

## Premarital and Extramarital Relationships: A Study of a Selected Slum in Dhaka, Bangladesh

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### BSTRACT

Premarital and extramarital relationships among the slum dwellers in Dhaka city have become a matter of growing concern. However, it has yet to be spotlighted in empirical research. As such, the study's primary purpose was to identify the causes and consequences of premarital and extramarital relationships. The study was a qualitative study where multiple case-study designs were employed. Primary data were collected via in-depth interviews with ten participants using snowball sampling. Moreover, three key informants were interviewed for further supportive information. The study shows that poor social environment and living conditions, learning unethical sexual practices from close friends, falsehood promises of marriage, and uncontrolled sexual desire are the significant causes of premarital and extramarital relationships among the slum dwellers. The study also reveals that unsafe and unprotected sexual intercourse, unintended pregnancies and induced abortions, domestic violence and divorce, and the risk of spreading STDs and STIs are major potential consequences of premarital and extramarital relationships among the slum dwellers and thus the issues are a significant threat to social and environmental well-being. The study suggests that both government and non-government organizations should undertake proper policy measures and programs such as propagation of health awareness programs, especially on HIV/AIDS and STDS, provision of civic amenities, enforcement of laws, and development of moral values to minimize premarital and extramarital relationships among slum dwellers.

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## 1. Introduction

Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh, is one of the fastest growing megacities in the world. Its current population is more than 21 million, with a density of 23234 people per square kilometer (World Population Review, 2021). Many people are slum dwellers, and the number of slums gradually increases in Dhaka city. According to the Census of Slum Areas and Floating Population in 2014 conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), 13,938 slums have been found all over Bangladesh. The number of slums was 2991 according to the Census of Slum Areas and Floating population in 1997. Most of the slums are situated in Dhaka city. The number of slums is 1644 and 1755 in Dhaka's north and south city corporation areas, respectively (BBS, 2015). A large number of people come to Dhaka every year in search of employment opportunities. However, only some of them get their expected employment opportunities. The rest have to struggle to earn their livelihood and they have to live in the slums. This is one of the mentionable reasons for increasing the large number of slums in Dhaka city.

Rural-urban migration is a very common trend in Bangladesh. Most of the migrants are rural poor who come to the city searching for work or employment opportunities, and most of them have to take shelter in slum and squatter settlements. Rural-urban migration has been one of Bangladesh's most critical factors of rapid, uncontrolled, and unplanned urbanization in recent years (Uddin & Firoj, 2013). The number of slums is increasing at an alarming rate in Dhaka city chiefly due to rural-urban migration. The people who have migrated from rural areas to Dhaka city are bound to live in slums due to insufficient employment opportunities. Slums manifest poverty, insufficient employment opportunities, social exclusion, and inappropriate government policies (Sclar & Northridge, 2003). The slum dwellers in Dhaka city are living in very miserable conditions. Due to poor sanitation and congested living environment, they often suffer from many diseases (Rahman & Alam, 2015). The word slum reflects the miseries of deprived people who have to struggle to survive, and the miseries of the females are more than men in the slum area in Dhaka city (Sharmin & Luna, 2015).

Adolescent girls are facing many problems in the slum area of Dhaka city. They are losing their capabilities due to unhygienic conditions and the gradual degradation of environmental health (Suha & Haque, 2013). As the knowledge, education, and skill of slum dwellers are relatively low, they cannot get any high-quality jobs or work. The females work as housekeepers, garment workers, small factory workers, brick breakers, and laborers while the males work as rickshaw pullers, van or card pullers, drivers, carpenters, floating vegetable sellers, floating tea sellers, and day laborers. The illiterate and the lower-class people live in the slum area. They have fewer opportunities for entertainment and recreation. As a result, they are involved in different kinds of unsocial activities such as crime, drug addiction, prostitution, and unsafe and unprotected premarital and extramarital physical relationships.

In spite of having all of these problems mentioned above, the slum dwellers of Dhaka city are involved in many types of premarital and extramarital relationships. Sometimes they are involved in unsafe and unprotected premarital and extramarital sexual relationships which may lead to the spread of STDs and STIs in the slum area at an alarming rate. A study found that the slum dwellers of Dhaka city are suffering from different sexually transmitted infections like Syphilis, Gonorrhea, Hepatitis B, and Chlamydia (Sabin et al., 2003). Anthony Giddens, a prominent British sociologist and the former director of the London School of Economics, opined that human intimacy, or the system of intimate relationships, gradually transforms from one social stage to another. He introduced the concepts of 'confluent love' and 'plastic sexuality,' which are

increasing in late modern society. He explained that maintaining a sexual relationship with a particular partner or multiple partners has become very easy in the late modern era (Giddens, 1992). The transformation of intimacy or intimate relationships is visible in developed western countries and developing countries like Bangladesh, even among lower-class people, including slum dwellers. Nowadays, premarital sexual relationships are increasing all over the world (Chamie, 2018). Despite being a Muslim-majority country, the prevalence of premarital and extramarital relationships, especially among lower-class urban people like slum dwellers, is widespread in Bangladesh. (Quddus, 2015). The adolescents of the slum area in Dhaka city are involved in premarital sexual relationships, the females sometimes work as commercial sex workers (CSWs), and the married males are involved in extramarital relationships. Although many of them are involved in unprotected premarital and extramarital multiple sexual relationships, they are not knowledgeable about some crucial issues such as the consequences of unprotected sexual acts, different kinds of STDs like HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, Gonorrhoea, and Syphilis, how a person is infected with these and the availability of treatment facilities for STDs or STIs.

Some studies are available in the academic world regarding premarital and extramarital relationships in Bangladesh, and many studies are also available regarding the problems of slum dwellers; no attention has been given so far to the trends of intimacy among the slum dwellers like premarital and extramarital relationships and their multidimensional impact on them. As such, the main intent of this study was to find out the causes and consequences of premarital and extramarital relationships among slum dwellers. In line with its main objective, the study sought to investigate the following research questions:

- 1 What is the social and environmental condition of the slum dwellers?
- 2 Why and how are the slum dwellers involved in intended and unintended premarital and extramarital relationships?
- 3 What are the consequences of involving premarital and extramarital relationships among the slum dwellers?

## **2. Methods**

### **2.1. Research Site**

Kamrangirchar slum area under Dhaka South City Corporation was purposively selected due to its bad reputation for illegal activities and current unpleasant social environment. Kamrangirchar is situated on the west side of the river Buriganga. More than 1.4 million people are living in this area. Most of the slums are built on the side of and around the Buriganga River. The river Buriganga is becoming significantly narrower day by day. A big embankment on the east side of the river Buriganga saves the people of Dhaka city from being flooded.

### **2.2. Research Design and Participants**

This research is a qualitative study. In view of the nature of the research, a multiple-case study was mainly employed. A multiple-case study is a type of case study in which researchers compare two or more cases regarding a particular issue under study and seek to build a theory and make generalizations (Leedy & Ormrod, 2021). The study area was selected purposively and the respondents were selected by snowball sampling. A total of 10 participants were selected for this study based on snowball sampling. Since snowball sampling is more suitable for locating the

samples with particular characteristics or in a situation where the researchers do not directly connect with the respondents, the study used this type of non-probability sampling to select the respondents from the target population (Siddiky, 2021). The participants comprised - males and females; married and unmarried. Unmarried respondents were selected to know the trends of premarital relationships, while married respondents were selected to know the trends of extramarital relationships. The socio-demographic profile of the participants is presented below in Table 1:

Table 1. Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

| No.     | Sex    | Age      | Religion | Educational Qualification |
|---------|--------|----------|----------|---------------------------|
| Case-1  | Male   | 42 Years | Muslim   | Class Eight               |
| Case-2  | Male   | 22 Years | Muslim   | Class Six                 |
| Case-3  | Male   | 38 Years | Muslim   | Class Three               |
| Case-4  | Male   | 25 Years | Muslim   | Class Six                 |
| Case-5  | Male   | 22 Years | Muslim   | SSC                       |
| Case-6  | Female | 32 Years | Muslim   | Class Nine                |
| Case-7  | Female | 19 Years | Muslim   | Class Eight               |
| Case-8  | Female | 23 Years | Muslim   | Class Seven               |
| Case-9  | Female | 15 Years | Muslim   | Class Nine                |
| Case-10 | Female | 18 Years | Muslim   | Class Four                |

Table-1 shows ten cases were selected for this study; five respondents were male, and the rest were female. The ages of the participants ranged from 15 to 42 years. All of the respondents were Muslims. The educational qualification of the slum dwellers is very low. In this study, it is evident that out of 10 participants, only one respondent passed the secondary school certificate (SSC), two completed class nine, two completed class eight, one completed class seven, two completed class six, one completed class four and the rest one completed class three.

### 2.3. Data Collection Procedure

For this study, both types of data – primary and secondary were collected. Primary data was collected through face-to-face qualitative interviews with the participants using interview protocol, which guided the researchers on how to interview and what to explore while interviewing. The participants answered the questions raised by the researchers according to their perspectives and experiences in life. To gather more details, especially about the consequences of involving premarital and extramarital relationships, the researchers also held interviews with three key informants who had very good knowledge about the slum area and various illegal and unethical activities being operated in that area. The interviews were conducted from January 1, 2022, to February 30, 2022. The researchers firmly maintained the ethical issues as the topic is susceptible and complex. Generally, people do not like sharing personal issues like premarital and extramarital relationships. As such, the researchers carefully maintained the principle of anonymity throughout the research. Secondary data was gathered from various secondary sources, including books, journal articles, newspapers, research reports, and websites. The researchers analyzed primary data with secondary data from various sources.

## 2.4. Data Analytical Procedure

After collecting primary data from the research field, they were compiled and edited with care. Then the edited transcripts were scrutinized. The researchers used an interpretive approach to make sense of social reality by understanding the meanings of their observations and experiences about premarital and extramarital relationships. Cross-case and thematic analyses were employed to analyze and interpret the qualitative interview data. The researchers carefully reviewed the text or excerpts of the interviews, identified some key concepts and patterns of meanings, and tried to interpret those with the help of relevant literature and insightful understandings.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Result

In order to gather information regarding the socio-economic backdrop of the premarital and extramarital relationships of the slum dwellers, the study tried to explore the socio-economic condition of the participants of the Kamrangirchar area. The participants' socio-economic condition involves several variables such as occupation, social class, monthly income, migration status, and housing type. The socio-economic condition of the participants is depicted in Table 2.

Table 2. Socio-economic conditions of the participants

| No. | Occupation                   | Monthly Income  | Housing Type                         | Relationship Status                                 |
|-----|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Salesman of a Crockery shop  | BDT 15000       | Mess                                 | Married and engaged in an extramarital relationship |
| 2   | Salesman of a Furniture Shop | BDT 10000       | Living in the Workplace              | Unmarried and engaged in a premarital relationship  |
| 3   | Rickshaw Puller              | BDT 15000-18000 | Living in a Rickshaw Garage          | Married and engaged in an extramarital relationship |
| 4   | Bus Helper                   | BDT 7000-8000   | Squatter Settlement                  | Unmarried and engaged in a premarital relationship  |
| 5   | Jobless                      | N/A             | Living with Family (One Room)        | Unmarried and engaged in a premarital relationship  |
| 6   | Housewife                    | N/A             | Living with Family (One Room)        | Married and engaged in an extramarital relationship |
| 7   | Garment Worker               | BDT 9000        | Living with Family (One Room)        | Unmarried and engaged in a premarital relationship  |
| 8   | Garment Worker               | BDT 9500        | Living with Maternal Aunt (One Room) | Unmarried and engaged in a premarital relationship  |
| 9   | Student                      | N/A             | Living with Family (One Room)        | Unmarried and engaged in a premarital relationship  |
| 10  | Garment Worker               | BDT 8500        | Living with Family (One Room)        | Unmarried and engaged in a premarital relationship  |

As shown in Table 2, from the ten case studies, three participants are garment workers, all female. Their monthly income ranges from BDT 8500 to BDT 9500. Two participants work as salesmen in two different shops – crockery and furniture shops. These two are male, and their monthly incomes are BDT 15000 and BDT 10000, respectively. Another respondent is a rickshaw puller who earns (BDT 15000-18000) monthly. Another works as a helper on a local bus and earns (BDT 7000-8000) monthly. The three participants do not earn any money; one is a housewife, one is jobless, and the rest is a students. It is noticeable that all the participants are of lower socio-economic backgrounds, and most live in overcrowded rooms. It is also evident that three participants are married and they are engaged in extramarital relationships. On the other hand, seven participants are unmarried and they are engaged in premarital relationships.

Table-3, shown below, addresses research question-2, that is, why and how the slum dwellers are involved in both intended and unintended premarital and extramarital relationships. To investigate the question, the study examined the participants' views on their experiences of involvement in the intended and unintended premarital and extramarital relationships.

Table 3. Experiences of the intended and unintended premarital and extramarital relationships

| No. | Marital Status | Relationship Type | Views of the Participants about their Experiences                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Key Categories of Causes (Themes)                                                                                                               |
|-----|----------------|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Married        | Extramarital      | “I have been living in Dhaka for 15 years without my family. My family resides in my village home. Being a married person, it is very difficult to lead life without wife. I pay a visit to my family twice in a year. Because visiting family is very expensive for me. So, I fulfill my biological needs by having sexual intercourse with CSWs available in brothel or residential hotels”. | -Living a long time without a spouse<br>-Uncontrolled sexual desire<br>-Enjoyment in life                                                       |
| 2   | Unmarried      | Premarital        | “I have been involved in premarital sexual intercourse for about two years. My first experience of meeting CSWs in a residential hotel. Some of my close friends, who have many such experiences, took me there. Initially I was very shy. However, now I have been used to. I really enjoy it.”                                                                                               | -Learning unethical sexual practices from close friends who have such previous experiences<br>-Uncontrolled sexual desire<br>-Enjoyment in life |
| 3   | Married        | Extramarital      | “I have been living in Dhaka for about 7 years without my family. It is very tough to live without wife. It is very expensive to visit my wife. I found my many friends going to CSWs for having sexual intercourse. Some of my intimate friends                                                                                                                                               | -Living a long time without a spouse<br>- Uncontrolled sexual desire<br>-Learning unethical sexual practices from close friends who             |

|   |           |              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                     |
|---|-----------|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|   |           |              | inspired me to be involved in such activities with CSWs in the residential hotels".                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | have such previous experiences                                                                                                                      |
| 4 | Unmarried | Premarital   | "I have been involved in premarital sexual intercourse for last one year. Some of my close friends, having such experiences, inspired me to get myself involved in such activities. I often go with my friends to the brothels and sometimes visit alone in some special areas of the slum to have sex with CSWs".                                                                                 | - Learning unethical sexual practices from close friends who have such previous experiences<br>- Uncontrolled sexual desire                         |
| 5 | Unmarried | Premarital   | "I have many friends who are drug addicted and some of them are involved in premarital and extra marital relationships. Some of my friends frequently visit some residential hotels at different places in Dhaka city where they meet with CSWs to fulfill their physical needs. One day, they took to me to a hotel for having sexual intercourse with CSWs. Since then, I have been habituated". | - Learning unethical sexual practices from close friends who have such previous experiences<br>- Uncontrolled sexual desire                         |
| 6 | Married   | Extramarital | "My husband has been working as a construction worker in Malaysia for two years. It is very difficult for a married woman to live without husband for such a long time. Recently I have developed a close relationship with one of the friends of my husband. We do sex sometimes".                                                                                                                | - Living a long time without a spouse<br>- Uncontrolled sexual desire                                                                               |
| 7 | Unmarried | Premarital   | "I work in a garment factory. My two close friends are in a relationship with their colleagues. They often date and have sex. It has inspired me to find a boyfriend to enjoy my life and come out of a monotonous life. My boyfriend is my co-worker. We often go to residential hotels for having sex".                                                                                          | - Learning unethical sexual practices from close friends who have such previous experiences<br>- Enjoyment in life<br>- Come out of monotonous life |
| 8 | Unmarried | Premarital   | "I live in a slum of Kamrangirchar. I work in garment factory at Elephant road in Dhaka where I closely work with both male and female                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | - Learning unethical sexual practices from close friends who                                                                                        |

|    |           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
|----|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    |           | colleagues. Some of my colleagues are intimately engaged in premarital affairs. In order to remove my monotony and enjoy my life, I have developed a close relationship with one of my colleagues. He We often date outside and go to residential hotels to have sex”. | have such previous experiences<br>- Enjoyment in life<br>-Come out of monotonous life<br>-Uncontrolled sexual desire                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                        |
| 9  | Unmarried | Premarital                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | “I live in a slum of Kamrangirchar. One year ago, I fell in love with one of my friends’ cousin whose house is very close to my house. One day, he proposed me to have sexual intercourse. Initially I rejected his proposal. But when he assured me to marry, I agreed”.                                                                                                               | - Assurance of marriage<br>- Belief in falsehood promise for marriage                  |
| 10 | Unmarried | Premarital                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | “I was in a relationship with a man for one year. He was a salesman in footwear shop. When I saw him first, I became much attached to him because he was very handsome. Gradually we became very good friends. One day he told me that he would marry me. I believed him and engaged with very deep relationship with him and we often used to have sex. But he eventually bluffed me”. | - Assurance of marriage<br>-Belief in falsehood promise<br>-Uncontrolled sexual desire |

To address the research question-3, that is, what are the consequences of involving premarital and extramarital relationships among the slum dwellers, the study examined the views of the participants regarding their practices of premarital and extramarital relationships and how these practices may contribute to spreading different types of STDs and STIs among slum dwellers. To address research question 3, the study also examined the views of three key informants. The views of the participants have been presented below in Table 4:

Table 4. Practices of premarital and extramarital relationships

| No. | Relationship Type | Views of the Participants about their Practices                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Categories of Practices (Themes)                                                                                            |
|-----|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Extramarital      | "As pointed out before, I often go to residential hotels or brothels to have sexual intercourse with the CSWs. While doing sexual intercourses, I don't use always condoms. I know about sexually transmitted diseases but I am not serious about it". | -Having sexual intercourses with CSWs<br>- Having negligence in using condoms<br>-Unsafe and unprotected sexual intercourse |

|   |              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 | Premarital   | <p>“I frequently visit various residential hotels in old Dhaka to have sexual intercourse with CSWs. I don’t feel good using condoms. That’s why; I am reluctant to use it. I have little knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases”.</p>                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of seriousness about sexually transmitted diseases</li> <li>-Having sexual intercourses with CSWs</li> <li>- Having negligence in using condoms</li> <li>-Unsafe and unprotected sexual intercourse</li> <li>- Little knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases</li> </ul> |
| 3 | Extramarital | <p>“I mainly have sex with CSWs in the residential hotels around old Dhaka. I know about HIV/AIDS. However, for having much pleasure, I don’t use always condoms while having sexual intercourses”.</p>                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Having sexual intercourses with CSWs</li> <li>- Having negligence in using condoms</li> <li>-Unsafe and unprotected sexual intercourse</li> <li>- Lack of seriousness about sexually transmitted diseases</li> </ul>                                                                 |
| 4 | Premarital   | <p>“I often go to brothels or some areas of the slum to have sexual intercourse with CSWs. I don’t know much about sexual diseases. While having sex, I rarely use condoms for having highest satisfaction”.</p>                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Having sexual intercourses with CSWs</li> <li>-Unsafe and unprotected sexual intercourse</li> <li>- Having negligence in using condoms</li> <li>- Little knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases</li> </ul>                                                                    |
| 5 | Premarital   | <p>"I often go to various residential hotels around old Dhaka to have sexual intercourse with CSWs. I do not have much knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases, such as Hepatitis, Syphilis, and Gonorrhoea. However, I do not use condoms regularly for sexual satisfaction".</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Having sexual intercourses with CSWs</li> <li>-Unsafe and unprotected sexual intercourse</li> <li>- Having negligence in using condoms</li> <li>- Little knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases</li> </ul>                                                                    |
| 6 | Extramarital | <p>“As pointed out, I have very deep relationship with one of my husband’s friends. He takes care of me much. I know about sexually transmitted diseases. However, my partner doesn’t use condoms always though I insist on it. But he doesn’t listen to me”.</p>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Having sexual intercourses with a boyfriend or a partner</li> <li>-Unsafe and unprotected sexual intercourse</li> <li>- Having negligence in using condoms</li> </ul>                                                                                                                |
| 7 | Premarital   | <p>"My boyfriend and I go to residential hotels usually once a</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Having sexual intercourses with a boyfriend or a partner</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

|    |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    |            | month to have sex. I know little about sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS and Gonorrhoea. My boyfriend is much reluctant to use condoms. I advise him to use condoms. However, sometimes he listens to me, and sometimes he does not.     | -Unsafe and unprotected sexual intercourse<br>- Having negligence in using condoms<br>-Little knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases                                                                                                                           |
| 8  | Premarital | “My boyfriend takes me outside for dating. Sometimes we do sexual intercourse in residential hotels. I don’t have much knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases. I suggest him to use condoms. However, he is not serious about it”.          | -Having sexual intercourses with a boyfriend or a partner<br>-Unsafe and unprotected sexual intercourse<br>- Having negligence in using condoms<br>-Little knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases<br>- Lack of seriousness about sexually transmitted diseases |
| 9  | Premarital | "We sometimes go to residential hotels to have sex. I know about sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS. However, my boyfriend is not serious about it".                                                                                   | -Having sexual intercourses with a boyfriend or a partner<br>-Unsafe and unprotected sexual intercourse<br>- Lack of seriousness about sexually transmitted diseases                                                                                                  |
| 10 | Premarital | "When I had a relationship with a man, we used to go to some residential hotels to have sex. I know about the sexually transmitted disease. That is why I often requested my partner to use protective measures. However, he did not listen to me. | Having sexual intercourses with a boyfriend or a partner<br>-Unsafe and unprotected sexual intercourse<br>- Lack of seriousness about sexually transmitted diseases                                                                                                   |

The views as to the consequences of involving premarital and extramarital relationships of the three key informants are presented below in Table 5.

Table 5. Consequences of involving premarital and extramarital relationships

| No. | Social Position         | Views of the Key Informants                                                                                                                                           | Key Categories of Consequences (Themes)                                                                           |
|-----|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | A portion of slum owner | “A lot of young boys and girls who are living in that area are involved in premarital relationships including premarital sexual intercourse. Some cases of unintended | -Unintended pregnancies and induced abortions among adolescents<br>-A risk of spreading STDs and STIs in the slum |

|   |                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|   |                        | pregnancies and induced abortions among the adolescent girls are found. Both married and unmarried males visit brothels or residential hotels to fulfill their physical needs with CSWs. I am deeply concerned about the present situation of the slum”.                                                                                                                                                                                                            | - A threat to the inhabitable social environment                                                                                                                       |
| 2 | Small businessman      | “Most of the garment workers who are living in the slum are involved in premarital relationship with their co-workers. Many unmarried boys and girls from other occupations are also involved in premarital relationships. Some unmarried boys frequently visit brothels/residential hotels to fulfill their physical needs with CSWs. To me, domestic violence and divorce are also very common causes among the slum dwellers due to extramarital relationships”. | -A risk of spreading STDs and STIs in the slum<br>- Extramarital affairs cause domestic violence and divorce<br>- A threat to the inhabitable social environment       |
| 3 | Local political worker | I found that many young boys and girls are involved in premarital relationships including sexual intercourse. I know of some cases of unintended pregnancies at premature ages and induced abortions among adolescents. Sometimes, their friends influence young boys to visit a brothel or residential hotels”.                                                                                                                                                    | - Unintended pregnancies and induced abortions among adolescents<br>-A risk of spreading STDs and STIs in the slum<br>- A threat to the inhabitable social environment |

### 3.2. Discussion

The discussion section is divided into three subsections, each focusing on the discussions on findings about three research queries. The subsections involve the socio-economic conditions of the slum dwellers, causes of intended and unintended premarital and extramarital relationships, and practices and consequences of premarital and extramarital relationships. These subsections are presented below:

### *3.2.1. Socio-economic Conditions of the Respondents*

The study reveals that the participants have a lower socio-economic background and migrated from rural areas. Lack of job opportunities in villages, landlessness in villages, the higher chance of getting a job in the city, and river erosion were identified as the major reasons for people to migrate from rural areas to Dhaka city (Jahan et al., 2015). Most of them are involved in manual work and sales activities with low incomes. Most of the slum dwellers of Dhaka city are engaged in day labor, a labor of different factories and industries, rickshaw or card pulling, small businesses, and small jobs or services (Alamgir, Jabbar, & Islam, 2010). They live in poor housing with crowded conditions. Many studies suggest that poor social environment and living conditions result in unethical practices and illegal activities among the people (Darfour-Oduro & Grigsby-Toussaint, 2022; Jose, 2021; Haque & Muniruzzaman, 2020; Raut & Pakhare, 2016). According to social disorganization theory – one of the key sociological theories of criminology – deteriorated neighborhoods, inadequate social control, law-violating gangs and groups, and conflicting social values contribute to the causation of crimes (SIEGEL, 2012). As such, a poor social environment and living conditions can be attributed to unethical practices or illegal activities such as premarital and extramarital relationships in the slum areas.

### *3.2.2. Causes of Intended and Unintended Premarital and Extramarital Relationships*

There were three married and seven unmarried males and females in this study. All of them were engaged in premarital and extramarital relationships, including sexual intercourse. The male respondents visited brothels or residential hotels to fulfill their physical needs. The female respondents are involved in premarital sexual intercourse with their partners when they manage time and place by negotiating with each other. However, the present study finds some causes of intended and unintended premarital and extramarital relationships, including premarital and extramarital intercourse. The major causes are: Living a long time without a spouse, uncontrolled sexual desire, enjoyment in life, learning such behavior from close friends who have previous experiences, coming out of monotonous life, assurance of marriage, and belief in falsehood promises for marriage. Some other studies and theoretical explanations of some scholars of related fields support these findings. Anthony Giddens used some theoretical terms, such as plastic sexuality, sex addiction, and hyperactive sexual desire to denote the condition of having sexual relationships with multiple simultaneous partners (Giddens, 1992). The patterns of intimacy are gradually changing and premarital and extramarital relationships are rising not only in western developed countries but also in developing countries like Bangladesh. Nowadays, anyone can maintain multiple partners, and avoiding reproduction is also very easy due to the availability of contraception (Muniruzzaman, 2017). Some other recent studies have found the factors and causes of premarital and extramarital relationships (Kundu, Chettri, & Mallik, 2022; Jahan, et al., 2017).

### *3.2.3. Living a Long Time Without Spouse*

The present study finds that if a person, especially a married man, has to live a long time without his spouse, he gets involved in extramarital relationships. Some respondents who are involved in extramarital sexual intercourse have mentioned that it is challenging to live without a spouse and without fulfilling physical needs. Females are also involved in extramarital relationships due to living a long time without husbands. A theoretical model explains some critical

factors of extramarital affairs that include the distribution of time of married persons among workplace, spouse, and paramour; spending leisure time with non-household members, mainly with co-workers; and the activities with household members and the activities with non-household members (Fair, 1978).

#### *3.2.4. Uncontrolled Sexual Desire and Enjoyment in Life*

Uncontrolled sexual desire is another mentionable cause of intended and unintended premarital and extramarital relationships. Both married and unmarried males and females cannot restrain themselves from being involved in premarital and extramarital sexual intercourse due to their uncontrolled sexual desire. Marriage is considered the only legal way of fulfilling physical needs, especially in Muslim-majority countries (Razif, 2020). Despite this, many people are involved in premarital and extramarital relationships, including sexual intercourse. This study also finds that the respondents visit brothels to fulfill their physical needs with CSWs. Nowadays, violating social, cultural, and religious restrictions and involving in premarital and extramarital sexual intercourse is a widespread phenomenon, not only in western countries but also in developing countries like Bangladesh. Some people always emphasize their desire and enjoyment.

#### *3.2.5. Learning Unethical Sexual Practice from Close Friends Who Have Previous Experiences*

The study shows that many married and unmarried male participants visit a brothel for the first time with their close friends who have previous experiences visiting brothels and having sexual intercourse. So, there is a common trend of learning unethical and illegal sexual practices in the form of premarital and extramarital relationships from close friends. Sutherland's 'Differential Association Theory supports this finding.' According to this theory, criminal behavior is learned. People learn motives, values, attitudes, and techniques for criminal behavior through interaction with others, especially family members, friends, and peer groups (Adler, Laufer, & Mueller, 2012; Siegel, 2012). In line with 'Differential Association Theory', many studies suggest that people's delinquency or deviant behavior is the result of their interaction and association with their friends who have such behavior (Alduraywish, 2021; Chigbu, Nwobi, Nwanna, & Etele, 2021; Yusuf, Daud, Arshat, & Sakiru, 2021; Huijsmans, Nivette, Eisner, & Ribeaud, 2019; Rokven, Boer, Tolsma, & Ruiters, 2017).

A study reveals that almost all Americans have experienced sex before getting married. This is a common trend in many western countries (Finer, 2007). This tendency to involve premarital and extramarital sexual intercourse has also increased in third-world developing countries like Bangladesh. The slum dwellers are not beyond this trend. Like upper and middle-class people, the slum dwellers are also getting involved in premarital and extramarital sexual intercourse. The slum dwellers are influenced by their co-workers, friends, and peers to know about brothels and CSWs and subsequently get involved in premarital love relationships.

#### *3.2.6. Falsehood promise of marriage*

The unmarried girls are often involved in premarital sexual intercourse after getting the assurance of marriage from their partners. In this study, two unmarried girls got involved in premarital sexual intercourse after getting the promise of marriage from their partners. Some girls refuse to conduct sexual intercourse initially but after getting the promise of marriage to their

partners, they agree with their partners' proposal. A recent study finds that due to insufficient emotional support from the family and a lack of proper sexual socialization, girls easily accept any emotional and sexual behavior from boys (Noroozi, Taleghani, Merghati-Khoei, Tavakoli & Gholami, 2014). Some boys offer a false promise of marriage to the girls to conduct sexual intercourse, and the girls accept their proposal. However, after having sexual intercourse, the boy refuses to marry the girl. These types of premarital sexual contact are also rising among slum dwellers.

### *3.2.7. Practices and Consequences of Premarital and Extramarital Relationships*

From the case studies, this study has found some practices of the respondents when they are involved in premarital and extramarital sexual intercourse. The respondents' most common practices and trends are: Having sexual intercourse with CSWs, having negligence in using condoms, having unsafe and unprotected sexual intercourse, lacking seriousness about sexually transmitted diseases, and having little knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases. Moreover, from the KII, the study has found some consequences involving premarital and extramarital relationships, including premarital and extramarital sexual intercourse. These are Unintended pregnancies and induced abortions among adolescents, the risk of spreading STDs and STIs in the slum, a threat to the inhabitable social environment, and extramarital affairs causing domestic violence and divorce.

However, all of these findings from case studies and KII are supported by some related literature. A recent qualitative study has found some causes, patterns, and consequences of extramarital relations among married women (Malik, et al., 2014). Another recent study has found the factors influencing premarital sexual behavior among the youths and its impact on their health (Shrestha, 2019). Some other studies have suggested many aspects of premarital and extramarital relationships, including causes, practices, patterns, and consequences of premarital and extramarital sexual behavior (White, Cleland, & Carael, 2000; Mensch, Clark, Lloyd, & Erulkar, 2001; Rob & Mutahara, 2001; Teachman, 2004; Mitsunaga, Powell, Heard, & Larsen, 2005; Schensul, et al., 2006; Mercer, Khanam, Gurley, & Azim, 2007; Adhikari & Tamang, 2009; Glass & Wright, 2010; MANNING & COHEN, 2012; Bogale & Seme, 2014; Uddin & Ferdous, 2015; Arafat & Khan, 2021)—some available literature in academia about premarital and extramarital relationships, including premarital and extramarital sexual intercourse. However, no attention has been paid to premarital and extramarital relationships among the slum dwellers. The present study tried to find different aspects of premarital and extramarital relationships, including sexual intercourse among slum dwellers in Dhaka city.

Based on the practices and consequences of premarital and extramarital relationships, including sexual intercourse, some themes have been developed. These are consecutively illustrated below:

### *3.2.8. Having Sexual Intercourses with CSWs*

This study finds that married and unmarried boys visit brothels or residential hotels to have sexual intercourse with CSWs. Moreover, some boys are involved in premarital and extramarital sexual intercourse in the slum area, where they try to convince the girls in many ways, like false promises of marriage. Another study shows that the boys in Dhaka visit residential hotels to fulfill their physical needs and identifies some reasons behind their involvement in sexual intercourse

with CSWs. They not only want to get rid of wet dreams and masturbation, but they also want to prove their masculinity through sexual activities with CSWs (Gazi et al., 2009).

### *3.2.9. Having Negligence for Using Condoms*

Some slum dwellers involved in premarital and extramarital sexual intercourse have little consciousness regarding using condoms. However, many of them have negligence in using condoms. Some respondents who frequently visit a brothel or residential hotels do not always use condoms. The CSWs who are working in the brothel cannot consistently impose on their clients to use condoms every time. The female CSWs can increase condom use by negotiating with their male clients. But they can't always do that due to their clients' objections. A related study finds low negotiations for condom use by female CSWs in brothels, hotels, and the streets of Dhaka city (Alam et al., 2013). However, recently the usage of contraception, including condom usage, has dramatically increased among the slum dwellers of Dhaka city (Akter R., 2020).

### *3.2.10. Unsafe and Unprotected Sexual Intercourse*

The present study also finds that male and female slum dwellers are involved in unsafe and unprotected sexual intercourse. Most of them do not have proper knowledge about contraception and STDs. They try to fulfill their physical needs, whether in brothels or elsewhere, according to their convenience. They try to avoid reproduction, but sometimes they cannot avoid it due to a lack of knowledge about condom usage and other types of contraception. The CSWs working in the brothels try to avoid reproduction by following different contraceptive methods. However, the other women involved in premarital and extramarital sexual intercourse do not always follow any proper method of contraception. A recent study finds that the young men who live on the streets in Dhaka city are involved in different types of unsafe sexual behaviors, which may lead to STDs or STIs (McClair et al., 2017).

### *3.2.11. Having Sexual Intercourses with a Boyfriend or a Partner*

Besides visiting a brothel or residential hotel, some slum dwellers are involved in premarital and extramarital sexual intercourse in the slum or elsewhere. In this case, the male partner convinces the female partner to conduct sexual intercourse and they choose a place to spend their time together through negotiation. Sometimes the male partner gives a false promise of marriage to the female partner so that she can easily accept the proposal. Sometimes both partners are engaged in premarital sexual intercourse to get pleasure, not as a result of extreme love (Hossen & Quddus, 2021).

### *3.2.12. Lack of Knowledge and Seriousness about STDs*

Since the level of knowledge and education is relatively low among slum dwellers, they are not severe of STDs and STIs. Some respondents have little knowledge about unprotected and unsafe premarital and extramarital relationships, few others have no idea about that, and others ignore this impact. Some adolescents and youth, who are engaged in premarital sexual intercourse, know that such kind of relationship may facilitate HIV/AIDS. Some of them use a condom while conducting any sexual intercourse to protect themselves from AIDS, but others do not use a

condom every time. Most of the respondents have more or less knowledge about HIV/AIDS. However, they do not know about other STDs like Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Syphilis, and Gonorrhea. Heterosexual intercourse is a very common phenomenon among slum dwellers. Since their knowledge and awareness are inferior, the females are more vulnerable to STDs than their male partners (Hossain, Mani, Sidik, Shahar, & Islam, 2014).

### *3.2.13. Unintended Pregnancies and Induced Abortions Among Adolescents*

Unintended pregnancies and induced abortions are also common phenomena in the slum area. Due to the lack of knowledge and seriousness about reproduction and contraception, adolescent girls become pregnant after accidental premarital sexual intercourse. Sometimes young girls accept the proposal of physical relation from their male partners after getting the false promise of marriage. However, when the girl becomes pregnant, the male partner denies their relationship. One of the respondents of KII witnessed some cases of unintended pregnancies and induced abortions in the slum area. He said, "A lot of young boys and girls who are living in that area are involved in premarital relationships including premarital sexual intercourse. Some cases of unintended pregnancies and induced abortions among adolescent girls are found in this area" (Fieldwork,2022; KII-1). Premarital sex, premarital pregnancy, and extramarital sex are prohibited in Bangladesh. However, these are gradually increasing, especially in those places where urbanization is growing fast, economic insecurity is prevalent, and people are influenced by the impact of globalization (Begum, Ashraf, & Nawar, 2018).

### *3.2.14. A risk of Spreading STDs and STIs in the slum*

Since the slum dwellers are involved in unsafe and unprotected premarital and extramarital sexual intercourse, the slum area is very vulnerable to spreading STDs and STIs. Moreover, they have very little knowledge about STDs and STIs, which increases the risk of spreading STDs and STIs in the slum area. It is found from the KII that some slum dwellers, like garment workers, are involved in premarital relationships. Other people from other occupations are also involved in both premarital and extramarital relationships. Some frequently visit brothels/residential hotels to fulfill their physical needs. One of the respondents of KII expressed this, "Most of the garment workers living in the slum are involved in a premarital relationship with their co-workers. Many unmarried boys and girls from other occupations are also involved in premarital relationships. Some unmarried boys frequently visit brothels/residential hotels to fulfill their physical needs with CSWs" (Fieldwork,2022; KII-2). A qualitative study conducted in Rajshahi city found that men involved in extramarital commercial sex who do not use a condom properly suffer from sexually transmitted diseases/infections (Uddin & Ferdous, 2015). So, the slim dwellers in Dhaka city involved in unprotected extramarital relationships have a high risk of STDs and STIs.

### *3.2.15. Extramarital Affairs Cause Domestic Violence and Divorce*

Despite social and religious restrictions, many people in Bangladesh engage in premarital and extramarital relationships. The present study also finds that many slum dwellers are also involved in both premarital and extramarital relationships, including sexual intercourse, which have some negative impacts on them. One of the mentionable impacts of extramarital affairs among slum dwellers is that it increases the cases of domestic violence and divorce. A respondent

of KII mentioned, "To me, domestic violence and divorce are also widespread among the slum dwellers due to extramarital relationships" (Fieldwork,2022; KII-2). Another qualitative study finds that extramarital affairs are one of the primary causes responsible for divorce among the women of Dhaka city (Akter & Begum, 2012). Some other similar studies found extramarital affairs as one of the major causes of domestic violence and divorce (Islam, 2020; Yesmen & Nahid, 2020; Mahzebin, 2021). These studies are conducted in different areas of Bangladesh. The present study also finds similar results in the Kamrangirchar slum area.

### *3.2.16. A Threat to Inhabitable Social Environment*

When domestic violence, divorce, and other chaotic situations increase in a particular area, it becomes a threat to the inhabitable social environment. The present study finds that due to premarital and extramarital relationships, domestic violence and divorce gradually increase in the slum area, threatening the inhabitable social environment. Moreover, slum dwellers are also involved in different unsocial activities, including some criminal activities, which make the living environment more vulnerable for general people. Most of the slum dwellers migrated to Dhaka from different rural areas. Violent activities and crimes are rising due to this rural-urban migration (Khanam, 2016). Slum areas are always regarded as vulnerable places of different social problems where children can engage in various criminal activities, which makes the slum areas a more dangerous place to live in (Kamruzzaman & Hakim, 2015).

## **4. Conclusion**

Premarital and extramarital relationships have become a common issue across the globe. The study revealed that slum dwellers of Dhaka city are involved in premarital and extramarital relationships. This study identified several causes and consequences of premarital and extramarital relationships. Unpleasant social environment, learning unsafe sexual practices from close friends, falsehood promises for marriage, and uncontrolled sexual desire are the significant causes of premarital and extramarital relationships among the slum dwellers. The study also found that having unsafe sexual intercourse with CSWs, boyfriends or partners, unintended pregnancies and induced abortions, domestic violence and divorce, and the risk of spreading STDs and STIs are major potential consequences of premarital and extramarital relationships among the slum dwellers. It is a matter of great regret that most slum dwellers do not know how to protect themselves from the negative impact of these premarital and extramarital relationships.

Some TV channels telecast different programs on HIV/AIDS, although very few programs focus on other STDs such as Hepatitis B/C, Syphilis, and Gonorrhoea. A large number of unmarried adolescents and young boys and girls are living in the slum area. Many of them are engaged in premarital sexual intercourse. Some floating and street commercial sex workers also live in the slum area. However, most are not cautious about using condoms, putting them at risk of being transmitted STIs/HIV/AIDS. More programs should be telecasted not only on HIV/AIDS but also on other STDs to increase awareness among the people. Although some NGOs and INGOs are working in the slum area to improve the condition of the slum dwellers, they should be more involved in this issue. Our government also should take more steps to improve awareness among the slum dwellers not only on this issue but also on some other relevant issues.

Moreover, the provision of civic amenities, enforcement of laws, and creation of virtuous life through fostering proper education and social values should be considered. However, the

research topic is susceptible and complicated, and the study was qualitative. It was not easy to find out the personal information of the participants. Moreover, since the study was qualitative, the study did not investigate the statistical association among several pertinent variables that could better explain premarital and extramarital relationships. As such, the mixed method can be applied to explore more details about premarital and extramarital relationships the in slum area.

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