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### **3. THE PROBLEM OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND PERSPECTIVES ON TRANSFORMATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

*The Case of Pakistan*

The problem of underdevelopment of traditional/indigenous communities in Pakistan has created enormous socio-political challenges at various levels. It is argued that on one hand religious fundamentalism has fostered extremist ideology (Cohen, 2009) in indigenous communities, and, on the other hand, the waves of Marxism have raised consciousness and expectations among the youth of these communities but have failed to solve development problems (Bakhteari, 1996). In the current chaotic scenario, youth and young adults are the centre of attention in two respects: (i) they are the victims of false and irrelevant ideologies prevalent in their tribal/traditional/isolated society, and (ii) they are the hope for reshaping a better society in Pakistan. 'Change' is inevitable now at every level.

It is largely acknowledged by development economists that Pakistan has failed to translate its impressive economic growth into the improvement of human development indicators. Since the 90s, its rank in UNDP's Human Development Index has declined from 139 (Human Development Reports, UN, 1997) to 147 (Human Development Report, UN, 2015). In the spectrum of economic policy and planning development, investment in human capital was inevitable for attaining high economic growth that recommended building more schools in the areas where people do not have access to education services. Most of these areas are located in rural communities where the majority of the population resides. However, despite continuous national and international efforts Pakistan has not achieved either the target of 100% universalization of primary education nor has it been successful in controlling the dropout rate of children and youth in rural areas that is above 50% in all provinces of Pakistan (National Commission for Human Development, 2013).

According to local intellectuals and practitioners in the field of development education working in traditional communities, in the absence of relevant, useful education, proper guidance and leadership, local people even those who have completed their formal education are left isolated, facing the dilemma of identity crises as they do not feel connected with their local communities nor have they established their position or status in mainstream institutions. In this critical

scenario, there are organizations and people who now question the basic ideas of 'development' and 'education'.

In 2004, I had an opportunity to engage with an NGO, the Institute for Development Studies and Practices (IDSP), that has been working in the most deprived province of Pakistan for more than 30 years. This organization mostly works with young male and female members of tribal communities in various districts of Balochistan. Being part of rural communities for a long time and knowing their realities, strengths, weaknesses, issues, culture, and people, IDSP firmly asserts that "every human being is equal and has the potential to create, develop, produce, generate, vitalize and revitalize processes, thoughts, and actions based on humility, humanism, trust, justice, truth, self, and mutual accountability and transparency" (IDSP, 2010, p. 1). IDSP strives "to relearn, regenerate, regain, and reclaim the indigenous values, practices, processes, and repressed knowledge based on local wisdom and knowledge" (IDSP, 2010, p. 1).

IDSP strongly voices the critique of mainstream notions and practices of development and it uses alternative approaches to educate and develop its targeted population. In order to empower youth of traditional society and to develop a cadre of effective thinkers, practitioners, and activists, it offers two types of non-formal development studies courses under its Academic Development Program (ADP). The two main courses are (i) a "Development Studies Course" for both men and women and (ii) a "Mainstreaming Gender and Development (MGD) Course" for women only. This program integrates community-development practices and critical theoretical perspectives. The theoretical framework of ADP courses was developed in the form of three core themes. The themes are: (i) the Colonial and imperialist basis of leading development practices, (ii) Critical pedagogy and radical education, (iii) Spirituality, culture, and social change. In this emancipatory educational program, students experienced self-actualization, gender-sensitization, decolonization, re-inhabitation, and praxis. Their transformative learning experiences in IDSP and their development practices have reshaped and transformed their perspectives, their personal lives, and their professional community development practices.

This chapter is based on a case study that was conducted in IDSP at Balochistan to examine the IDSP stakeholders' transformative notions of development and their emancipatory actions at micro, meso, and macro levels. I employed two critical theories to understand their transformative perceptions and practices: Boaventura de Sousa Santos's (1999) *Postmodern Critical Theory* and Jack Mezirow's (1978) *Transformative Learning Theory*. This chapter will share key elements and conditions that contributed to bring 'change' at the micro level in a traditional society that is dealing with the challenges of extremism, poverty, and the gravity of globalization.

In this case study twenty-one IDSP stakeholders including 4 administrators, 3 teachers, 8 male learners, and 6 female learners participated. These participants were selected using purposive, convenience, and theoretical sampling techniques and following specific selection criteria designed for each group of stakeholders,

administrators, teachers, and learners. Two primary qualitative-research research methods were used to collect data from the research participants: (i) document analysis and (ii) in-depth interviews with IDSP administrators, teachers, and students (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

#### IDSP STAKEHOLDERS' CRITIQUE OF MAINSTREAM DEVELOPMENT NOTIONS AND PRACTICES

IDSP stakeholders explained the following problems they associate with the mainstream or Western notions of development. Such notions, they believe:

- are limited in perspective: they are fictitious, posing as universal truths when they are not;
- are irrelevant to local realities; they are not applicable in rural communities of Pakistan;
- are imposed, not evolved; people and systems were not prepared for globalization, certainly not for “instant globalization;” and
- promote mainstream symbolic aspects of development.

#### *Transformation of IDSP Stakeholders' Perspectives on Notions of Development*

IDSP stakeholders explained their perceived notions of development in a variety of ways. For example, they explained it in terms of implications for the personal level, local level, and global level. The IDSP Director explained it both in an ideological or philosophical form and in a practical or functional form.

When I asked, “what does it (development) mean to you? Or how do you define the word “development,” most participating IDSP learners (students), responded that real development is “development of your intellect.” However, most of the administrators relate the notion of development to humanism, humanist values, and humanity. Humanism and humanist values, in IDSP’s ADP, are defined in terms of humans’ unlimited potential for growth, human freedom and autonomy, of equity and equality, and of human responsibility both to self and others. Cranton and Taylor (2012) referred to these humanist values as humanist assumptions which, they claim, are “inherent in transformative learning theory” (p. 6).

In terms of development at the local level, all IDSP stakeholders put emphasis on pro-people and local-relevant development projects and programs. The IDSP Director and other administrators, in the light of their own community development practices, shared a philosophy of doing development education at the grass-roots level. Their alternative notions of “development” focus on:

- intellectual development,
- humanism, humanist values, and humanity, and
- development relevant to local realities – local needs, local context, local agenda, local priorities.

*Development as intellectual development.* “Intellectual development” was the most common response among all IDSP learners as their alternative notion of development. They emphasized development of critical and analytical minds in their society. While they were explaining this notion they were actually comparing it to materialistically symbolic pursuits and goals (construction of high rise buildings, promoting high socio-economic status for some in society) and the agenda of Westernization or modernization at the center of mainstream development. Instead, they emphasized human development, but not in the sense in which it is generally understood in the field of national development and development education. For example, human development is generally taken as synonymous with educated, healthy, responsible “human resources” for increasing already high economic growth rates. IDSP learners instead emphasized human intellectual development, not specifically for development of the country, but for the sake of the individuals’ own enlightenment or liberation.

By the word “development” they refer to the following human capabilities: high level of intellect, critical thinking skills, combination of both intellect and personality development, conscience, thoughtfulness, wisdom, developing broader perspectives, adaptation of knowledge and skills, learning new things, cognitive development, emotional development, keeping one’s mind positive, clear and clean thinking, ability to convert negative things into positive things, giving awareness, bringing change, better understanding, mental progress, and understanding of systems.

In the view of IDSP learners, the intellectual development of a person greatly reduces the probability that others will misguide you; one learner said you will not follow others blindly if you are developed in a real sense. In her view, the development of intellect greatly enhances one’s potential power over one’s destiny; she said “you will never develop until you stop [blindly] following others” (A Female Learner). IDSP learners believe in the power of a critical and analytical mind because it gives one strength to get control over one’s own life. One female learner concluded “the power of mind is greater than the power of arms”.

IDSP learners’ advocacy for developing critical thinkers at grassroots levels is logically consistent with today’s ugly reality in Pakistan where youth and people of traditional and tribal communities are being abused and destroyed by several political and religious extremist groups. In the views of IDSP stakeholders, people of such communities will be genuinely developed if they are given critical awareness and taught “hidden knowledge,” if they are able to analyze every situation, ideology, action, happenings, and events, with a critical mind. However, “Hidden knowledge” refers here to knowledge that consists of critical perspectives and theories, alternative ideas and views, and literature focused on knowledge of particular relevance to marginalized people but not usually taught in mainstream institutions. According to IDSP stakeholders, with an analytical and critical mind people of their community can choose their own path and no external or internal group would easily be able to exploit them.

*Development as humanism, humanist values, humanity.* With regard to the concept and practices of development, IDSP stakeholders, particularly IDSP administrators, emphasized humanism, humanist values, and humanity. With respect to IDSP's own position on the concept of "development" one administrator said:

There is a definition of development, but basically what really matters is how we look at it and what vision we have of it. Like if we say a society should be developed then what (things) will make it developed. Normally, in a typical way, the physical state and social conditions of that society should be better. For us (in IDSP) development should, most importantly, focus on human values or principles of humanity, for example the aspects of equality, justice, equal treatment; it should not promote discrimination and hatred. It should have (or portray) a human face. (A Male Administrator)

He added that, to preserve socio-economic stability, provision of basic needs is necessary (infrastructural development); however, what is essential in the "project of development" is the element of "humanist values." IDSP administrators and other stakeholders define the humanism or principles of humanity in the concept of development in following terms:

- It must acknowledge and respect diversity
- It must maintain peoples' dignity
- Everyone must be treated equally
- Everyone must be respected
- Everyone must be heard and given voice
- It should not promote discrimination and hatred
- It should be pro-people
- It should not contain exploiting factors

IDSP administrators urged promotion of these principles of humanity in programs and projects of development education. They stated that it is imperative for development practitioners to raise their voice for incorporating these human values in all kinds of development programs. One administrator said that human values must be central to the framework under which development programs are designed. In his view, human-related development projects and programs, such as poverty reduction programs sponsored and shaped by international organizations and state institutions of education are useless if they cannot address issues of inequality and discrimination in a society.

IDSP learners too stressed teaching basic principles of humanity in development education programs. In their views, "development" means to be aware as a human being grounded in humanism and having firm belief in the value of humanity as a whole. In their views, human beings can only be called developed if they learn to value other human beings and humanity and if they able to acknowledge or "understand what righteous actually is" (A Male Lerner). One learner said "To respect human values is actually the development. Otherwise, if the meaning of

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development is constructing high-rise building, roads, and bridges then Karachi should be the most developed place, but it is not” (A Male Learner).

In my view, the IDSP learners’ interpretation of humanism specifically includes the principles of openness and acceptance of others. Their approach to understanding the issue of inequality was practical and related to existing social issues in our society. Their intention in defining development in terms of creating faculties of openness and acceptance within people is an effort to address people’s rigid and hostile attitudes and perceptions toward “other” people because of their different religious background, ethnicity, sexual orientation, geographical location, socio-economic status, etc.

IDSP stakeholders urged that it is very important to highlight these human values in the concept of development and also in designing development projects; otherwise, anything encompassed in mainstream “Western” stereotypes of development will be considered as development by common people. They are not against building infrastructure and provision of basic human facilities for their communities. They acknowledge the importance of infrastructure, as well as technological, and communication development; however, their main focus is to give humanity, humanism, and humanist values the central place in the concept of development. In their view, “a society can function and grow only on the principles of humanity” (IDSP Administrator).

*Development must be contextualized in local realities.* IDSP stakeholders also define the term “development” by making references to development projects run by government, non-government/non-profit, and international development organizations in the province of Balochistan. Their concern and interest in community development projects and programs makes sense because hundreds of development programs in the fields of education, health care, women’s development, child welfare, poverty reduction, rehabilitation, rural development, non-formal education, and so forth are currently operating in Balochistan. Besides some mega-projects of national and provincial governments (e.g., Balochistan Rural Support Program) and international development organizations (USAID, UNICEF, Concern, Save the Children, UNDP, CIDA) more than 1035 registered Non-profit Organizations are functioning in the development sector of Balochistan since 2000 (Social Policy and Development Centre, 2002).

The focus of IDSP stakeholders’ conversations with respect to development programs in Balochistan consistently gravitated around one word, “localization.” Within this rubric, they criticized the role of global institutions such as the United Nations and other international-development organizations and institutions in the development sector of Pakistan. They argued that, in Balochistan, global institutions bring their own specific agenda and they influence the practices of all stakeholders in the development projects they sponsor and control. One administrator explained this and said “if the UN decides to declare a decade as [dedicated to] prevention of HIV,

immediately all NGOs and development interventions start working on HIV” (IDSP Administrator). According to IDSP stakeholders, global institutions’ development agendas undermine local public issues by overwhelming and ignoring them. In their view, poverty, health, water resource management, women’s education, religious extremism, and ethnic violence are the basic issues of Balochistan. They argued that, in the presence of such issues, one would expect to find development programs focused on environment, family planning, and charity schemes. Therefore, each aspect of any community development program, in the views of IDSP stakeholders, must be relevant to local realities. From conceptualization of each program to its design, planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, they like to see local peoples’ involvement at every stage of the program.

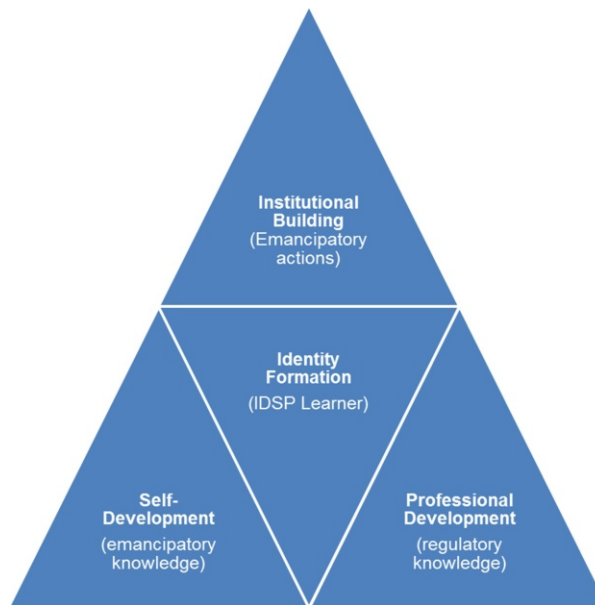
In the view of IDSP stakeholders, improvement or development will occur only if it is relevant to local realities. It is important to understand here what they mean by local relevancy or local realities. They mean that local resources, local capacity, local wisdom, local needs, local issues, local culture, local knowledge systems, local interventions, local human resources, local agendas, local priorities, local development indicators, local economic conditions, and the local political situation shape and delimit the success of all development projects. They urged that International Development Organizations (IDOs) incorporate local issues and local needs in all development interventions in Balochistan.

IDSP stakeholders argued that communities will “develop” when local resources are used in the implementation process of projects. They reproached international development projects that come with conditions that ignore local realities. They shared some examples of projects in which officials were instructed to buy vehicles from the West. In a similar vein, in some flood relief projects project leaders were instructed to buy food items only from the Islamabad (Capital of Pakistan) and certain international food companies instead of local vendors. However, IDSP stakeholders insisted upon using local markets. In their views, such initiatives that leave out the local context and ignore local resources destabilize the local economy when they could play a significant role in boosting it.

IDSP stakeholders repeatedly highlighted the importance of local peoples’ involvement in each phase and stage of community development programs. They believe in the capabilities of local people to pursue and execute any task of community development projects. In this regard, they criticized the extensive involvement of outsiders or foreigners in development of projects and programs. According to one IDSP teacher, non-local consultants denigrate local practices in their project evaluation reports and leave a negative impression of local people and their culture in these reports. In their view, this approach to development and associated methodologies only benefits those who are already privileged, although it certainly exploits those local people whose issues are used for initiating these projects. One IDSP teacher stated with anguish that “A project that involves and represents local people’s views is still missing” (IDSP Teacher).

*IDSP's Conceptual Framework of ADP for the Development of an Individual*

The conceptual framework of ADP explains the phenomenon of development or transformation of an individual in IDSP. This framework has three main components: Self-development, professional development, and institutional building. These components are presented as components of a triangle in Figure 1.



*Figure 1. IDSP framework of ADP*

The first component of the triangle is self-development. In ADP, self-identity is first developed through a process of self-actualization in which participants in the courses revisit assumptions and beliefs they have embraced over the years about their own personality and identity. They identify their weaknesses and strengths and assess their actual potential. Then, by learning about dynamics of different kinds of behaviour, their “new self” starts to develop. However, the journey of self-development is furthered by participation in gender discourse, religious discourse, and development discourse and by constant interaction with their own community during field assignments.

The second component of this triangle is professional development or professionalism. The IDSP Director said that professionalism starts when the self is developed. In ADP, participants have to learn several kinds of skills such as writing, presentation, computer use, planning and budgeting, and organization and management of field activities. In ADP, a discrete module on communication skills and types of behaviour (e.g., assertive, aggressive, and passive) is taught



to all participants to develop their public communication skills with co-workers, community members, and governmental officials.

The apex of this triangle is institution-building. In ADP, individuals come with their own ideas and they test out their ideas and work on them. It is expected that at some point learners should be able to theorize, research, and integrate their practices by themselves. According to the Director of the IDSP, “these practices will create a fire and curiosity in them and they will be eager to know the impact of their work.” In her view, that curiosity and eagerness should lead them towards institution-building. However, the institution-building she envisioned for her learners is quite atypical. She clarified:

We want our learners to learn institution building but not typical institution-building; the institution building [that we want them to learn is one] in which you can house your own growing program and accommodate your own idea(s). And, for grooming your ideas, whatever the kind of capacity, whether you are doing it from your home or your car or sitting on a road or renting a room. There is no [necessary] condition; rather what is really important is the understanding of systems, how do systems work, what do I need to continue my idea; so that is the third point of triangulation, and then again it will connect with self and then you will reach professionalism. So that was the method we have created in our course for youth development.

Explaining the overarching cumulative phenomenon in this framework (i.e., the IDSP-learner identity formation) Dr. Bakhteari stated that the identity of an IDSP learner should be formed in a way that would not boost her or his own ego; rather it should be formed so as to orient the learner toward planning for “others.” The emphasis is placed on “others.” And who are the relevant “others?” They are family, community, and marginalized groups of the community. She explained that in this triangle “young people will build a mirror and they will develop themselves by looking into that mirror. So, they should make the mirror and carefully consider the reflection in that mirror; and, who is the mirror — their people, their community, that is the mirror.”

*IDSP’s Ideology of Development Practices: A Journey of Moving from Micro to Macro & Macro to Micro*

In the context of doing or practicing development in local communities of Balochistan, the IDSP Director and other participants shared their concerns regarding existing development practices. They particularly criticized the short duration of community development projects. In their views, such short-term projects leave a black hole at the ground level that causes new social problems in the communities. Focusing on this particular issue, the IDSP Director stated her own idea of community development practices.

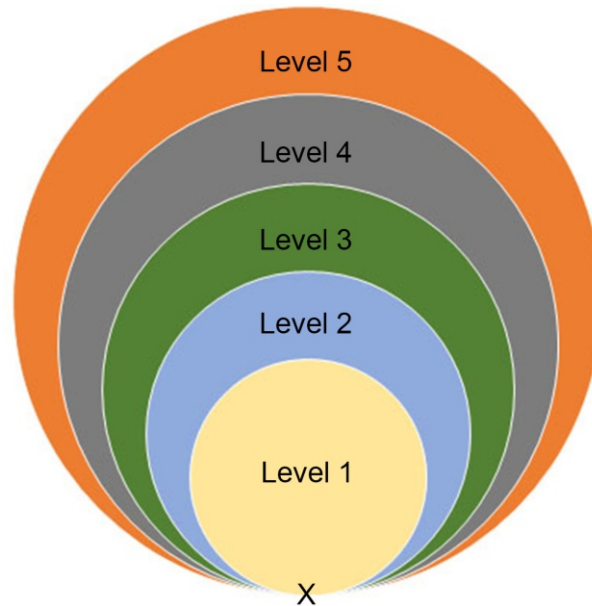
According to her, the process of development has many dimensions. In her view, it is absolutely unethical and unprofessional for a development practitioner to complete one dimension and leave it without addressing other emerging dimensions. She said

people who think they have completed their job after executing only one development project should not step into this field. She explained her own philosophy of doing development work in local communities. She envisions community development practice as a journey of constant movement from a micro level to several macro levels (see Figure 2). In her view, it does not matter if a development project is small or big; what really matters is identifying the emerging dimensions of development in the process of development. Her philosophy of development practices is presented below in her own words:

I, after doing all this (PhD and building 2000 girls schools in Balochistan or breaking one of the myths about Balochistan) again want to return to the same unit. This is what I believe all the time – from point to macro and from macro to point (start from a point to reach to macro level and then again return to the point and go to macro). This has been the centre point of my life.

In her view, it is crucial for a development practitioner or group of development practitioners to come back to the point from which a development project started. She believes that a number of changes occur “on the ground” during a project creation and execution process; therefore, it becomes essential for the practitioners involved to take account of all the changes that have occurred and start addressing them.

Her vision of development practices is captured in Figure 2. In this figure, different colours indicate different dimensions of the development. To show the journey of



*Figure 2. IDSP philosophy of development practices*

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the development process I use circles of different sizes. These sizes do not reflect the scope of the development project; instead they show the significance or strength of grasping the development process. Each circle indicates completion of one cycle addressing one dimension of development. For example, Level 1 indicates that a development project was initiated from a “Point X” and reached completion the apex of the Level-1 circle; however, the practitioner will come back to the same Point X and start addressing another dimension from the same point and take it to the macro level (i.e., the apex of level 2), but it again comes back to the Point X and continues its journey until a strong model of development will emerge.

## EMANCIPATORY ACTIONS: SUCCESSES AND SHORTFALLS

Baumgartner (2001) believes that “action on... [a] new perspective is imperative;” for her, “not only seeing, but living... [a] new perspective is necessary” (p. 17). This chapter illuminates the influence of participants’ participation in ADP on self-reported perceptions of their engagement in community development practices, the main thrust of the final research question of this study. In the following sections I will outline actions which participants took both individually and collectively at three levels in terms of scope: micro, meso, and macro. Actions taken individually to address personal, family, and societal issues are reported as “micro level.” Actions taken (individually or collectively) to confront some community issues on a small scale are reported as “meso level.” Actions taken either at a national level or which received national attention are reported as “macro level.”

*Emancipatory actions at the micro level.* There are three major kinds of intentional micro-level actions reported by IDSP stakeholders. The first type of action they took was focused on ensuring gender balance at all levels, family, work, and community. The second important type of action they took was raising voice against exploitation and oppression. The third category of their emancipatory actions is related to serious societal problems such as corruption, nepotism, oppression and exploitation of marginalized groups. This third category of emancipatory action relates to ethical decisions that they took to prevent themselves from taking part in any activity that could lead them into corruption or force them to exploit others. They took these actions because they did not want to compromise their personal integrity based on the humanitarian principles which they learned in ADP courses. I explain the details of these three key actions below.

*Ensuring gender balance at family level and work.* The process of self-actualization and gender sensitization during the IDSP transformative learning process crystalized in learners’ minds the injustice prevailing particularly at home and generally in society. After reframing their subjective and gendered identities, participants took bold steps to ensure gender balance in their families, work places, and community. They are trying to create gender balance in society by fighting

against gender inequality through making appropriate personal choices, becoming involved in all family decisions, and sharing knowledge on gender issues with family and community members. A recent evaluation study conducted by IDSP in 2012 on its MGD graduates, *Explore and study the impact of Mainstreaming Gender and Development courses of IDSP since 2003–2010 on its graduate learners of Balochistan*, reports that, after completing the course, sixty-three percent of the IDSP female graduates have resumed their education. Bypassing the teaching profession which is considered the “most suitable” profession for females, forty-three percent of female IDSP graduates decided to choose community development work by joining non-government organizations and by establishing self-employed skill-development centres (Qambrani & Qambrani, 2012). Most of them, after the course, decided to join the higher-education institute, also an uncommon phenomenon in a traditional society.

Research findings of this study demonstrate that, after going through the gender sensitization phase in ADP courses, both male and female participants examined the role and status of female family members with a new understanding. They came to see clearly the male dominance in most family matters, particularly in the lack of voice and power of their mothers and other significant female family members in the family decision-making process. Female participants stated that during their studies at IDSP they shared their transformative knowledge, particularly on gender issues, with their parents. By transferring gender-sensitive knowledge they convinced their parents that they should be given freedom to make personal choices and be consulted on family decisions, particularly those related to their own lives. However, some female participants reported that becoming part of the family decision process involved long arguments with their parents. Sometimes they even had to face opposition from male relatives who have unwarranted and unnecessary influence over and interfere in the family matters. In most cases, these relatives opposed girls’ education and career choices.

Male research participants also shared their efforts to promote gender balance in their own homes and in their work environment. Their statements on their intentional actions toward that end reveal that their vehemently-entrenched attitudes towards gender-specific (stereotypically male) roles have changed. They have come to understand that the social reality specific to gendered identities and subjectivities is not the natural order of things. They claimed that now they participate in home chores while earlier it was a matter of honor and ego not to do so. Some male learners who are married and have daughters shared courageous decisions they took to open the doors of new opportunities for their daughters. For example, one father allowed his teen-age daughter to travel to Quetta, Karachi, and Islamabad from his home town Sibi, to compete in an Intel computer-software project.

In a similar vein, male participants shared ways in which they have tried to create gender balance in their work places. They stated that in their organizations they have always tried to recruit local females and oppose hiring non-local females. They further reported that they had tried their best to provide local females a supportive working

environment so they can become a source of inspiration for other local women. Most of the male learners are associated with the NGO sector; so, not surprisingly, they claimed that at every opportunity they encourage gender mainstreaming. They claimed that in all kinds of developmental activities they assured a fair representation of women. Contrary to female participants, male participants did not mention any challenges in reducing gender imbalance in work places. Instead they shared their efforts to introduce gender-sensitive policies and initiatives at work.

Female research participants claimed that consciously and unconsciously they have acted upon gender-relevant issues and events in their lives. However, despite continuous efforts, they face difficulties in fostering gender balance in the work place and at the community level. In their view, “people do not want to accept it [gender balance] ...and they take it as a joke” (A Female Learner). They explained that it was extremely hard for them to create gender balance outside the home boundaries. In their view, achieving gender balance in a traditional society is the most important but also the most difficult task. They said that, in their work places and in informal gatherings in their communities, they had always felt alone whenever they raised their voices on gender-sensitive issues or took a stand to defend their rights. They said that people in their offices and in their communities laugh at them and make fun of their views related to gender.

*Raising one’s voice against exploitation and oppression.* One important outcome of emancipatory education in ADP courses is the IDSP stakeholders’ capacity to challenge agents of hegemonic institutions, unscrupulous employers, and supporters of oppressive social structures. Findings of this research reveal that, in many public forums and meetings, participants had openly criticized and challenged those meta-narratives, habits, and ways of being that have been major sources of exploitation and oppression of vulnerable members of society.

In de Sousa Santos’s Postmodern Critical Theory, the existence of a culture of silence in postcolonial societies is considered one of the main difficulties preventing reinvention of alternative knowledges. All IDSP stakeholders also confirmed the presence of a culture of obedience and conformity in their communities. They said that this culture had made the common rural and tribal people believe that everything is fine in their social systems. One learner said that “Somehow we are taught/given a message to be silent and to be quiet on events happening in the world or in a family or in our society or in our area. We are not allowed to question anything” (A Male Learner). They said that this culture of obedience and silence is reinforced so strongly that it is very hard for common people to challenge it. In the views of IDSP stakeholders, this hegemonic phenomenon has created a culture of fear within society so that people are afraid to speak up before powerful, authoritative, and dominant groups. According to one administrator, one basic task of ADP was to defeat that fear.

In this study, almost all research participants proclaim that they feel fearless when they present their critical views to powerful authorities and audiences. They said

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they know what they are saying is righteous and that is the reason they do not care about the consequences of their actions. Their shared stories suggest strongly that they never hesitated to speak up before anyone and in any forum whether it was a large coordination meeting at the district level or an informal gathering at the community level.

IDSP stakeholders claimed that they have broken the culture of silence of their traditional society. Because of this type of human agency, IDSP faculty believe the contribution of IDSP learners is quite different from that of other players in the development sector in Balochistan.

*Resisting nepotism and corruption.* Nepotism and corruption are two major social evils rooted in Pakistani societies. In the latest Transparency International Annual Report (2012), Pakistan is ranked the 34th most corrupt country among 176 countries of the World. The findings of this study show that, on several occasions, IDSP stakeholders took actions to stop nepotism at their work places. Many stakeholders, on an individual basis, refuse to become the part of organizations where exploitation and corruption are unavoidable. On ethical grounds, they have set their career choices accordingly and have declined many attractive job offers.

I heard a widely-shared maxim from many IDSP learners, “if you cannot stop the exploitation, oppression, and corruption, then, at least, try not to become part of those institutions where these social evils cannot be avoided.” One IDSP learner said that his fellow course participants clearly understood what social construction and change really is and how it can be furthered in society. In his view, the essence of this discourse was that you should not be part of the establishment and the mainstream system because they are corrupt and promote inequality in the society.

IDSP stakeholders stated that over the years their critical thinking, knowledge of truth, and their working experiences have helped them in setting their priorities, working principles, and boundaries for development. They said that they are now in a position where they can refuse a 50,000-rupee or 100,000-rupee salary package if they feel that in that organization they would have to compromise their working principles.

Although most IDSP learners have joined non-mainstream institutions, they are still facing issues of nepotism and corruption in their organizations. Both male and female participants reported that they have frequently switched their jobs in the NGO sector. They cited a couple of reasons including the short-term duration of the projects, highly-structured policies and operational plans, non-negotiable frameworks, the presence of a culture of corruption and nepotism, and excessive use of resources on non-developmental activities. Some learners stated that they resigned from their jobs because they found themselves in an environment where it was very hard for them to avoid taking bribes or where they noticed that developmental activities were going against the interest of the local people and the actual purpose of the project.

IDSP faculty responding to my question regarding their expectations for IDSP students stated that the biggest challenge for their students is to challenge the standard

practices of development. They said it is very difficult for them to do something which they dislike, which they believe is wrong, and which they know is not going to benefit the targeted audience. In the view of the IDSP Director “one of the biggest challenges for learners is to follow their perceptions and dreams and to put forward/apply/advance those ideas”.

Their emancipatory action at the micro level has established a general perception of IDSP and its learners in the society of Balochistan, a perception that people from IDSP are not “normal,” “common,” and “ordinary” people. In the words of IDSP stakeholders they are defined as “different,” “unusual,” “radical,” “difficult,” “strange,” “weird,” “crazy,” “insane,” “revolutionary,” and “exceptional” people by their friends, family members, and development practitioners. Participants reported that some of their friends and family and community members questioned their new identity and made fun of their revolutionary ideas. They disliked their critique on modernization, the formal schooling system, and globalization. In the development sector, according to participants, people either like them a lot or completely reject them as soon as they find out that they come from IDSP. On one hand, they are in high demand in the NGO sector of Balochistan and, on the other hand, they are facing several challenges in finding a stable position in this sector. One learner said that, “people of other NGOs think that people who have been associated with IDSP have a different psyche” (A Male Learner). He said there are several people in the NGO sector who do not like this “psyche” and consequently they avoid employing IDSP learners in their development projects.

At a micro level, IDSP stakeholders’ individual reflective decisions and actions have brought significant positive changes. At the family level, they have been successful in creating a gender balance that has certainly changed the family dynamics in the favour of women. At the community level, their continuous resistance towards gender discrimination, oppression, exploitation, nepotism and, corruption has played a significant role in breaking the culture of silence of their society. The next section of this chapter will focus on those community-development initiatives that were undertaken on a small scale by IDSP and its stakeholders.

#### *Emancipatory Actions at the Meso Level*

During the discussion on alternative development practices, research participants shared details of some community initiatives that were either taken by them or by IDSP itself or other IDSP fellows who were not participants in this research. These initiatives are divided into five categories: educational services, social-service delivery, activism, creative writing and publishing, and revival of traditional practices.

During my field work, I gathered evidence of some of these actions, but, it was hard to collect evidence regarding those undertaken by non-participants in this study. The main purpose of explaining these actions here is to illustrate how emancipation of critical and alternative knowledge has influenced the developmental practices of IDSP Stakeholders.

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*Educational services.* IDSP stakeholders reported five key educational initiatives: (i) development of eight district education policies; (ii) a short-term non-formal education project for out-of-school children in the Sibi district (an intervention of IDSP); (iii) development of a textbook for out-of-school children; (iv) initiation of a home school for children and women in Lasbella District; (v) building a tuition academy for children and youth of Khuzdar District. Among these five, the first two initiatives were taken at the institutional level in IDSP while three others were undertaken by IDSP learners.

There are certain features of these IDSP initiatives that distinguish them from other government and NGOs initiatives such as:

- IDSP and its learners targeted specifically children, youth, and women who either had never attended school or had withdrawn from formal schools;
- They used non-traditional teaching approaches and methods such as a mentoring approach;
- Their purpose in teaching was not limited to the development of literacy and numeracy skills but also extended to creating consciousness on certain social issues such as gender, economic activities, accountability, governance, and violence, and extremism;
- They tried to make teaching content relevant to the realities of their students;
- These initiatives were taken after examining the local needs of the area.

#### *Social services*

During the interviews, IDSP teachers and administrators shared information and perceptions on the contribution of IDSP and its learners in social-service delivery. They specifically mentioned the following five key self-initiatives in which their learners were intensively involved: (i) installation of a water purification plant in a desert area; (ii) establishment of IDSP campuses for women in five districts of Balochistan; (iii) training of newly selected women councillors; (iv) establishment of a skill-development centre for women; and (v) formation of a farmers' association in the district of Sindh.

Most of these initiatives were being undertaken by the IDSP and graduates who did not participate in this study. All of these initiatives operated at the local level. According to IDSP teachers, these initiatives are good examples of alternative development practices by IDSP and its learners as they emerged “on the ground” as a result of their students’ interest in specific issues and needs of their local communities. In other words, these initiatives were not taken due to any national or international campaign in the field of community development.

*Activism.* Four participants in this study stated that they have been involved in “activism” since they have graduated from the IDSP. One female learner shared a case of honour killing in which she was secretly involved in saving the life of an intended woman victim. In a similar vein, one Baloch male learner stated that he,



along with other course participants, protested in front of a Press Club against extra-judicial killing in Sindh province. The most interesting case of activism reported by study participants is one learner's efforts to launch a campaign on impacts of a dam on the local people of his area. This campaign was launched as a result of an IDSP learner's impact study on the Mirani Dam that was built in the region of Makran. In this study he found flaws in the design and construction of the dam that later ruined the lives of hundreds of local people. That specific learner has written about this disaster in a provincial newspaper, Daily Intekhab. His campaign received substantial coverage from the print media. In fact, he has taken on the issue at the policy level as well. With the victims of Mirani Dam, he launched an official complaint to the Governor and Chief Secretary of Balochistan. With the support of IDSP, he presented the case of the Mirani Dam project in reputable policy institutions, such as the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), in Islamabad. With the support of a Senator, he got an opportunity to discuss the issue in a formal meeting of the Planning Commission of Pakistan. He also met with the Federal Minister of Power and Energy and requested him to help the victims of the Mirani Dam project. This campaign is still continuing.

*Creative writing and publishing.* Participation in ADP courses has created and sharpened learners' writing skills. There are many IDSP learners who have written in local newspapers, newsletters, IDSP's quarterly published journals Transformation and Aks ul amal (Reflective Actions), and in IDSP's other publications. An overview of their published articles and papers show that they pay attention to the issues of formal schooling, the health system, environment, food security, unemployment and extremism. They have also written on topics such as "modernity and human values," "democracy," the "role of media and schooling," "traditional values and practices," "imperialism," and "mother languages and globalization."

*Revival of traditional practices.* There were two examples of revival of traditional practices which most of the research participants cited during their conversation on alternative practices: (i) rehabilitation of Karezes (a traditional water management system) in Pishin district and (ii) IDSP's mud-construction Project (a traditional architecture method of construction).

Karezes are used for irrigating crops and for meeting drinking and domestic requirements. They are "defined as man-made underground water management systems" (Ullah, 2012, p. 5). One student of the IDSP DS course rehabilitated a five-hundred-year-old Karazes in his district that had been dysfunctional since 1997 due to a severe drought in Balochistan. During the course, he shared the problem of dysfunctional Karazes in his area and conducted a small study on this issue. Later, IDSP provided him with a fellowship to work on his idea. Under the supervision of an IDSP team and with the support and contribution of his community he initiated a cleaning of the wells of the Karazes. According to an IDSP report on the project, he hired fifteen labourers as well for this job, and, with the cleaning of the first few

wells, water started to flow again in the Karazes. By the time all the wells were cleaned, sufficient water was available to irrigate crops and to fulfill the domestic needs of local people.

The second important traditional practice that research participants mentioned was the IDSP's mud-construction-projects initiative. In early 2000, IDSP intended to establish a Community Development University (CDU) in the city of Quetta. IDSP, following one of its core values of revival of traditional practices, decided to construct the main campus of CDU, Hannah Campus, by using traditional local practices. For this purpose, a preliminary base-line study was conducted to understand local construction structure and the life style of local people living in the neighbourhood of the campus. According to one IDSP administrator, IDSP and its team spent a year studying the area and the people of Hannah. In the process, according to him, they learned that local people use "mud structure." As a result, the final decision of IDSP was to build the Hanna campus with mud. This project is now under construction.

At the meso level, it is difficult to assess the significance of emancipatory actions. There seems little doubt that all of them were undertaken out of community spirit and with good intentions using a non-traditional approach. However, it is also a fact that most of them are not operational. In fact, the current status of some actions is unknown. Among seven operational projects only two, revival of Karazes and installation of a water purification plant, seem significant since they have benefitted local people. The impact of the other five action projects is hard to assess because some of them are in their infancy and others had no evidence of extended benefits.

This limited success at the meso level has created frustration among some IDSP stakeholders. According to one teacher, because of these frustrations IDSP learners have built a love-hate relationship with IDSP. During my field work, I also came to understand that IDSP learners think of themselves as "change agents" and that they are proud to be that; at the same time, however, they are frustrated because they are facing several challenges in bringing about "change." They shared with me their limitations in practicing their revolutionary and alternative ideas in the field. I noted moreover that whenever they face problems they expect IDSP to support and help them. However, the reality, as IDSP teachers and administrators pointed out, is that IDSP does not have sufficient resources to meet each learner's needs for support.

#### *Emancipatory Action at the Macro Level*

There are two specific initiatives of IDSP stakeholders that are pertinent to discussion here: (i) establishment of a College for Youth Activism and Development (CYAD) at the national level and (ii) establishment of Khawateen Ittehad Citizen Community Board (CCB) in the Lasbella District. Both initiatives were taken following a formal protocol; both initiatives have legal status as they are registered under the Social Welfare Act 1963; CYAD was established with the intention of reaching out to youth of troubled areas at the national level while the CCB was established at the district level but has received recognition at the national level.

*College for youth activism and development (CYAD).* The founder of CYAD is an IDSP administrator who established this organization in 2007. In his interview he explained key influences that led him to establish CYAD: (i) his working experience in IDSP led him to study the issues of terrorism, extremism and Talibanization in the region which have severely affected the youth of his Pashtoon community; (ii) his teaching experiences in IDSP helped him to understand the phenomenon of youth, particularly adolescence; (iii) he was exposed to some very hard realities in which he learned that people who are trained as suicide bombers were transformed without their own intention. He said that with the help of some local people in troubled areas of Pakhtoonkhwah he managed to meet a group of people who were being trained as suicide bombers.

According to him, all these experiences taught him that the things that encouraged youth to become extremists, even to the point of acting as suicide bombers were not based on sophisticated philosophies. He concluded that “it was the delicacy of their age, and some psychological, emotional, and political factors which encouraged them to choose that path” (IDSP Administrator). With this conclusion in hand, he felt the need for an institution or network of individuals who could transform these fragile youth and reintegrate them with the society. To convert this idea into reality, with the support of IDSP, he established an office of CYAD in Quetta with a plan to reach out to 300 youth in troubled areas of Pakistan. According to him, instead of 300, CYAD was able to engage 1500 youth in a period of one year. Now, its own head office is in Quetta; two sub-offices have been created, one in Loralai and the other one in Swat; and one liaison office in Islamabad.

CYAD provides diverse opportunities for training to youth to manage and avert their radicalization towards extremism, to develop their leadership skills, and to expand their role in local-level planning, decision-making processes, and community development. It uses generative approaches that focus on participants’ interests, needs, realities, and aspirations. Taking inspiration from IDSP’s ADP framework, it also aims to revitalize participants’ sense of belonging with their self, family, community and the world. CYAD is similar to a virtual and distance-education institute as it engages its participants through various means: internship, volunteer work, workshops, training sessions, seminars, and student exchange programs. Its aim is to convey to youth effectively and efficiently the message of social reconstruction or positive transformation of their society—and engage them in it.

*Khawateen Ittehad citizen community board.* This particular initiative was the result of collective efforts by IDSP female learners in Lasbella District. A group of MGD course graduates who participated in the 2003 and 2005 courses decided to establish a local library for women of their area. This initiative was taken under a local government ordinance enacted in 2000 that encouraged local communities all over Pakistan to establish Citizen Community Boards (CCBs) to address their local issues.

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These female IDSP learners, following all required procedures and legal formalities, formed the first women's CCB in their area. IDSP helped them in the process of project development as well as in the provision of space for the library. It was the only library in the area that was established and managed by the local women. Soon it received recognition at the national level from the Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment in Islamabad. According to one IDSP teacher who was intensively involved in MGD courses, there were some other CCBs as well which were formed by female graduates of IDSP; however, *Khawateen Ittehad* CCB received great attention from the print and electronic media because it emerged as the first women's CCB in the history of Pakistan. Despite all that recognition and attention, however, this library was closed in 2007. The main reasons for this failure were lack of resources to bear the operational cost of the library and dispersion of the group members who initially established it.

#### CONCLUSION

IDSP stakeholders' transformative notions of development and their emancipatory actions reveal that they believe in human-centred development. The point of reference of their conversations on development was humans or humanity, and not primarily the economy or democracy. Their approach towards development seem opposite to the popular theories and approaches of development. For example, in human capital theory the development of humans is considered essential for agriculture or economic development. In other words, they are used as an input in the production function of development. Their development in most cases is linked with the attainment of social efficiency and development of democratic society. These mainstream approaches of development made the individuals and humans the secondary positions while their primary and prime focus is institutions or economy or infrastructure. IDSP stakeholders are not entirely against physical or materialistic development or economic development; however, they relate these developments first and foremost with the development of human beings.

Also, human development in the IDSP program is not limited to provide only regulatory knowledge and a few skills. They emphasized the development of critical agency in humans. In their views, people of their community will be developed when they will be free of oppression, free from false pre-conceived ideas, fears of incompetence, feelings of denigration, confusion, and inferiority complexes. In their views, their people will be developed when their confidence in their own diverse cultural identity and their local culture and tradition will be restored. In their views, their people will be developed when they feel prepared in engaging with the global forces and powers without compromising on their own integrity. They believe, it is possible only by enhancing people's intellectual capabilities. IDSP learners were actually speaking from their own lived experiences. After the course, most of the participants, particularly learners, realized they had developed

an enhanced capability for analytical and critical thinking which helped them both in their personal and professional lives.

I also personally observed that their critical-thinking ability and intellectual strength have brought sustainability in their personalities and within their inner selves. I believe that sustainable development, which has been the core agenda of most development education programs and projects, should give attention to the sustainability of people's individual development. From the experientially grounded views of IDSP stakeholders, it seems that *sustainability must start from the sustainability of one's self*.

In the light of their emancipatory actions, it is evident that IDSP stakeholders constructed and embraced alternative or new knowledge in ADP courses, knowledge intended to improve their lives and community-development practices. The findings of this research exhibit that, at a micro level, they have been successful in bringing positive changes in their personal and family lives. However, in the workplace and at the community level they face several challenges in putting their emancipatory perspectives into practice. Despite the fact that some of their community actions were recognized at both provincial and national levels, it is hard to claim they have brought any major and significant changes at the macro level.

Freire (1978), in fact, opposed a "mechanistic view of social changes;" he insists that "[e]ven if there is a serious changeover, such as revolution, the myths from the previous structure will carry over and continue to influence the new governmental structure" (p. 302). Instead, he emphasized that "cultural revolution" can occur when people "culturally attack culture" and they "do not let it become static, becoming a myth and mystifying" it (p. 302). IDSP stakeholders' actions against the culture of silence, culture of domination of men over women, culture of corruption and nepotism, and so forth, are also indicators of "cultural revolution" in a traditional society. Their actions show that IDSP and its stakeholders are following a promising and potentially effective approach towards transformation of their society; however, the speed and scope of this social transformation is undeniably quite slow.

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