

# Impact of western culture on pakistani culture

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Pakistani Culture is very unique in terms of its social and ethical values. These values are something which are given due importance. This culture revolves around the religion of Islam which teaches equality among every human being that exists on this planet. Pakistan's culture is very diverse. It has been invaded by many different people belonging to different races. These people include the white Huns, Persian Arabs, Turks, Mongols, and various Eurasian groups. These groups differ in their way of dressing, food, religion. Pakistani culture consists of different cultures starting from the Punjabis and sindhis to the tribal cultures of the easternmost Pakistani provinces.

Now these cultures have strongly been influenced by surrounding cultures of India, Central Asia and the Middle East along with other places. Today due to globalization, Pakistani culture is largely influenced by the western society. This main influence is due to the fact that many Pakistani are living abroad and they come back with this change. Many restaurants from other countries have started business in Pakistan and are making a lot business here. Media has played a wide role in bringing this change. There are many channels of different countries that we can see these days. This is something that is to some extent positive and negative also.

Positively the new generation gains knowledge while negatively they are attracted to it and want to bring it in to practice there is also a reactionary movement in Pakistan which wants to move away from these changes made by the western influence in Pakistan. This group is strongly conflated with Islam and is on a strong mission. The Impact of Western culture on Pakistani

culture has had both positive and negative effects on Pakistani society, though the negative effects outweigh the positive ones by quite a margin.

**Provision of Human Rights:** The first and the most prominent is the Freedom of Press, Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Action. These fundamental rights have mostly been secured through excessive Western influence. Whether it is through an indirect manner (western teachings in schools and university which have shaped the collective consciousness of the people in such a manner so as to protest against Human Rights violations) or through direct means (access to the free media in western countries has encouraged the Pakistani people to expect and ask for the same rights).

**The Feminist Movement:** Western Influence has brought with itself a considerable chunk of the Feminist movement to Pakistan. Women in Pakistan enjoy much more liberty compared to some other Muslim countries. A few example are of trivial incidents like women taking part in International sports competitions and being allowed to vote, drive and pretty much enjoy the same liberty as most women all over the world do. Women are involved in all spheres of governance, commerce, politics etc. Recently, four women were inducted into the Pakistani Air Force as fighter pilots

**Revamping of the judicial system:** The judiciary has recently taken keen interest in people's difficulties and now the courts accept petitions for sue – a concept unheard of only a few years back. Courts have also started looking into cases of Human Rights' violations which were previously either ignored completely or at best placed on the back burner. And this has improved the image of the judiciary amongst the people as they now feel that their grievances will be listened to and appropriate action will also be taken.

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Media: Westernization has been spread throughout our country predominantly because of the media. The TV channels show various newscasters and different characters in the dramas wearing westernized clothes. In addition to this, intimate scenes are becoming more common in TV programs. Even our TV shows are now depicting the western style of dressing and decor. The catalogues, magazines, billboards etc. clearly show the impact of westernization all over Pakistan. You can see the catalogues of Stone Age, Chen One for example. Magazines and certain TV shows discuss extremely open issues that are out of the scene if people take into account our culture, traditions and religious values. The media of today is exploiting the personalities of new generation. It presents the western world in such a glittering way that anybody can become its victim. This is what, following, western liberal concepts has done to us therefore we are getting entrapped deeper into the web of westernization. Religious and Moral Values:

Westernization has intruded so deeply into our culture that the Islamic values and “ Adaabs” have faded away. The obligations of a Muslim have long been forgotten. No longer do people respond to the call for prayers, in fact, they eat or smoke openly. Alcohol, prostitution, drugs are becoming regular and despite their openness, no actions are being taken to eliminate them from our society. Eid in Pakistan is slowly and steadily losing its charm and importance amongst young Muslims, The young generation has lost its enthusiasm and excitement towards the festival of Eid and they are less interested in its preparations. Nowadays, with the changing trends in fashion and lifestyle, youngsters have become too much influenced by media and their surroundings that their interests have diverted elsewhere.

For example, they are more concerned about Valentine's Day, Halloween, and New Year. All these celebrations are not in our culture yet they find them more amusing and enjoyable. The extended and nuclear family system, a hall mark of Pakistani culture, has slowly died away. The young generation seldom cares for the old parents and so, sadly, old age houses have been established. There has also been a great increase in divorce rates and extra marital affairs.

Language: The Language Dilemma is being faced by most Pakistanis today especially the youth. Each country has its own mother language and it is not just a way of communicating but also a part of their culture. Today, unfortunately most Pakistani youths are not proud of speaking the Urdu language and this is mostly seen in the upper middle and Elite classes. Most Pakistanis are moving away from their mother language and adopting English. By adopting English we are not just adopting their language but also their culture, values, customs and traditions and in the process are forgetting our own culture.

This confusion started when the British came to rule our land and since then people have been trying to copy their language and have associated it with prestige and class. This problem has been further aggravated by the excessive exposure and the media influence. Even our education is now focusing too much on English at all levels. Urdu has been replaced by the English language on all official levels as well. Obsession with English is so much that many Pakistanis, who speak and write English well, are unable to understand Urdu.

Clothing: These days western influence can be seen all around but most specifically it can be seen in the way Pakistanis have started dressing. Gone are the days of the simple shalwar kameez, whatever fashion becomes popular abroad, it is quickly adopted by the people here, without thinking that it is not meant for their body type or cultural values. Also the Pakistani fashion industry is so inspired by the foreign styles that they don't even hesitate before introducing revealing clothes in their collection. The elite have more or less completely adopted western clothing as their own. Such people lose their national identity because fashions reflect the culture of a nation as Shakespeare said " apparel proclaims the man". Vulgarly results as the misconception of this modernization. Affects on youth:

The actors and actresses in these dramas are and movies are seen beautifully dressed wearing heavy jewelry and make up, carrying expensive mobiles, gadgets and accessories that everyone cannot afford and dresses that portray nudity. This really fascinates our women and they try to imitate their lifestyle and living standards. Whereas women in Islam are asked to stay covered and simple that is why Shalwar Kameez was made our National dress but today majority of our youth is seen walking away proudly wearing those revealing western clothes and designer brands with expensive make up. The element of shyness has gone extinct these days and bold, blunt, liberal attitude is common. Roaming around with friends of the opposite sex has become normal now and even the parents have gone comfortable with their children hugging their friends and smoking together.

The girls and guys today are more concerned about their weight and body shape rather than their studies. Most of the teenagers are involved in drugs

and all the wrong doings in the name of adventure. Theft has become so common and the criminal activities. The attitude of children has changed drastically with their parents, being Muslims our parents hold the highest status and authority over us and we should respect them and look at them with love but today for every no, the parents have to suffer their child's questioning, screaming, shouting, hateful language, quarrelling and not to forget suicides, murders and such activities are reported when the parents disapprove of it.

Marriage ceremonies: We live in a society where marriages are more of the show-off events, the more the merrier. A lot of money is spent to organize the most lavish Mayouns and Mehndis ever and the best is chosen for the girl's, dowry. Talking about mayoun , mehndi and dowry are these things even taught to us by Islam? Islam regards dowry as haram and instructs us to observe simple Nikah and Walima ceremonies as per one's affordability. But these days wedding planners are hired, choreographers and DJs are called for dance and music. A lot of people go under debts because of these so-called Rasams. Dancing, singing, expensive bridal dress and such things come from the other traditions, they were never a part of our Muslim traditions and they're simply a waste of money. The situation is indeed alarming for the national identity in Pakistan. Therefore firm steps are needed to be taken on regular basis to preserve Pakistan's cultural values and identity. Conclusion

Apart from government to take measures to control the cultural invasion, the responsibility lies on every Pakistani to own, respect and love this country. We have to believe in our own native values in order to save and secure our

identity. Being Pakistani, we should not forget that our homeland made us stand out in the map of the world as an independent nation and provide us the freedom, which many Muslim countries are still striving for today. If we want to live with honor, dignity and secure our identity, we have to proudly own and love our country. If we want our upcoming generation should breathe freely as an independent nation in the world, then, today we have to work in the best interest of Pakistan. We have to rebuild our characters and minds to take the track which leads Pakistan to the destination our ancestors had dreamt of.

Pakistanis and Pakistani media are required to respect the native traditions and individuality, abide by the rules and regulations of the federation, support the minors/minorities and provide education for all irrespective of their financial and social background; we can bring the change, prosperity in our society and secure our homeland. The intellectuals in media and the political circles have the responsibility to start the debate. It is through repeated exposure that the citizens will start to identify themselves with democratic and liberal values. To minimize and resist the effects of western channels, it is suggested that local channels should be strengthened and programs should have better content. These channels should produce and broadcast quality programs that could help in the promotion of Pakistani values and traditions and improve the image of Pakistan at international level.