



The Concept of Social Capital in Gulistan of Saadi

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ABSTRACT

Although the subject of social capital has no long record but it dates back to social life and it is rooted in the ideas, visions, traditions, institutes, behaviors and the humanistic and social network communication. These issues are consistent to the components of social capital mentioned in Gulistna of Saadi written in seventh hegira century. This paper regarding to explanation of social capitals in Gulistan of Saadi while offering definitions of social capital and theories proposed by scholars like Bourdieu, Colman, Fukuyama and Putnam tries to examine the concept of social capital in Gulistan of Saadi and explain some social capital components such as justice by proposing examples of Gulistan of Saadi.

Key words: social capital, Gulistan of Saadi, justice, valuation of the competence individuals, blaming of the envious, in attention to the incompetent individuals.

INTRODUCTION

To the World Bank, social Social capital is one of the important concepts that have been considered in sociology as a fundamental factor in structuring of the social relations and it is introduced as a foundation of the people interactions. Although, the concept of social capital has been considered by the scholars recently, by contemplation on this subject it can be found its long record in the history of mankind. It has been rooted in values, religions and beliefs that attention to it and correct application of social capital increases the effect of the fairs and empowers relations.

Social capital identifies quality and manner of interactions and it is a main factor for the social actors.

According capital strengthens of the codes, norms, commitments and trusts in the social relations and institutional orders and the ways to achieve the goals [1].

Social capital is factor to progress of other capitals. Today the scholars have concluded that if social capital is strengthened in the society other cultural and economic capitals are progressed. Social capital is important and it causes that the people could fulfill their goals easily with few cost and less time.

Although, social capital has unit concept but it does not have a unit status in different societies. Since beliefs, values and religions are different in the societies and it is possible that an act is consider as a social capital but it is known as anti - social conduct.

In book "Management and social capital" the importance of social capital is emphasized and it is believed that other capitals are like a vase with beautiful flowers that is on a table called social capital. If one of the legs of the table breaks other capitals are lost.

So, if social capital is damaged insignificantly other capitals are damaged considerably. Since the individuals could manage their affairs by social capital and in the light of these relations they provide the context for progress of other. As a result, in the societies with rich social capital the individual have powerful relationships and they are assured that if they encounter with a problem they will be supported.

Francis Fukuyama in the book " The end of order and social capital" writes: "The term of social capital as I know was used in the classic work of Jean Jacobson, death and life of the big cities of America for the first time (1961) that he explains that compressed social networks in the old and different district of the city constitute form of the social capitals and regarding to cleanliness and prevention of the street crimes and other decisions on the improvement of quality of life compared to official institutional agents like police show more responsibility. The term of social capital was used in the 1970 for describing of the inner city economic development problems briefly: The Africans Americans in their social scope lacked trust and attachment while Asian Americans and other powerful groups had trusted each other. The lack

of trust and independency among the blacks depict lack of transaction among them. In 1980 James Coleman used this term in broad way and Putnam emphasized on the role of the social capital and civil society in Italy and America" [3].

In the book of "Management and social capital different definitions have been offered on the social capital: some scholars suggest social capital as potential set that more or less institutionalized in the social network. Some consider the social capitals as set of the values and norms among members of a group that lead to creation and empowerment of collaboration" [4]

1-Definition of social capital from the perspective of the scholars

Different scholars have offered definitions on the social capital. We refer to briefly:

1-1-Bourdieu

He explored the concept of social capital gradually. He was European sociologist that was interested in research on the stability of the social class and other inequality forms. But Colman and Putnam researched on the social and political tradition of the North America. At the beginning his position was identified by his attempts on offering cultural anthropology of social reproduction. In his researches on the tribes of Algerian in 1960 he described dynamic development of structured values and thinking ways shaping of the habits that bridged subjectivity and objectivity.

In a part that was published for the first time in 1973 concerning to the place of fixation of the members of the groups (self and his children) he defined social capital as follows:

"Capital of social relations that provides useful supports in case of need. It means the capital of dignity and respect is the important social situations is necessary and it is possible to be offered as money such as a political job" [5].

He developed this status by adding the following sentence:

"Social capital is set of material and spiritual resources that let a person or a group to have stable networks of measured relations and mutual recognition" (ibid: 31).

Bourdieu believed that understanding the social world is impossible without understanding different forms of capital not that shape of the capital consider in economic theory. He used the concept of cultural capital for explanation of academic achievements unequal to different social classes for the first time.

By following cultural capital strategies required in the family some social groups could assure optimal progress of what their children have learned. He believed that some aspects of cultural capital transfer depict effective way of inherited transferring since it was done objectively and so it is less controllable, while economic wealth resulted from heritage is controllable by tax.

Bourdieu applied his permanent solution on the discussion of social capital. In paper "Temporary notes" he wrote that social capital idea is the only way to explain social assets and it is obvious that:

"Different individuals have unequal return of the relatively equal capital (cultural and social) and it is dependent on this fact that how the individuals could equip the capital of a group (family old classmates of the elite schools, specific clubs and etc" (ibid: 33).

1-2- Coleman

Coleman considers social capital as a complete example of a public product that is offered by some people and it is not only effective for those who made effort to create it but also it effects on all individuals of a group.

Coleman in his first paper defines social capital as: A set of resources of the family relations and local social organization and are useful for social and cognitive growth of a child or a teenager. These resources are different for individuals and could offer important privilege for human capital development of the children and youth" (ibid: 44).

In other part Coleman defines social capital related to growth of the children as follows: "Norms, social networks and adults and children relationships that are valuable for growth of the children considered as social capital in the family and out of family and in the society" (ibid).

Social capital is not only valuable for reliability but also for self - cognition and identity. Concerning on that applicability of the resources in the practice he believed that two elements play an important role: real amount of the commitment and level of the trust in social environment.

Coleman writes: "Besides trust level that leads to obligations there are real need of the people to help other resources, level of assets, cultural differences in tendency toward helping and demand of help, dependency level of social networks, and social contact rationality" (ibid: 46).

Social capital could be considered as assets of the poor people and it is not merely a tool for rich one and it tends to dynamicity of the social networks.

1-3-Putnam

At first, Putnam defined social capital as: "social capital refers to characteristics of the social organizations such as trust, norms and networks that could improve efficiency of the society by facilitation of cooperative actions"(ibid:54).

His definition on the social capital was changed a little in decade 1990. In 1996 he announced that his objective on social capital is characteristics of social life, networks, norms and trust that empower the participants to follow their common goals"

He in his book writes that the main idea of social capital is that it consists of valuable networks that influence the individuals and groups efficiency"

1-4- Fukuyama

Francis Fukuyama believes in unofficial norms and values in groups and he defines it as follows: Social capital can be defined simply as a set of norms and unofficial values; so that the members that could collaborate with each other participate there. Participation in the values and norms does not lead to social capital in its own sake; since these values could be negative" [3].

In this part we study two main pivots of social capital components in Gulistna of Saadi:

2-Justice

Justice means preservation of a condition, conducting of an act according to codes justly" [7]

"Justice is perfection, since it requires collection of perfected traits. Justice is a trait that resulted from human

soul so that the man could gain all traits and acts in moderate way and eliminate all blamed traits so that it could establish unity and friendship among people" [8].

Justice is a subjective concept; since it is not visible objectively; but it can be offered trait of just and unjust to a part of social phenomenon. In other words, justice is a kind of valuation of a condition so it is a moral concept. Concerning to its meaning and classification of the justice concept many efforts have been made in the scope of political philosophy; since from the old times it was one of the fundamental values of political sciences. In a classification this concept is classified into procedural or administrative justice and social justice.

In Robertson opinion, procedural justice covers just trial that is significantly simpler and more comprehensible than social justice. In social justice the social flexibility in division of the rewards and incomes is focused. It means that this justice is distributive justice that is related to social capital reproduction. In distributive justice, the manner of distribution of the rare resources and fitness of the inputs and outputs are focused.

Saadi in Gulistan refers to justice in different tales that we refer to some of them:

A king helped a dervish when he was drunk and the dervish spent much and then returned to the palace. The king got angry and said: "Drive away this insolent extravagant fellow who has dissipated such an immense sum in so short a time, since the treasury is designed to afford a mouthful for the poor and to the fraternity". One of the viziers said it seems expedient that stated allowance should be settled for people of this class separately for their maintenance, that they may not live extravagantly; but what you commanded in displeasure to exclude them altogether, is repugnant to the principles of true generosity to fill one with hopes through kindness and then to destroy him with despair.

A monarch cannot admit people into his presence

And when the door of liberality is open

Then shut it upon them with violence

No one sees the thirsty pilgrims on the sea shore

Whenever there is a spring of sweet water, men, and birds

And ants and flock together [9]

Saadi refers to important point that it is necessary to assign defined salary to the poor and never give much to them since it causes to prodigality and demanding more and he also points that treasure is not belonged to one person and all people have right to enjoy it.

One of the sons of Haroon Ar-Rashid said his father that one of the sons of the officers offended his mother. The king asked the viziers what to do. Every vizier gave an order and Haroon said his son, it is better to forgive him and of you cannot you offend his mother. Be careful about revenge that we are known as oppressor (ibid: 30).

This tale teaches us that it is necessary to be just in execution of the law and there is no difference between king and a common man in execution of the law. Although, the son of king was offended the king suggested him to forgive the sinner.

"The Alexander was asked: why did you conquer the west and east and the former kings had numerous treasures and armors and could not conquer. He replied: I never attacked on the people and killed the kings of those realms (ibid: 140).

It should be considered that justice and kindness is important in governance. In this tale, Saadi reminds that a ruler should not oppress the people and he should rule out justly.

3-Respect on the competent individuals

Respect on the competent people is valued trait that paves the way to progress. If society pays attention to the competent individuals certainly the people could reach perfection and progress. The competency of a person or a society depends on the knowledge and skills that could lead them toward ultimate goal that not only prevents wasting of social capital but also adds on the value of the people. As you know respect on the competent individuals causes that the society progress and if a society has a powerful management the members of that society are succeeded.

Social capitals rely on the respect on the competent and powerful people and Saadi refers to following example:

I heard of a king's son, who was low in stature and ill favored, whilst all his brothers were tall and handsome. Once on a time, his father looked at him with disgust, which the son had sagacity enough to discover and said: of father a short man who is wise is preferable to him who is tall and ignorant [9].

"I heard one of the Arab kings ordered his officers to increase the salary of an officer since he was a guardian and obeyed the orders and the other servants were indifferent. A pious man heard and wondered and he was asked what the reason was? He replied: the servants have this position in the court of the God" (ibid: 116).

Saadi emphasizes that the competent and obedience people should be honored and respected. It is obvious that such individuals are like treasures that should be paid attention and they are social capitals that provide the contexts for progress of the society.

"Hatam Tai was asked: did you hear and see a generous man than you? He replied: yes, one I slaughtered forty camels for the heads of Arab and when I went outside I saw a man who dug the bushes and I invited him to the party and he said:

Everybody who eats from his effort

Never accept the offering of Hatam Tai

He was more high minded and hard-working than me" (ibid: 259).

Hatam Tai was a rich man that invited many people to eat food in his home and one day he invited the officers of Arabs in party and he saw an old man that picked up the thorn. He invited him to the party. The old man never accepted his invitation. So, it is clear that the competency and ability of a person do not depend on his wealth but hardworking and high minded is more valuable.

4- Blame of jealousy and envious

Jealousy is blamed trait that causes to moral abnormalities while the norms bring social capital. Many immoral conducts such as offenses and disrespects are rooted in jealousy. Jealousy causes that the man denies the people goodness and virtues and seeks their defects. Imam Ghazali writes: jealousy is that when a person receives blessing and you want decline of him.

Jealousy is a mental illness. Ragheb defines it as wish of losing affluent that the person is competent to receive it.

The reason for jealousy is discomfort of the man of his failure and he wishes the other people not progress. If the person knows that failure of others never aid him he never acts jealously [10].

In Coleman opinion, social capital is power and ability of people to establish close relationship with each other and this relationship continues when the person enjoys others progress.

Saadi blames the jealousy and jealous in Gulistan:

I saw an officer's son who was endowed with wisdom and sagacity beyond description. His companions became envious and accusing him falsely of dishonesty, made a fruitless attempt to deprive him of life. The king asked him: What can the enemy do against him who has an assured friend? What is the cause of their striving against you? He replied under the shade of your majesty protection, I have gained the good will of every one excepting the envious man who cannot be satisfied but they decline of my good fortune, the wealth and prosperity of sovereignty is perpetual.

The malevolent men wish that misfortune may befall the successful

If the bat's eye not see in the day What fault is on that account to be imputed to the sun? [9].

In Saadi opinion, the common people act enviously with the smart and wise men and they can be protected by the rulers. Since they are social capitals they should be protected and supported. He adds that the envious men are satisfied only by decline of the competent individuals and he blames the jealousy and explains this trait with a beautiful example.

The vicious cannot endure the sight of the virtuous in the same manner as the curse of the market howl at a hunting dog, but dare not approach him.

The abject envious wretch will slander the virtuous man when absent but when brought face to face His loquacious tongue becomes dumb (ibid: 551).

The envious people are likened to hunting dogs that do nothing; since they are unable compared to the competent individuals they cannot accept them. Saadi blames them. Since in Coleman opinion, social

capital is power of establishing mutual relationship; an envious person could not enjoy others progress and as a result this relationship is prevented.

"The envious man dislikes an innocent person" (ibid: 573).

Saadi blames the envious people and believes that the person who can bear the blessing of other one he never likes the happy individual.

5- Avoiding incompetent people

The incompetent individuals deny all values and beliefs and instructing them is fruitless and ineffective. These individuals waste social capitals so helping and educating them is useless.

The educating of the wicked person is useless It is like putting walnut on the dome

This couplet depicts that educating the person that he is mean and wicked is fruitless and as walnut cannot remain on the dome educating of such individuals is ineffective.

Saadi believes that wicked people never change his nature and he narrates a tale in this regard.

A gang of Arabian robbers had assembled on the top of a mountain and blocked up the road of the caravan. In the evening when the robbers returned from their expedition laid down their weapons and the gallant men sprung out of the ambush and pinioned the robbers one after another. In the morning they were captured. When the king gave orders for them all to be put to death one of the viziers asked the king to forgive one of the youths and the king did not accept and said it is better to eradicate them altogether; for to extinguish the fire and suffer a spark to remain or to kill a snake and preserve its young is not acting like a wise man [9].

The vizier demanded the king to give the boy to him. After two years he killed the vizier and two sons and carried off immense booty and ran away.

How can any one form a good sword out of bad iron?

O ye philosophers, it is impossible to convert A worthless wretch into good man

The rain in whose nature there is no partiality Produce tulips in the garden but only weeds in a barren soil (ibid: 62)

Saadi reminds us that although vizier asked the king to forgive him but after a while he showed his nature and killed the vizier and his sons. So instructing incompetent people is fruitless.

"Moses saw a poor man that has no shoes on his feet and he said: O, Moses demand God to give me providence. Moses prayed and went and returned after some days and saw a group of people gathered together. He asked them and they replied he was drunken and killed a person and now he is sentenced. Moses admitted the God wisdom and demanded God to forgive him" (ibid: 260).

The incompetent people in case of educating and aiding waste the resources and social capital and lead the society to destruction.

"A certain vizier had a stupid son he sent him to a learned man to instruct him. After a while he sent a person to the father with this message that: your son has no capacity and has almost distracted me.

When nature has given capacity instruction will make impression but iron is not of proper temper no polishing will make it good (ibid: 433).

"A king placed his son with a preceptor and said: this is your son, educate him in the same manner as one of your own. The preceptor took pains with him for a year but without success, whilst his own sons were completed in learning and accomplishments. The king reprimanded the preceptor and he replied: on king the education was the same, but the capacities are different" (ibid: 448).

If the gem is placed in the mud it is yet valuable and if dust goes to the sky it is useless so educating of incompetent is wasting of time" (ibid: 557).

Saadi suggests that the incompetent person never be educated although he is the son of king or vizier since instructing them is useless and waste of time and resources.

CONCLUSION

As it is obvious social capitals are interactions that offer identity and national values. By valuation of these constructs a society is guided toward success.

Although social capital is a new concept and it has gained the attention of the researchers recently but dates back to human life. Saadi as a great and international poet has offered treasure on social capital in his Gulistan and he taught values and educational issues that they are new while passing of several centuries.

In this paper some social capital components mentioned in Gulistan of Saadi have been investigated. Of these components it can be referred to justice, blaming of jealousy and envious, meritocracy and avoiding incompetent people as social capitals that could ensure trust, collaboration and tolerance of the disagreed forces and friendship and family relations.

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