

## **COMMUNICATION – A TOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN OF REHMAN COLONY KARACHI-SINDH**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Education is necessary for development because it increases economic growth and prosperity of a country and its people. In this era of communication and technology, the school going age children of our country are still out of schools and our government has failed in even providing primary education to them. The condition of children who belong to the lower class of society and those living in marginalized segments of our society is worst of all. The present study attempts to highlight the role of interpersonal communication in altering the attitude and behaviour of the marginalized segment of people living in our society and to promote social development with the help of development support communication. This study utilizes phenomenological research methodology to get an in-depth understanding of the situation and to solve the research questions of the study. The relationship between interpersonal communication and development support communication is examined in this study. In its support a case study of Rehman Colony is taken as an example where primary education to non-school going children was promoted with the help of development support communication using interpersonal communication. The study reveals that in the absence of traditional media, interpersonal communication is the best possible solution, which is effective, cheap and non-dependent of any technology. The research suggests that at community level people can work mutually for the betterment of society and with a little mutual effort socio-economic conditions of*

*marginalized people living in our society can be improved  
and social discrimination can be terminated.*

**Keywords:** *Communication, Out of School Children, Development Communication, Development Support Communication, Interpersonal Communication.*

## INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the fundamental factors of development. Education raises people's efficiency and creativity. It plays a vital role in securing economic and social development. It reduces poverty and boosts economic growth. In the long run it can promote gender equality, reduce discrimination, and promote social justice and peace in society. It is one of the most significant investments a nation can make in its people and to its future.

National Research Council of Pakistan has also stressed on education as one of the key factors in the development of a human being. Education is the main driving force for the development of an individual, its society and a country as a whole. To get education one must have to pass through different stages of schooling in life. Education helps children in their physical, social and mental development (National Research Council, 2015).

In our country the importance of education sector was first felt in 1959 when a Commission on National Education was formed, which suggested that the educational system in Pakistan should pursue quality as an important objective and recommended children's compulsory education. The Article 37-B of the Constitution of Pakistan was created in 1973 which clearly states that the State shall provide free and compulsory secondary education to eliminate illiteracy within minimum possible time. Similarly in 1973 Article 38-D of the Pakistani Constitution, was also created which states "The State shall provide basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, housing, education and medical relief, for all citizens, irrespective of sex, caste, creed or race, as are permanently or temporarily unable to earn their livelihood on account of infirmity, sickness or unemployment." On 19th April 2010, Article 25-A of the Pakistani Constitution was created, stating that "The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such a manner as may be determined by law" (The Constitution of Pakistan, 2010). The promise by the state to provide education to children of Pakistan is not limited to constitutional provisions

only in fact there are several conventions and accords that also bind the state. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations in 1948, the Millennium Development Goals till 2015 and Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by 2030 are some of them. However, Sindh has failed to achieve targets for universal education by 2015 as over 6.4 million children are still out of school. Moreover, access to educational facilities is still a major problem for the poor and less privileged segment of the population. Children are said to be the future of a country, but the state of Pakistani children is not very good especially their educational requirements are not fulfilled due to lack of resources and allocation of very little amount for education in fiscal budget. Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training discloses in Pakistan Education Statistics 2015-16, Islamabad, published by the Government of Pakistan in 2017 that at the provincial level in Sindh, out of 12.7 million children, almost 6.0 million approximately 47% are enrolled in schools from primary to higher secondary while as many as 6.7 million approximately 53% are out of school (Pakistan Education Statistics 2015-16, 2017). A news report by The News International dated 28th October, 2019 confirms the worse status of education in Sindh by quoting the statement by the Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah admitting that one of the major educational challenges in Sindh is the high number of out-of-school children estimated at 6.4 million which amounts to 40 percent of the province (40 per Cent of Children in Sindh out of School, Admits CM, 2019).

Education provides grounds for development by raising creativity and productivity in the society. Increased creativity and productivity help in acquiring economic and social development by improving income distribution in society. Development is the growth and the progress that a society comes across by using education and by gaining knowledge of new production methods and technological advancement (Khan, 2015, p. 20). The purpose of development is to raise the standard of living and quality of life of the population and the creation of local income and employment opportunities, without damaging the resources of the environment. Social development is the improvement in the fields of education, health, agriculture, manufacturing industry, and communication on national level (Khan, 2015, p. 31).

In solving development issues all over the world, communication is used as a vital tool. Communication is sharing of information and the most important type of communication is personal communication, which happens when

people make their thoughts and wishes known to each other. Communication can be verbal, non-verbal, written and visual. Communication can be classified into different types. The types of communication ranges from intrapersonal to interpersonal, machine assisted interpersonal communication, group communication and mass communication. Mass communication is the communication which happens when messages are sent to a large audience with the help of some media. Books, magazines, newspaper, billboards, radio, television, film, social networking and the Internet are important types of mediums used in mass communication (Dominick, 2010, pp. 9-15).

It is important to note that for this study the researcher has presumed the assumption that communication is one of the vital elements towards the process of development. At the outset it is to be cleared that any media cannot take over the task of decision making on behalf of any community or society. Media can just play a role in the decision-making process. A borderline is to be recognized by every developing society as to where the media can work effectively by itself and from where society can accomplish their goals from development support communication. Here communication refers to sharing of information to speed up development whereas development refers to socio-economic change for improvement and betterment of society.

The project was named by the researcher as “Street Children School Project” due to the fact that the children of this particular community were seen living and roaming on the streets of Rehman Colony all day; out of their homes like street children. These children resembled street children but actually these children belong to the group of “out of school children” of our society. It is also important to note that these children do not fall under the UNICEF’s definition of street children which describes street children as boys and girls, aged under 16 years, who live on streets as their home and also get their source of living from streets. Rehman colony is situated in Manzoor colony in the city of Karachi.

Karachi, during colonial period was originally a small fisherman village. Baloch tribes from Baluchistan and Makran were settled here. These tribes named their first settlement near delta of Indus River as ‘Kolachi’ Village. In 1947 after the partition of the subcontinent Karachi was chosen as the Capital of Pakistan. In 1960, the capital of Pakistan was first shifted to Rawalpindi and then to Islamabad. Now Karachi is the capital of Sindh and Sindh is

among the four provinces of Pakistan. It is the largest city of Pakistan and according to censuses of 2017 it has a population of 14.9 million. It is one of the world's fastest growing and among the largest metropolitan cities of the world. Karachi is located near Arabian Sea and it has two seaports, the Port of Karachi and Port Bin Qasim. Karachi serves as a transport hub for the country. It is Pakistan's premier industrial and economic center. People from all over Pakistan come to Karachi seeking jobs. It is country's most linguistically, ethnically, and religiously diverse city. For the administrative purposes Karachi is divided into six districts namely 1) Karachi East, 2) Karachi West, 3) Karachi Central, 4) Karachi South, 5) Malir and 6) Korangi. These six districts are sub-divided into 18 towns and each town is further sub-divided into union councils. There are 178 union councils in Karachi. Beside this, six cantonments also exist in Karachi which are administered by military. Karachi East is among the six districts of Karachi which is bifurcated into 2 towns: Jamshed Town and Gulshan Town. Jamshed Town is divided into 13 Union Councils and Union Council number 2-Manzoor Colony is one of them. Manzoor colony is sub-divided into nine sectors and all the sectors are further sub divided into small colonies. Rehman colony is one of them.

### **Research Problem**

Education is essential for every child because it helps them learn how to think critically. It improves their creativity and it helps children to find the path to a career which they wish to follow as an adult in future. In Sindh, 40 percent of children of school going age are out of school which means that they do not have any career or future. The study tends to know the reasons behind in order to find a solution to it.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objective of the study is to highlight the role of interpersonal communication in changing attitude of people living in society and to promote development with the help of development support communication.

### **Research Questions**

- 1) Can interpersonal communication promote development?
- 2) Can interpersonal communication be used in the absence of traditional media?

- 3) Can communication help in terminating social discrimination in the society?
- 4) Can communication change the attitude of society?

### **Literature Review**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948 defines education as a “human right”, which should be compulsory and free of charge, for all children. The same has been endorsed in numerous international accords and adopted by the World Conference on Education for All, 5-9 March, 1990 Thailand and World Education Forum Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000 (Outcomes on Education, 2000).

Role of education in social development can be judged by a quotation extracted from a document published by UNICEF in 1999 by Hall & Midgley. “Education is the single most vital element in combating poverty, empowering women, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment and controlling population growth” (Hall & Midgley, 2004, p. 153).

Development is not only to bring enhancements in social well-being of people living in a society but it is also the capacity of the system to provide conditions for the continued well-being of people living in a society and a society as a whole. Initially after stressing on economics the concept of development is now shifting towards more humanitarian grounds. Now development is said to be a change in different patterns of society meant for better realization of human values and allowing society to have better control over its environment. It also enables individuals to gain more control over themselves (Abida, et al., 2015).

The practice of Development Support Communication (DSC) and Development Communication (DC) are used in development programs. Nora Cruz Quebral is the pioneer in the discipline of development communication. She described development communication as the art and science of human communication which is applied to the speedy transformation of a country and its people from poverty to a prosperous state (Chang & Soomro, 2009). Development communication campaigns are not directed towards a specific development goal and are limited to mass media. It refers to technology-based communication network, which regardless of message and content, tends to create a climate suited for development. The messages are designed

to transform the behavior of people or for improving their quality of life.

The term Development Support Communication (DSC) is attributed to Erskine Childers. He described it as a specifically designed communication strategy which supports a particular development program (Narula, 1999, pp. 41-42). It represents a small universe and it is applied generally to a community development at Micro Level. DSC campaigns are message oriented and can be terminated after achieving goals. Nowadays, the concept of participatory approach has been used to empower people by using their own intellectual and cultures to bring change and development in several sectors of people's lives, for instance politics, health and education.

Melkote and Steeves are of the opinion that development communication occurs everywhere, in virtually any community on the planet. It is the use of communication to enable social development. It is important at this point to clarify the meaning of development communication for the term has a wide variety of connotations. Development communication doesn't restrict itself merely to the development of rural areas, nor is it concerned with agricultural development alone. It is oriented towards development whether or not it is in rural or urban areas, or in areas such as agriculture, family planning, education or nutrition (Melkote & Steeves, 2001).

If governments of developing nations are unable to provide education to children of their nation some responsibility also falls on the shoulders of society. Society can help in providing education to non-school going children. According to Servaes and Malikhao participatory communication has been used to support development by gaining community's pride of its own resources and culture, educating and stimulating people to be active as change agents (Servaes, & Malikhao, 2005).

According to Daramola the interpersonal communication dominates our activities at home, school, market and almost everywhere. It is a powerful level of communication because it is contextualized in such a way that it allows people to know and understand each other. Without interpersonal communication, development-oriented information, instructions and messages cannot be shared between members of the community and development communicators. Every tool and strategy being used by development communicators and planners has a certain level of interpersonal involvement in it. Interpersonal communication is needed in researching,

planning, executing and evaluating development messages, strategies and campaigns in any society. Similarly, group communication occurs when a small number of people meet to solve a problem. For easy interaction between members of the group and effective communication the group must be small so every member can have a chance to interact and communicate with all of the other members. Formation of groups is very important in solving social issues since the collective efforts of a number of people results in greater output than the single effort of the same number of people. Members of such groups engage in group communication by exchanging ideas, thoughts, information and messages. Examples of such groups in the society include the family, church groups, social clubs, work group, committee, study group, etc. In group communication, the source is a collection of individuals and the receiver is also a collection of individuals (Daramola, 2012).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Phenomenology was used as research methodology in the study. It is a qualitative research approach that emphasizes on the commonality of a lived experience within a specific group. The ultimate goal of the approach is to arrive at an explanation of the nature of the certain phenomenon (Creswell, 2013, pp.77-83). In social science, researches phenomenology is used to extract the pure data. Bracketing is used by the researcher to document personal experiences with the subject and to help remove researcher from the process. Memoing is one of the commonly used methods of bracketing in phenomenology studies (Maxwell, 2013, pp. 135-136).

A small phenomenological qualitative study was designed consisting of interviews with the locals which was conducted to know the issues and the problems of not sending school going age children to school. Twenty families from Hindu community of the locality having more than two children of school going age, who were not going to schools, were selected as subject for the study. Interviews were arranged for collecting data and our interpersonal messages for sending their children to schools were delivered. The study attempted to answer two main questions 1) what is the reason behind not sending your children to school? 2) What context or what situation have an influence on your decision for not sending your children to school? The collected data was organized for like phrases and themes that are then grouped to form clusters of meaning. Through this process the researcher



constructed the universal meaning of the situation and arrived at a more thoughtful understanding of the phenomenon.

A development support communication strategy was also developed to use interpersonal communication to inform about the benefits of children's education and motivate people residing at Rehman Colony to send their children to public sector schools. Messages usually sent by interpersonal communication are personalized and its feedback is immediate. Also, the main advantage of this type of communication and especially in this case is that it can take place in casual and comfortable settings. As the subject of the study was a small Hindu community so use of mass media and its channels was useless, costly and time consuming. It was rather a bit easier to go directly in groups to a family and get their confidence by spending time with them and discussing their problems and giving solutions by offering help.

### **Case Study of Street Children School Project**

As social development projects require work force and resources to achieve its objectives; the researcher motivated students of media studies department of Greenwich University to come forward voluntarily and work for the betterment of their society. 14 students were selected as volunteers who were ready to give their time and were willing to work for the project. Security due to presence of female volunteer students, free transport facility whenever required for the project, and space for training of the children were provided free of cost by Greenwich University. The project was named "Street Children Education Project".

A short film produced by the students of Mass Communication and Media Studies department Greenwich University, depicted the heart-breaking story of young children living in Rehman Colony. The short film story revealed that young children in their school going age were roaming and playing in the streets and were fighting with each other on petty issues while playing and were engaged in verbal abuse.

An investigation on the issue was launched and a team of media students with video and audio recorders were sent to the location to get the real picture of the locality and issues. Afterwards a study was conducted in Rehman Colony. It is about a 40 to 50 years old locality consisting of different ethnic and

religious groups. The people are mostly uneducated and unskilled belonging to lower class of the society. Majority of the people are Muslims, but a large number of Christians and Hindus also live there. Majority of people living there are either jobless or work on daily wages as labourers earning a very minimal amount of money as daily income. The overall standard of living of the locality is not good and even basic necessities of life were totally absent. The locality seems to be a classic example of underprivileged and dejected class of our society. Drug addicts can be seen sitting at the corners of the streets and a large number of youngsters were sitting in small groups smoking and wasting time. Children of the school going age were seen as wandering on the streets playing different games in dirt. When locals were interviewed a large number of demoralized residents complained about the acute water shortage, prolonged load-shedding, overflowing gutters, and lack of proper educational institutions, insufficient healthcare facilities and dilapidated roads as some of the major problems of the colony. Minorities living in the area were facing the worst civic problems and financial crises. They were living socially isolated being victims of social discrimination and injustice and were scared and worried regarding the future of their children. Sectarian violence and target killings were one of the main reasons due to which minorities were living isolated from the society. When locals were questioned that why their children were not going to schools, not even government-run schools which are totally run by government on free of cost basis and even books are also provided free of cost? Most of them replied that it was also very painful for them because instead of going to schools their children passed their whole day roaming and playing in the streets near their homes. Parents were of the opinion that due to extreme poverty they are unable to send their children to even government run schools where free education is provided as they cannot even afford the cost of school uniforms and stationery to be used. Above all, the unbearable cost of pick and drop from home to school and vice versa was a major factor for not admitting children to schools. Minorities were also reluctant of sending their children to schools due to sectarian violence and due to their conception, that at schools their children will not be treated equally leading their children to further inferiority complex.

The researcher selected Hindu community of Rehman Colony to run a study on self-reliance basis with an objective to get the children of school going age admitted in government run schools. This would at least provide primary education to the children of unprivileged class of our society and they

will go to school for learning rather than waste their time by roaming around on streets and become drug consumers. Similarly once some children are admitted to school others will definitely follow and a never ending process of learning and going to school will begin which will ultimately with passage of time drive out people living below poverty line to a far better position. The most crucial task was setting of specific development objectives which were made on the basis of direct input from those who will be directly involved. After the initial study objectives were identified which were to send children at the age of school going to public sector schools and all the expenses of sending them to school to be covered on self-reliance basis generating income from donations and organizing events. Target group of the campaign was identified and base line knowledge about them was collected. Hindu community was living in complete isolation and were living collectively in specific location of Rehman Colony. It was easy to locate the whole community at one place saving time and resources. The problem of not sending children to schools was analyzed and was mainly due to ignorance, misconception, law and order situation, sectarian violence and insufficient resources. Action plan was formulated to use interpersonal communication in the campaign as a mode of communication and volunteers were trained by researcher in content. Plan was to first identify children of school going age within the Hindu community and visit each family twice in a week to meet parents and elders of the family to discuss the importance of children's education. Concerns of each family were noted and discussed with the researcher. In the next meeting their concerns were cleared and families were motivated to send their children to school. As a part of the campaign finally the researcher also met families for their satisfaction and encouragement. The campaign with the help of interpersonal communication was carried out twice a week for 8 weeks and 20 children from 11 families were targeted. After hard work of interpersonal communication with the children, their parents and elders of the community, 12 children from both genders were ready to go to school and their families along with the elders of the community gave permission to admit them to public sector schools situated near the locality in order to save transport costs.

Before admitting to school necessary documents for admission, school uniforms, school bags, stationery, school accessories and non-formal training was provided, and the cost was borne by the University.

At the end of the campaign, 12 children with the consent of their families

were ready for taking admission in public sector schools. Boys were admitted in Government Boys Primary School JT-3 and girls were admitted in Government Girls Primary School GT-1. Both schools are situated in nearby locality called as Azam Basti. Overall success rate of the campaign was 60%.

## **DISCUSSION**

Theoretical and empirical evidence across countries linking education and economic development is quite strong. A well-functioning system of inclusive and relevant quality education remains one of the major challenges being faced by Pakistan even after seven decades. The uneven and faltering economic development is a result of low priority accorded to education, training and skill development. Education not only expands economic opportunities but also helps build a socially cohesive and responsible society embedded with democratic values. A well-educated society also exhibits more tolerance and respect for other nations, societies, groups and even individuals.

The results of the study revealed that in our country, issues like domestic violence, unemployment, natural disasters, swelling family size, abuse in schools, neglect and family break-down, unplanned rapid urbanization, and lack of education are the major factors behind the increase in the number of non-school going children. Another major factor is poverty which hits children badly and causes lifelong damage to their minds and bodies. Millions of children in the school going age group are out of schools due to poverty or lack of resources. When grown up un-educated, children earn their livelihood by begging at traffic signals and scavenge around rubbish dumps or industrial waste sites or take on menial jobs, working 12-15 hours a day to earn money which is hardly enough to buy them two meals for the day. These children are more often subjected to verbal and sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation at workplace and even at their homes. These inhumane treatments drive children to drugs and into the hands of criminal gangs who promise protection, food and a better life. Due to lack of economic resources, these children start stealing small items which cause depression, insecurity and psychological problems leading to intoxication.

The project turned out to be successful due to the use of interpersonal communication despite mass media being out of reach for those people. Print media couldn't have been used either due to low literacy rate and similarly electronic media could not be used due to its high initial cost and involvement

of technologies which were not available in this community.

In this study one more benefit of using interpersonal communication as mode of communication was its immediate feedback which helped researcher in providing instant answers to the questions raised and in solving issues at the same time saving time and efforts. Interpersonal communication was more fruitful while communicating with the elders of the community or heads of families because depending on feedback received proper reply to the issues were provided by the researcher at the same moment which convinced the target audience easily.

As the results of the study revealed that the reason for not sending children to schools was not only the scarce resources but sectarian violence against minorities, social discrimination due to race, cast, class and creed were also some important factors behind it. This is one of the reasons for which the researcher selected out of school children from the Hindu community which is the most marginalized group of our society. The initiative helped in building confidence of Hindu community along with other marginalized communities.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study concludes that interpersonal communication can be effectively used in changing attitude of people which can help in achieving development through development support communication. Without getting any help from traditional media the development messages were successfully communicated to uneducated and marginalized segment of society by using interpersonal communication.

Taking the results of the study as a model of social development, a lecturer by profession, her full-time students and a private sector University by using interpersonal communication on self-reliance basis sent 12 out of school children to school for learning. If other people of the society also come forward and try to send a child to school the whole out of school children population will be admitted schooling in the next few years.

A little help by society can do a great job for the marginalized segment of community living within the society. Every society can develop its least developed areas and marginalized people by providing their basic needs on self-reliance basis especially when state is unable to provide such facilities

to its whole population due to various economic, social and political reasons. Our society has to take part in developmental processes actively and should terminate social discrimination with the help of communication.

As the components of the model are tested locally therefore its applicability is intended to range across a variety of development themes within health and women issues as well as poverty elimination projects which involve information sharing and interpersonal communication for development.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Due to scarce resources, government must search for greater cost-effectiveness in all its operations so more amount can be allocated for education in at least next fiscal budget.

To acquire active support and greater contribution from public, the government must formulate a policy to involve people in their development programs.

To end social injustice and discrimination from our society we have to work on humanitarian grounds.

It is important to give a sense of protection and safety to the minority communities of our society by encouraging them to actively participate in development programs which can also eliminate their social problems.

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