorable mental health outcomes.

Comparative studies: It would be easier to comprehend the special contributions libraries make to fostering children's mental health if we could compare the efficacy of interventions based in libraries with those based in other settings, such as schools or community-based initiatives. In the context of Bangladesh, comparative studies can be used to pinpoint the particular benefits and restrictions of library-based techniques.

Mixed methods research: A deeper comprehension of the experiences and viewpoints of children, parents, librarians, and other stakeholders participating in library-based interventions would result from the combination of qualitative research methodologies with quantitative studies, such as focus groups or interviews. The contextual complexities, obstacles, and facilitators of using libraries to promote children's mental health can be clarified by qualitative study.

Intervention development and evaluation: The development and evaluation of evidence-based therapies that are specifically suited to the Bangladeshi setting can be the main focus of future study. To broaden the reach and impact of library programs on children's mental health, these interventions may include innovative approaches like digital platforms or community partnerships.

Cost-effectiveness analysis: For sustainability and scalability, it is essential to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of library-based interventions for encouraging child mental health. Future studies may explore the financial implications of putting such solutions into practice, including cost-benefit analyses and evaluations of resource allocation methods.

Stakeholder engagement and collaboration: The relevance, viability, and impact of library-based interventions can be improved by incorporating a variety of stakeholders, such as policymakers, educators, mental health specialists, and community members in the study process. Future studies can concentrate on involving stakeholders in cooperative research and implementation efforts to build a complete strategy for child mental health promotion in Bangladesh.

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