

## **Abstract**

There are public concerns about poor school performance and doubts have been expressed as to whether teachers have the requisite competencies to deliver or not. Failures, hitherto, have been attributed to drunkenness, absenteeism, lateness, large classes and syllabus incompleteness, poor expression and comprehension of language; grammatical errors, spelling mistakes and lack of satisfying the demands of the questions in examinations. This lecture explains why "Communication Disorders" serve as a "hidden" factor which accounts largely for poor performance in language, speech production and reading difficulties among children which lead to lack of success in academic work and social settings. The lecture points out causal factors as genetic predisposition, structural abnormalities and

human factors in the environment of learning. This lecture indicates that the negative impact of language and speech disorders do not affect only the individual's success in school but also influence social life, career choices and emotional well-being. The lecture concludes that language and speech performance can improve when early identification of the disabilities is made through community screening of children, when policy of English Language as medium of instruction is made flexible and good speech models with constant language interactions with children are practised in early years. It also suggests the use of appropriate methodology in teaching speech and language in schools, particularly by teachers in preschool and lower primary.