

Q. Pakistan's national culture reflects unity in diversity.
Elaborate.

CULTURE

Culture 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, arts, morals, customs and all other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society."

A Pakistani is in tandem federalist, Muslim and ethnically/culturally pluralist."

Salient Features of Pakistan Culture:

Every great nation enjoys its own culture. Similarly, Pakistan culture is very distinct due to Islamic value and rich historical background.

Pakistani culture has the following characteristics:
Islamic values:

Pakistani culture is actually a part of the contemporary Islamic civilization which draws its values & 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 Muhammed (PBUH), brotherhood, equality and social justice etc. Islam is the religion of peace & patience. Pakistani society is very cooperative. National calendar is marked by religious days which are observed with great devotion.

National & Regional Languages:

Pakistan is a large country which comprises of four provinces and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). All of these component parts have their own regional languages. As such Punjabi, Pashto, Balochi, Sindhi, Brahi 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 languages of cultures. In addition, the presence of Hindu community in Sindh gives touches of dance and music in Sindhi region. The Hindus sing Bhajans but Pakistani culture has adopted Qawali.

Rich Literature:

Pakistani culture is rich in the literatures of Urdu, Sindhi, Punjabi, Pashto, Balochi, Balochi & Kashmiri languages. Urdu literature boasts of the masterpieces of Maulana Azad, Iqbal, Shibli, Hali, Ghalib, Agha Hashar, Manto and Faiz where the Punjabi literature stands out with great names like Wernis Shah, Bullah Shah, and Shah Hussain etc. Similarly, Sindhi literature glitters with the masterpieces of Shah Abdul Latif, Sachal Sarmast, and Faqir Nazim & Baluch. The Pashto literature also boasts of names like Sheikh Saleh, Raghoon Khan, Akhund Dardelza, Khushal Khan Khattak and Rahman Baba. The Balochi literature comprises of masterpieces of Jam Duk, Muhammad Ali, Zafar Shah Hashmi, Ghani Feroz, Hasrat Baloch, Abbas Ali Zame & Aziz Bughri 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 & butter of the family.

Variety of Dresses:

Pakistani culture is rich in variety of dresses. The people of Punjab, the Pathans of KPK, the Baloch people and the Sindhis wear their own distinct dresses. These dresses are very colourful and prominent and give attractive look during national fairs & 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. Mianwali and Sibi are famous where the Polo festival. Gilgit is prominent at national and international level. Moreover, Urs of Hazrat Dara Gani Bakhsh, Madhu Lal Hussain, Baba Bulley Sah, Abdul Latif Bhittai, Hazrat Noshah Gani Bakhsh and Bahauddin Zakariya 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 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 Bhaque in

Wrestling; Hanif Mohammad, Javed Miandad, Imran Khan, Wasim Akram, and Inzamam ul Haq in cricket, Shehnaaz Sheikh, Khalid Mahmood, Akhtar Rasool and Munir Darin hockey and Jehangir Khan, Jansher Khan 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.

Commonalities (language):

Mostly language is the basis of ethnicity in Pakistan. Punjabi is the predominant ethnic class which consists of 48% of Pakistan's population. Sindhis form about 12%, Sindh (a variant of Punjabi) forms 10%, Urdu speaking 8%, Balochs 3%, Hindko 2%, Brahi 1% and other 8%.

95% Pakistan's population is Muslim. Amongst the remaining 5% Christians are the biggest religious minority who are around 3% of the total population. Other religions of Pakistan are defined by the agrarian nature of society.

Pakistan is predominantly a rural society where over 65.5% of population lives in the rural areas.

Agriculture is the main employer of the labor force which employs over 43% of the work force.

The culture & social norms of Pak are defined by the agrarian nature of society.

Q. CPEC is a flagship project of One Belt One Road (OBOR) and a regional game-changer. Explain.

Flagship Project of One Belt One Road (OBOR)

Chairman Parliamentary Committee on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Senator Mushahid Hussain, has said that CPEC is the flagship project of the "One Belt, One Road" and it symbolizes the resurgence of a new Asia based on cooperation, connectivity and corridor.

He was addressing the Information Ministers Forum at the China-Eurasia conference in Urumqi. In his speech, Hussain said that the initiative of reviving Silk Road represents the shift in balance of economic and political power away from the West to the East. He added that the Chinese province of Xinjiang which borders Gilgit Baltistan is one future ^{hub} of cooperation and connectivity between Europe & Asia.

Pakistan in China's OBOR Initiative:

A popular Chinese saying, well received by many states, states, "If you want to get rich, get started by building roads." So, recognizing this along with the fact that regional integration is an inevitable measure to meet the demands of economically globalized world, Chinese leadership rephrased the notion of Silk Road in 2013 with the announcement of 'One Road, One Belt' initiative. The initiative is a step to link the past with the present, revive the glory of Asia, source for Asians to rework the pride for their history and cultures and show their commitment to unity and cooperation.

1. Prescription for a notion.

OBOR is a descriptor of notion that encompasses numerous smaller ideas, be it bringing profound shifts in trends of a trade; be it progress in investment and capital flows across Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and West Asia; be it enhancement of cooperation in economic, social, civilization, political sphere; be it profound shift in or broadening the level of cooperation to an extent to extend it to Pan-Asian and Eurasian regions in future, in totality what can be appraised reasonably is that this initiative if implemented with true rigour will involve a lot more projects, countries or entities, which would ensure their increasing openness.

2. The Maritime Silk Road and the Silk Road Economic Belt

Pakistan is an important pillar of China's OBOR initiative, which refers to "The Maritime Silk Road and the Silk Road Economic Belt," introduced by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013 during his visit to Kazakhstan. This policy framework foresees the development of several corridors across the region that will be built to boost regional economies to the tune of \$2.5 trillion and to the benefit of a combined population of over 4.4 billion across 65 countries.

Among other corridors, the Maritime Silk Road will connect the Pacific coast to the Baltic Sea. With China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and Yunnan province as starting points, the Silk Road Economic Belt will link China, Central Asia,

Russia and Europe, while also connecting China with the Persian Gulf, South East Asia, and the Indian Ocean.

3. China Mongolia - Russian Land Corridor:

Under the auspices of this series of projects, the China-Mongolia-Russia Land Corridor will be built with the Chinese province of Heilongjiang as its starting point; the China-India-Bangladesh-Myanmar Corridor will be built with Kolkata as its starting point; the China-Central Asia-West Asia corridor will be built with China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region as its starting point, and an exclusive China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will be built to connect the ports of Pakistan's Gwadar with Xinjiang.

4. Infrastructure Developments

The initiative does not simply entail the building of roads, rails, and ports; instead it fosters the introduction of a comprehensive network of infrastructure development. The Asia Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB) will finance projects within the framework of this initiative. The BRICS New Development Bank, the Silk Road Fund, as well as the China-ASEAN Interbank Association and SCO inter bank Association will also offer funds.

Under this initiative, he signed various agreements amounting to an estimated \$46 billion. These funds represent one of the first concrete acts in line with China's One Belt, One Road Initiative as they will be devoted to the construction of roads, rails and

power plants which will be built on a commercial basis by Chinese companies over a 15-year period.

CPEC as a game changer:

The ambitious CPEC, touted both countries as a "game changer" is an agreement that seems destined to put other regional partnerships - including the SAARC - in cold storage, trigger tensions and consequent militarization. Increasingly, it appears likely to lead to a new "great game" in the region.

1. Economic part of CPEC:

While the economic part of the CPEC, along with the port of Gwadar, are now operational, and the latter will be key in facilitating trade with China, it is also expected to become a hub where both economic and strategic interests collide.

China's announcement, which received wide coverage in the Indian media, to deploy its naval force in Gwadar to protect the port has become at a time when tension between Pakistan and India is sky-high and India has been pursuing a policy of "isolating" Pakistan regionally and globally. Postponement of one SAARC summit that was due to be held in Pakistan is but one example of this policy in operation.

2. Strategic relations .

(a) Beijing and the dilemma:

While Pakistan sees in the decision an opportunity to boost strategic relations with Beijing and checkmate India's superior naval capability. In India, according to its former chief of naval staff, Admiral Suresh Mehta, sees the deployment as giving China unhindered access to the key Arabian sea trade routes and the oil rich Persian Gulf region.

(b) Chinese funded Port .

What annoys India most is that the Chinese-funded port, and the corridor to Kashghar in Xinjiang province, have blocked its own ambitions to revive its traditional routes to the Central Asian region, a route that is now trying to revive via Afghanistan.

(c) Geographical location.

Guadar due to its peculiar geographic location, has historically attracted a lot of countries in the region. China's growing naval presence indicates its own interest is only likely to increase in the near future.

(d) Larger trade coalition:

For its part, India, sensing the emergence of a larger trade coalition in the region, has already started building its own trade route via Iran's Chabahar port to Afghanistan & Central Asia.

(c) Tripartite Tripartite Agreement

India signed a tripartite agreement with Afghanistan and Iran to link the Chabahar port with Afghanistan via the Zaskari - Delaram highway, also constructed by India. The agreement will provide land-to-sea connectivity to Afghanistan and the Central Asian republics through Iran, effectively by passing Pakistan.

f) Gwadar port and Chabahar:

Located barely 72 km away from each other - are no mere commercial links but rather geographical geopolitical launch pads in a wider strategic power play. As such, while Gwadar allows China to monitor US and Indian naval activity in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea and Pakistan to dominate the energy routes to which it is a gateway, Chabahar - though its competitor is still far from over - is India's portal to Afghanistan, Central Asia, Russia and beyond.

Conclusion:

The difference between this "great game" and those of the past is that this time regional countries such as Pakistan and Iran are actually involved and not mere buffer zones of warring empires, even as they might still be seen to playing second fiddle to bigger states, namely China and India.

Other way, what cannot be gainsaid is that for Pak - beset by religious extremism, a separatist movement in Balochistan, and volatile relations with neighbours both to the east and west - CPEC and Gwadar offer a golden opportunity for a better position.