

Social Capital for Upholding Social and Psychological Wellbeing of the Family with Migrant Members in Northern Bangladesh

Md. Rostom Ali

MPhil Fellow at Institute of Bangladesh Studies (IBS), University of Rajshahi,
Rajshahi- 6205

Email: mdrostomali190@gmail.com

Abstract: This research paper attempts to explore how social capital works for upholding socio-psychological wellbeing among families with migrant members due to the absence of the family member (s). A structured questionnaire survey based quantitative study was carried out among 400 families in the four Unions of the four Upazilas in the Northern region of Bangladesh. Respondents who had at least one family member in abroad for 2 years or more. Moreover, it has been identified few important things by this research. The highest level of communication (both internal and external communication) is existed by migrant both inside of the family and outside of the family. Consequently, social bonding as well as network facilitate to stretch social cooperation among them. In terms of preserving social and psychological wellbeing, this research revealed that there is a connection between social capital, and social wellbeing along with psychological wellbeing. Therefore, social cooperation is more important thing for upholding social and psychological wellbeing through social capital.

Keywords: Social Capital; Social Wellbeing; Social Cooperation; Psychological Wellbeing

1. Introduction

Social capital understandably refers to preserve social attachment. The key purpose of using social capital concept is to improve connectivity among all social beings. At this point, there are three types of social capital (bonding, bridging and linking), which is mainly discussed in this research paper. The link between social capital and social wellbeing along with psychological wellbeing is manifested, but the application of its facilitation is not properly used toward the betterment of personal, family, and community settings (Babaei et al., 2012). Particularly, in the context of Bangladesh, the practice of social capital in the different type of societal issues is not up to the mark. Dealing with social issues, it is high time to use social capital for the betterment in almost all life events (Bottrel, 2008). However, in this research paper, the key purpose is to explore how migrant communicates with rest of the family members, neighbors, near relatives and others, and how social capital works for upholding social wellbeing and psychological wellbeing to the families with migrant members particularly. There are few important areas that has been focused in this research paper, namely; (a) types of communication between migrant, family members, neighbors, and near relatives; (b) the facilitation of social capital for preserving social cooperation and overall wellbeing among them; and (c) what ways social capital helps them for keeping social and psychological wellbeing. After

conducting this research work, it is found that the highest percentage of the respondents has claimed, migrant can communicate frequently with rest of the family members, neighbors and near relatives. That means, they keep highest level of bonding and bridging social capital to continue that attachment and relationship among them. In terms of having social wellbeing, social cooperation along social bonding is also important, because these (social cooperation and others wellbeing) are inter-connected in achieving societal goals or overcoming crises (Halliwell, 2014). One of the key things is important to ensure or preserve social wellbeing or overall wellbeing, which is related to psychological wellbeing as well. Here, the role of social capital is instrumental because of social bonding and relationship (Cramm, Mollar & Nieboer, 2012). If persons can communicate with one-another frequently, and normally they can psychologically feel comfortable whether meaningful communications or not. According to other view, whereas a person is a social being by born, this connectivity is never lost due to physical distance. Hence, social capital facilitates relationship among migrant, neighbors and near relatives for upholding social cooperation, social bonding, social and psychological wellbeing.

2. Literature Review

There are few relevant studies already done by scholarly people across the world. The notion of social capital is not newly apparent, but till date, very limited research in the context of Bangladesh has been done in the concerned issues. Here, the word “Social Capital” conveys social interactions. It also facilitates individual to preserve good relationship with all corresponding people (Aral & Alytne, 2011). As conceptualizing social capital, there are four important pillars that are existing, namely; a) personal relationship, b) social network support, c) cooperative action, and d) community engagement. These pillars instrumentally contribute to preserve a wider range of societal wellbeing (Scrivens & Smith, 2013). Individual usually do communicate purposively. In case of homogeneous communication, it has bigger impact on bonding. Wang (2014) found that homogeneous social network has negative effects on bonding relation as well. Consequently, the preservation of social wellbeing is essential. Therefore, social capital is applied for upholding social wellbeing. Because it helps individual to face and to overcome crisis situation. Van Deth & Zmerli (2010) found that there is a correlation between social capital and social crisis in both family and community setting. Many of the experts claimed that social capital enables individual to get rid of social crisis. To measure the effectiveness of using social capital to the societal issues, it demands to conduct further research. However, a study conducted among 222 senior respondents in the University of Sydney, Australia. The purpose of that study was to explore nexus between internet user and social capital. It revealed that social capital has significant association to ensure wellbeing particularly social wellbeing (Sun et al., 2008). Another study was conducted in 2012 among 9,604 respondents to measure a relationship between social capital and wellbeing through a cross-sectional study. Result revealed that individuals who have maximum level of trust upon corresponding people are much happier other than individuals who are trustless (Bai et al., 2019). Similar type of research was carried out in the context of

Poland. Research objective was to measure whether or to what extent social capital helps migrant workers to deal with life event by taking adaptation strategies. Study found positive association between variables (Ryen et al., 2008). In case of ensuring social wellbeing, there is a research gap to explore how social capital works to the concerned issues. Social capital in building networking skills and strategies depends on which ways individuals carry out a good communication with corresponding people. Because, in nature, individuals are used to communicate with family members, friends, and community people (Ryan, 2011). Another study revealed that social capital is used as a fixed asset of community activities in order to build social relationship toward social wellbeing. That study was conducted among Sri Lankan migrants in order to explore social phenomenon and wellbeing (Pathirage & Collyer, 2011).

3. Objectives

Objectives of this research paper are following:

- a) To explore what types of communication and bonding maintain among migrants, family members, neighbors and near relatives; and
- b) To investigate whether or to what extent social and psychological wellbeing exists between migrant, and community people including near relatives through bonding and bridging social capital.

4. Methodology of this Research Paper

As designing of this research paper, quantitative approach was used to collect necessary data from the respondents. This was a cross-sectional study in nature. It was conducted in the four unions of the four districts in Northern Bangladesh.

In this regard, a structured questionnaire was developed for collecting quantitative data from 400 respondents who has a member living in abroad for earnings in Northern Districts of Bangladesh. In this case, four districts were chosen purposively, namely; Bogura, Joypur Hat, Rangpur, and Gaibandha. In terms of selecting Upazila and Union of each district, it was also taken purposively. Whereas, total migrant families at union levels of Northern Bangladesh are unknown. Respondents were selected by using Systematic Random Sampling (SRS). Sample was determined through following formula for unknown population (Kotheri, 2014).

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Here,

n= Sample size

z= Confidence level (at 95% probability = 1.96)

e= Acceptable error (error limit 5%, i.e., 0.05)

p= Estimated population proportion (0.5 this maximizes the simple size)

q= 1-p = (1-0.5) =0.5

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2 * 0.5 * 0.5}{(0.05)^2} = \frac{0.960}{0.0025} = 384.1 \approx 384$$

Moreover, 400 respondents were equally distributed into four selected districts (100 respondents in each district). As the techniques of data analysis and presentation, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to present data. Here, confidence level was 95% by using IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.

5.0 Results and Discussion

Results of this research paper are based on objectives. Those are demonstrated category-wise which is presented in the below tables. It is also covered discussions of the study findings. These are following: -

5.1 Types of Family of the Respondents

In general, there are two types of family existing in the context of Bangladesh. One is nuclear family, and other is extended family. In past, extended family was familiar, but now-a-days, nuclear family is popular than extended family. People in almost every class as well as community are likely to build small family due to challenging situations in daily life. Migrant families are not different too. According to the outcome of this research work, majority percent of the respondents who came from nuclear family other than extended family.

Table 1: Distribution of Different Types of Family of the Respondents

Name of District	Types of Family		Total (%)
	Nuclear (%)	Extended (%)	
Joypur Hat	79	21	100
Gaibandha	79	21	100
Rangpur	72	28	100
Bogura	59	41	100
Total	289	111	400

Based on table 1, it suggests that there are two types of family of the respondents distributed into four districts of Northern Bangladesh. Majority percent of respondents lives in nuclear family as it is expected. In addition, above 70% of the respondents is from nuclear family in each district (except in Bogura).

5.2 Types of Communication between Migrant and Family Members

To carry out family life, a decent communication between family members is essential for several reasons. For instance, taking regular update, caring children and aging people, negotiating with social and economic issues, mental and psychological refreshment, and so forth. In this study, communication between migrant and rest of the family members is important not only for having economic development and sustainability, but also for negotiating with other societal issues. This research paper suggests that migrant family members likely want to keep attachment with family. Moreover, social capital facilitates not only to make a connection in both societal and financial matters of them, but also it helps to

create a linkage between those matters (Haug, 2008). For instance, family management, decision making, children education and so forth. In addition, migrant never feels alone or far behind from family. In terms of giving more or less time by migrant to the family members, it is a researchable issue to explore. Because migrant family member is used to communicate with family members with a purpose or not. Table 2 is based on that in details.

Table 2: Distribution of Communication Differences of Family Members with Migrant

Types of Communication	With All Family Members		With Aging Members		With Children	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Always	270	67.5	182	45.5	160	40
Often	72	18	153	38.3	122	30.5
Sometime	41	10.3	36	9	51	12.8
Seldom	11	2.8	16	4	27	6.8
Never	4	1	10	2.5	29	7.3
No Answer	2	0.5	3	0.8	11	2.8
Total	400	100	400	100	400	100

According to table 2, it represents types of communication between migrant and family members as internal communication. Here, it is clearly seen that highest percent of total 400 respondents have given statement “Always” (67.5% of all family members, 45.5% of aging, and 40% of children respectively). That means communication among them is very satisfactory level. A list percent of respondents has claimed that they can communicate with migrant family member “Often” or “Sometime”.

5.3 Types of Communication between Migrant, Neighbors and Near Relatives

As living in a community, family members, whether living with family or living outside of the family, are responsible to carry a good relationship with their neighbors and near relatives. Because it is a fundamental requirement of connectivity with community people or near relatives. However, in reality, migrant needs to communication with neighbors and near relatives along with his or her family members. Because family members are inter-connected with both neighbors and near relatives in regular activities. So, it is important for migrant to stay connected with them, not only for economic transaction and all, but also for other societal issues. This argument is supported by a research article. It says that in terms of tackling crisis situations, social capital helps migrant to face or to overcome the unexpected circumstances of the family (Palloni et al., 2001). Types of communication are slightly different carried by migrant with neighbors and near relatives. Here, communication differences have been quantified as under:-

Table 3: Status of Communication Differences of Migrant to Neighbors and Near Relatives

Types of Communication	With Neighbors		With Near Relatives	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Always	122	30.5	89	22.3
Often	125	31.3	161	40.3
Sometime	87	21.8	84	21
Seldom	41	10.3	43	10.8
Never	22	5.5	20	5
No Answer	3	0.8	3	0.8
Total	400	100	400	100

Table 3 illustrates communication differences between migrant, neighbors and near relatives. At a glance, it is clearly seen that there is a steady communication difference in each category. Here, about 30% of the respondents has claimed that migrant “Always” or “Often” can communicate with neighbors, while 40.3% of them has stated that migrant often communicates with near relatives. Although, a decent percent of the respondents has given answer that migrant always communicates with near relatives. Similarly, the highest percent of the respondents (above 60% in total) has also claimed that migrant can communicate with their neighbors in a regular basis.

5.4 Facilitation of Social Capital between Migrant and Family Members

At earlier discussion, it firmly defines that communication between family members is connected with bonding social capital. Because, bonding social capital in family that works to preserve family relationship. It also facilitates among both migrant and rest of the family members to engage with social cooperation and psychological wellbeing in particular. Table 4 indicates how social capital works for promoting social cooperation and psychological wellbeing. Opinion differences have quantified in the table 5.4, as following:-

Table 4: Distribution of Opinion to the Social Cooperation and Psychological Wellbeing between Migrant and Family Members

Types of Opinion	Social Cooperation		Psychological Wellbeing	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagreed	6	1.5	19	4.8
Disagreed	37	9.3	57	14.3
No Opinion	93	23.3	95	23.8
Agreed	174	43.5	137	34.3
Strongly Agreed	90	22.5	92	23
Total	400	100	19	4.8

Table 4 suggests that there are different types of statement given by the respondents on how migrant denotes with social cooperation and psychological

wellbeing of the family members. Here, 43.5% of the respondents as highest has agreed that migrant does play an active role to keep social cooperation, and another 22.5% of them has strongly agreed too. Similarly, 34.3% of the respondents also has agreed that migrant pays a decent attention to preserve psychological wellbeing. On the other hand, less than 20% of the respondents has provided opinion that the way migrant communicates with their family, which is not enough for conserving psychological wellbeing of them.

5.5 Facilitation of Social Capital for Promoting Social Cooperation and Overall Wellbeing

The concept of bridging social capital has been defined by scholarly people. It refers, when individual purposively communicates with neighbors and near relatives which is so called bridging social capital. A study was conducted among 250 household respondents who had at least one migrant family member. Result suggests that social capital is significantly connected in a sense of community, place and neighboring (Prayitno et al., 2014). Here, table 5 is also reflected by study data that how social capital negotiates migrant for upholding social cooperation and overall wellbeing with neighbors, and near relatives.

Table 5: Distribution of Opinion to the Social Cooperation and Total Wellbeing between Migrant and Neighbors Including Near Relatives

Types of Opinion	With Neighbors		With Near Relatives	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagreed	16	4	12	3
Disagreed	61	15.3	61	15.3
No Opinion	85	21.3	116	29
Agreed	139	34.8	152	38
Strongly Agreed	99	24.8	59	14.8
Total	400	100	400	100

Table 5.5 shows how social capital upholds social cooperation between migrant, neighbors and near relatives. Here, it is clearly seen that about 55% of the respondents (agreed and strongly agreed) has claimed that migrant plays a role toward social cooperation and wellbeing to the neighbors. Similarly, 38% of the respondents has agreed that role to the near relatives. But very least percent of total respondents has given opinion either “Strongly Disagreed” or “Disagreed”. It means that social capital denotes for keeping social cooperation and overall wellbeing among them as a whole.

5.6 Facilitation of Social Capital for Promoting Psychological Wellbeing

As promoting psychological wellbeing, social capital helps migrant to continue attachment with neighbors and near relatives as external communication. Because when migrant communicate with them purposively or not, it obviously reflects on psychological refreshment too. However, in the study findings, data shows that migrant is used to have attachment with them by keeping bridging social capital (See in details at table 6).

Table 6: Distribution of Opinion to the Psychological Wellbeing between Migrant and Neighbors Including Near Relatives

Types of Opinion	With Neighbors		With Near Relatives	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagreed	28	7	20	5
Disagreed	64	16	77	19.3
No Opinion	97	24.3	78	19.5
Agreed	140	35	135	33.8
Strongly Agreed	71	17.8	90	22.5
Total	400	100	400	100

Table 5.6 suggests how social capital promotes psychological wellbeing between migrant, neighbors, and near relatives. About 50% of the respondents (“Agreed” and “Strongly Agreed”) has claimed that migrant plays a role toward psychological wellbeing to the neighbors. Similarly, 33.8% of the respondents as highest has agreed that role to the near relatives. But the lowest percent of the respondents has provided “Strongly Disagreed” statement in both occasions (only 7% with neighbors, and 5% with near relatives respectively).

6. Concluding Remarks

The Key findings of this research paper show that regular communication is important for conserving and improving social capital among migrant and their family members including other corresponding people. Study data suggests that highest percent of the respondents opined with “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” option. They claimed that migrant from outside of the family can communicate regular basis. For the reason that, migrant contributes instrumentally by discussing family, community and other societal issues. Communication of migrant with neighbors and near relatives is slighter irregular rather than family members as communication differences. In this regard, most of the respondents have the opinion that migrant do communicate all family members including spouse, while a less than half of them has claimed that migrant can communicate

with neighbors and near relatives. But a few respondents have not responded on this question. Based on the study data, it is clearly seen that there is a strong communication and bonding network existing among them. Therefore, migrants maintain to preserve a strong bonding with rest of the family members, and a decent level of communication has been kept by migrant to the neighbors and near relatives on the whole.

Findings also suggests that social capital works to preserve social and psychological wellbeing among them. Here, majority of the respondents answered positively on this issue. That implies social capital plays a key role for upholding social and psychological wellbeing. In this regard, respondents thought that social cooperation that is social capital much more important for preserving social and psychological wellbeing. Without having social cooperation, it is impossible to ensure psychological wellbeing among them. Therefore, social capital always offers individuals to keep social cooperation which is related to promote psychological wellbeing as well.

The study also suggested there is wider scope of further enquiry for academics which will explore whether or to what extent communication gap occurs among individual at person, family and societal settings in the context of migration and to investigate what ways communication gap can be reduced by an effective and meaningful communication.

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