

## **Analyzing the Concept of "Commitment" in the Illustrations of the Stories of One Thousand and One Nights**

### **Abstract**

In order to achieve social and political order and stability, society needs individuals to adhere to the approved laws and norms in that society; Therefore, the concept of commitment can be mentioned as one of the most central pillars of social capital. Social capital is a set of norms, values and moral obligations that form the mutual behavior of people within their framework and facilitate social relations. This concept has existed in Iranian society for many ages and its reflection can be seen in the literary works remaining from past periods. "One Thousand and One Nights" is one of the literary works remaining from before the Achaemenid period, which, in addition to literary and political issues, beholds social and moral issues and contains significant elements and components in the field of social capital. This research is accomplished by a descriptive and analytical method and relying on the data of library sources. In this research, one of the main indicators of social capital (commitment) has been investigated; moreover, the performance of this indicator in arranging the context for participation and solving political and social problems has been explained in depth regarding the stories of the text, which without a doubt, awareness of these findings can be used as a solution in establishing relationships; therefore, it is appropriate to socialize and gain social capital. The results of this research are commitment to security, commitment to justice and commitment to participation. This category can also be seen in the illustrations of the stories of One Thousand and One Nights.

### **Research aims:**

1. Recognizing the concept of commitment in the stories of One Thousand and One Nights.
2. Examining the concept of commitment in the paintings related to the stories of One Thousand and One Nights.

### **Research questions:**

1. How is the concept of commitment reflected in the paintings of “One Thousand and One Nights”?
2. What is the reflection of the concept of commitment in the story of "One Thousand and One Nights"?

**Keywords:** Social capital, commitment, One Thousand and One Nights, Discipline literature.

## **Introduction**

Social capital is one of the new concepts that have been proposed in the economic and social studies of industrialized and developing societies, and its role in the formation of social relationships of individuals is studied, and today it plays a much more important role than the physical and human capabilities. In the absence of social capital, other capitals lose their effectiveness, and without it, it becomes uneven and difficult to follow the paths of cultural and economic development and evolution. Literary texts in classical and contemporary form contain significant elements and components in the field of social capital, and paying attention to the role and presence of these texts in daily life can affect the quality and quantity of the social capital. By using their suggested recommendations in terms of opinion and action in peaceful and nonviolent contexts, collective participation and benefiting from people's experiences in mutual communication and emphasis on goodwill and good faith in human relations with each other, the realization of extensive social capital can be witnessed as it exists between humans and human societies. Literary texts available to the society, most of which were inspired by religious and national teachings, and the contents and themes of parts of them exist in the collective and historical memory of the society members, are among good potential capacities for preserving and revitalizing that behold the social capital. The optimal and correct use of these resources can lead to the growth of the society. Due to the breadth of these texts, in this article, only the investigation of the index of "commitment" in the stories of "One Thousand and One Nights" is studied. "One Thousand and One Nights" is one of the books before the Achaemenid period, which includes a series of stories in the language of humans and animals. These allegorical characters appear in a social bond, speak, debate, help each other, conspire, rise to war and conflict, have a king and a court, and everything that exists in a human society. Basically, the author of this story wants to

express the social relations and governance methods of humans sometimes from the language of humans and sometimes from the language of birds and animals. The prose in these stories is an excellent example and is intended to stimulate the audience's sense of curiosity and pleasure, nevertheless it can be said that in fact, their content and intellectual and social foundation is to promote and spread the principles of statecraft, cooperation, social justice, gentleness, self-restraint, secrecy and commitment.

According to the surveys conducted from various sources, a comprehensive research has not been conducted on the social capital of "commitment" in the illustrations of the "One Thousand and One Nights" stories. Therefore, studying the stories of "One Thousand and One Nights" and examining the concept of social capital in the illustrations of these stories is the result of this research work. This research was completed by a descriptive and analytical method and relying on the data of library sources.

## **Conclusion**

Social capital is a multi-dimensional concept in social sciences and influential in many areas of society. It has been considered as the raw material of civil society, which arises from the many daily interactions of people. According to the author of this valuable book, the central idea of commitment can be summed up in the word "relationships". Commitment is one of the important aspects of human relations, which is the basis of participation and cooperation among members of society. This is clearly witnessed in the story of "One Thousand and One Nights". In this work, humans and animals, after continuous interaction and communication with each other, fulfill their duties according to individual characteristics such as honesty, trustworthiness, knowledge, truthfulness, integrity, chivalry, good thinking and kindness (which are mostly common among the political elites) and this becomes the basis for their cooperation and participation. In these stories, humans and animals feel responsible for the duty assigned to their fellow species, and this act of theirs firstly creates trust and peace of mind, and secondly, increases security and prevents the occurrence of great dangers. According to the teachings of Islam, "adherence to the agreements and keeping the covenant will lead to the wide spread of public trust and the formation of healthy and appropriate relationships." In "One Thousand and One Nights", animals as symbols of humans are very loyal to their obligations in all the three examples mentioned, and this act is the source of trust and the strengthening of social relations since the associations between people

are highly dependent on contracts, agreements and obligations they have towards one another. In these stories, two positive and negative moral values are perceived, the positive moral values are related to commitment in social relations, and the negative moral values such as envy, greed, and trickery are strongly denied. In these stories, humans and creatures are looking for safety of life, and its realization becomes possible firstly after the destruction of the cause of fear and apprehension, and secondly, after mutual trust is established. Among the results, the creation of collective security (free travel and circulation) and social and political participation can be accounted for. It is believed that the appointment of agents should be based on knowledge and according to the commitment of experience, merit and capacity of the people since agents directly influence the work process of the government, and the lack of committed and appropriate selection disturbs the balance of classes and the social status of the society leading to destruction and instability.

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