

DECEPTION AS A REASON FOR SOCIAL UNDERDEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The present study has explored new dimensions of social deception and its relationship with underdevelopment. The prime aim of the study was to delineate, as clearly as possible, the process of deception in various institutions like family, education and media and how these institutions promote deception and create a particular mind set of people. Deception creates mistrust and complexities in human relationships resulting in the fragmentation of society. Social institutions do not work cohesively leading to social underdevelopment. The present study was limited to students and professionals from different institutions of Faisalabad. A total of twenty four respondents (twelve females and twelve males) were taken for this study. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and in-depth interviews were tools to collect data. Qualitative research design was used to conduct this research. Purpose oriented sampling was adopted for data collection. Data analysis was done to produce new themes and ideas according to respondents. According to the findings of present study, deception creates mistrust in society which breaks national unity. As a result, a society becomes a victim of social underdevelopment. Social institutions like family, education and mass media act as agents of deception.

KEY WORDS: Social Deception, Development, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

This study has been undertaken to systematically explore the conscious or unconscious deception within Pakistan. People must understand deception which targets them and organizations, leading to social underdevelopment. There are many factors which can become the reasons for underdevelopment, and deception is one of them. According to researchers deception (also called deceit, bluff) is the act of convincing another to believe something that is not true, or not the whole truth or is half truth. In the study, a pioneering attempt is made to identify what causes deception and what can be the advantages of decreasing deception in society. A cultural change is taking place. Deception is becoming a part of our behavior, and now it has become a norm. Present study brings advancement and explains the endless circle of known and unknown deception which slows down the extent of trust and sense of bond among humans.

Deception becomes effective when it is internalized by a social being or the social system. In a society, deception is successful when wrong communications are believed at mass level such as through mass media like television, radio, movies, cartoons, dramas, newspaper, etc. As Ware stated, "we live in a world of deception. Part of the art of modern advertising finds much of its allure in deception like amplifying or exaggerating certain truths, omitting clear negatives, and creating an artificial urgency to get us to 'need' a product". Recent research has determined that most people regularly lie in the course of everyday conversation by exaggeration, hedging, false-bragging, and outright lying. The last several

years have seen a variety of high profile "hiring" nullified because of false information given on resumes (Ware, 2004). Research on the self-reported frequency of lying indicates that in the course of their normal daily activities people lie in about 25% of their interactions with others (DePaulo & Bell, 1996; DePaulo & Kashy, 1998). While it is obviously advantageous to detect lies, most of the empirical research on the detection of deception indicates that people lack any special skills or abilities to detect when others are lying (see Vrij, 2004 for a review). In fact, it seems that humans perform only slightly better than chance when attempting to detect who is lying and who is telling the truth. According to Reddy (2007), "at the beginning deception starts through family socialization. Sociologists, who have conducted functional analysis, show the onset of non-verbal deceptive acts to be surprisingly early. Infants and toddlers seem to be able to communicate false information (about themselves, about shared meanings and about events) very early. It is argued that the development of deception must be a fundamentally social and communicative process and that if we are to understand why deception emerges at all, the scientist needs to get 'back to the rough ground' and explore the messy social environment in which it develops".

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Researchers selected students and professionals from Faisalabad city to choose respondents for their data collection. The universe of the present study is consisted of students and professionals from 10 institutions and departments of Faisalabad. Qualitative data is concerned with people's feeling and views about some issues and events, and tries to understand the way they really see things. Such data is normally in the form of the sociologist's describing and interpreting people's feelings and lifestyles, often using direct quotations from the people studied (Brown, 2002). Qualitative research technique was used for collecting detailed information about people's beliefs, feelings, emotions, and reactions about social deception and underdevelopment. Researchers wanted to get rich and detailed information about how deception occurs while people interacted at many levels, for example, primary and secondary level of interaction. "A special subset of a population observed for purpose of making inference about the nature of the total population itself is known as sample" (Babbie, 1989). Researchers used purposive sampling to select respondents for data collection. In order to collect data researchers used Focus Group Discussions and Unstructured In-Depth Interviews as tools. Focus Group is a special kind of interview situation that is largely non-quantitative. Focus groups gathers together four to six people in a room with a moderator to discuss one or more issues for one or two hours. Focus Group Discussions are useful in exploratory research and to generate new ideas, questionnaire items and explanations (Neuman, 2000).

Focus Group Discussions (FGD's) were conducted. Unstructured In-Depth Interview is like a guided conversation. The interviewer has topics in mind to cover (the interview schedule) but few if any preset questions. The interviewer seek to put the respondent at ease in a relaxed informal situation and will then ask open ended question which may trigger off discussions or further questions. The interviewer aims to obtain further depth or detail and draw out the respondents' feelings, opinions and confidences (Brown, 2002). Unstructured in-depth interviews were conducted on eight senior citizens from Faisalabad.

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Researchers have created new themes and ideas from respondents verbatim and views about relationship of deception with social underdevelopment.

REASONS OF DECEPTION

Family as an Agent of Deception (Conscious or Unconscious)

Family is the one of the chief agents of socialization. Therefore, the kind of part it plays is quite obvious in internalizing deception to a child from the day he is born. In Pakistan bond of parents and the child is so persistent that the child stays in the parents' house even when he becomes able enough to earn a living of his own, which is why the influence of mother and the father on the child is immense throughout his/ her life. Deception is learned by the process of socialization through different social institutions of society, particularly family (Cole and Mitchell, 2001; Kahn, 1967).

One of our respondents says that

“Our parents live in deceptive culture that is why they unknowingly inculcate deception into their children's minds. For example, sometimes a mother wants to save her child by blaming or insulting others, she gives a false statement to conceal his or her mistake.”

In the context of 'family and deception' a female respondent whose age is twenty four said;

“Mother's lap is the first school for child's socialization. Parents deceive their children consciously in their own interest. If mother's character is strong, there are less chances of learning deception”.

A male respondent of age twenty three said;

“When I was a child, my father often asked me to say no to the person at the door asking for my father even though my father would be at home. The more I fooled the person on the door the more I was applauded by my father. Now I often lie on cell phone, even to my parents or friends. And yes, I faced many imposition problems of career too”.

According to a female respondent of age forty one, who is a Psychiatrist, stated;

“The family unknowingly creates such environment which creates a deceptive element in the mind of a child. Easily getting away with problems with the lying-aid-kit becomes a part of his personality. This is absolutely right; children do what they are told. If they are asked to tell a lie they lie, if they are asked to sit they sit, in innocence they are more prone to listen, act and obey because they do not have a developed judging power at this stage. At times the child gets scolded because of this ignorance. For example, he discloses what he is not supposed to speak-out-in-the-open.....”

Social Environment is more Important than Family

Social environment is deceptive environment that is why a child learns deceptive behavior by observing deceptive communication in peer group or in social circle, like neighborhood and overall situation of the country. There are coercive forces which inculcate deception by different pressures, for example, fear of rejection, desire to be appreciated, and competition among individuals.

During an in-depth interview, a male respondent of age forty who is an official in the Pakistan Army said;

“As far as my childhood is concerned I did not learn any kind of deception from there. But at the education level, I learnt that bad habits in oneself must be kept hidden from others, or else they never quit making fun of you.....”

Social Environment Makes Perceptions

Society makes perceptions. There is one reality and many see that reality with their narrow-built-perceptions and ultimately act according to their perceptions, not the reality. When people rely on perceptions there are more chances of victimization of deception occurs because there is one reality and various perceptions of different people.

During in-depth interviews a male respondent of age fifty, who is a Sociologist said;

“Family is not wholly responsible for teaching deception to their children. We must not forget that parents live in society. A society has a socialization process of its own. It socializes parents in a particular way too. That is why the family inculcates those values into their children which they have learned from society.”

Telling Lie(S) has become a Compulsion

In daily life society's coercive environment compels one to tell half truth, conceal or exaggerate the information during interaction with others. When an individual fears the consequences by speaking truth (i.e. penalty like isolation from society and more) he will always opt for hiding the facts. Deception in communication is a wide spread phenomena (Buller and Burgoon, 1996).

During FGD's, in the context of people's attitude towards deception, a male respondent of age thirty four said;

“Well, I think sometimes we have to deceive others unwantedly for the sake of our acceptance in society or due to social pressure. Many a time situations and circumstances compel us to cheat. At school when I was the class representative, I remember my teacher asking me if I had seen any cheating going on in the class and I would have to say no”.

According to female respondent of age forty one, who is a Psychiatrist, said;

“If a child belongs to an unstable/ broken family, his personality is affected. In such cases where one of the parents is dominative, Freud has proved that, first; the habit of the dominative parent is hated by the child and then later on, adopted by him in future to overcome deficiencies in his personality. As the dominating parent has always been in the win-win situation the child will adopt this too even though he might know it is wrong. By then he will come to know that only by being dominant will he succeed”.

Truth is Relative

Truth is a relative term. Due to diversity in thinking, actions and experience, all individuals have their own interpretation of truth. If you are given a picture of a man about-to-strike the other man in it, and asked if the man would strike or not, many of the viewers will decide differently. That is because of diverse backgrounds and minds. So a truth accepted by one person is not necessarily the truth accepted by all. Vrij (2000) used the terms lie and deception interchangeably and defined them as “a successful or unsuccessful deliberate attempt, without forewarning, to create in another a belief which the communicator believes to be untrue.”

During an in-depth interview, a male respondent of age fifty stated;

“During the fabrication of perception, parents do not come to know about the whole truth. In other words, truth becomes relative. A truth for me will not necessarily be the truth for another. But I blame mostly the media and education system for building a deceptive perception about social environment. Where consensus can be made for the right thing, media manipulates that truth in such a shrewd manner that wrong perceptions are built all over on majority level”.

Deception has Become a Norm

People lie to each other with confidence and chest thrust forward because they know it will be accepted. Without any feeling of guilt, people conceal or exaggerate a piece of information. If anyone has objection towards deception the deceiver says; “I have no option, many people are doing it. If I have done it, so what”? Deception is acceptable and justified (Elms, A. C, 1977).

A male professional respondent of age sixty three mentioned in interview;

“Years ago bribery was considered bad. The house which had people like these living in them, was not appreciated and shown resentment. Nowadays the situation has reversed. Now bribery is considered as a normal thing to do. At present times the concept of giving bribe to the person for their benefit can be explained by me as I give benefits to my clients as their right”.

A male respondent of age fifty said;

“When all are at fault no one is at fault. The whole society is victim of deception. Deception has become a norm and is accepted without any misgiving.....”

“.....as all people start to lie, they create an unbreakable circle of mistrust and unfaithfulness among each other. Ultimately it brings a scattered cultural environment”.

A male respondent of age twenty two said;

“In our society deception has become customary, that is why no one takes it as a big mistake anymore. Normally we don’t react to or care about nominal lies or deceptions”.

Deceptive Education System

Teachers inadvertently deceive their students, but five respondents say these days, teachers deceive consciously. In academic life, students are taught ‘honesty is the best policy’, but teachers don’t follow this when it comes to them. Deception is learned by the process of socialization through different social institutions of society particularly education (Cole and Mitchell, 2001).

In an interview with a male respondent of age fifty, he spoke a few words which were;

“There are classes within the education system and each institute constructs the mind of each student according to the set-targets. I believe specialization is itself deception; a person is an engineer, doctor, accountant and psychologist. They will have narrow views. An economist will see that development will occur only by money investment. To avoid negative deceptive consequences by multilayered specialization we need proper governance and wise leaders. Sadly, our leaders are victims of narrow perceptions themselves”.

A male respondent of age sixty three said;

“In Pakistan the education system teaches individualistic approach, and systems of education have failed to create role models and firm-will students”.

A female respondent of age forty three said;

“When I am in the class, teaching, I am not addressing one student but the whole class. But if I come to know that any of the students is more keen and devoted than others, I obviously give him more attention, the reason being that he grows more”.

During FGD a female respondent of age twenty four said;

“Teachers, classmates and curriculum create deceptive environment for students. Most of the teachers tend to favor students on the basis of beauty, intelligence or status”.

Difference in Practical and Ideal Life

So far, all of our respondents agree with the point that there is a great contradiction between whatever is learnt in student life and work life. Ethics learnt in academic life are different. For example, honesty is the best policy but in practical life there is leg pulling, lack of cooperation, and bribe culture exists. This motivates others to use unfair means if one wants success. Deception has become a compulsion for people in particular social situations. Sometimes social pressure is a cause of deception (Murray A. 1938).

In the context of involvement of deception in different phases of life, a male respondent of age fifty said;

“When an innocent student, who has grown learning ideal values like never to lie, when he enters the practical life, he has to unlearn the first learned values. Even individualistic approach taught to him is deceptive because only a few out of many become rich, while the rest only become an audience to the rosy picture shown to them”.

Individualistic Approach Promotes Deception

In Individualistic culture, the people prefer their personal interest to collective interest. Therefore there are more chances to deceive each other. On the other hand, in collectivism people cooperate with one another and tolerate many things for their collective interests. Individualistic approach motivates people to neutralize others and even induces an individual to use the other individual for the sake of his personal concern. Such a situation creates mistrust and suspicion among people and individuals think if others deceive me I should deceive them because truth is useless for me. Individualism also promotes materialism in which people try to exploit other individuals try to seize their belongings like status, prestige, wealth and power.

In the context of causes of deception in society, a female of age forty one stated during her interview;

“Usually people deceive others for the sake of their own interest. Due to the tool of individualism and lust, collective thinking cannot be produced among individuals and people start getting alienated from social issues, problems are aggravated, and an unknown underdevelopment starts occurring”.

To Lie while Joking is Common

In this modern age, deception has become general in many societies, because many people do not reject it and sometimes they use it for sake of fun and enjoyment April fool on first April is a good example of it (Goldie, 2004). According to our twenty four respondents to lie while joking has become very common. At times, one speaks the truth but deliberately negates it as a lie by appropriate body language. This is all done consciously. If found out, this is conveniently passed off as a joke. This kind of action is accepted in society.

In the context of attitude of people towards deception an interview with a male respondent of age seventy said;

“Lien while joking was never appreciated by me, generally this kind of joking is found amongst friends of similar age. But in this era, lying is becoming common among young people because of the facilities available to them like cell phones, internet and etc. they consider it an entertainment for themselves”.

Detection of Deception is Difficult

One of the respondents pronounces that deception is difficult to distinguish in the complex state of affairs of daily life interaction of people with one another. Sometimes they conceal or exaggerate something, sometimes they flatter others confidently, and an individual can become victim of this deception easily. The victim usually is not able to detect the deceiver's hidden interests. People are motivated to lie and deceive when they know that lie detection is a difficult process (Gur and Sackheim, 1979).

A female psychiatrist articulates attitude of people towards deception;

“When there is a lenient attitude of society towards lying and deceit, the deceiver will always find it convenient to deceive. He knows that no one will question him and even if he is caught, he will not be punished because there will be many other practitioners like him”.

Media is used as a Tool to Make Perceptions

Media play very important role in internalizing deceptive behavior because they create such situation where individual use deception as a tool for their defense (Cole and Mitchell, 2001). Mass media is an important agent in promoting deception (Elliot and Culver, 1992). Twelve respondents agree with the point of view that electronic and print media have their own agenda for making profit. For instance, media always uses selective images and personalities to increase its profit and commercialization. Media makes perceptions, beliefs and builds a particular thinking of its viewers. That is why media is called the third parent of socialization. According to our respondents, it is Information Technology which has brought a ceaseless competition among T.V. channels. Each channel wants to be the first one to give breaking news and show live coverage of incidents as early as possible without thinking about the effects of the news and images.

According to a male respondent of age fifty;

“Media creates short-term perceptions, which are mostly deceptive in nature. Our media is being used as a tool and society is becoming the victim. There are many people working in the media who are not aware that they are harming their own society. They spend their whole lives in media being an ignorant victim of deception”.

A male respondent of age twenty three said;

“There are certain issues of every country which should be displayed on private news channels of that country only. Due to globalization there is no room for privacy anymore. Every country's media wants to boost by declaring that its media does the ‘world coverage’”.

According to a female respondent of age twenty five;

“Our Eastern culture is being affected because of our own media. Our societal norms and moral values are constantly and rapidly changing. For example, Western dresses, cosmetics, fashion products have influenced our youth a great deal. I believe our immature media should learn to stick to its own societal norms and values for a change”.

Capitalism is responsible for promoting deceptive behavior

Our eight respondents agree that capitalism has its own immoral ethics which is full of cheating and betrayal. Capitalism can only exist with the ‘rule of eighty twenty’, snatch from eighty and give to twenty percent of population only. Capitalism also creates individualistic and materialistic approach; it creates more inequality

among individuals and social classes. Researches indicate that in modern business world or in trade system, deception is a common trick (Finnie et al, 2005; Malanga S., 2009).

A male respondent of age fifty said;

“Capitalism is full of fantasy. Actually it brings inequality and creates varied unconstructive perceptions. Where ‘gain’ is concerned, capitalism snatches from many and gives to a few.

Law is not properly implemented

There is a mysterious hand of some influential groups behind the scenes manipulating political, economic, social, cultural and educational activities to suit its own interests (Faruqi, March 1992) that’s why law implementation against deception becomes difficult. One of our respondents’ views is that no matter how the structure of economy is, it is the fair implementation of law which is important. If law enforcing agencies become powerful, there will be less chances of victimization by deception occurring. But law makers must keep in mind that there should be a rule of law not rule by law. Whatever system there maybe, if law implementation is proper, only then a society will succeed.

In an interview, a male respondent of age forty said;

“As far as Pakistan is concerned, there is improper legislation. Much time is wasted in law making and breaking. For instance, it very convenient for our political leaders to get their crimes and loan payments written off while an ordinary man cannot make an easy exit. Hence this ordinary man tries deception as a tool to endure in society”.

Deception is functional for individual not for society

Promotions are given to the job holders but they are not fair in many cases. This form of development is not development but an injurious societal development where rights are not respected. In this situation, the deceived starts deceiving too. People start neutralizing each other, societies’ fragmentation starts; and it ends up in social underdevelopment. But Robert Nozick is one of those intellectuals who argue that Deception is termed negatively but it is not always harmful for society. It is used to get collective benefits, for instance, intelligence agencies and embassies use deceptive manners for their national interest (Nozick, 1974).

A male respondent of age fifty said;

“As we have no option but to study books given by the West, we are made exocentric and we become allergic to follow our own Eastern culture. In simple words our education system has taught us to stop worrying about each other and formulated a self-developing-mind which has made us mean and materialistic”.

HOW CAN DECEPTION BE MINIMIZED?

Change Patterns of Socialization

Family plays a very important role in socialization of a child. If deception is to be decreased, a start has to be made from the roots. All family members should resist deceptive attitude among themselves first and then the children will learn automatically. One’s own honest attitude, for instance, minimum difference between words and actions can teach children an unforgettable lesson. The important position of the family education can’t be denied because it is the first and lifelong for each person (Chuong, 2000; Xuan, 1997). It is in the families that people absorb life experience, moral and

cultural standards of societies. The first roots of one personalities, hobbies, attitudes towards life, etc. are shaped in families (Lich, 1990).

During an interview, a respondent of age sixty three said;

“Whatever the mother has taught, the child will always remember in the back of his mind, the sense to differ between right and wrong, evil and good”.

In FGD, a respondent of age twenty five stated;

In fact deception is a never ending circle but yes we can minimize it. There should be no difference in our words and actions. Moral values should be preferred and simple life style should be adopted”.

Collective Thinking

Eleven respondents consider that collectivism can minimize deception. When people prefer their national interest to personal interest, tendency to deceive will decrease. Collective thinking creates such sense of unity and harmony among people which becomes a powerful tool to make progress in less-unequal-manner. Collectivism creates trust and increase tolerance level among people. There will be less uncertainty, less hostile feelings and there will be a gradual but shared stable development.

During interview, a male respondent of age seventy said;

“Basically I belong to a village but I live in the city, Lahore. According to my experience, in rural life there is less deception because people know each other very well and are committed to each other not only work-wise but moral-wise too”.

Uniformity in Education System

By bringing uniformity in the education system we can minimize deception. There should be no difference in system like English and Urdu medium, O-Level and Metric level, FSC and A’ levels exams. Because of their differences collectivism and unity cannot be produced. There are three different systems in Pakistan; the government cannot make one united-education policy. Because of this, different systems produce social class differences and divide people in different groups when they enter their professional life. These differences are over there too and it is not beneficial for the development of our country.

During an interview, a male respondent of age sixty three said;

“Urdu is our national language; keeping this in mind we can create a uniform educational system. In this way we can promote our own culture with unity and save ourselves from discrimination in development”.

Positive Use of Media

Pakistani media should change its priorities and policies. Media should show ‘real’ images not profit-making-selected-images. Before communicating any piece of information to the people media must always bear in mind the dignity and sovereignty of the country while deciding,

for example, what should be shown or not. Media should avoid creating multi standards. Media must not forget the positive role it played in the war of 1965, and the way in which it produced unity among people in the earthquake of 8th October, 2005. Media should revive itself and reset its standards.

In FGD, a male respondent of age twenty three said;

“Our media should give a picture of reality, not selective image of society. It should strive to create soft image of Pakistan to the world. We can use media as a tool to recreate bond of trust between leaders and the public”.

True Implementation of Islam

Islam is a complete system of life and it therefore sets out a system of government, which encompasses all the concerns of man and his society in harmony with his nature. Within this system, it gives the solutions to the different problems mankind faces at the present time under the various systems of governments including those in the Islamic countries (Z. Olyabek, 2001).

A male respondent of age twenty five said;

“Islam is the best religion, we can only make ourselves the best nation by following its teachings like simple living, loving humanity, doing justice, showing no discrimination between rich and poor and discouraging falsehood and dishonesty”.

IMPACTS OF DECEPTION ON SOCIAL UNDERDEVELOPMENT

When deceit, lie and bluff are practiced in a society on a large scale, there are grave effects on social relationships, interaction patterns and moral values. Lust, greed and inhumanity are increased among people. They become more rational and less emotional.

Most of the people feel honesty is not enough for successful survival. Deception creates such deceptive perception that it is difficult to accept a person with complete truth and honesty. Deception is poisoning the society spreading mistrust among individuals like a plague. No one believes each other completely at any level of relationship. Such type of social environment does not let a society grow smoothly and get a balanced development. Consequently, there are more chances of society ultimately being victim of social under-development.

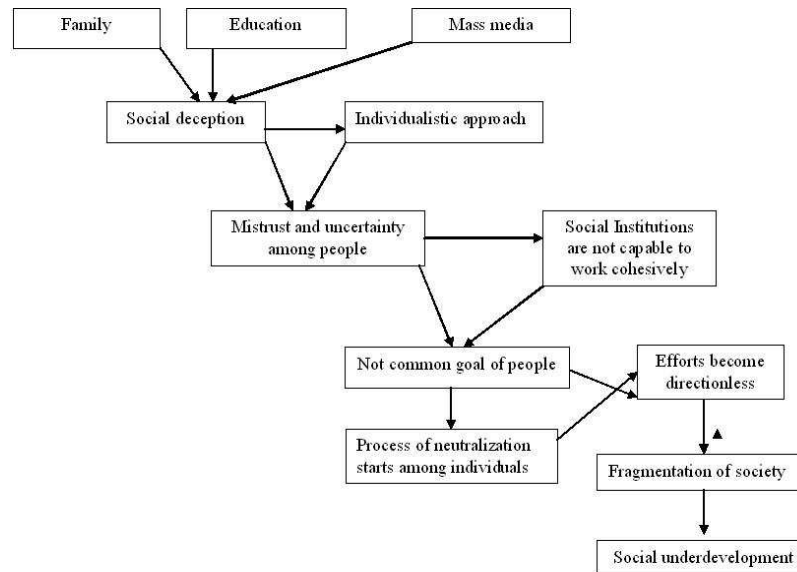
During FGD, a Female Respondent of Age Twenty Five Stated;

“I believe that deception creates complexity in our thoughts. We always become a part of system’s politics and dishonesty. There is less creative and positive thinking due to extreme corruption and dishonesty which is why we are still a third world country”.

A Male Respondent of Age Twenty Four Said;

“When majority of people feel that they are being deceived they do not put their sincere efforts into their responsibilities. As a result, productivity is less and time and resources are wasted, which lead to social under-development”.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK EXPLAINING HOW DECEPTION IS A REASON FOR SOCIAL UNDERDEVELOPMENT



CONCLUSIONS OF PRESENT RESEARCH

This research will hopefully help to understand the process of how deception can become a reason for social underdevelopment in Pakistan. The primary aim of the research is to get detailed information from young persons like students and senior citizens. Data analysis indicated that there is a positive relationship between deception and social underdevelopment and both are reciprocal of each other. For instance, the more the deception in society the higher the chances of social underdevelopment, and the more the social underdevelopment in a society the greater the deception becomes common among individuals. Analysis of this study concludes that deception is an unbreakable circle. It cannot be completely eradicated but can only be minimized. On the other hand, social underdevelopment can be eradicated by weakening deceptive culture of the society. Researchers conclude this research by this observation that both collectivism and love with indigenous culture are the only two tools that can be used to get rid of deception and make Pakistan a strong and developed nation of the world.

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