ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an attempt to explore how design could be an agent in bringing about change to a pressing issue such as overpopulation. It examines the theory of co-design and the potential it might have in bringing about a behaviour change in rural communities regarding family planning, a possible solution to overpopulation. The research starts out with the lack of awareness about family planning and methodically inspects how it might be a result of ineffective educational material. These educational messages are proven to be misinterpreted or not understood at all due to a difference in visual literacy between the developer and the user. The research explores whether the implementation of co-design would bridge this gap between the designer and the audience and lead to better educational material and, in turn, more awareness about family planning.

The methods employed to gauge the potential of this theory include a detailed review of publications on family planning and the population situation of Pakistan, the theory of co-design and projects where this concept has been applied for a health-related issue. The primary research includes a number of interviews of individuals from both governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in the designing and management of the IEC material as well as focus group discussions with the community members of Thatta, in order to test the potential of co-designing and gain valuable insight.