

Changing Family Patterns in Urban Bangladesh: A Sociological Study of Dhaka City

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ABSTRACT

In sociological research, family pattern has attracted attention because of its continuous transformation. This study aims to identify and explain changes in family types, relationships and interactions in Dhaka City. While previous studies mostly explained family types and relationships, this study also analyses changes in family interactions. Using mixed methods (surveys and in-depth interviews) with purposive random sampling among university students, service holders and teachers. The study reports that majority of respondents live in nuclear families, indicating the breakdown of joint families. Significant factors behind this shift involve technological advancement, cultural expansion, economic and institutional development and surroundings. Individualism fosters equality, choice, freedom, self-identity and weak kinship ties, while ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) reduce family time and interactions.

Keywords: Family pattern, Family change, Individualism, ICTs, Family relationships

INTRODUCTION

Family, considered as the basic and paramount institution in any society (Bhasin, 2016; James et al., 2025), has considerable

influence for shaping a society and its people. Family is the basis of a culture (Saleem et al., 2015). Currently, family patterns are undergoing major changes throughout the world (Rathore & Meena, 2022). This is being observed in all types of countries, e.g. in most developed countries, the family type is nuclear, whereas in developing countries such as Bangladesh, the family type is still joint or extended. However, in developed countries, the nuclear family is now getting replaced by single-parent family, cohabitation, and same-sex couple family (Browning, 2006; Levitan & Belous, 1981), whereas in developing countries, the joint family is getting replaced by a nuclear family (Georgas, 2003; Rahman & Zhang, 2017; Priya, 2017; Samad, 2015). Factors such as economic prosperity (James et al., 2025), technological variation (Samad, 2015), spread of cultural ideas (Furstenberg, 2019; James et al., 2025; Meyer et al., 1975), and *institutional development such as* education, law and health (Samad, 2015; Priya, 2017) are responsible for these changes in family patterns.

In contemporary family relationships, individualism rather than collectivism is evident. Consequently, own choice, creating self-identity, freedom in decision-making, weak kinship ties are evident in a family (Wehner & Abrahamson, 2004; Duncan & Smith, 2006; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim,

2001). Besides, equality, mutual respect, democracy in relationships, cohabitation, single-parent family, same-sex relationship, separation and divorce are being noticed in intimate relationships (Beck-Gernsheim, 2001). With changing family types and relationships, family interaction is changing and being affected (Castells, 2005; Saleem et al., 2015). Because of the advent and prevalence of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the current family environment, communication with other family members and relatives has increased (Romero-Ruiz et al., 2017) and quality time spent within the family has reduced (Mauritzson & Nordmark, 2004). In fact, this study reports that before the availability of ICTs, family relationships were very strong with relatives and there were more face-to-face interactions.

This study explains and analyses changes in family types, relationships and interactions in Dhaka. All studies about changes in family pattern have focused on family types and relationships; however, this study has attempted to explain changes in family interactions in addition to analyzing family types and relationships in considerable detail. Studies about the changing family patterns get far less attention in Bangladesh; most importantly, there is a lack of research about changing family patterns in context of Dhaka. Moreover, this study aims to inform and increase awareness in the society about the contemporary family patterns and trends such that people can appropriately deal with changes in family patterns. The research questions of this study are the following:

What factors have influenced changes in family patterns in Dhaka, Bangladesh?

Which type of family is prevalent in urban Bangladesh and how has the family structure changed throughout time?

How have family relationships evolved in Dhaka city?

How is family interaction impacted in Dhaka, Bangladesh?

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The family, a fundamental unit of society, has the ability to effectively shape the values of society. However, the dynamics of families are undergoing major changes at the age of modernization and globalization-as suggested by family change theorists (Notestein 1953; Davis 1963; Goode 1963). In this regard, modernization and family change theory stated that the expansion of communication technologies and the extensive use of social networking sites are indicators affecting family patterns (Inkeles & Smith, 1974 as cited in Mayer, 2013). Moreover, other influential factors, such as spreading cultural ideas, particularly Western culture (Robertson, 1992; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Trommsdorff, 2009), and developments in social and economic aspects (Notestein 1953; Davis 1963; Goode 1963), play a significant role behind the changes in family patterns. Consequently, both developed and developing nations are experiencing shifts in family structure. For instance, single-parent households are replacing nuclear families in Western countries, whereas joint or extended families are shifting to nuclear families in developing countries (Robertson, 1992). Apart from these, scholars noted that the emergence of some values like personal freedom, mutual respect, independence, personal gain, personal choice, gender equality and mutual negotiation have had an impact on intimate relationships. These individualistic values are decreasing the significance of traditional values, rules and regulations, dependency and roles associated with gender. Furthermore, this individualism is negatively impacting the interpersonal relationships in developing countries similar to what happens in the developed world. Weak family bonds, feelings of isolation, same-sex relationships, separation between couples, divorce, and violent activities are all manifestations of this (Notestein 1953; Davis 1963; Goode 1963). Thus, it can be considered that family patterns are altering owing to the influence of globalization and modernization. As a consequence, families find it challenging to

maintain their exclusive traditions, beliefs, values, rules and regulations in all societies (Robertson, 1992).

This study also used Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's 'individualization theory', which depicts the way modernization and globalization are leading social structures, particularly the family institution, to become increasingly individualistic. This theory illustrates that the growing focus on individual freedom, individual choice and personal fulfilment is presenting an issue to conventional family structures and traditions. According to the individualization theory, traditional conventions, values and roles disappear from society due to the increasing trend of individual freedom, fulfilment and choice. Individuals are no longer restrained by rigorous societal standards (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Even as conventional structures are deteriorating, contemporary institutional frameworks such as welfare systems, education and labor markets continue to leave an influence on individuals. These contemporary institutions reinforce people in making decisions regarding their marriages, families, and careers (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). However, this gained freedom entails greater risk and responsibilities since individuals have to cope with uncertainties in sectors like self-identity, interpersonal relationships, and employment without the endorsement of conventional standards (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002).

Both the modernization and family change framework and individualization theory offer an extensive foundation for analyzing the changing family patterns in urban Dhaka, Bangladesh. Modernization, fostered by developments in technology, economic growth and cultural expansion, has replaced conventional joint family structures with nuclear families. The changes in macro-level development create a condition for individualization, where individual freedom, identity, and autonomy gain prominence over the traditional family norms. Both theories influence the study's findings, showing that respondents prefer nuclear

families due to privacy and individual freedom, which reflect individualism. These findings additionally connect these alterations to general factors such as technological advancement and Western cultural values, which represent modernization. Moreover, this dual influence causes fragile kinship ties, as well as decreased family interaction, because information and communication technologies (ICTs) enhance virtual interactions over face-to-face interactions. Thus, the integration of these theories provides an influential perspective that enables the explanation of changes in family types, relationships, and, finally, interactions in Dhaka city.

MATERIALS & METHODS

This study followed the methodological triangulation approach in which both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect and analyze data. The application of mixed methodologies enabled a more thorough understanding of the changing family patterns in Dhaka regarding family types, relationships and interactions. The quantitative approach included a survey design with closed-ended questions, while the qualitative component used in-depth interviews for delving more profound understanding of participants' various points of view and experiences. This dual procedure cross-checked data from several sources to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings.

Study design and sampling strategy

The study followed a purposive random sampling technique because the focus was on the specific characteristics of the population that were of interest to the study and enabled the researchers to obtain in-depth information as per the objectives of this research. The researchers selected three categories of the population: university students, service holders and teachers. Basically, these particular demographic groups were chosen to gain a thorough understanding of changing family patterns.

They are the educated and knowledgeable group of people in urban Bangladesh who have the ability to comprehend the aims of this research. Apart from all of these, their points of view and experiences were very significant for comprehending how family patterns are evolving and which factors influenced the family structures, relationships and interactions in Dhaka. In general, their thoughts and experiences provided a diverse perspective for this research and they were influenced directly or indirectly by changing family patterns, encompassing shifting family structures, family relationships, attitude towards marriage, family interactions, among other aspects.

For data collection, Table 1 represents that this study was conducted in three areas of Dhaka, i.e. Dhanmondi residential area, Shahbagh area and Sadarghat area. These areas were chosen owing to their relevance to the investigation focus and their unique demographic characteristics. For this study, 120 respondents (68 males and 52 females) participated in the survey, ensuring balanced gender representation. Using a checklist, 13 participants (7 males and 6 females) were selected for in-depth interviews by considering their availability as well as willingness to disclose particular information. The interviews were carried out at convenient times and venues for the participants, ensuring flexibility and comfort in dealing with issues of concern.

Table 1: Sample distribution of study areas

| District | Study areas | Survey design | In-depth interview (IDI) |
|----------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Dhaka | Dhanmondi residential area | 42 (26 male and 16 female) | 3 (2 male and 1 female) |
| Dhaka | Shahbagh area | 52 (27 male and 25 female) | 4 (2 male and 2 female) |
| Dhaka | Sadarghat area | 26 (15 male and 11 female) | 6 (3 male and 3 female) |
| Total | | 120 | 13 |

Data collection techniques

For the purpose of collecting quantitative data, the 120 respondents were provided with a standardized survey form. Closed-ended questions were integrated into the survey design in order to gather data on changing family types, relationships, and interactions in Dhaka city. Before starting data collection, an insignificant amount of sample was utilized for a pilot test to verify clarity as well as applicability. The required modifications were implemented throughout the pilot test in accordance with the feedback that was received.

In-depth interviews were employed to gather qualitative data, and the discussions were directed by a checklist. The data were obtained by audio-recording based on the consent of participants and necessary field notes were taken to capture background data and behavioral cues. To ensure reliability in responses and facilitate communication, the interviews were conducted in the participants' mother tongue, Bengali.

Data analysis techniques

In order to analyze quantitative data, they were edited after the collection of data for precision and completeness. After editing, the data were coded for numerical representation. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 22) program was then used for data entry and analysis. To summarize the data, tables and graphical representations were produced using descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages. Besides, a paired sample t-test was used to assess the comparison between the data sets and obtain a proper insight from the data.

For qualitative data analysis, the interviews were transcribed and translated into English. To ensure accuracy and identify emerging themes, the translated data were analyzed several times. Thematic analysis was used to organize the data into themes and subthemes that aligned with the study objectives. The analysis included a sequential process of reading, coding, and interpreting the data to discover patterns and insights. To

demonstrate significant themes and present a more comprehensive overview of the study topic, participants' quotations were incorporated into the research findings.

Ethical considerations

The researchers took the consent of all participants before their participation in the study. Participants were explained about the purpose of the study, the freedom of participants to withdraw at any moment, and the confidentiality of the responses they provided. To maintain participants' privacy, names and other identifying information were anonymized.

Limitations

Although the study offers a profound understanding of changing family patterns in Dhaka city, it has certain limitations. The purposive random sampling technique may constrain the extent to which the outcomes can be generalized, despite being appropriate for the study objectives. Response bias may have introduced due to the dependency on self-reported data in both the survey and the in-depth interviews. Future research could address these limitations by utilizing longitudinal designs to analyze changes over time and by incorporating a larger and more diverse sample.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Changes in family types

The family is one of the most important institutions in society, forming the primary foundation for learning norms, values and customs. However, the family institution is undergoing a shift throughout the developed world, and developing countries, including Bangladesh, are no exception. In Bangladesh, the trend of living in nuclear families rather than joint families is increasingly prevalent; this shift is eroding the tradition of living in joint households (Chowdhury, 2018; Rezvi, 2016). Figure 1 demonstrates that most respondents (74.2%) live in nuclear families, while the remaining respondents (25.8%) belong to joint families. This suggests that respondents' family structures are noticeably shifting, with nuclear families becoming more prevalent. A similar trend has been noticed in India. Bhasin (2016), for instance, found that 75% of families in India are nuclear households, indicating a major change in the conventional family structure. These associated results suggest a wider regional trend in South Asian societies regarding nuclear family systems. Alhussain et al. (2019) and Collins et al. (2010) have also pointed out the global shift in family types wherein nuclear families are gradually replacing joint families.

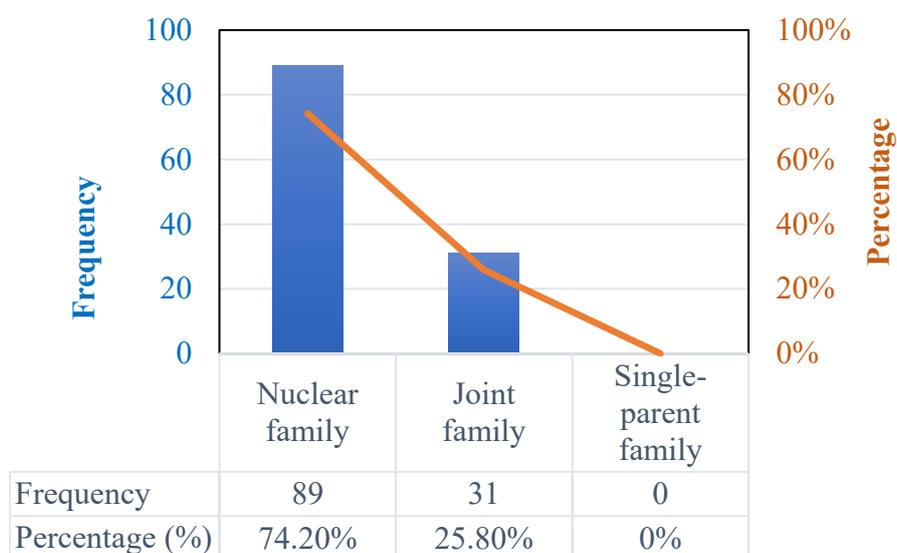


Figure 1: Types of family

Currently, most people in Bangladesh, particularly those in urban areas, prefer to live in nuclear families. Interestingly, this study reports that 58.3% of respondents prefer to live in joint families, while 41.7% prefer nuclear families, as shown in Table 2. Similarly, another study carried out by Samad (2015) reported that many respondents favored to have joint families, whereas respondents in urban areas preferred nuclear families.

The nuclear family, popular in recent times, is considered the most preferable type of family among the current generation. Reasons for preferring nuclear families include individual freedom, personal space and privacy (Bhasin, 2016), a supportive learning environment for children, the convenience of acting independently, freedom of speech, fewer responsibilities and better conditions for women (Priya, 2017; Chowdhury, 2018). Respondents reported that decision-making (30.5%) in a nuclear family is particularly easy. Then, they also mentioned the following: personal space and privacy (28.4%), better condition of women (16.8%), development of personality (7.4%), development of confidence (6.3%), less responsibility (5.3%), problem-free family (4.2%) and freedom of speech (1.1%) are the reasons for preferring a nuclear family (Table 2). Accordingly, one male respondent remarked:

“I prefer a nuclear family because it allows individual freedom. However, such freedom is rare in a joint family, where a person has

to be accountable for everything.” (Student, higher secondary, 21 years).

In terms of the preference for joint families, 36.3% of respondents reported that sympathy and cooperation exist in such families, as shown in Table 2. Moreover, 26% prefer joint families because of mutual affection and love. Other reasons are as follows: security of dependent members (15.8%), shared responsibilities (13%) and financial solvency (6.2%). Finally, 1.4% of respondents preferred this family type for the opportunity to live together with all members and to ensure greater care for children. Similarly, a study reported that people generally prefer joint families for mutual affection, staying together, shared workload, proper socialization of children and the security of all members (Bhasin, 2016; Samad, 2015). One male respondent in an in-depth interview said the following:

“I prefer a joint family for several reasons. First, the socialization process of children is easier in a joint family. Secondly, not only children but also adults, dependents and independent members experience social security. However, in a nuclear family, particularly in urban areas, children and other family members feel insecure. Moreover, if both husband and wife are employed, the feeling of insecurity becomes even greater. Thirdly, cooperation with all members is evident in such a family. Finally, considering the power structure, joint family members are less likely to fall into vulnerable conditions.” (Teacher, postgraduate, 40 years)

Table 2: Preferred family types and its reasons (multiple responses)

| | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Preferred family types | | |
| Nuclear family | 50 | 41.7% |
| Joint family | 70 | 58.3% |
| Total | 120 | 100.0% |
| Reasons of preferring nuclear family (N=50) | | |
| Decision making | 29 | 30.5% |
| Personal space and privacy | 27 | 28.4% |
| Development of personality | 7 | 7.4% |
| Development of confidence | 6 | 6.3% |
| Less responsibility | 5 | 5.3% |
| Better condition of women | 16 | 16.8% |
| Problem free | 4 | 4.2% |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|----|--------|
| Freedom of speech | 1 | 1.1% |
| Total | | 100.0% |
| Reasons of preferring joint family (N=70) | | |
| Mutual love | 38 | 26.0% |
| Sympathy and cooperation | 53 | 36.3% |
| Financial solvency | 9 | 6.2% |
| Sharing of responsibilities | 19 | 13.0% |
| Security of dependent members | 23 | 15.8% |
| Staying together | 2 | 1.4% |
| More care for children | 2 | 1.4% |
| Total | | 100.0% |

Family patterns are changing throughout the world because of technological advancement, the expansion and blending of cultural ideas, education, social awareness and human thought. As presented in Figure 2, 36.9 percent of respondents believed that cultural expansion is responsible for changing family patterns. Various Western and European cultures influence the traditions of developing countries through films, television series, and other programs. As a result, the traditions and cultural practices of those countries are gradually being eroded. The next highest category is technological advancement (26.7%). Due to the emergence and usage of various technologies, changes are clearly noticed in families regarding communication, entertainment and leisure, as well as education and learning. This result agrees with previous studies, which reported that due to the expansion of cultural ideas (Bhasin, 2016) and technological advancement, family patterns are changing worldwide (Furstenberg, 2019; Samad, 2015). Furthermore, respondents mentioned other reasons: economic development (21.4%), institutional development (13.4%), surroundings (1.1%) and cultural lag (0.5%). In this context, one male respondent said the following:

“Family patterns are changing in the age of globalization. There are two types of changes: material and non-material. Material change is visible, and technological advancement-an important driver of globalization-falls into this category. Technologies influence family patterns, which is apparent at present. However, non-material change refers to changes in human thought. There has been a drastic change in people’s thinking.” (Teacher, postgraduate, 40 years).

Another female respondent remarked:

“There are three important factors responsible for changes in family patterns in Bangladesh. First, owing to the advancement and availability of technology, family patterns are changing over time. Second, cultural lag is another important factor. Furthermore, people of the present generation prefer to live in cities, whereas earlier generations preferred to live in villages. Third, owing to the expansion of educational activities, the occupation of a person is gradually changing. Individuals no longer continue with the same occupations as those of their earlier generations.” (Teacher, postgraduate, 27 years).

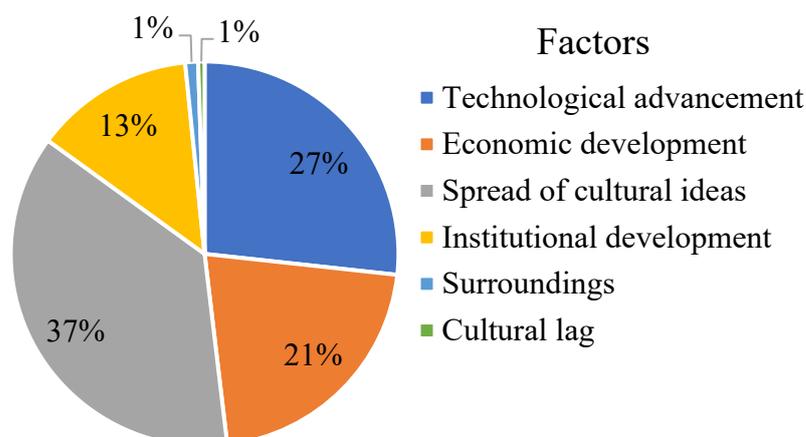


Figure 2: Factors of changing family pattern (multiple responses)

Changes in family relationships

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that family relationships are affected in both positive and negative ways by the shift in family structures. The constant integration of new features through modernization fosters changes in social structures. Since the family is a vital unit of society, alterations in societal structures inevitably affect the family institution. In this context, Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (2001) as well as Duncan & Smith (2006) stated that collectivism among family members is now rarely seen; instead, individualism, the feature of contemporary social structure, is prevailing in families. This individualism is predominantly observed in developed countries, but it is increasingly visible in developing countries as well, resulting in changes in family relationships. Similarly, this study reported that individualism affects family relationships in Bangladesh, a view shared by all respondents. One female respondent commented:

“Individualism affects the family both positively and negatively. Here, I can categorize individualism into three parts:

Normal individualism: This type of individualism should exist in every person and benefits both the individual and their family.

Moderate individualism: This benefits the individual but can be detrimental to their family and surroundings.

Extreme individualism: If a person only pursues their own interests, they, their family and those around them will all be negatively affected.” (Student, graduate, 23 years).

Practicing individualism within the family has multiple effects, such as making choice, decision-making opportunity, creation of self-identity and weak kinship ties (Wehner & Abrahamson, 2004; Duncan & Smith, 2006; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001). Likewise, the data in Figure 3 report that due to the practices of individualism, respondents can now freely take decisions (42.1%) and make their choice (27.3%). However, it was difficult in earlier times to make any choice or decision for people because they lived in joint families where decision-making was largely collective. Furthermore, respondents (13.4%) added that individualism offers opportunities to create self-identity, but at the same time kinship bonds are gradually weakening. Distance from relatives emerges as a result of differing individual choices and opinions. Then, socialization process of children is not formed properly that was mentioned by 1.4% respondents. If both husband and wife are excessively involved in their careers, they cannot manage their time for children. Consequently, children’s socialization is conversely affected. Apart

from these effects, individualism contributes to establish self-reliance and create happiness for people (1%). Finally, 0.5% observed that individualistic values also give rise to indifference towards the family. In this context, one male respondent reported the following:

“I have the opportunity to give my opinion on any topic, and my family accepts it. Therefore, before taking any decision, my

family members and I think carefully and justify the pros and cons of every opinion.” (Service holder, postgraduate, 29 years).

Another male respondent added that:

“Nowadays, kinship ties are weakening because of individualism; however, this was not the case before. In our time, kinship ties were strong, but this bonding is no longer seen in the present generation.” (Service holder, postgraduate, 30 years).

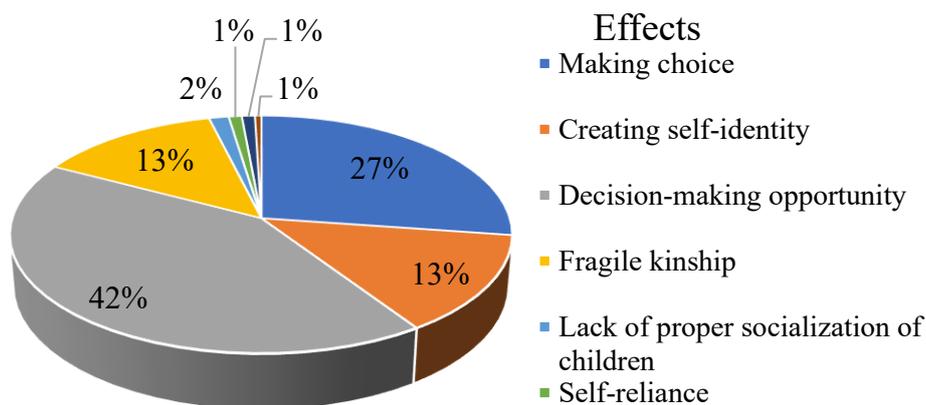


Figure 3: Effects of individualism on family (multiple responses)

Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (1995, 2001) & Giddens (1992) pointed out that individualistic values play a significant role to affect the intimate relationships in negative ways and as a result, various consequences are emerged in the relationships. According to Table 3, respondents (91.7%) agreed that intimate relationships are affected by individualism. They reported various consequences such as divorce (35.4%), separation (23.3%), single-parent family (13.5%), cohabitation (9.9%), children without marriage (8.5%), same-sex partnership (6.3%), changes in kinship terminology (1.3%), criminal tendency in children (0.9%) and high relational mobility

(0.4%) are reflected in intimate relationships. In IDI, one female respondent said the following:

“Currently, the individualism level has reached such a level that a same-sex couple is seen. Actually, social structure has completely changed; consequently, these problems are developing in our society. Furthermore, divorce, cohabitation, single-parent family, separation of couples and same-sex marriage are allowed in most of the outside countries in the world. Owing to the globalization process, people in Bangladesh want to copy the system of developed countries.” (Teacher, postgraduate, 27 years).

Table 3: Individualism negatively affects intimate relationships and its negative sides (multiple responses)

| | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Individualism negatively affects intimate relationships | | |
| Yes | 110 | 91.7% |
| No | 10 | 8.3% |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|--------|
| Total | 120 | 100.0% |
| Negative sides (N=110) | | |
| Divorce | 79 | 35.4% |
| Cohabitation | 22 | 9.9% |
| Children without marriage | 19 | 8.5% |
| Single-parent family | 30 | 13.5% |
| Same sex relationship | 14 | 6.3% |
| Separation | 52 | 23.3% |
| Changing kinship terminology | 3 | 1.3% |
| Criminal tendency in children | 2 | 0.9% |
| High relational mobility | 2 | 0.9% |
| Total | | 100.0% |

Practicing individualism creates not only negative effects but also positive aspects in intimate relationships (Gillies, 2003). In this regard, Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (1995); Giddens (1992, 1999) stated that having individualism in intimate relationships embodies equal rights, shared responsibilities, mutual negotiation, and other invaluable sides. As presented in Table 4, a mere respondents (8.3%) considered that there are positive sides of individualism whenever it pertains to close relationships between partners. This indicates that Bangladesh, as a developing country, supports collectivism over individualism; for this reason, respondents did not consider that individualism has good sides in intimate relationships. As reported by 24.39% of respondents, intimate relationships enhance some positive aspects, such as equal opportunity and rights, shared duties and responsibilities, mutually resolving issues and a strong sense of relationship. Furthermore, according to 2.44% of respondents, individualism between partners reflects interpersonal skills. One female respondent said the following:

“I consider that individualism has a positive side in intimate relationships. Individual freedom is required for building a relationship or making a decision to live with a person. In previous societies, a person would marry before he/she could understand anything. Moreover, there were certain social rules that forced the individual to stay with the person to whom he/she married. However, people now have the freedom to choose their partner, as they are becoming aware day-by-day. Consequently, many people can freely and happily lead their married lives.” (Teacher, postgraduate, 27 years).

Another male respondent added:

“The positive side of individualism in intimate relationships is that if there is problem between husband and wife, it is mutually solved. Furthermore, happiness is observed in a family if there is same mentality between couples. Moreover, it influences the next generation.” (Student, higher secondary, 21 years).

Table 4: Individualism positively affects intimate relationships and its positive sides (multiple responses)

| | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Individualism positively affects intimate relationships | | |
| Yes | 10 | 8.3% |
| No | 110 | 91.7% |
| Total | 120 | 100.0% |
| Positive sides (N=10) | | |
| Equal opportunity and rights | 10 | 24.39% |
| Role sharing activities | 10 | 24.39% |
| Mutually problem solving | 10 | 24.39% |
| Strong sense of relationship | 10 | 24.39% |
| Creating interpersonal skills | 1 | 2.44% |
| Total | | 100.0% |

Giddens (1992, 1999), together with Kinnear (2002), reported that radical changes are manifested in all sectors of society. Moreover, as an important social institution, family relationships are also undergoing

radical change. Similarly, according to Figure 4, a large number of respondents (92.5%) considered that contemporary family relationships are radically changing, whereas 7.5% of respondents did not.

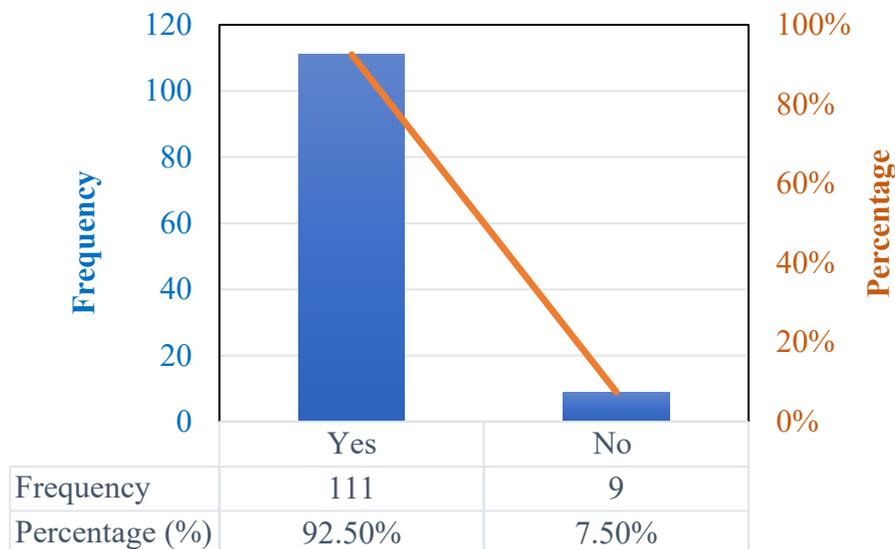


Figure 4: Contemporary family relationships are radically altering

Changes in family interactions

Changes in family interaction are central to this study because the previous and present family interaction trends have been analyzed. Behind the gradual changes of family interaction, the emergence and access to ICTs is an important mediator. When a person spends more time on using ICTs rather than spending time with family members, virtual life becomes important to the person rather than real life. Thus, at one stage, the person spends less time with his/her family and spends more time on using the Internet. Furthermore, many studies reported these results in most cases (Mauritzson & Nordmark, 2004). Similarly, Table 5 illustrates the comparison between amounts of time individuals spent with families after and before using the Internet. After using the Internet, respondents spend 1–2 h (39.2%), >5 h (20.8%), 2–3 h and 3–4 h (15.8%), 4–5 h (6.5%) and <1 h (1.7%) with their family. Before using the Internet,

42.5% of respondents spent >5 h per day with their family, 4–5 h (16.7%), 3–4 h (15.8%), 1–2 h (13.2%), 2–3 h (10.8%) and finally <1 h (0.8%). Therefore, when respondents did not use the Internet, they spend more time with their family but after using the Internet, the time spent has gradually reduced. In this case, one male respondent explained:

“Because of ICTs, the time I spend with family has reduced a lot. Before the use of ICTs, there was daily interaction with family members. When I went to school and returned home after class, I used to talk about what was happening in my school, class and with my friends before going to sleep at night. However, after getting a mobile phone and the usage of social media, time spent with my family has gradually reduced. Now my interaction with the family has almost stopped because everyone in the family is busy using their own devices.” (Student, higher secondary, 21 years).

Table 5: Comparison between individual’s spending time with family after and before using the Internet

| | After using the Internet | | Before using the Internet | |
|-------|--------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage (%) | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
| <1 h | 2 | 1.7% | 1 | 0.8% |
| 1–2 h | 47 | 39.2% | 16 | 13.3% |
| 2–3 h | 19 | 15.8% | 13 | 10.8% |
| 3–4 h | 19 | 15.8% | 19 | 15.8% |
| 4–5 h | 8 | 6.7% | 20 | 16.7% |
| >5 h | 25 | 20.8% | 51 | 42.5% |
| Total | 120 | 100.0% | 120 | 100.0% |

A paired sample t-test was conducted to compare the time spent with family (per day) after and before using the Internet. There is a considerable difference in time spent with family (per day) after the usage of the

Internet (M= 3.49, SD= 1.59) and time spent with family (per day) before the usage of the internet (M= 4.61, SD= 1.49); $t(119) = -9.000, p = .000$.

Table 6: Paired sample t-test distribution of time spent with family after and before the use of the Internet

| Outcome | After | | Before | | 95% CI for the difference | | | |
|---------|-------|------|--------|------|---------------------------|--------|-----|------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | N | t | df | p |
| | 3.49 | 1.59 | 4.61 | 1.49 | 120 | -9.000 | 119 | .000 |

* $p < 0.5$

The results indicate that there is a considerable impact of the usage of the Internet on time spent with the family (per day) because time spent with family has gradually reduced after the use of the Internet.

The interaction among family members has been reducing owing to the usage of ICTs such as mobile and browsing on the Internet. Consequently, there is a negative impact on family members in terms of interaction. One female respondent said:

“My brother and I go to home around the same time. My brother comes from college and then started playing games on mobile. If I say let’s eat together, but he will not eat because he will play games on mobile. In that moment, we are not eaten together. As a result, the interaction with family is diminished due to the usage of ICTs.” (Student, graduate, 23 years).

Moreover, a male respondent said the following:

“I believe family interaction is being affected owing to the usage of ICTs. Individualism also plays a role. For example, I often watch a program on TV that my mother will not watch because she likes Indian serials, which

I dislike. So, when she watches Indian serials on TV, I angrily leave the room. This reduces family interaction and weakens our relationship.” (Student, higher secondary, 21 years).

When various ICTs were not so much advanced and available, people spent additional time with their families, had more face-to-face communication and there was a strong relationship with family and relatives. And this study has attempted to explain the nature of family interaction and relationship before the emergence and availability of ICTs because there is a lack of study about the family relationship before the availability and usage of ICTs. As revealed in Figure 5, 35.7% of respondents considered that family relationships were extremely strong before the age of ICTs. Moreover, 25% respondents noted that there was good relationship with relatives because in previous times, people used to go their relatives’ houses for any festival. Furthermore, respondents mentioned other aspects like sharing happiness and misery (20.9%), standing in danger (15.2%), spending more time with family (1.6%) and increased face-to-face

communication (1.2%). One male respondent reported in IDI:

“When mobile phones and the Internet were not available, family relationships were extremely strong and family members spent more quality time. However, owing to the emergence and availability of technologies, each of us has different tastes and options. During the time of our grandparents, when ‘Bioscope’ started, not only family members but also everyone in the area used to watch the ‘Bioscope’ together. Moreover, my family and I used to watch ‘Ityadi’ (a magazine TV program of Bangladesh) on TV together. However, now we do not watch any program together because everyone watches programs on YouTube according to their own schedule.” (Student, higher secondary, 21 years).

Besides, another male respondent added that:

“Prior to the age of ICTs, family relationships were very strong. When communication technologies were not available, all the family members ate together. But now, family members do not eat together due to the availability of technology. Now everyone in the family eats according to their own time and convenience.” (Teacher, postgraduate, 30 years).

One female respondent in IDI mentioned:

“There was a good relationship with relatives and people used to go to different occasions of relatives before the entrance and availability of ICTs in families. As like, if one of my relatives invites me to an event, I watch a film or series at that time instead of going to the event. I think it is more comfortable for me to watch a film or series than to go to an event.” (Student, graduate, 23 years).

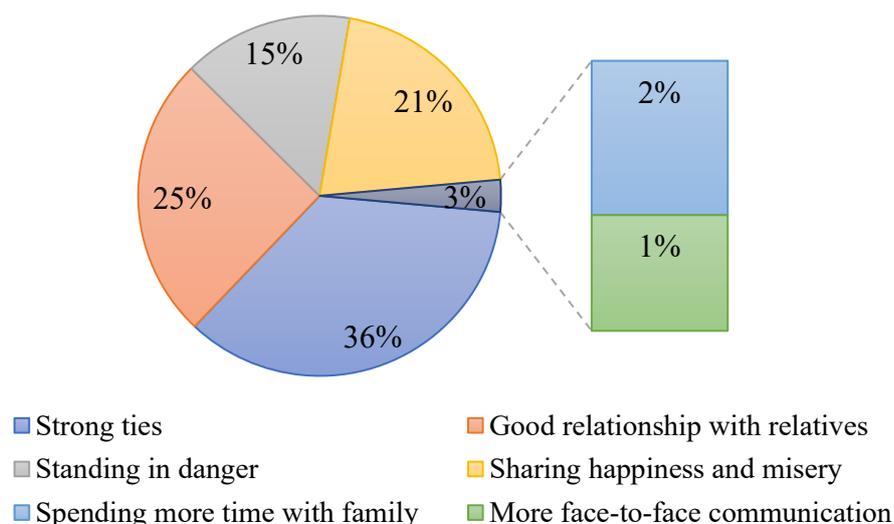


Figure 5: Family interaction and relationship before ICTs (multiple responses)

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this study attempts to identify and explain changes in family types, relationships and interactions in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The family, holding significant importance in society, possesses distinct cultures and patterns that influence both the community and its individuals. However, these family patterns are changing over time throughout the world. The results of this study represent that traditional joint family system has been replaced by the nuclear

family because majority of the respondents live in a nuclear family, which indicates that, similar to developed countries, family types are changing in our country. In this regard, technological advancement, Western culture, economic development and institutional development are influential factors contributing to the changes observed in family patterns. Furthermore, individualism is becoming more prevalent within families, replacing collectivism. This individualistic approach affects family, leading to the

emergence of personal choice, self-identity, individual freedom, self-reliance and fragile kinship ties. Besides, family intimacy and relationships are undergoing significant alterations and are being impacted. This research also focuses that the interaction in family is changing and affecting owing to the revolution of ICTs. Before the advent of ICTs, individuals involved in greater face-to-face interaction with family and relatives and spent more time to these connections. As a result, familial bonds were considerably stronger in earlier societies. Therefore, it can be stated that though people are experiencing the trends of evolving family patterns but they may not be fully able to entirely comprehend the present scenario of family patterns owing to the limited availability of empirical works on the subject. Therefore, this study attempts to enhance the understanding of contemporary family patterns and its changing trends in our society, enabling people to increase their awareness about this. Any subsequent research will gain insight substantially from the empirical study that has been carried out. Finally, this empirical work recommends that future researchers can explore the changing family patterns in comparison with other cities in Bangladesh in order to achieve widespread relevance.

Declaration by Authors

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