

Characteristics of Pakistani Culture:

Culture may be defined as an integral whole which affects human ideals, actions and modes of living. According to E.B. Taylor, "Culture is a complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, customs and all other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society." Every great nation enjoys its own culture. Similarly, Pakistani culture is very distinct due to its Islamic nature and rich historical background. Pakistani culture has the following characteristics:

1. **Islamic values and traditions.**
2. **National and regional languages.**
3. **Mixed Culture.**
4. **Rich literature.**
5. **Male dominated society.**
6. **Variety of Dresses.**
7. **Fairs and Festivals.**
8. **Sports**
9. **Food**
10. **Handicrafts.**

Islamic Values: Pakistani culture is actually a part of the contemporary Islamic civilization which draws its value and traditions from Islam and rich Islamic history. Majority of population comprises of Muslims and follows teachings of Islam, i-e., belief in one Allah, Prophethood of Hazrat Muhammad P.B.U.H, brotherhood, equality and social justice etc. Islam is religion of peace and patience. Pakistani society is very cooperative. National calendar is marked by religious days which are observed with great devotion.

National and Regional Languages: Pakistan is a large country which comprises of four provinces, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA). All of these component parts have their own regional languages. As such Punjabi, Pashtu, Sindhi, Balochi, Barohi and Kashmiri are regional languages. However, Urdu is the national language which is spoken and understood in all parts of the country.

Mixed Culture: Practically speaking Pakistani culture is a beautiful blend of the Punjabi, Sindhi, Pathan, Baluchi, Barohi, Seraiki and Kashmiri cultures. In addition, the presence of Hindu community in Sindh gives touches of dance and music in the Sindhi region. The Hindus sing Bhejas but Pakistani culture has adopted Qawwali which is a praise of the Holy Prophet P.B.U.H.

Rich Literature: Pakistani culture is rich in the literatures of Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashtu, Baruhi, Baluchi and Kashmiri languages. Urdu literature boasts of the masterpieces of Maulana Azad, Iqbal, Shibli, Hali, Ghalib, Agha Hashar, Manto and Faiz whereas the Punjabi literature stands out with great names like Waris Shah, Sultan Bahu, Ghulam Farid, Bulhay Shah and Shah Hussain etc. Similarly, Sindhi literature glitters with the masterpieces of Shah Abdul Latif, Sachal Sarmast, Shah Qadir Bakhsh, and Faqir Nabi Bakhsh. The Pushto literature also boasts of names like Sheikh Saleh, Raghoon Khan, Akhund dardeeza, Khushal Khan Khattak and Rahman Baba. The Baluchi literature comprises of masterpieces of Jam Durk, Muhammad Ali, Zahoor Shah Hashmi, Ghani Parvez, Hasrat Baluch, Abbas Ali Zemi and Aziz Bugti etc.

Male Dominated Society: Pakistani society is dominated by male members. Each family is headed by the senior most male member who is responsible for arranging the bread and butter of the family.

Variety of Dresses: Pakistani culture is rich in variety of dresses: The people of Punjab, the Pathans of NWFP, the Baluchi people and the Sindhis wear their own distinct dresses. These dresses are very colourful and prominent and give attractive look during national fairs and festivals.

Fairs and Festivals: The culture of Pakistan has great tradition of Fairs and festivals. These fairs are held in all parts of the country. Moreover, annual urs of great saints are held to commemorate their anniversaries. On these occasions, fairs are also held in which people take part in great numbers. Out of these the Horse and Cattle shows of Lahore, Mianwali and Sibi are famous whereas the Polo festival of Gilgit is prominent at national and international level. Moreover annual urs of Hazrat Daata Ganj Bakhsh, Madhu Lal Hussain, Baba Bulhay Shah, Baba Farid Gunj Shakar, Baba Gulu Shah, Pir Jamaat Ali Shah, Abdul Latif Bhittai, Hazrat Noshah Ganj Bakhsh, Bari Imam, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, and Bahauddin Zakriya are celebrated with great fervour.

Sports: Pakistani people are great lovers of sports and games. Modern games like hockey, cricket, football, badminton, squash, table tennis and lawn tennis are played throughout the country. In addition wrestling, boxing, and athletics are also very popular among masses. Pakistan has produced great sportsmen in the past. These include Bholu in Wrestling, Hanif, Miandad, Imran, Wasim Akram, and Inzamam in cricket, Shehnaz Sheikh, Ishaq Hussain, Khalid Mahmood, Akhtar Rasool, and Munir Dar in hockey and Jansher in squash.

Handicrafts:

Pakistan enjoys great distinction in handicrafts at international level. Wooden furniture of Chiniot, sports goods of Sialkot and embroidery of Multan and Hyderabad is world famous.

Culture of Pakistan .

The society and culture of Pakistan comprises numerous diverse cultures and ethnic groups: the Punjabis, Kashmiris, and Sindhis in east, Muhajirs, Makrani in the south; Baloch and Pashtun in the west; and the ancient Dardic, Wakhi and Burusho communities in the north. These Pakistani cultures have been greatly influenced by many of the surrounding countries' cultures, such as the Turkic peoples, Persian, Afghan, and Indians of South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East. Pakistan has a cultural and ethnic background going back to the Indus Valley Civilization, which existed from 2800–1800 B.C., and was remarkable for its ordered cities, advanced sanitation, excellent roads, and uniquely structured society. Pakistan has been invaded many times in the past, and has been occupied and settled by many different peoples, each of whom have left their imprint on the current inhabitants of the country. Some of the largest groups were the 'Aryans', Greeks, Scythians, Persians, White Huns, Arabs, Turks, Mongols, Afghans, Buddhists and other Eurasian groups, up to and including the British, who left in the late 1940s. Pakistani society is largely multilingual, multi-ethnic and multicultural. The newly born Pakistan had to have a sub continental leaning, having been a part of for last 5000 years of its civilization. However, the Indus Valley, present day Pakistan, culture was different from the rest of North India or South India”. (Quoted Pakistan’s Identity, History and Culture, from the famous book Gwadar on the Global Chessboard by Nadir Mir).

Literature: Pakistani literature originates from when Pakistan gained its nationhood as a sovereign state in 1947. The common and shared tradition of Urdu literature and English literature of South Asia was inherited by the new state. Over a period of time, a body of literature unique to Pakistan has emerged in nearly all major Pakistani languages, including Urdu, English, Punjabi, Pushto, Seraiki, Balochi, and Sindhi.

Poetry: Poetry is a highly respected art and profession in Pakistan. The pre-eminent form of poetry in Pakistan almost always originates in Persian, due in part to the long standing affiliation the region had with the Persian Empire. The enthusiasm for poetry exists at a regional level as well, with nearly all of Pakistan's provincial languages continuing the legacy. Since the independence of the country in 1947 and establishment of Urdu as the national language, poetry is written in that language as well. The Urdu language has a rich tradition of poetry and includes the famous poets Dr Allama Iqbal national poet, Mirza Ghalib, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Ahmad Faraz, Jazib Qureshi and Ahmad Nadeem Qasimi. Apart from Urdu poetry, Pakistani poetry also has

blends of other regional languages. Balochi, Sindhi, Punjabi, Seraiki, and Pashto poetry have all incorporated and influenced Pakistani poetry. Poetry in the form of marsia Salam and naath is also very popular among many Pakistanis.

Music: Pakistani music is represented by a wide variety of forms. It ranges from traditional styles such as Qawwali and Ghazal to more modern forms that fuse traditional Pakistani music with Western music. Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan was internationally renowned for creating a form of music which synchronized Qawwali with western music. Popular forms of music also prevail, the most notable being film music and Urdu and Punjabi pop music. There are also the diverse traditions of folk music, as well as modern styles, with rock bands such as Call being recognized internationally. Music Stars of Pakistan are Noor Jaha, Rahat Fateh Ali Khan.

Dance: Folk dances are still popular in Pakistan and vary according to region such as:

1. Bhangra –Punjab

- Luddi – Punjab
- Sammi – Punjab
- Dhammal - Performed at Sufi shrines/ dargahs in Punjab and Sindh
- Attan - Folk dance of Pashtuns tribes including the unique styles of Quetta and Waziristan
- Khattak Dance - Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa
- Chitrali Dance - Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa
- Jhumar - Siraiiki and Balochi folk dance
- Ho Jamalo Sindhi dance
- Lewa - Balochi folk dance

Drama and theatre: These are very similar to stage plays in theatres. They are performed by well-known actors and actresses in the Lollywood industry. The dramas and plays deal with many themes from life events, often with a humorous touch. Pakistani poetry is the best.

Recreation and sports:

The official national sport of Pakistan is field hockey with squash and cricket also very popular. The national cricket team has won the Cricket World Cup once (in 1992), were runners-up once

(in 1999), and co-hosted the games twice (in 1987 and 1996). Additionally, they have also won the ICC World Twenty20 once (in 2009), and were runners-up (in 2007). The team has also won the Australasia Cup in 1986, 1990, and 1994. At an international level, Pakistan has competed many times at the Summer Olympics in field hockey, boxing, athletics, swimming, and shooting. Hockey is the sport in which Pakistan has been most successful at the Olympics, with three gold medals (1960, 1968, and 1984). Pakistan has also won the Hockey World Cup four times (1971, 1978, 1982, and 1994). Pakistan has hosted several international competitions, including the South Asian Federation Games in 1989 and 2004. A1 Grand Prix racing is also becoming popular with the entry of a Pakistani team in the 2005 season. The Tour de Pakistan, modeled on the Tour de France, is an annual cycling competition that covers the length and breadth of Pakistan. Recently, football has grown in popularity across the country, where traditionally it had been played almost exclusively in the western province of Baluchistan. Fifa has recently teamed up with the government to bring football closer to the northern areas too.

Cuisine: Culinary art in Pakistan comprises a mix of Middle Eastern, Iranian, Afghan, north west Indian, and Turkish cuisine that reflects the country's history as well as the variation of cooking practices from across the surrounding regions. Urban centers of the country offer an amalgamation of recipes from all parts of the country, while food with specific local ingredients and tastes is available in rural areas and villages. Besides the main dishes of *salan*, with or without meat and cooked with vegetables or lentils, there are a number of provincial specialties such as *karahi*, *biryani* and *tikka*, in various forms and flavors, eaten alongside a variety of breads such as *naan*, *chapati* and *roti*. There are also local forms of grilled meat or *kebabs*, desserts, and a variety of hot and cold drinks.

Ramadan: The holiest month of the Islamic Calendar, which is a month of fasting from sunrise to sunset and self-discipline, it is widely observed in Pakistan. Muslim Pakistanis (about 97% of the population) fast, attend mosques with increased frequency, and recite Quran. Special foods are cooked in greater quantities, parties are held, and special accommodation is made by workplaces and educational institutes.

Chand Raat: It occurs after the Islamic month of Ramadan. Chand Raat occurs the night before Eid day celebrations commence, marking the end of the month of Ramadan. In the night known as Chand Raat, people celebrate by various means, such as girls putting henna on their hands. People buy gifts and sweets that will be given to friends and families who come over to celebrate

the end of Ramadan. The streets, major building and landmarks, even outside of malls and plazas, put on displays of elaborate decorations and colorful light shows. There are large crowds in the city center to celebrate the beginning of Eid, and it is usually a boom time for business.

Eid celebrations: The two Eids, Eid ul-Fitr and Eid ul-Adha, commemorate the passing of the month of fasting, Ramadan, and the willingness of Ibrahim to sacrifice his son Ishmael for God. On these days, there are national holidays and many festivals and events take place to celebrate Eid. As Pakistan is a Muslim state, there are three days off for all businesses and government offices. On the night before Eid, people search for the new moon to mark the end of Ramadan and arrival of Eid ul-Fitr. The day starts with morning prayers, then returning home for a large breakfast with family members. The day is spent visiting relatives and friends and sharing gifts and sweets with everyone. During the evening people hit the town for some partying, going to restaurants or relaxing in city parks. On Eid ul-Fitr, money is given for charity and as gifts to young children.

Milaad un Nabi: Milaad un Nabi is a known religious festival which is celebrated in many parts of Pakistan. The Milaad is the celebration for the birthday of the Islamic prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SAW).

Muharram (Ashura): In Pakistan, the first ten days of Muharram are observed officially. The 10th day of Muharram is marked in the memory of Imam Hussain (Aliahsalam), the grandson of Muhammad, who was a martyr, along with 72 family members, friends and followers during the Battle of Karbala.

Jashn-e-Baharan: Jashn-e-Baharan, also referred to as Basant, is a pre-Islamic Punjabi festival that marks the coming of spring. Celebrations in Pakistan are centered in Lahore and people from all over the country and abroad come to the city for the annual festivities. Kite flying competitions take place all over the city's rooftops during Basant (now prohibited). The fertile province of Punjab was intimately tied via its agriculture to the different seasons of the year. The arrival of spring was an important event for all farmers and was welcomed with a celebration, hence the name Jashn (celebration) Baharan (spring).

Independence Day: On August 14, the people of Pakistan celebrate the day Pakistan gained its independence from British India and formed an independent state for Muslims. However, one-third of the Muslims decided to remain in India. There are many celebrations all over the country, with people singing and dancing in the streets. Concerts are held with many pop and

classical singers. Parades are held in the capital city (Islamabad). Many people decorate their houses and fly the flag of Pakistan. At night, fireworks are used in many cities. Many people pray for the country and reflect on their pride in the country of Pakistan. Defense Day Parade: September 6 is another patriotic day, when the Army of Pakistan is put on display for the general public to show Pakistan arms. All Government officials attend the ceremony and medals and recognitions are awarded to special people for their work. In March 2007, the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) put on display the new joint manufactured Chinese-Pakistani aircraft called the JF-17 Thunder.

National Dress: The national dress of Pakistan is Shalwar Qameez for both men and women. It consists of a long, loose fitting tunic with very baggy trousers. The dress is believed to be an amalgamation of the dresses worn by the ancient Persians, and Mughal Empire who have left their impression on the people and culture of Pakistan. The men's version consists of solid, masculine colors, and is almost always accompanied by a collar and buttons (similar to a polo shirt). Men often wear an outer waistcoat over the shalwar kameez. The women's version almost never contains collar and buttons but is often embroidered and consists of feminine colors and may feature lace or flower patterns. In the summer, a light, cotton version is often worn, while during the winter, a heavier, wool version is worn. The sherwani or achkan with karakul hat is the recommended dress for male government employees and officials, as it is not specifically associated with any of the provinces. Most male government officials wear the formal black sherwani on state occasions.

Cultural Traditions: Pakistanis have evolved an often distinct and unique set of culture, Pakistani arts in metal work, tiles, furniture, rugs, designs/paintings, literature, calligraphy, etc. are diverse and renowned internationally. Pakistani architecture is unique with its infusion of Islamic, Persian, Turkish and Indigenous styles. The manners and lifestyles are guided by a blend traditions as well as culture. Food dishes are also attracting quite a lot of attention with its wide blend of flavors and spices.