

ERODING SOCIAL CAPITAL AND INCREASING DIVORCE IN DHAKA CITY

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Abstract

In the pursuit of gaining financial solvency and for so doing keeping utmost focus on career development, family value, the hallmark of social capital, is seemingly getting less focus in the present capitalist social structure of Dhaka city. The paper argues that modern couples' ignorance towards developing social capital is a major factor behind the alarming increase in the divorce rate in Dhaka City. This study intends to explore how the culture of extreme individualism is causing a profound negative impact on strengthening social capital and the marital bondage is getting weaker which provokes couples to terminate their conjugal bondage even on trifle issues without considering deeply on social norms, values, obligations - the core features of social capital. In line with a comprehensive content analysis of the relevant secondary data, qualitative interviews of eight scholarly participants - four PhD Fellows of Dhaka University and four advocates in the High Court Division- have been arranged with semi-structured questionnaires to get the insights regarding the relevance of eroding social capital and the tendency of divorce among the couples in Dhaka city. The study findings suggest that the policymakers concerned with social stability in Bangladesh need to adopt policies keeping social capital into consideration along with financial capital – economic solvency- and human capital –education-; and for that, a more comprehensive study regarding the significance of social capital is needed to develop a pragmatic and time- worthy strategy to check the reckless increase of divorce rate in Dhaka city.

Key Words: Family value, financial capital, Human capital, Increasing Divorce, Individualism, Social Capital

Introduction

Divorce, the final termination of a conjugal life, has now been in an alarming state in Bangladesh in general and in the urban areas like Dhaka City in particular. The social structure in Bangladesh is now undergoing a radical

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change. It was a common belief in the past and still most often uttered in the local vocabularies that a bride goes to the house of her husband wearing red dress and comes back, usually after the death of her husband, wearing the white cloth. It suggests that the bondage between the couple is seemingly eternal that can even not be terminated through death. From religious point of views, every religion discourages divorce. In Muslim law, though divorce is legally accepted, but Islam, as Doi (1992) opines, strongly encourages people to get married to live in peace and solidarity (Patoari, 2020:21). In traditional Hindu culture, on the other hand, divorce is totally prohibited (Uddin & Hossain, 2017 cited in Patoari, 2020:21).

However, the present state of divorce rate in Dhaka city does not reflect the belief with which our society has been accustomed to. Even few years ago, the couples and specially women, in case of intolerable marital experience, preferred mostly separation. They did so to get release from the physical and mental harassments from the family members of the in-laws on the one hand and to maintain the social norms of thinking about the social stigma of both their children and themselves resulted from divorce on the other (Choudhury, 2019). Women, in particular, tried utmost to persist their conjugal life any how mostly due to their financial and physical insecurities and social exclusion. However, the result is getting reverse as with the increase of education and financial solvency educated women, as per Hossain & Ghose, (2018), are more eager to appeal for divorce (cited in Sarker et al. 2022:40). The capitalist modernity that promotes individualism has deeply penetrated in the mind of modern people in the recent years in Bangladesh (Ahmed 2017:44). People are relentlessly running after material gains to enrich their financial capital – money, saving, wealth -, and human capital – higher degree, skill. In so doing, the other vital capital such as social capital is seemingly undervalued and/or very marginally focused. Characterized by trust, norms, networks, cooperation, sharing and features like these, social capital works as the glue to enhance bondage among people in the family and the society at large. The existing literatures hardly keep focus on this vital issue that eroding social capital is a major factor behind the intolerance among the couple. The intangible values viz., sympathy, sacrifice, tolerance, respect, altruism seem to be meaningless in the capitalist thinking of development which provokes them to think for the final termination of their conjugal life- divorcee. Most often, the couples quarrel for trivial issues and take the hasty decision of getting divorce. One of the basic reasons is that in many cases the mental touch between the couples does not grow up to a deeper extent even living under the same roof over the years. The present study seeks to explore the significance of social capital in strengthening bondage among the couples. And thus, the basic research question is: To what extent is social capital practiced by the couples in Dhaka city? And secondly: How does declination of social capital work as the vital cause behind the

alarming increase of divorce in Dhaka city? This paper argues that the linkage and connectivity between practicing social capital and preserving family integration is very firm. And the study findings suggest that declination of social capital is a crucial factor behind the alarming growth of divorce rate in Dhaka city. To reach into the study objective, the independent variable in the study is social capital whereas the dependent variable is preservation of conjugal life.

The paper, as follows, consists of two sections. The first section sheds light on the basic concepts of social capital and divorce. In the second section, the present state of divorce rate in Dhaka city and the significance of social capital in reducing divorce rate are discussed based on the specific indicators of social capital - trust, norms, networks – followed by a precise discussion of the collected data and a concluding remark.

Literature Review - Social Capital and Divorce

Emergence of Social Capital

Social capital is relatively a new concept in development literature. However, the essence of social capital can be found in the writings of great scholars in all ages and eras. Scholars from different arenas in different periods including Adam Smith, David Hume, Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Max Weber and many others dealt with almost similar concepts in different titles (Claridge 2018:4) such as community development (viz., Kay 2005, Islam 2014b, 2012b), participatory development (Durstun 1999), community empowerment (Islam & Morgan 2012a, b), community building (Putnam 1993 et al.; Potapchuk et al. 1997) (Adopted from Islam, 2015). However, L. Judson Hanifan in 1916 coined the term ‘social capital’ first in the modern time (Putnam & Goss 2002, cited in Ahmed 2019:44). And later, the concept got attention to a wider scale academically in 1980s by Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, (Fukuyama 2000:100) and early 1990s by Robert Putnam (Ahmed 2019:44). Coleman provided the initial analytical framework to social capital which Putnam followed and popularized the concept later on (Pargal et al. 2000). As the time progresses, social capital has got much attention towards the academicians and the number of literatures that were produced only three (03) in 1993 on social capital increased to two hundred and seventy-seven (277) in 2003 (Bhuiyan & Evers 2007).

Definition of Social Capital

Due to its multidimensionality (Uslaner & Dekker, 2001, Hean et al. 2003), social capital does have hybrid theoretical origin which has added more complexity in theorizing social capital (Claridge 2018:4) and scholars have defined social capital based on their disciplines. This study does not concentrate to resolve the

complexity in defining social capital rather mention those definitions that have relevancy with the study objectives.

Firstly, Robert Putnam, the pioneer of popularizing the concept social capital, considers social capital (1993:167), as the characteristics of social organization viz., trust, norms, networks, that enhance the society's capacity by promoting collective actions. Fukuyama has explained social capital almost in the same lens of Putnam and to him (2000:98), social capital refers to the informal values or norms that people, belonging to a group, exercise to develop cooperation among them. James Coleman has considered social capital from a rational point of view and social capital, according to him (1988: S98), refers to different types of entities having two common features such as they constitute some forms of social structures, and they promote certain actions of the individuals who belong to the structure. From a normative perspective, like Putnam, Smithson (1982) defines social capital as the sympathetic relationship of the individuals that they exercise among themselves and the actors involved in that congenial relationship avail the benefits of the cooperative actions among the members. (Robinson et al. 2002:6). The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2001) defines social capital as the features like network, norms, values and understanding that contribute to develop co-operation among the people belonging to any association or with the other groups. (Bhuiyan & Evers 2007).

Definitions, as cited above, clearly reflect the great deal of variations in defining social capital and there is still lack of consensus developed among scholars to reach to a precise definition on social capital. However, recognizing the fact that social capital is multidimensional, some core features of it can be detected and that it deepens bondage among people which brings outcome both for the individuals and the groups involved into the process of connectivity.

Types of Social Capital

Social capital can be in different types such as bonding, bridging, and linking (Claridge, 2018). Bonding social capital persists among people who are closely connected like family members which is horizontal; bridging social capital is vertical which is practiced relatively loosely connected people such as class friends; and linking is absolutely vertical which persists among people belonging to different status including government officials and common people (World Bank, 2002, cited in Roy & Rahman, 2013). Again, Uphoff and Wjaryatna (2000), illustrate two types of social capital such as structural and cognitive social capital (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2000a, cited in Claridge, 2004). Structural social capital, as Hittet al (2002) opine, refers to the socially constructed rules, procedures, precedents that work to bring mutual benefits (Claridge, 2004) and cognitive social capital refers to the norms, values, trust,

beliefs, attitudes that contribute to gain collective interests (Blakeley, 2002:199, cited in Ahmed 2019:45).

Divorce

Divorce is the legal system of terminating a conjugal life. According to Strong and Cohen (2013), divorce or dissolution of marriage refers to the termination of a married life that puts an end of the matrimonial bondage between the husband and the wife and releases the couple from executing the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage (Afroz, 2019:261). Like getting married with their own choices, any one - husband or wife or both - can apply for terminating their relationship through divorce. It is one of the fundamental rights of people either to marry and found a family and go for its dissolution. Bangladesh is also a signatory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, henceforth) and in the article 16 of UDHR it is stated that everyone –man or woman – irrespective of class, gender, race, country, or religion possesses the rights to marry; found a family and can equally go for the dissolution of the conjugal life.

Divorce is obviously a global practice. The modern couples in Dhaka city are highly afflicted with this unexpected global trend. It happens mostly when the stock of social capital gets weaker among couple that develops mistrust among them and provokes them to the path of divorce. A man in touch with his wife and children becomes more disciplined, kind, soft minded and a single life, on the contrary, though does have relatively more liberty and flexibility to engage in charitable deeds; however, the softer feeling of life is usually missing there (Bacon, 1597, cited in Lall, 1997:74).). Homer considers a man as despicable and immoral who lives without a family (Aristotle, cited in Karim, 2015:38). Having a family with a convenient family harmony is an integral part of life and termination of a conjugal life hardly brings peace and contentment in human lives. This is a very vital issue. However, the existing literatures hardly focus on this vital issue that people's carelessness towards respecting social capital is a major cause behind the intolerable relationship between the modern couples which lead them towards the path of divorce. The present study aims at exploring this very vital but less focused issue that more focus in forming social capital is very vital to check the reckless divorce of the modern couples in Dhaka city.

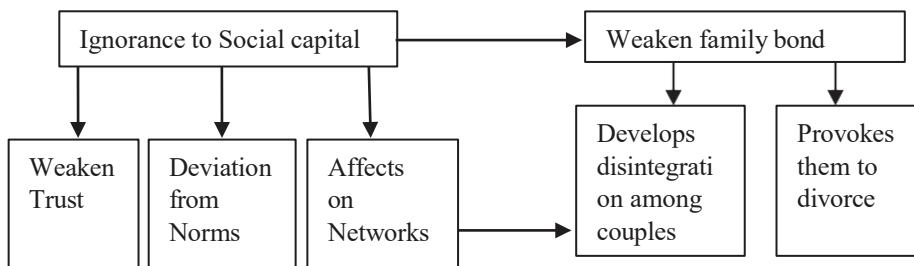
Theoretical Framework

Social capital is a multidimensional concept (Putnam 2001). The researchers undergo challenges in different degrees to choose the theory best suited for their studies (Claridge 2004:30). However, three authors are mostly cited who have contributed to the initial development of social capital theory viz., Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam, (Claridge 2018), and literatures

developed after them have mostly followed on these three authors in theorizing social capital.

These three leading contributors of social capital are, however, divided into two streams in terms of conceptualizing social capital. Led by Bourdieu, this group considers social capital as the attribution of private goods which are applied by the individuals to maximize their interests (Bourdieu, 1986, Burt, 1997, Lin, 2001, cited in Kamal et al 2021). Bourdieu (1983:249) and the thinkers alike explain social capital from Marxist point of view and consider social capital as the means of developing networks among powerful classes to exercise power and gain advantages (cited in Roy & Rahman, 2013). To Bourdieu, social capital is a private good and that an individual uses it as the resource based on the social position (Bhuiyan & Evers 2007). Bourdieu's theory, though, has some unique features; it does not match with the core objective of the study. According to Bourdieu, social capital can only be availed by the powerful classes; however, the educated classes in Bangladesh who are usually more powerful are applying to get divorce more for the weak stock of social capital.

The other group is comparatively large in number and considers social capital as the collective asset that assists people to achieve collective gains (Coleman, 1988, Putnam, 1993 et al., cited in Kamal et al. 2021). Like Coleman, Putnam also considers both the structural – rules, regulations - and cognitive -trust, norms, and networks -as the vital features of social capital (Coleman 1988, Putnam 1993 et al.). They consider social capital as the by-products to other capitals that facilitate the society as a whole (Coleman 1988: S116, Putnam et al. 1993:170). One's trustworthiness, they both opine, is beneficial to others (Coleman 1988: S117, Putnam 1993:170). Moreover, they both admit the negative consequences of social capital and that some forms of social capital can be beneficial for one while detrimental for other (Putnam, 2001, Coleman 1988). The core intention of the study is to explain how family bond gets weaker and divorce increases when the features of trust, norms, obligations, networks are not properly practiced which are found in both Putnam and Coleman's analyses of social capital. Therefore, the authors have developed the theoretical frame work of the study based on Putnam (1993, 1995, and 2001) and Coleman (1988, 1990, and 1994), that can be explained in the following way:



Research Methodology

The study is basically qualitative in nature substantiated by quantitative data though in very marginal scale. Qualitative methodology is purposively prioritized for the study as by so doing, the researchers can go into the depth of human actions and explore the factors that stimulate the individuals to conduct those actions (Islam 2015:33). It is particularly applicable to discover the underlying motive of human behaviour (Kothari and Garg, 2017:3) and is good at capturing meaning, process, and context (Bryman, 1988:62, Rose, 1982, cited in Devine 2002:199). In line with a content analysis of relevant secondary data - books, articles, newspaper reports etc. - , qualitative interviews of eight scholarly participants - four PhD Fellows of Dhaka University and four advocates in High Court Division- have been arranged with semi-structured questionnaires. Due to their reluctance to identify the names, the Alpha-Numeric Code number is applied in explaining the views of the participants. For that the PhD Fellows at the University of Dhaka have been coded as PF1, PF2, PF3, PF4, and advocates in High Court Division are coded as AHD1, AHD2, AHD3, and AHD4. Justification behind the selection of the PhD researchers and advocates from the High Court Division is that they are well concerned about the issue. While the former are more concerned in academic discourse, the latter regularly observes the real picture of the couple's presence in the court premises for executing the legal procedures of divorce. Therefore, the views of the eight participants can provide valuable insights and can add value to make the study an enriched one.

Divorce Scenario in Dhaka City

Divorce is never an expectation as it spoils the dream of a couple cherished during the marriage. The state of despair that emerges from divorce has now increased to an alarming state in Dhaka city. In the last few years, the graph of divorce is constantly on the rise. A survey shows that the number of divorces occurring between 2010 and 2019 in Dhaka City was about 70,000 (BBS, 2021, cited in Chowdhury 2023:31).

Each year Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) makes an extensive survey on various aspects of the country including the state of divorce. In respect of divorce rate, the report is somewhat same with just marginal modification. In 2018, for instance, the report in the daily newspapers on divorce scenario in Dhaka was 'one divorce in per one hour in Dhaka city' (Prothom Alo, 2018). In 2023, the report is on an average, 'one divorce is registered in every 40 minutes in the capital' (Prothom Alo, 2023). In his interview with the researchers, one of the participants says "The day is not so far when the daily newspaper will publish one divorce in per one minute in Dhaka and the extreme sense of maximizing

individual aptitude is a major factor behind this upward graph of divorce rate in Dhaka city” (PF1). The way the number of files is getting increased for divorce in the capital, is really alarming. In his interview with the writers, another participant argues “We are getting more cases of divorce at present and most of them are women” (AHD1). However, many scholars opine that BBS report does not reflect the exact picture. As Population Scientist of Dhaka University Professor ASM Amanullah charged the data collection method of BBS as faulty and the number of divorces, he continues, is much higher than that of the BBS report (The Business Standard, 2023).

The number of divorces in Dhaka city has constantly been in the upwards. In 2012, 5,353 people registered for divorce which was increased to 7,458 in 2016 (The Daily Star August, 4, 2017). The salient feature is that women are now applying more for getting divorce. In his interview with the authors, one of the interviewees said “in most cases, women’s educational capability; their sense of awareness and self-dignity; physical dysfunction of their male partners and loneliness and deviation from traditional beliefs due to the influence of modern technology, viz., social media are the root causes behind the increasing application of women to terminate their conjugal relationship” (PF2). As the time progresses, the number of applications from women is constantly getting higher to a remarkable extent than that of men. The table 1 as follows, reveals the state of application of divorce in Dhaka city by the couples in the last three years (2020-2022).

State of application of divorce in Dhaka city in the last three years (2020-2022)	Total Number of applicants in Dhaka City	Number of men applicants	Number of women applicants
2020	12513	4032	8481
2021	14659	3824	9264
2022	13288	4272	9016

The table 1 clearly manifests the huge gap between men and women in terms of number applying for divorce in Dhaka city. The divorce rate has got doubled within just one year. It rose to 1.0 per thousand people in 2022 compared to 0.5 percent in 2021 (Prothom Alo, 14 June, 2022).

Relevance between Divorce and Social capital

There are diverse determinants and indicators of social capital such as trust, norms, reciprocity, obligations, altruism, sympathy, honesty, good will, etc. All these dimensions of social capital possess strong linkage and connectivity with each other and among themselves. Any social relation, and of course, the conjugal life persists on the cooperative attitudes among the actors. And

spontaneous cooperation, as Putnam et al. (1993:167) opine, is promoted by social capital. Social capital works as a sort of collateral that develops trust and confidence. Trust is a moral resource that increases with uses and whenever two people express trust to one another, it promotes confidence upon each other (Ibid, p:169). For trust being deepen, development of network and sharing views; showing respect and attention to each other's needs are very important. Looking at the modern couple in Dhaka City and especially where both the husband and wife work outside the home, the space of sharing and so doing development of network has been very limited. Firstly, they have to undergo tremendous pressures at their professional arenas and prove their competence to survive their jobs as well as to get further promotion. On the other hand, they have to face the horror of traffic jam every day and spend endless hours due to traffic congestion which strongly hinders to develop social capital among the couples. Robert Putnam (2001), shows how traffic congestion causes profound negative impact in developing social capital among the city dwellers. Either the working husband wait for the wife after coming back at home or vice versa which causes frustration among them and increases intolerance. Again, after coming at home, many of them either get busy with their professional works or pass time with modern devices which also shrink the space of developing the stock of social capital. Due to face book, many couples get engaged with illicit relationship (Ahmed 2017:50). For all these things, the level of trust among the couples in Dhaka city is constantly getting weaker which leads them towards divorce. In his interview, one of the interviewees argues

If people give time to each other after coming home reducing their extent of time in face book, it develops understanding and feeling for each other, and the number of cases for divorce comes much less to us. (AHD 2).

Again, many working couples live in separate places due to the different locations of their working places. This physical gap also affects on their networks. In many cases, this detachment affects on their mental relationship; causes doubt; impede to develop the stock of social capital and the constant detachment widens the space of terminating their conjugal bond through divorce.

Norm is a vital determinant of social capital (Coleman, 1988, Putnam, 1993 et al.). Deviation from social norms affects negatively in the formation of social capital. Norms impede people from being free riders (Putnam et al. 1993:171). Norms restrain people to be opportunists and strengthen family bond by promoting people to work selflessly (Coleman 1988: S104). A married person follows the norms and becomes a generous and loving husband (Bacon, 1597, cited in Lall, 1997:74). According to Fukuyama (2000:99), "families are

obviously important sources of social capital everywhere". Family life, according to Gramsci, should always be highly prioritized as it is root of practicing all sorts of norms and values in human life, (Edwards 2004, p.49). For a peaceful and convenient conjugal life, the selflessness of both the husband and the wife is equally important. In absence of that, the level of social capital erodes which affects on the married relationship of people.

Financial capability is obviously needed (Dreze& Sen, 2013:18) but as an intangible value, social capital (Coleman, 1994) is equally important. Most studies that have recently been conducted behind the unhappy relationship among the couples in Dhaka City have identified somewhat the same results. And that, the sole focus of people is now to achieve the tangible values viz., money, name, fame, career (Ahmed 2017, Choudhury 2019, Afroz 2019, Patoari 2020, Mahzebin 2021). There is huge rift from traditional norms. Extended families are breaking down and, in most cases, people are living only with their children. Educated mothers in the prior, provide the primary education to their children and therefore, the human capital of the mothers contributed for the career development of the children. Fathers also remained relieved regarding the care of the children which also worked to develop trust and confidence between the couples. Coleman (1988: S110) says that if the education and skill of the parents don't work for developing social capital through assisting children, their human capital is meaningless towards children. And it is happening apparently in city life of Dhaka as both the husband and the wife have to remain so busy for their outside works. Mothers who are housewives try to manage almost everything single handedly by doing all the domestic chores and taking every care of the children. In fact, the welfare of children restrains many couples to persist the relationship any how (Choudhury, 2019:143). However, due to career development, many women nowadays tend to take children at late and as such the sense of bond that deepens with the presence of children does not develop which also provokes them to divorce. One of the interviewees says to the author that "While collecting data in conducting my research, I have seen that the changing trend of family structures is a major factor for declining the family harmony in the urban areas (PF3)" In Dhaka City, another interview argues;

The couples live alone without their parents in laws. In our social norms, old people usually settle the disputes among their children and restrain them to go against social norms which contribute to strengthen social capital. (PF4).

Moreover, reciprocity is another important component of norm (Putnam et al.1993:172) that forms the foundation of social capital (Ahmed, 2019:50). According to Putnam (2000:135) "A society that relies on generalized reciprocity

is more efficient than distrustful society” (Ahmed,Ibid). If the practice of generalized reciprocity is developed that the husband will help the wife or vice versa in the expectation that he /she will receive the same assistance in the future, it enhances the stock of social capital. In the patriarchal structure of Bangladesh, women usually sacrifice themselves for the greater interest of the family, in the hope that their contributions will be recognized with respect. Many women wait throughout the day and work at home alone in the expectation that the husbands after coming back at home will give them company, and extend their helping hands in domestic chores whatever they can or at least appreciate their contributions with a smiling face. In practice, the exchange becomes one sided which raise doubt on the sense of sympathy and altruism in the minds of the couples and mostly towards women. The generalized reciprocity does not develop. Women suffer from the pangs of loneliness and inferiority complex; and out of utter frustration many women get involved with extramarital relationship and due to the lack of social capital, the conjugal life moves gradually towards the path of termination. In her interview with the authors, one interviewee says

Educated women apply more for divorce because they no longer like to admit that women will only sacrifice and in turn get insult and dishonor. (AHD3).

Societies everywhere possess some forms of social capital and norms which develop stocks of social capital including qualities such as truthfulness, committing social obligations and reciprocity (Fukuyama, 2000:99). Social norms that are developed from spontaneous interaction among people are not found in printed forms rather these informal values promote people to act altruistically and deviance from those norms result diverse adverse consequences including family breakdown (Ibid pp. 102:105). Therefore, the breakdown of family reflects the deviation from social norms and is an indicator of measuring the state of social capital in a society (Ibid p: 102). In USA, the declination of family value, increasing divorce rates, extramarital relationship, teen-age pregnancy, rising trend of single – parent families clearly reflect the declining nature of social capital (Huntington,1996:304).

It is happening as the Americans have been getting deviated from their traditional beliefs and executing antisocial activities (Ibid). All these features are more or less practiced by the couples in Dhaka City, educated classes in particular. Like the other modern society viz., USA, family disharmony, extramarital relationship of the couples, increasing divorce rates, rising trend of single – parent etc. have been the common phenomena in the capital of Bangladesh. In her interview with the authors, one of the interviewees says “I mostly deal with the cases related to

family disputes including divorce and in almost all cases the basic causes are lack of trust and deviation from social norms (AHD4).

Divorce, therefore, is a vital indicator of measuring the state of social capital in a society (Huntington, 1996, Fukuyama, 2000). And social capital is declined when truthfulness is not practiced; norms are ignored; social obligations are not met and the culture of self-centeredness deeply penetrate in human mind which restrain them from altruistic behaviors. There is a huge paradigm shift from ‘us to me’ and that is, in the social structure we use to believe that whatever we do, it is done for the sake of the family. However, the prime focus is seemingly on individual career and all the other issues are secondary even the betterment of children, as the couples while going to divorce, nowadays, are not considering deeply about the adverse impacts of their divorce in the overall development of the children. There must be a balance between material and spiritual needs and it can be possible as Bhutan has successfully been practicing over the years through its development philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH) (Sarker et al. 2022), and the society in Bhutan is slowly but constantly achieving economic growth keeping equal focus of developing their stock of social capital (Ibid).

Social capital stands for social well-being in the positive spectrum (Claridge 2004) and intra-personal trust (Bankston and Zhou 2002, cited in Claridge 2004), optimism, life satisfaction are the fundamental determinants of social capital (Narayan and Cassidy 2001, cited in Claridge 2004). The continuous increase of divorce rate in Dhaka city clearly reflects the absence of trust, satisfaction, and optimism among the modern couples in Dhaka city. Life in modern world, as Douglas North says, is very complex (Putnam et al. 1993:178). The intolerable jam has added more complexity for the city dwellers. Almost every day while returning back at home, people have to suffer for this horrible traffic congestion which causes profound negative impact on their mental strength. It affects on people’s tolerance power and they lose temper very quickly resulting the quarrel in the family even on the trivial issues. Moreover, modern technology has already developed a narcissistic generation (Ahmed 2017:51) that provokes people to live into fantasy even at the cost of sacrificing their long traditional believes, values, norms – the core features of social capital.

Discussion

The views of the eight participants and the data found from the robust analysis of the relevant secondary sources clearly reveal that the eroding trend of social capital is a crucial factor behind the alarming termination of conjugal relationship in the capital. A conjugal life without trust, confidence, cooperation and sympathy for each other cannot persist. From ‘one divorce in per one hour

in Dhaka city' in 2018, it has turned into 'one divorce in every 40 minutes in the capital' in 2022. Experts, however, do disagree with this rate claiming that the rate of divorce in the capital is higher to a greater extent as the BBS reports suggest. More comprehensive study is obviously required to identify the probable actual rate of divorce. However, the rate of divorce that we have at hands, clearly provide the testimony of a grim picture of the state of family breakdown in Dhaka city and family breakdown is a vital indicator of measuring social capital (Huntington 1996, Fukuyama, 2000).

The constant increase of divorcee rate in Dhaka city provides strong testimony that the level of social capital among the couples is very weak. The profit-hunting mentality of the capitalist philosophy that has deeply penetrated in the minds of the modern couples in Bangladesh (Ahmed 2017:48), seems to deviate people from the emotional touches that work as the glue to strengthen family relationship. Marx and Engels(1970:38) sharply criticize this profit hunting nature of the capitalist by stating that the sentimental attachment that tighten family bondage has been demolished by the capitalists and turned the family relationship as merely a monetary relation (Sarker et al. 2022:37).

The trend of divorce worldwide is now on the upwards and the capital of Bangladesh is also not an exception. For the maintenance of family, financial capability is must and for that the achievements of human capital- education, skill – is also equally needed but the equal emphasis on forming social capital can in no way be ignored. People in Dhaka city seem to have no time to spare. People like to gain more and more and run relentlessly to achieve that but the material riches only cannot ensure peace and happiness as more money for the Americans fail to bring happiness for them (Layard, 2005:3, cited in Sen 2009:273). Aristotle also opposes the search for infinite wealth (Karim, 2015, p.49). Modernity creates artificial needs and provokes people to achieve those needs in any way and under any pretext. In so doing, they tend to forget the root of happiness and that is the development of family harmony - the core of social capital.

In the era of globalization, the task of maintaining a family alone by the father is very tough. Moreover, women – skilled, highly skilled, or unskilled – like to be self-reliant to contribute equally and enjoy the dignity of life. In so doing, they fail to make a balance between their roles inside and outside the families. They fail to provide time and company, as desired, to their counterparts and children. Moreover, in the traditional culture of Bangladesh, women have to do all the domestic chores irrespective of their heavy workloads outside the home or social status and with some exceptions; they hardly find their husbands beside them to execute the domestic responsibilities. Due to immeasurable pressures, both at

home and outside the home, often they fail to control their temper. The softer feelings of social capital- love, pity, sympathy, kindness, altruism - that tighten the family bond, get weaker and at one stage the conjugal life is terminated through divorce especially from women. The balance between the two wheels – family and work place – is very vital which they, in most cases, fail to do and divorce is the final consequence of it. Scholars worldwide consider women's presence in the outside the work as the root cause of divorce everywhere (Putnam 1995) including Dhaka city (viz., Choudhury 2019, Afroz 2019, Patoari 2020, Mahzebin 2021). As such the number of applicants for divorce is nearly 70 per cent from women and majority of them belong to the educated classes. Their achievements of human capital - education, skill – therefore fail to establish peace, contentment and security in their lives as keeping undue focus on financial capital and human capital; they fail to make an adjustment between the two wheels of family life and their career development.

Moreover, old people, nowadays, usually do not stay with their children. Old people, in the social tradition of Bangladesh, work like a banyan tree and restrain their children from doing any task that might hamper family harmony. However, old people are not as honored as they were in the past. The eminent population scientist of Bangladesh, Professor DR Nurun Nabi, says that the grandparents hardly have any space in the present trend of nuclear families (The Daily Sun, 2018, cited in Sarker et al.: 42). Therefore, there is seemingly none to settle the disputes among the couples in Dhaka city. And all these phenomena are happening in the conjugal relationship of the modern couples in the capital and the absence of social capital within the family is a crucial factor behind the alarming increase of divorce in Dhaka city.

Conclusion

The study intended to explore two questions: To what extent is social capital practiced by the couples in Dhaka city? And secondly: How does declination of social capital work as the vital cause behind the alarming increase of divorce in Dhaka city? The answer of the first question is that social capital is not paid its due attention by the modern couples in the capital. There is a constant declination of social capital in Dhaka city. The rate of divorce is continuously increasing to a larger extent and the breakdown of family is a vital indicator of measuring social capital. Secondly, the eroding trend of social capital is a crucial determinant behind the alarming increase of divorce rate in the capital. Along with tremendous workloads in the outside work fields, people have to waste a lot of time every day for traffic congestion which limits acutely their scopes of spending time and sharing their views with their families at home; affecting on

their tolerance power; causing family disputes; and all these phenomena contributing to the decay of the stock of social capital.

And finally, in almost all the studies, the presence of women in the outside works is considered as one of the prime causes for the declination of social capital. In many cases, they have to choose one between the family and the profession and most educated women nowadays prefer the later that leads the former institution towards termination. The development of social capital is an inalienable necessity as it is the byproducts of all other capitals. Therefore, should we discourage women to join in the outside work forces? The straight answer is no. The first and the foremost task is to make a balance between the two wheels - the family life and the outside work. In so doing, there must be a balance between material and spiritual needs and both the husband and the wife have to develop a harmonious family atmosphere with the moral resources of trust, confidence, cooperation, sympathy, passion, honesty and respect for each other. They must realize the truth that individual is helpless if left alone (Hanifen, 1916, Ahmed 2019:44). And obviously, the role of the old people is very crucial as they work as the glue among the family members and restrain people from doing anything that might go against the norms of the family. The development of social capital is absolutely crucial for stopping the reckless trend of divorce in the capital. There is hardly any literature that has focused the inherent linkage and connectivity between social capital and preserving family integration. The contribution of the paper is that, it has focused this very vital but almost untouched issue and recommends conducting more comprehensive research about how the family relation is being constantly terminated in Dhaka city for the acute decay of social capital.

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