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Exploring Channels of Cultural Communication between Pakistan and China

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This article traces the new channels of communication being used as intercultural communication tool to enhance the existing bond of friendship between China and Pakistan, the oldest strategic allies in the region. The study explores government initiatives, academic programs and projects aimed at promoting Chinese language and culture in Pakistan to boost cross-cultural communication. The horizon of China's cultural communication in Pakistan is being expanded by teaching Chinese language like utilizing new media tools such as video conferencing and radio broadcasts technology. The paper covers the various aspects of the roles different organization are playing to empower cultural communication channels such as Confucius Institute, China Radio International, Pakistan China Institute, National University of Modern Languages and Chinese Diplomatic Mission in Pakistan. This paper is highly significant as it helps to know the strategic measures that China is taking to strengthen the bilateral ties with Pakistan, especially people to people contacts, through intercultural communication tools.

Keyword: Language and communication, new media, Chinese language, cultural diplomacy, Confucius institutes, China Pakistan relations, cultural engagement

Globalization has not only linked international markets but also opened new channels of interaction with nations, societies, cultures and civilization. Therefore the need to understand and communicate with the world has also increased. China is investing heavily in policies aimed at improving its image, creating understanding about China, Chinese civilization and above all advancing its domestic and international role through various cultural diplomacy initiatives especially by using sophisticated communication technology. These strategic communication measures symbolize China's long-term vision for the immediate neighbours, region and the world.

After reforms and opening up policy of Deng Xiaoping in 1979, China has boosted efforts of engagement with the world. Now, China is the third biggest investor; it is the biggest trade partner of more than 120 countries and has the highest foreign currency reserves in the world. Chinese currency, Yuan, has become the eighth-most-traded currency in the world in 2013. In the last three decades, China's incredible economic, progress has got the attention of world.

Politically, China has changed itself from an inward looking state to an outward looking nation. After turbulent consequences of socialist and communist experiences, China is adopting new political trends according to its social conditions. On the diplomatic front, China has resolved border issues with eight neighboring countries. It is engaging

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with immediate neighbours, as well as with South Asian, Central Asian, African, and Middle Eastern countries. New China is reaching to Asia, Africa, and Latin America for economic partnerships through win-win cooperation. China has set up new platforms for regional and international cooperation such as SCO, ASEAN, and BRICS.

China's current leadership has created new vision for global China by introducing the two strategic projects; Silk Road Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Road that aim to revive the spirit of ancient Silk Road. Currently Chinese trains carrying cargo from commercial center of Yiwu are reaching to the heart of Europe-Germany. It is that said 21st century is an Asian Century which will be led by emerging China. In this changing scenario, when China is engaging and shaping the world, China's cultural communication with the world has become more important than ever. As a tool of cultural communication, Chinese language is being taught and learnt world over because China engages herself with the global community.

Communication is to diplomacy as blood is to the human body. And the language is a fundamental bridge to connect different people of different cultures. As China engages with world, and its economic power attracts nations around the globe, the value and trend of the learning Chinese language is increasing. By 2014, China established at least 480 Confucius Institutes in the world. Around 100 million overseas people were learning Chinese language, according to China's Ministry of Education. Out of 480 Confucius Institutes, more than the 95 institutes are currently operating in Asian countries.

As China emerges on global stage, its economic power is increasing the value and significance of Chinese Language worldwide. Therefore, Chinese as a foreign language has become a subject for research, and educational market as well. Experts believe that Chinese language will become a highly important for global cultural or business communication especially in the developing countries like Pakistan in the future, as China expands its economic footprints around the world.

Pakistan China Relations

Pakistan and China are time tested friends, good neighbours as well as economic partners. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1951, both countries have celebrated 65 years of bilateral relations full of vigor and vitality. The strategic partnership between Pakistan and China has gained momentum over the last three decades. Traditional friendship between the two countries has been deepened through cultural exchanges, and economic cooperation in various fields has made tremendous progress too.

During the last six decades, Pakistan and China have expanded cooperative partners in all sectors of life. The current spectrum of relationship covers military ties, trade and commerce links, research and academic cooperation projects, joint counter terrorism exercises, relief and rescue operations, and sports and cultural exchanges.

Expansion of Karakum highway, joint manufacturing of JF-17 (fighter jet), construction of Gwadar deep sea port and Neelum-Jhelum hydro project are exemplary projects of the current scenario of Pakistan China partnership.

Pakistan China signed Free Trade Agreement in 2006. Bilateral trade volume was worth 15 billion dollar in 2014. China has supported Pakistan through capital and technological investment in the field of energy, communication, and infrastructure development projects. Positive progress was also made in financial cooperation as the two sides agreed to conduct cooperation of currency swap in 2011. The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China opened its branches in the capital city, Islamabad, and commercial hub, Karachi. Some 120 Chinese companies and more than 20 thousand Chinese

nationals are contributing in the development projects launched in Pakistan's various regions including Balochistan, Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtoon Khawah, Azad Kashmir, and Gilgit Baltistan region. To strengthen political and parliamentary exchanges between two the countries, a Pakistan China Parliamentary Friendship Group was established in 2013 by the Senators of Pakistan.

New Frontier of Pakistan China Partnership

In 2013, Pakistan and China governments launched a landmark project called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that envisages connecting Pakistan's deep seaport Gwadar with China's Xinjiang region through road and rail network. CPEC is a cluster of economic development projects such as energy, infrastructure and connectivity, and is expected to revitalize Pakistan's economy.

A sum of 46 billion dollar investment was announced for the development of CPEC, dubbed as a new glaring example of the strong partnership between Pakistan and China. Special economic zones, a railway system, model cities, airport as well as a free trade zone at Gwadar port will be set up along the 2,100 kilometer long economic corridor. The establishment of state-of-the-art industrial zones by Chinese companies will pave the way for modernization of Pakistan. That's why; Pakistan China Economic Corridor is seen as a new frontier of bilateral cooperation between two old partners of the region.

To boost academic links, Pakistan and China signed youth exchange program in 2008 to promote educational linkages between universities. And the year 2012 was celebrated as year of friendship to enhance people-to-people contacts.

In the last two decades both countries have boosted cultural exchanges. From 2009 to 2011, one hundred Pakistani youth visited China, and some 424 Pakistani students were awarded educational scholarships with the purpose to enhance educational and cultural ties under the scholarship program.

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties, media played a vital role to strengthen and promote these friendly relations. The image of China in Pakistan is friendly and positive while the image of Pakistan in China is appreciable, both in old and young generations.

China and Pakistan achieved fruitfully all-round cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, defence, culture, people-to-people exchanges and so on. Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Sun Weidong, has voiced this by saying people to people exchanges were the foundation of China-Pakistan relations.

Chinese people love their Pakistani fellows and wish to develop 'heart-to-heart' communication through learning Chinese language. Ambassador further stressed by saying that Pakistani people have got enthusiasm to learn Chinese language that is an essential tool and a significant bridge for developing people-to-people contacts between two countries. In the past, the trend of learning the local language of each other was slow. But since 2010, more and more Pakistani youth is enrolling for Chinese language programs, which could serve as a powerful cultural communication tool to bring the people of the two countries more closely.

In 2010, Syed Hasan Javed, the additional secretary of Pakistani Foreign Ministry, talking to Xinhua News Agency said that the young people in Pakistan were taking more and more interest in China's culture and heritage, which enhances the bilateral friendship and increases the youth to youth contacts.

In the last few decades, though Chinese and Pakistani people have enjoyed harmonious relationship based on mutual respect and understanding but language barrier remains a major hurdle in the way of cross-cultural communication. Therefore, the

commencement of Chinese language programs, started by Chinese government, is helping Pakistani people to overcome this problem. Learning Chinese language would not only further strengthen time tested strategic partnership of China and Pakistan, but also help to enhance cultural ties at public level. In the futuristic view, learning Chinese language would help youth of Pakistan to access Chinese market that is full of trade and business potential.

Chinese Cultural Communication Centers

To add new energy to the existing ties between Pakistan and China in the 21st century, various programs of cultural communication such as teaching Chinese language and introduction of Chinese cultural heritage have been launched in various cities of Pakistan.

Today, Chinese language has been taught at public and private schools, colleges and universities where kids, youth and professionals are being introduced about Chinese culture and civilization. Chinese language programs in Pakistan have boosted the cultural communication endeavors of China to understand Chinese history and culture, its economic development and tremendous achievements that this neighbour of Pakistan has attained in the last 40 years. These initiatives are also helpful to bridge the people of two countries, to further strengthen the time tested friendship by building academic linkages between the educational institutions of two countries.

Numerous public institutes and private organizations in Pakistan have emerged in the last few years to play the role for enhancing cultural communication with China. National University of Modern Languages (NUML) is the most famous, oldest and modern channel of cultural communication between Pakistan and China.

National University of Modern Languages

NUML is a public sector educational institute, chartered by the government of Pakistan, where Chinese language teaching program started around 1980. Now the university has established campuses in major cities such as Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, Hyderabad, Multan, and Faisalabad.

NUML was the pioneer cultural communication channel between China and Pakistan as it was the only center promoting Chinese language and culture in Pakistan. In the last decades, Chinese language department has been advanced by adding trained native Chinese teachers, and Chinese language labs. Today hundreds of students are learning Chinese language here both at the elementary and professional levels. Chinese language initiative at NUML has not only helped to introduce China to the people of Pakistan but also has built a new window of understanding between China and Pakistan in the area of cultural communication focusing on boosting people to people contacts.

Emphasizing the value of Chinese language, Prof. Lei Weizhong, former Head of Chinese Department at NUML (2012) said that earning Chinese Language could further bolster the unique friendship between China and Pakistan, and expand the cooperative partnership between the two friendly countries through the effective use of cultural communication tools.

Confucius Institute Islamabad

Confucius (551-479 BCE) was the most influential Chinese thinker, political figure and educator. He founded Confucianism that profoundly influenced the Chinese civilization and has been an important part of traditional Chinese culture since centuries. Confucius Institute, named after Confucius, is a non-profit public institution based in China that

aims to promote Chinese language and culture worldwide. By the end of year 2010, there were almost 4 lakh learners of Chinese language and culture at 322 Confucius institutes spread across 96 countries. There were 369 Confucius classrooms dedicated for the promotion of language and culture of China.

The cluster of Confucius institutes spread around the globe are dubbed as a soft power initiative of Chinese government, which is playing vital role in promoting Chinese language, and enhancing cultural communication between China and world community. (James F. Paradise, 2009)

In Pakistan, the first Confucius institute was established in April 2005 at National University of Modern Languages in Islamabad. Its purpose was to empower cultural communication to strengthen Pakistan China all-weather friendship and strategic partnership. Confucius Institute Islamabad was also the first one in the Muslim world at that time. The Institute was launched with the cooperation of the Hanban (Chinese National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language), Beijing Language and Culture University, and National University of Modern Languages. Hanban is government body that provides support to Confucius institutes to boost China's cultural exchanges with the world.

Now Confucius Institute Islamabad organizes Chinese cultural activities and events, and Chinese language competitions to enhance awareness about China, Chinese civilization, and China's economic and technological achievements. Every year hundreds of students attend Chinese language courses at Confucius Institute. After graduation, these students either get admission in Chinese universities or they find jobs in various Chinese companies working in Pakistan. After Islamabad, the second Confucius institute was established in 2014 in Karachi. As a powerful cultural communication medium, Confucius institute has become a vibrant cultural bridge between the people of Pakistan and China.

After ten years of operation in Pakistan, Confucius institute has achieved remarkable progress as regards cultural, educational and diplomatic exchanges between Pakistan and China. The center has also won awards for being the "Confucius Institute of the Year" for three years in 2007, 2008 and 2010; respectively for effective communication role. In 2011, the Institute's Chinese language teaching programs were further expanded as it sponsored 27 teaching centers from universities and other training institutions across Pakistan. The initiative boosted the student enrollment to 6 thousand.

The Confucius institute's cultural programs have attracted more than 40 thousand participants after the Institute launched Chinese language teacher selection and training program. The program provided training sessions for local Chinese teachers. Keeping in view the successful results of Confucius institute for Chinese language promotion, Pakistan government announced to incorporate Chinese language teaching into the national education system.

Chinese Cultural Communication Center

Punjab province is the most populous province of Pakistan, having approximately 56 per cent of the country's total population. The region is also the cradle of great civilization since ancient times. Punjab is also center of sophisticated educational institutions. It has 32 universities teaching arts, humanities, science, engineering, law, medicine, and business. Punjab had the highest literacy rate of 74.6 per cent in 2014.

Lahore is the capital city of Punjab province. It is also the main cultural, historical, administrative and economic center of Punjab which has the highest human development index of 0.670, out of all of Pakistan's provinces. Lahore is also called a city of colleges

and universities. Punjab University Lahore is the oldest but most well reputed institution known for higher learning. The university has produced top leadership of the country since the last several decades. Pakistan's cultural and historic city "Lahore", and China's historic city "Xia'n" were declared sister cities in 1992.

The Punjab province has made tremendous progress in the last few decades. Punjab government has strengthened friendly relations with China by signing several economic agreements with dozens of Chinese companies. Chinese investors are bringing capital and technology to Punjab province and creating job opportunities for its skilled youth population. China is working to build and operate the first-ever metro transit system in Lahore, symbolizing the spirit win-win cooperation between two countries.

Punjab-Jiangsu Cultural Center

Pakistan's Punjab and China's Jiangsu province are declared twin provinces. Punjab-Jiangsu Cultural Center (PJCC), located at provincial capital Lahore, is the first Chinese cultural center in Punjab serving as a cultural bridge between the people of Jiangsu and Punjab. Currently, this cultural school is administered by the Punjab Institute of Language, Art and Culture, which is a government body responsible to promote cultural exchanges with foreign countries.

To increase cultural links with people of Punjab, Jiangsu government provided Chinese teachers, established lecture rooms, a library, an auditorium, and a Chinese museum, where artifacts, objects of art, culture and literature pertaining to China's Jiangsu province are exhibited.

Now PJCC offers Chinese language courses, organizes cultural programs, besides sponsoring the students' exchange between Punjab and Jiangsu province of China. The center facilitates people of Punjab in learning Chinese language. Cultural activities such as Chinese cooking classes and Chinese traditional painting classes are also held here to boost cultural understanding and social links. PJCC has become a major educational source for the youth of Punjab province to learn Chinese language and understand Chinese culture.

Since establishment, PJCC has emerged as a new dynamic cultural communication medium operating in provincial capital to create more understanding about China, establish cultural links, and strengthen the friendly relations between Pakistan and China.

Chinese Cultural Communication Centers

Sindh, the southern province of Pakistan is the region which had been home of the world's oldest civilizations, the Indus Valley civilization. Karachi is the provincial capital of Sindh province. The city is famous for modern, liberal and universal education centers in the province.

Since the last five decades, Karachi has become the thriving export center, industrial and commercial hub of Pakistan because government has invested on multi-billion dollars mega development projects like Karachi Nuclear Power Plant, Port Qasim and Pakistan Steel Mills. These projects provide thousands of jobs to the people of Sindh province. Karachi also has headquarters of Pakistani companies as well as regional offices of international companies.

The premium location of Karachi on the coast of the Arabian Sea makes the city one of the major international aviation hubs. Karachi seaport is the gateway between Asia, Africa and Europe. In 1984, China's commercial hub, Shanghai, and Pakistan's economic

center, Karachi, were declared sister cities to enhance economic and cultural linkages between the two countries. In Sindh province, several Chinese companies are investing in various development projects ranging from oil and gas exploration to mining, nuclear and infrastructure projects. Thar Coal project, Saindak Copper and Gold mines are the famous ones. China's Exim Bank has established its branch office in Karachi.

In the last 21 years period, Sindh Province and China have carried out numerous bilateral cooperation programs such as frequent exchange visits of high-ranking officials, exchange programs in urban planning, and exchange of scholars and students to increase cultural and educational ties between the two countries.

The China-Pakistan bilateral cooperation in education sector has led to the growth of new centers of cultural communication in Karachi city, which are offering Chinese language and culture courses to both students and professionals. Several Schools and universities of Sindh province have collaborated with educational organizations of China to build bridges between the two friendly countries.

Chinese Language in Public Schools

Since the last 60 years, Pakistan and China have celebrated unprecedented close ties often dubbed as deeper than sea. To take this unique relationship, an MoU was signed between Sindh province government and education department of Sichuan province of China in March 2015 to offer Chinese language courses in Sindh province of Pakistan.

Commenting over teaching Chinese language in schools, the then Education Minister Nisar Khuhro said the measure of teaching Chinese language as compulsory was taken to promote Chinese language and culture in Pakistan because people of Pakistan have maintained strong cultural and economic ties with China.

Government also announced that the teaching Chinese language would be made compulsory from class six onwards to matriculation in all schools of Sindh province within three years. Government said students showing good skills in Chinese language will get extra marks, scholarships and foreign visit opportunities for higher education and professional training in China.

The Sindh government sought Chinese cooperation to provide technical facilities such as devising a syllabus, providing Chinese teachers and language labs to go ahead with the plan. Following this new plan, a Chinese language Center was established at the Cadet College Petaro, one of the elite cadet colleges in Pakistan operated by military education wings.

This cultural center in the Sindh province is supported by China and native Chinese volunteer teachers who provide training of Chinese language and culture to students hailing from elite group of families.

As Pakistan-China move forward to explore new areas of cooperation, new cultural communication centers are being established in various parts of Pakistan. These cultural communication initiatives would produce a new generation of youth in the country having good knowledge of China, Chinese culture and Chinese language.

Confucius Institute

To boost academic diplomacy and to promote people-to-people contacts, Pakistan and China are also exploring new opportunities of cooperation in education sector. In this regard, University of Karachi, one of the largest and best educational places in Pakistan signed an MoU with Sichuan University (China) in 2013 to establish the Confucius Institute to teach Chinese language and introduce Chinese cultural heritage for the people Karachi

metropolis. The inaugural ceremony of Confucius Institute Karachi, the second Confucius Institute in Pakistan, was held at the Governor's House in Karachi on November, 2015. The institute is accredited by Hanban (Chinese National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language).

According to cooperation details, the Sichuan University was to award degrees to Chinese learning language students at University of Kashmir. While the talented graduates would be sponsored to attend a one-year advanced course at the Sichuan University for free. The Chinese government also announced to provide; native Chinese teachers for the Confucius; scholarships for other eligible students. Commenting over the launch of institute at University of Kashmir, vice-chancellor Prof Dr Mohammad Qaiser termed it a new milestone in the history of cultural exchanges between Pakistan and China.

Confucius Institute at Karachi is a new cultural and educational platform for the people of Sindh to establish more strong links with China in the areas of business and culture. Several Chinese companies are engaged in oil and mineral exploring ventures in Sindh province so this institute would help business community as well as local youth, having Chinese language skills, to explore economic benefits in Chinese companies. Besides economic opportunities, Confucius center in Karachi would also to establish business and professional links with Chinese institutions paving way to expand scholarly exchanges between the two countries.

New Frontiers of Pakistan-China Cultural Communication

Pakistan's south western province of Balochistan is a region with abundance of natural and mineral resources. Pakistan government has launched key mega projects here aimed to bring progress, prosperity and development in the province. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is 2,100 kilometer-long road and rail network. A huge sum of capital worth 46 billion dollar will be invested on this project, which is seen as a new frontier of booming cooperation between Pakistan and China.

The corridor embedded with special economic zones, a road and rail network, several model cities and airports, would link Pakistan's deep seaport Gwadar with China's Xinjiang region to boost integration of regional economies and cultural ties. The project is a major component of China's One Belt One Road initiative proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013. Besides, economic uplift programs, both governments have also launched several educational programs aimed to create new platforms of educational and cultural exchanges between universities and schools of two countries.

In August 2015, Gwadar city government and Xinjiang's Karamay government signed educational training cooperation that aims to provide training opportunities for the teachers from Gwadar region of Balochistan province, hit by the storm of terrorism. In October 2015, the first group of the Pakistani teachers started their courses of basic Chinese language and Chinese culture in the international division of Karamay high school, Xinjiang province. Educational exchanges between Karamay and Gwadar city are new examples of emerging platforms of cultural communication between Pakistan and China. Now focus of communication is shifting from developed cities to less developed regions of two the countries to bolster the mutual development process.

Private Sector: Pakistan-China Cultural Communication

The focus of cultural communication in Pakistan diverted from public level institutes to private schools after 2001 as Pakistan China relations got more strength and warmth during the time of Musharraf regime (1999-2008).

Several private educational institutes appeared on the landscape of teaching Chinese language and culture in Pakistani cities. These institutes came up with more innovative projects of cultural communication aimed to further expand the horizon of Pakistan China friendship.

Pakistan-China Institute

Pakistan-China Institute (PCI) is the first-of-its-kind non-governmental think tank based in capital city Islamabad. The institute, led by a seasoned diplomat and prominent political figure of Pakistan Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, has ushered as the most dynamic cultural communication channel between China and Pakistan in the private sector. Pakistan-China Institute has endeavored to promote people-to-people ties between two countries in all areas particularly cultural diplomacy and education with a focus on youth and women.

Since its inception in 2009, PCI has launched several projects of cultural communication between China and Pakistan that includes joint research and training programs, publications, TV productions, educational joint ventures besides numerous public-private partnership initiatives in the areas of Chinese language and culture. PCI regularly invites Chinese art and cultural groups to visit Pakistan to create more awareness and understanding about China, Chinese culture, civilization, history and economy and its technological marvels.

In the area of education, PCI has helped Pakistani educational institutes to expand cooperation with Chinese partners for joint educational projects. The most recent projects focused on overcoming the language barrier between the two people and cultures, and expanding the network of Chinese language institutes in Pakistan because Chinese language is paramount in tapping the great potential of bilateral cooperation.

PCI helped China Radio International and Roots Millennium Schools to collaborate in teaching Chinese language in Pakistani schools. The program named 'CRI-Roots Confucius Classroom' was launched in 2011, which opened a new gateway for the people of Pakistan and China to expand cultural relationship from the traditional platforms to knowledge-oriented exchange projects. Through this program around four thousand children were enrolled for learning the Chinese language in the school.

Keeping in view the needs of the Pakistani youth, PCI launched another innovative project of utilizing video conferencing technology to start online Chinese language classes in universities of Pakistan from 2014. PCI helped three educational institutions: Confucius Institute, Latif Ebrahim Jamal National Science Information Centre, and University of Karachi to collaborate for this technology-driven educational project. Now online Chinese language teaching program is benefitting the youth of Pakistan and bridging the people of China and Pakistan.

Besides, these cultural communication programs, Pakistan China Institute organize cultural and educational dialogues, public forums and seminars to strengthen the cultural communication between the two countries.

Bahria University Karachi Campus

China's huge market offers wide range of business opportunities. The need to understand and communicate well with Chinese people is the goal of every business man. Therefore, Chinese language has become more important after China surpassed Japan as the second largest economy of world in 2010. Bahria University, established by the Pakistan Navy in 2000, is one of the leading higher education institutions in Pakistan. Keeping in view the

new dynamics of Pakistan-China relationship, Bahria University launched Chinese language and cultural courses in Karachi, a thriving metropolis of Pakistan. Now University's Chinese language department comprises of well qualified and experienced Chinese instructors teaching Chinese language courses to students, business community and executives of the companies in commercial hub of Pakistan.

This kind of cultural communication centers established at schools and universities of Pakistan are equipping the youth with the essential skills to communicate with Chinese community rapidly expanding business around the world. These centers are laying the basic foundation for big platforms of cultural communication between China and Pakistan.

As China pours more investment in Sindh province, the need to communicate with Chinese people working in Chinese companies is increasing. Therefore, more and more Chinese language institutes are mushrooming in small and big cities around Sindh province. Edu-Tek, a private sector educational institute and certified by Government of Sindh, offers Chinese language courses in Karachi. The main focus of this course is on spoken language, grammar and daily business phrases. The teaching format consists of audio and visual system, and group interactions to improve Chinese language and Chinese cultural exposure by watching movies and films. These joint venture cultural projects are helping to promote a greater understanding between the two cultures of Pakistan and China, besides consolidating friendship through mutual understanding.

Chinese Embassy in Promotion of Cultural Communication

Chinese Embassy Islamabad and its cultural office is a very active cultural communication center that organizes social events, educational activities and cultural festivals to boost understanding of the Pakistani people about Chinese culture.

Besides special cultural events such as China's national holiday and spring festival, Chinese cultural office invites Chinese art and cultural groups to show their performances in Pakistan. This cultural center has also played vital role in linking scholars and media people of two countries to boost mutual cooperation in the area of art and culture.

Chinese embassy women group headed by wife of the Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, organized China culture camp in 2014. The culture camp was the first of its kind, and some 40 students from different schools took courses at the culture camp, in which Chinese language, Chinese music as well as Chinese calligraphy were taught. Chinese Cultural Office has become a vital cultural communication link fostering closer ties between Pakistan and China in cultural and academic sectors.

Media Role in Cultural Communication

China Radio International (CRI), established on December 3, 1941, is a state-run radio station broadcasting to a global audience. Using 61 languages, CRI programs aim to promote favourable relations between the Peoples' Republic of China and the world.

CRI-Urdu service, an Urdu language listeners programming and broadcasting, is very important cultural bridge between Pakistan and China. The Urdu service aims to engage with people of Pakistan for better cultural understanding between the two countries. Beside, news and features related to Pakistan, CRI Urdu broadcasts teaching Chinese language programs to teach Chinese language to listeners around Pakistan. The program is very popular among the young listeners in rural areas of Pakistan. On the website of CRI, listeners can find Chinese language content of daily program. This Urdu language service

is facilitating the people to understand China and its dynamic cultural diversity. CRI also organizes quiz programs, photography, essay writing contests and painting competitions to boost cultural knowledge and understanding about China.

In 2015, Radio Pakistan and Chinese Radio International agreed to launch *Dosti* Channel FM-98, (Friendship Channel), to boost friendly exchanges and cultural communication through radio broadcasting. According to cooperation agreement, CRI will broadcast its Urdu and English programs targeting Pakistani youth by utilizing the broadcasting platform of Radio Pakistan.

The launch of *Dosti* Channel has added a new cultural communication platform helping to increase people-to-people contacts and forge cultural bonds at mass media level. Launch of this channel also shows expanding frontier of cultural communication between Pakistan and China.

Internet revolution has created tremendous opportunities of virtual learning. With the advancement of communication technology, more and more virtual classrooms are emerging, and teachers from thousands miles away are enlightening the minds of millions in different regions at the same time. A new culture of education is emerging in human civilization which is sophisticated, cost-effective, and time saving. Through virtual schools with the advanced training method, students can get a better training. Virtual schools are changing the landscape of learning.

Pakistan is effectively using this new source of knowledge and various educational institutions have launched online learning schools. National University of Modern Languages (NUML) has started offering an e-learning Chinese language program for those individuals and student groups who are interested in learning Chinese language by using internet. E-learning Chinese language program is a new technology driven educational platform aimed to broaden the horizon of cultural communication between Pakistan and China.

NUML has a 44-year-old history of imparting and promoting education of Chinese language and literature across Pakistan. Now the institute offers the first ever video conferencing-based Chinese language program for the candidate who have access to internet. Thousands of students have joined e-learning of Chinese language which is affordable, and free from time constraints. Online Chinese language program equips students with linguistic skills and enhances their social and cultural understanding of China. New media technology has opened new channels of cultural exchange and expanding the horizon the people-to-people contacts between Pakistan and China in the age of high-tech communication.

Open University Role in Cultural Communication

Distance education system brought new hopes for the learning aspirants of developing countries as this education system facilitates students from small towns, rural areas and financially weak groups, to enroll in a number of accredited schools, and attain a degree that can help them in career development. Now distance learning schools are changing lives of millions worldwide.

Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) Islamabad, the largest university of Pakistan in terms of registered students, has made different agreements with the Chinese universities for the promotion of Chinese language and academic exchanges through distance learning method. In 2014, AIU signed a memorandum of understandings with Yunan Open University. The language center will open a window for the language educationists of both countries to take advantage of the experiences, share the skills, strengthen knowledge houses of two

countries. Experts believe Chinese language center will also play vital role to reduce language barrier between Pakistan and China as this platform will provide more opportunities of learning for the aspirants of the Chinese language and culture.

Commenting on collaboration between two universities, Chinese Prof Xu Bin emphasized to foster cooperation in the educational sector by setting up a Chinese language center at AIOU. He also assured to provide faculty and technical support for the Chinese centers that will be add a new chapter in the history of academic partnership between China and Pakistan.

Educational cooperation and academic exchanges between two open universities of Pakistan and China have added new link bridge in cross-cultural communication helping to share fruits of the latest research and development.

Suggestions

Cultural Communication Center and Media Community of Pakistan: Pakistan in the last decade has seen a rapid media boom in the private sector. The state media that enjoyed monopoly for more than thirty years has weakened in the recent years due to advanced technology and efficiency of private media. Now media is more free, independent and commercial in Pakistan. In this scenario, China should provide specialized training programs coined with Chinese language skills for the media community of Pakistan so that they could be aware of China's culture, political system and economic transformation that has taken place in China in the last 40 years. More awareness of media people about China would improve cultural exchanges and communication links between the two countries.

Investment in Chinese Classrooms: Pakistan's Northwestern provinces Khyber Pakhtun Khwa (KPK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and south western province Balochistan are rich in natural and human resources. But the youth potential of this area has not yet been tapped properly due to low literacy rate, lack of schools and colleges in this area affected by the spillover of Afghan war and global war on terrorism.

Pakistan China Economic Corridor, a multi-billion dollar project, will pass through these areas in one way or other. So investing on youth of Balochistan and KPK by providing them educational opportunities such as teaching Chinese language or technical training will be fruitful. This initiative will create job opportunities, alleviate poverty, and reduce the trend to join extremist organizations. So opening up Chinese classrooms and vocational schools in Balochistan, KPK, and GB will empower the local people, enhance the cultural and educational links with the local community, and strengthen the security of corridor where Chinese companies will invest billions of dollars.

Over the past twenty years, Chinese government has launched numerous cultural communication channels, which introduce China, its art and culture, and teach Chinese language to Pakistani youth. The recent increase of Chinese learning institutes in provincial cities and major urban areas of Pakistan shows China's aims to strengthen the foundation of cultural communication between China and Pakistan. This kind of training initiatives are effective 'soft power' tools of China to expand cultural influences along the regions linked with Pakistan China Economic Corridor and Silk Road.

Pakistani government lauds these initiatives of China as Pakistan's former Ambassador to China, Masood Khan said learning Chinese language will create numerous development opportunities for the youth besides strengthening the bond of friendship between Pakistan and China. The public and private sector joint projects undertaken by Chinese and Pakistani organizations are indicators of expanding cultural communication between China and Pakistan.

Many developing countries around the world are looking towards China to seek cooperation in all sectors of development. Pakistani youth seems on the forefront of this race to learn from the Chinese model of development. Learning Chinese language would be the first step towards exploiting the opportunities that China offers. Establishment of Chinese cultural communication channels such Confucius institute, Confucius classrooms, friendship channel, online chinese platforms and distance learning sources in Pakistan are helping new generation to be new ambassadors of Pakistan and China partnership.

Conclusion

New century brings new technology, new gadgets, and new ways and means of communication. China's policy of global engagement, regional integration and cultural understanding is being materialized through the effective of communication tools in the region.

Pakistan is a resourceful country in terms of talented human capital and natural wealth. China as an emerging super power is a gateway of economic development opportunities for Pakistan. More intercultural Communication between Pakistan and China will help youth of Pakistan to access these development opportunities, and help China achieve the goals of regional integration. Therefore, both countries are adding more channels of cultural communication to open new frontiers of cooperation, partnership and friendship being celebrated since last 65 years.

Pakistan and China also have plans to invest more capital in intercultural communication initiatives, especially in the new media technologies to strengthen the depth of Pakistan China friendship in digital age.

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