

# Kuttis of Bangladesh: Study of a Declining Culture

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**ABSTRACT:** Very little information exists on the Kutti culture of Bangladesh, which flourished in the metropolis and suburbs during the first half of the last century. The preserver, protector and propagator of this culture were a group of Muslim community members who held distinct worldviews and ways of life to maintain their group exclusiveness. Their distinct world view found its expression through their adherence to the philosophy of plain living, where each member of them remained contented with whatever they had, and remained happy by trying to make other people happy by passing humor, cutting jokes and commenting sarcastic remarks to their clients who hired their hackney carts which were locally called as *tom tom*. Notwithstanding their abject poverty and being victims of exploitation and discrimination as well as oppression by the middle class and aristocrat people of that time they never made any organized protests against this social injustice. This paper intends to study the origin, growth, development and decline of Kutti Culture from Bangladesh society. The change process has been examined with some concepts as ethnicity, way of life, worldview, culture traits and social mobility.

## INTRODUCTION

The history of the origin and development of Dhaka city (Dacca) can be divided into five phases: Pre-Mughal (before 1608), Mughal (1608-1764), British (1764-1947), Pakistan (1947-1971) and Bangladesh (1971-upto) periods. History has it that originally the Pre-Mughal Dhaka consisted of 52 bazars (markets) and 53 lanes. It acquired its name of “Bayonno Bazar and Teppana Gulli” from its physical characteristic (Ahsan: 1996; Dhaka South City Corporation: n.d; Islam: 2008) and was famous for its industry which caused Portuguese traders to settle here. According to Dani (1962), the main business areas of that period were Sadharghat and Victoria Park, the ancient *Anta ghar*. During the later part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century Dhaka came under the control of the twelve *Bhuiyas*.

Munim Khan defeated Daud Shah Karrani in 1575 which is marked as the beginning of the Mughal suzerainty in Bengal. This Karrani revolted against *South Asian Anthropologist*, 2014, 14(1): 15-23

the Mughal Empire again soon after Munim Khan died and he was defeated in the decisive battle of *Rajmahal* that made Bangal a part of the Mughal Empire in 1576. Man Singh was sent to Bengal in 1595 for foiling all rebellions, especially the rebellion of Musnad-I-Ala Isa Khan. He established his headquarters in *Rajmahal* which was renamed ‘*Akbarnagar*’ and wanted to move his headquarters from *Rajmahal* to *Bhawal* for continuing military actions against the rebellious *Pathan*. He later moved his headquarters from *Bhawal* to Dhaka (Hasan, '81). In this regards, Taifoor ('56) said, “*In 1602 the Raja shifted his head-quarters from Bhawal to Dhaka in order to deal more effectively with the Pathans. At that time, Raja's headquarters was at the western part of the city roundabout the Dhakeswari temples that were then the palladium of the city. A Pre-Mughal strong fort had already existed in Dhaka in the present central jail compound that was further strengthened and renovated by the Raja and his successors. His headquarters thus formed a nucleus*”

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*for the Mughal City of Dhaka. He continued to stay here till 1604.”*

After Man Singh, Islam Khan came in power in Bengal. He successfully brought about the peace and security of the province and consolidated the Mughal power. He made Dhaka the capital of Bengal during the reign of Emperor of Jahangir. Taifoor (1956) contends that Islam Khan, though established his seat of administration in Dhaka in 1608, renamed it *Jahangirnagar* in 1612 after his master and liege Emperor Jahangir.

The beauty of Mughal Dhaka lasted for about a century (1608 to 1717) with a brief exception (1639-1659) when Shah Shuja was in power and the capital was shifted back to Rajmahal. Islam Khan's Dhaka continued to hold prominence and good position of the provincial metropolis until Shah Shuja thought it expedient to transfer the capital to Rajmahal in 1635. The glory of Dhaka began to diminish with the departure of Azim Shah from Dhaka in 1706 and was totally painted out in 1717 when Murshid Kuli Khan transferred the seat of the government from Dhaka to Muksudabad which was renamed Murshidabad (Hasan, '81).

Dutch, French, Armenians, Greeks and Englishmen came and settled in Dhaka with aims at expanding their business and missionary activities during the Mughal period. So Dhaka city, as it was thought, became an important place for business and trade during that time. The last independent Nawab Surajahdowla came in conflict with the Englishmen who did not comply with the existing rules and regulations and was defeated in the *Plassey* Battle in 1757. The power of Bengal automatically shifted to the hands of the Englishmen in 1764 (Dani, '62).

The transformation of the capital of Bengal from Dhaka to Kolkata (in the early phase of the British period), as the British had founded Kolkata in 1690 and more natural inclination to the development of this city, and the introduction of spinning machine in England in 1785, resultantly closing our muslin factory and deserting the weavers of Dhaka to seek employment in agriculture, had made significant contributions to the reduction of the area, population and splendours of Dhaka town (Ahsan, '96; Chowdhury and Hasan, 2011; Islam, 2008).

In 1858 India came under the direct rule of the British crown and saw some improvements in utility services. Bengal was partitioned into two poles i.e., East and West and Dhaka became again the capital of East Bengal and Assam province. The area of Dhaka city was extended beyond Ramna area. In 1911 the partition of Bengal was annulled because of huge protests from politicians and intellectuals based in Kolkata and the capital city was moved away from Dhaka (Islam, 2008).

As Dani (1962) said, “*On 12 December 1911, at the Delhi Darbar, His Majesty George V, announced that the capital of India would henceforward be Delhi and not Calcutta; the partition of Bengal, which had caused such bitter controversy would be revoked; Bengal would be one province under a governor in council; a new province of Bihar and Orissa would be created; Assam would once more be the charge of a chief commissioner.*”

India was divided into two parts i.e., India and Pakistan based on the ‘Dual Ideology’. Bangladesh became a part of the East Pakistan and Dhaka was made a capital city of East Pakistan from a district town. This political transformation and huge migration from India to Pakistan had caused in increasing the population and area of the city. New industries grew and business flourished. Motijheel commercial area and New Market at Azimpur area were developed as central business areas. Thus, in Dhaka, like in other Eastern cities, there developed two commercial nodes, the indigenous centre (located in old Dhaka) and the modern centre (located in new Dhaka) —with distinct characteristics (Ahsan, '96).

Bangladesh became independent from Pakistan through the Liberation war of 1971 and Dhaka, as it was before, remained the capital city of the independent Bangladesh. Consequently, the prosperity of Dhaka city reached the pinnacle position in every sphere. With this development, the population of Dhaka city has been rising and spatial size of Dhaka city has been extended towards Northward with the extension of the upper class residential area. The retail price centre was turned into a big business centre and new shopping and business centres have been built up in the course of time. The Kuttis is not the exception to this historical scenario of Dhaka city.

*Objectives of the study:* The main objective of the current endeavour was therefore to explore the origin, growth, development and decay of the Kutti culture in the light of historical backdrop of Dhaka city, as depicted before. Other objectives of the study were as follows:

- To explore how the Kuttis as a community came and settled in Dhaka city,
- to know whether they experienced any identity crisis, and,
- to find out inter-generational mobility in education, occupation and marriage.

The rest of the paper is organised in the following manner. The next section talks about the methodology of the study which is followed by the discussion of the origin, growth, development and decay of the Kuttis. How far the Kuttis experienced identity crisis is highlighted in the next section. The penultimate section highlights results of the study while the last section discusses main findings and draws conclusions.

#### METHODOLOGY

Both survey and observation methods were used in this study. Two types of sampling techniques i.e., purposive and area samplings were administered to select 62 respondents. Kuttis are living in different areas of Dhaka City but Nazir-bazar area was selected for this research. The field information was collected in 1997 when I was a student of M. S. S. in Sociology at Dhaka University for my master's dissertation. Though the information collected looks not to be contemporaneous, this information helps generate ideas about the position and status of Kuttis at that time. Based on this idea, the present situation could be imagined. Both primary and secondary sources of information were also used to substantiate my arguments in this study. There are a lot of methods for measuring mobility, which are available in many books and studies. But mobility matrix was used in this study as a tool of measuring inter-generational mobility.

#### ORIGIN, GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE KUTTIS

No official record of the population of Dhaka city during the Mughal period is available. However, Sebastian Manrique estimated the population of

Dhaka city and its suburbs at two lakhs (0.2 million) in 1640 (Karim, '64). As stated earlier, Islam Khan first made Dhaka the capital city in 1608. He excavated *Dulai khal* for both protecting the Pre-Mughal city and providing an internal water communication (Dani, '62). This *Dulai khal* ultimately divided Dhaka city into two parts i.e. eastern and western parts.

The people living in Dhaka city from four generations, have been considered original inhabitants of Dhaka city who have later been renamed *Dhakais*. Most of the *Dhakais* were Muslims and came in Dhaka from the adjacent places. Some authors claim that original Muslim *Dhakais* were divided into two special social classes i.e. *Khoshbas* or *Sukbas* and *Kuttis*. As historical evidence shows, the first generation of *Sukbas* came from Delhi and Agra. Their language was Urdu (Urdu). Among them, Syed, Turkis, Mughal, Pathan and Sheikhs were predominant. They basically lived at the western part of *Dulai khal*. Chawkbazar, Babubazar, Lalbagh, Islampur, Urdu road, Begumbazar areas were also their residential areas (Ahmed, '95).

Another social group of Muslim inhabitants was Kuttis. They spoke Muslim *Bangla* within their houses and local *Urdu* as well as *Islami Bangla* at the outside (Rahman, '95). They basically dwelt in the eastern part of *Dulai khal*. Their main residential areas were Kalta bazar, Roy saheb bazar, Narinda, Suritola, Moushandhi, Sutrapur, Bangsal etc (Ahmed, '95).

There is a debate among scholars about the etymological meaning of the word 'Kuttis'. As per Dr Muhammad Shahidullah, people who worked for building houses were called Kuttis. Many scholars denote people husking paddy as Kuttis (Ahmed, '95). Etymologically, the word 'Kutti' came from the Sanskrit word of '*Kuttin*' which means 'smashing' (Ahmed, '91; Ahmed, 2001). Basically, the majority of the Kuttis were Muslims and labourers and led a miserable life. The following lines of a poem corroborate this claim.

*"Dhaka ajib shahar, Nam Jahangir nagar, Do char Sharif hai, Baki kutti tamam"* (Hossain, '95)..

[Dhaka is a strange town whose name is *Jahangir nagar*. There are two or four *Sharifs* and the rest are all *Kuttis*]

There was a great famine in Bengal in 1769-70 and a lot of people died due to the scarcity of food. Consequently, a huge number of people came to Dhaka from the adjacent places, particularly, from Faridpur, Comilla, Noakhali, Mymensingh and from villages near to Dhaka, for their own needs. There was no liveable space for absorbing such a huge number of new migrants. Only water lands, canals and low lands of both sides of *Dulai khal* were less populated due to unhealthy environment. For this reason, these migrant Muslims took shelters in the localities of Bangshal, Malitola, Nazir bazar, Moushandhi, Joarpull, Kaltabazar, Rahmatgonj etc (Rahman, '95). As they did not know anything except agriculture, so their primary occupations were either to husk paddy or to chip off brick-concrete for the buildings of the Zamindar class who settled down in Dhaka. The higher class people, like Zamindar, called the former group Kutiyal (those who removed the husks from paddy) and the latter Hatkutti (those breaking brick-concrete). They have later been called each other group *Kuttis* (Hossain: 1995).

The Kuttis of Dhaka were accustomed to speak in a mixed language of Dhakaiya Urdu (Islam, n.d.) which made them the object of humour to other Bengalis always talking in a polished manner. They mostly belong to the Wahabi—a puritanical Muslim sect originating in Saudi Arabia (Naher, 2005). This accounts for their strict adherence to the injunction of the Quran and beliefs only in the direct and reliable traditions of the prophet Muhammad. They are ardent believers and live in a puritanical Muslim life. They are also termed as *ghair-maqallid*; they do not confirm to the four schools of Imams namely *Hanafi*, *Shafayee*, *Malaki* and *Hambali*. They strongly discourage Muslims from adopting Hindu ways, rites and ceremonies and equally detest Europeans for eating pork and believing in the Trinity of Jesus. They encourage people to make holy wars (*Jehad*) and to accept martyrdom as their ideal. They never believe in the worship of tombs and adoration of *pirs* and *faqirs* and observation of *Muharram* with sham fights, feigned *matams* (beating of breasts). Observance of mourning with wild fasting and *shirny* and mock penitence are greatly denounced. They are not assembled at mosque for special prayer on Friday and follow certain peculiarities in the form of prayers for

which they have a special mosque on *Bangshal* road (Taifoor, '56).

From the mid-eighteenth century, rice in the Eastern Bengal became an important item of export trade. Dhaka turned out to be the emporium of rice trade. Rice exporters were all Marwaris and Up-country merchants. They imported paddy from the interior of the country and employed numerous local labourers to process paddy into rice (Ahmed, '91). There were about 3000 Muslim families who worked as labourers and who smashed paddy in Dhaka in the early phase of the British period. This labourer class became a supplier of rice in Dhaka after 1787, with the result, formed a merchant class in Dhaka city (Taylor, '78). The Census of 1838 made a list of 138 occupational groups of which a large number of Kuttis were noticed (Hossain, '95). Interestingly, the Kuttis succeeded in monopolising the retail business in rice in the city by the late nineteenth century. So great was their power that they could easily raise the price of rice or create a scarcity by hoarding. They regularly profited from any shortfall in the harvest or threat of scarcity (Ahmed, '86, 2001).

The main reason for this dramatic rising position of the Kuttis in the society was not found. As perceived, shift in the royal power (from Mughal to British), diminishing the glory of Dhaka city, and the famine, depopulation the Dhaka city, forced the Marwari business men to leave this city. This out-migration had created the path for the Kuttis to occupy all left occupations, particularly rice retailing, and thus became dominant. In this regards, Professor Ahmed (in Islam, n.d., p. 197) makes this comment, "...so great was their power, that they could easily raise the price of rice or create a scarcity by hoarding. They regularly profited from any shortfall in the harvest or threat of scarcity." Consequently, they became a merchant class in Dhaka city in the course of time.

In sum, the Kuttis was originally a labourer class who used a special dialect, concentrated on particular areas of Dhaka city and led unsophisticated way of life. However, they became an important merchant class in due course of time and began to play significant roles in every phase of the development of Dhaka city.

### CRISIS IN IDENTITY

The area and population of Dhaka city has always been changing from time to time. The area of Dhaka in the Pre-Mughal period, especially in 1600, was one square mile and the population was unknown. Islam Khan firstly set up Dhaka as the capital of the Mughal Empire in 1608. But it faced the first set back in 1717 when Murshidh Kuli Khan transformed capital from Dhaka to Mursidabad. This transformation had caused the reduction of the area of Dhaka from 50 to 8 sq. miles (Khan and Islam, '64) and population from 900,000 to 200,000 (Taylor, '78). Dhaka became again the capital of Bengal and Assam province in 1905 but it lasted for six years. All kinds of trades and commercial activities were developed surrounding Sadharghat and its adjacent areas, known as central business districts (CBD), during the early period of the twentieth century. Consequently, a number of occupational groups, like Shakharis, Tantis, Kuttis, were emerged. Most of the Kuttis were illiterate and poor. But they formed the major part of the Muslim population. Kamranuddin Ahmed recalled that the Kuttis first led their livelihoods by tailoring, driving horse-carts ( called *Tom-tom*) and selling meats. Later on, they moved to open up shops for clothes, shoes by leaving their tea and juice stalls. Thus Kuttis became a merchant class with time either from rice-retailer or from other works. They did have a special dress, dialect and culture.

There was a system of assignment of Jaghirs<sup>1</sup>. Kuttis assigned the Jaghirs to the poor students who came to Dhaka from the rural areas for continuing their higher studies and whose task was to teach the children of Kuttis. These assigned persons were called *Master Shaheb* who deserved and got special respect in the locality. In some cases, the Kuttis made Jaghirs, who failed to continue their higher studies, their family members by arranging marriage with their daughters. But these Kuttis were disappointed in 1921 when Dhaka University was established in the name of the compensation of the annulment of partition of Bengal. In the meantime, Dhaka city was expanded beyond old railway line i.e. Fulbaria and a new Dhaka was established, the residential area of a newly emerged educated middle class was developed in this area. With the emergence of new residential areas, the trade centre also shifted from Sadharghat to Gulistan and

Nilkhet which are now business hubs. Resultantly, the inhabitants of old Dhaka, named Dhakais, remained in their old areas and saw the new settlers as their opponents. The vice-versa is also true in the sense that the new settlers feel that they are highly educated and have a different culture so they despised them, the Dhakais. This antagonistic class position caused their community relationships to be bitter which ultimately created division among them. This division sometimes created troubles in claiming their original identities (who are the original habitats of Dhaka city).

India was divided into two parts in 1947 and Bangladesh became a part of Pakistan and named as East Pakistan. Dhaka's glory remained the same as it was before because of making Dhaka the capital of East Pakistan. During the Pakistan period (1947-1971), that *Master Shaheb*, the Jaghir class, became powerful in administration and, resultantly, bureaucrats. They left their first wives owing to the lack of their abilities to adjust to the new environment and made Dhanmondi and its adjacent places their exclusive residential areas where the entrance of the Kuttis was restricted. Thus Dhanmondi has been created as the residential area for the highly educated middle class and Motijheel was transformed into the central business district (CBD) since the 1960s. However, some Kuttis with huge amounts of money shifted their residences from old to new Dhaka and were trying to assimilate with the new environment. Sometimes they established themselves as *Dhakais* and sometimes as members of middle class. By doing this, they were not able to keep their old culture and tradition. This discontinuation made their relations with their relatives (living in old Dhaka) bitter. Both new and old settlers think of each other as enemy.

Bangladesh became independent from Pakistan in 1971 and Dhaka has remained the capital of the newly emerged Bangladesh. The area and population density of Dhaka city has risen very rapidly. Gulshan and Banani have become the residential areas for the rich class. With this expansion, Dhanmondi becomes the residential area only for the highly educated middle class. Mamoon contends that the most demandable areas were Shakhari and Tanti bazaars areas in the mid-nineteenth century, whereas Dhanmondi was sought for area in Pakistan period,

and Gulshan and Banani are now the most demanding areas (Mamoon, '89).

All these historical turning events (partition of Bengal, liberation war with Pakistan, formation of a highly educated middle class, transformation of both commercial and residential areas from one to another zone) appear to have caused the reduction of the glory of old Dhaka city which has resulted in offsetting the roles, statuses and positions of Kuttis in new Dhaka.

### RESULTS

This section highlights the results of the study.

*Social mobility*: Mobility means movement from one situation to another situation. In this study, social mobility means movement from one social layer to another. There are two types of social mobility; one is intergenerational and another is intragenerational. The study focuses on intergenerational mobility, that is, movement from one generation to another.

#### *Educational mobility*

TABLE 1  
*Actual mobility of father's education obtained from respondents*

Education of fathers' father	Education of father					Total
	Illite- rate	Prim- ary	Secon- dary	Higher secondary	Bachelor or above	
Illiterate	6	26	2	--	—	34
Primary	—	14	6	—	4	24
Secondary	—	—	—	4	—	4
Total	6	40	8	4	4	62

(Source: Field survey)

Table 1 reveals that six fathers were illiterates whose fathers were also illiterates but twenty-six fathers of illiterate fathers moved one step and two fathers of that moved two steps upward. Fourteen fathers remained at their fathers' primary level of education but six and four fathers having their fathers' primary level of education moved one and three steps upward interchangeably. Four fathers remained at their fathers' higher secondary level of education.

As illustrated in Table 2, two sons remained at their fathers' zero level of education but four sons moved upward by one step. Twenty-two sons were at their parent's primary level of education but ten and

TABLE 2  
*Actual mobility of son -one's education*

Education of father	Education of son one					Total
	Illite- rate	Prim- ary	Secon- dary	Higher secondary	Bachelor or above	
Illiterate	2	4	—	—	—	6
Primary	2	22	10	6	—	40
Secondary	—	4	—	2	2	8
Higher secondary	—	—	4	—	—	4
Bachelor or above	2	2	—	—	—	4
Total	6	32	14	8	2	62

(Source: Survey)

six sons with fathers' primary level of education achieved secondary and higher secondary level of education respectively.

TABLE 3  
*Actual mobility of son -two's education*

Education of father	Education of Son two				Total
	Illiterate	Primary	Secon- dary	Higher secondary	
Illiterate	2	4	—	—	6
Primary	2	24	8	6	40
Secondary	—	2	6	—	8
Higher secondary	—	4	—	—	4
Bachelor or above	—	—	4	—	4
Total	4	34	18	6	62

(Source: Field survey)

Two sons remained at their fathers' zero level of education but four sons of the same group moved one step upward (in Table 3). Twenty four sons remained at their father's primary level of education but eight sons moved one step as well as six sons moved two steps ahead of their father's primary level of education. Six sons of their fathers' secondary level of education achieved the same (secondary).

TABLE 4  
*Actual mobility of son- three's education*

Education of father	Education of son-three			Higher secondary	N/A	Total
	Primary	Secondary	Higher secondary			
Illiterate	4	—	—	—	2	6
Primary	12	6	4	18	—	40
Secondary	2	—	—	—	6	8
Higher secondary	—	—	—	—	4	4
Bachelor or above	—	—	—	—	4	4
Total	18	6	4	34	—	62

(Source: Field survey)

As found in Table 4, 12 sons achieved the same level (primary) as their fathers obtained but six and four sons of father's primary level of education moved one and two steps forward respectively.

### Occupational Mobility

TABLE 5

*Actual mobility of father's occupation*

Father's father's occupation	Father's occupation					Total
	Labourer	Business	Clerk	Officer		
Labourer	4	28	—	—	—	32
Business	—	18	2	2	—	22
Clerk	—	—	6	2	—	8
Total	4	46	8	4	—	62

(Source: Field survey)

As indicated in Table 5 that four fathers remained in their fathers' occupation of labourer whereas 28 fathers moved to business whose fathers' occupation was labourer. Eighteen fathers remained constant in their father's occupation of business while two were able to shift to clerk and officer each of whose father's occupation was business. Six fathers with their fathers' occupation of clerk failed to occupy any higher level of occupation whereas two of the same group were promoted to officer.

TABLE 6

*Actual mobility of son-one's occupation*

Father's occupation	Son-one's occupation					Total
	Labourer	Business	Clerk	Officer	N/A	
Labourer	4	—	—	—	—	4
Business	—	38	2	6	—	46
Clerk	—	—	2	6	—	8
Officer	—	—	—	2	2	4
Total	4	38	4	14	2	62

(Source: Field survey)

Table 6 shows that all sons remained in their fathers' occupations more or less

### Marital Mobility

TABLE 7

*Actual mobility of father's marriage*

Father father's marriage pattern	Father's marriage pattern		Total
	Endogamy	Exogamy	
Endogamy	54	4	58
Exogamy	—	4	4
Total	54	8	62

(Source: Field survey)

As revealed in Table 7 that most of the fathers followed their father's marriage pattern.

TABLE 8

*Actual mobility of son-one marriage*

Father's marriage pattern	Son-one's marriage pattern			Total
	Endogamy	Exogamy	N/A	
Endogamy	40	8	6	54
Exogamy	—	8	—	8
Total	40	16	6	62

(Source: Field survey)

Table 8 suggests that marriage did not lead to mobility between father and son-one generation.

### Intergenerational Mobility

Table 9 indicates that no mobility found in most of the cases (four in ten between grandfather and father, between father and son-one each, one in two between father and son-two, seven in ten between father and son-three). Upward-mobility found between grandfather and father (six in ten) and between father and son-one (four in ten) to some extent.

TABLE 9

*Intergenerational educational mobility*

	Downward mobility				No-mobility				Upward mobility			
	GF-F	F-S1	F-S2	F-S3	GF-F	F-S1	F-S2	F-S3	GF-F	F-S1	F-S2	F-S3
F	0	14	12	14	24	24	32	44	38	24	18	4
%	0	22	19	23	39	39	52	71	61	39	29	6

(Source: Field survey)

Note: GF-F=grandfather-father; F-S1=father-son one; F-S2=father-son two; F-S3=father-son three.

TABLE 10  
*Intergenerational occupational mobility*

	Downward mobility		No-mobility		Upward-mobility	
	GF-F	F-S1	GF-F	F-S1	GF-F	F-S1
F	0	0	28	48	34	14
%	0	0	45	77	55	23

(Source: Field survey)

As illustrated in Table 10 that no mobility found in most of the cases (28 and 48 out of 62 between grandfather and father and between father and son-one respectively). However, slightly over half fathers moved upward from their fathers' occupations.

TABLE 11  
*Intergenerational marital mobility*

	No-mobility		Mobility	
	GF-F	F-S1	GF-F	F-S1
F	58	48	4	14
%	94	75	6	25

(Source: Field survey)

As like as other indicators, no significant mobility was found here (Table 11).

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it may be said that the Kuttis were not the original inhabitants of Dhaka city but they came here from the adjacent places. The Kuttis began their livelihoods by giving labour either for husking paddy or breaking off brick-concrete or driving a horse carriage (tom-tom). They had distinct culture, language, and food-habit and dress pattern, which distinguished them from others. In some cases, they became a merchant class in the course of time and got used to adjusting and readjusting to the new environment of Dhaka city. As a result, they considered themselves as old inhabitants of Dhaka city and now called *Dhakais* rather *Kuttis*.

Some of Kuttis later formed a merchant class and, among them, some families had shifted their residences from old to new parts of Dhaka city. The latter group in course of time has become a highly educated middle class. This transformation (there by the apparent disappearance of the Kutti community) accounts for various reasons. Among these reasons, mass migration of Hindu merchants to India,

availability of educational facilities at higher level, the expansion of Dhaka city, increasing importance of Dhaka city in political and administrative arenas, flourishing commercial industries during the Pakistan and now Bangladesh periods and globalisation are most important. Now the term of Kuttis bears negative connotation; their special dialect, dress, rites and rituals made them separated from the mainstream culture of Dhaka city. So they feel shy to introduce themselves as Kuttis. Consequently, the term of Kuttis has been losing its popularity. Thus it appears that the notion of Kuttis will become obsolete in the near future.

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### NOTE

1. Jaghir means using the reservoir for helping others continue their activities.

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