

THE RISE OF THE SUPER SHOP

In the last 25 years, people have seen many of the neighbourhoods maddeningly evolve into modern, buzzing localities, crowded with eateries and schools and apartments.

We used to walk to the nearest convenience store, which would cater to all the family's grocery needs. The corner shop used to maintain a ledger for our purchases and we would pay the owner at the end of every month.

But many such grocery stores have closed down. Instead, there are now super shops all over.

In these modern retail outlets, the shopping experience is quite different from what we were accustomed to.

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We get so many options under one roof; the environment is clean and air conditioned and there is no need of haggling, which is for many people a problem in the traditional vegetable and

fish markets.

In Dhaka, we have, to a large extent, given up on the small 'mudir doka', which was once the major source of kitchen supplies and a numerous other things. It seems, with the surging popularity of super shops in Dhaka, 'mudir doka' will not be missed much.

DOORS SHUT

Not all trends or changes are welcome, though. The fact that we nowadays compromise on family time is a lamentable development. Previously, it was a rare occasion that the entire family did not sit at the dining table for at least one meal a day.

Things have changed. Now, all parents see are closed doors. While parents spend



their time at work and return home considerable late at night, the children are either studying or playing online games.

During dinner-time, they are either not at home as they're meeting up with some friends or because they take the food from the kitchen and lock themselves up in their own rooms, watching movies or videos on YouTube while they eat.

This depressing scenario of shut doors is becoming increasingly common in the household. It seems that, obviously, our priorities have changed. Spending quality time with family is an extremely healthy thing to do - at every stage of life, not just during childhood. Unfortunately, it is an activity that has declined to a worrisome level in the last few years.

EYES AFFIXED ON THE SCREEN

Surely, one of the reasons that have given rise to the aforementioned concern is our almost alarming degree of dependency on gadgets and technology. Have you realised that we spend most hours with a screen in front of us?



With the advent of social media and addictive games and of course, smart phones, many of us live in the virtual world for a huge chunk of time.

Technology is a double-edged sword. The world continues to enormously benefit from the internet and smart phones, among others. They are just two of the inventions in the last 25 years or so that have revolutionised the way we interact, conduct business and even how we shop. Life has become much easier due to these advancements.

Meanwhile, spending countless hours on addictive games or on social media sites, or typing away on our phone without actually communicating to the person next to us, are some common scenarios we experience

every day.

Evolution is, perhaps, inevitable. And since it is a process, we may not even always realise it taking place. But on occasions when we look back at a time several years ago, we often become astonished at how we and everything around us have developed, transformed or deteriorated. And, as we learned from the past, simply one groundbreaking invention like the search engine or the smartphone can change our lifestyle in ways beyond our imagination.

It makes one wonder how our world will be 25 years from now.

By M H Haider

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