

Historical Review of Cultural Assortment; Influence of Non-native Cultures on Pakistani Youth

Mehak

Lecturer

*Department of English
Iqra University, Islamabad
ms.mehak@iqra.uni.edu.pk*

Dr. Muhammad Sajid Khan (CA)

Lecturer

*Department of History,
Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad
sajidkhan@aiou.edu.pk*

Abstract

Pakistan has a rich history of assorted cultures. After 1947, Pakistani society has seen diverse cultural ascendancy over the time. The process of cultural transformation was accelerated with advancement in information technology sphere. The waves of globalization and the involvement of electronic media in the 1990s has played major role in overlapping Islamic principles with western culture, especially in the urban areas of the country. There are countless dissimilarities among both cultures in their approach towards faith, principles, customs and values. These variations have an emotional impact on the younger generation of Pakistan. The main objective of the study is to find out the positive/negative influence of western culture on Pakistani youth and propose suitable commands required in these circumstances. Data was gathered via questionnaires on the opinions, observations and understandings of teachers from two different universities of Islamabad. An advanced instrument is used to evaluate the positive/negative influences of non-native cultures on students' deportments. The fallouts of the research shows that negative influences of the foreign culture rules over the positive traits, owing to indecisiveness, upbringing, misguidance and insufficient counseling amenities. The study offers several recommendations on the account of results as how

to manage these influences in order for youth to benefit from the external cultures and guard themselves from the adverse aspects of these cultures.

Keywords: Social order, Society, Culture, Western, Islamic principles

Introduction

Assortment of codes, principles, customs, ideals, work of arts and manners of individuals are known as 'culture'. It is "that multifaceted whole that comprises knowledge, faith, arts, moralities, rules, traditions, and some other abilities and ways that an individual develop as an adherent of a society" (Edward B. Taylor, 1871, p: 1). A culture is "a manner of thinking, a manner of performing, and physical entities that collectively make an individuals' lifestyle"(Macionis, 2012, p: 54).

As previously stated, a culture can be perceived as comprehensive standards of living, comprising conducts, principles, views and dialects, in addition to several diverse cultures and accepted subcultures in the sphere. The focal interest of the current discussion is two conflicting present-day cultures of this time. One is the 'Islamic way of life', that comprises a complete and perfect manner of living as it is grounded on to the understandings of the Holy Quran and Sunnah while on the other hand its 'Western way of life', both imply "a complete attitude towards living." Contrariwise, these two ways of lives are entirely poles apart in their essence. The source and foundation of any culture distinguishes it from the other cultures. The Origin of Islamic culture is based on the teachings of the Holy Quran. What is considered as a western culture in the present day initiates mainly from Greco-Roman/Germanic inspirations. It holds principles of the middle ages, renaissance age, and age of enlightenment, along with orthodox and Christian ethos.

Pakistan is a Muslim majority country with distinctive sub-cultures, principles and beliefs with Islamic influences. For the people of Pakistan, Islam is the only right scale that can set forth the proper moral directions for its system to work. The

“Civilizing mission” and modernization project under Western Colonial system brought many cultural transformations in colonized world. British have ruled this part of the sub-continent for almost a century and the influence of their culture can be perceived in every realm. The British colonial state initiated a process of modernization of state, society and economy. The civilizing mission was rolled out in India through introduction of modern education. That was a slow, gradual and evolutionary process of socio- political and cultural transitions. The process of adoption, resistance and rejection of these cultural interventions went side by side. The different segments of society responded these cultural challenges according to their respective vision of life. The British had made off a persuasive streak in language, schooling, administration, architecture, the dogmatic system, philosophy and values of British India. Pakistan had naturally inherited these cultural changes from the British rule but owing to the present surge in the westernization of cultural adaptations, people got more inclined towards the Western philosophy. Pakistani society embraces Western culture in the name of modernization in line with the requirements and concerns e.g., Jeans/ top, co-education, pop culture, culture of love marriages and so on. The current social scenario indicates that mingling the foreign culture into the Pakistani culture is quite alarming. Westernization is a process where susceptible segments of the society or a community try to update or streamline. Despite of condemnation and resistance, the process of adoption and cultural transformations gained great momentum in recent years. Most of the elites in Pakistan follow western culture due to their exposure and this inspire the other classes of the society to emulate them and compete with them. The foremost primacy of the newer generation is to get an employment in a well-established cosmopolitan firm in any developed country. This influence has also reached Pakistani universities and can be reflected in the way students dress, their way of talking, using English colloquial, keeping mixed relationships and audacious discussions.

Statement of the Problem

The research confers about the overlapping of Islamic principles and values by the foreign culture owing to teachers' observations and statements. Surge in the industrialization and electronic advancement has brought the world closer; that resulted in the amalgamation of different cultures. It has led a substantial change in the ways and behaviors of Pakistani youths. Youngsters here are more inclined towards westernized culture and incessantly follow their values and practices, completely leaving their own religious and traditional beliefs and principles. Though there are certain things that these young people consider as an indispensable part of their lives, and do not trade them off, however there are some things that the youth regards not essential enough and they are gradually fading from their circle of customary principles. Jeans/tops instead of shalwar/kameez, fusion of Urdu and English language during conversation, inclination towards pop songs and unrestricted gender affairs are some of the changes that have ruined the family structure of Pakistan. These states of affairs are quite grim in Pakistani institutions. This research mainly discovers these conditions by evaluating students' behaviors and conducts in Pakistani universities.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the existing state of university students with regards to the influence of western culture.
- To find out adverse and beneficial effects of non-native culture on university students.
- To suggest effective guidelines in order to overcome negative influences of foreign culture.

Research Design and Methodology

The research is indeed descriptive and quantitative research method has been used to assemble data. In order to record all the answers of the respondents, survey technique is employed. Survey is "a process where individuals are picked up on the subject of their topography (inland, provincial, local) or environmental aspects (geo-system, vegetation); and listing of

several individuals of a region from which conclusions regarding the populace can be pulled out” (Fuller & Mosher, 1987, p: 37).

Lecturers and teachers from two different universities of Islamabad are the population of this research. Three universities, namely Bahria University Islamabad, Iqra University and Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad are selected through cluster sampling technique. Fifty teachers, from all these three universities are selected as respondents for the study through random sampling system from all the departments of the universities.

Literature Review

Culture

The word culture has been originated from a Latin word “Cult/Cultus” which means cultivating or filtering. The very meaning of the term entails a land which is cultivated or a fertile land that is the best forms of societies are strictly connected to the agriculture or cultivation. Similarly, Romans link societies with “humanitas” i.e.; humanity and kindness which entails those humane qualities one could expect only from the educated and refined individuals. Conversely, many believe it to be a very odd saying and consider traditions and societies are like buildings which needs a development of a challenging life inside.

Culture is made up of overt and covert patterns, of manners that are learnt or conveyed through codes, establishing the distinguishing accomplishments of social groups, together with their example in works of art. The most important principal of culture involves customary ideas and particularly the values closed to it. The structure of culture may be observed as the result of actions and sometimes as provisional essential of imminent actions” (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p: 181)

Influence on Pakistani society

The social order of Pakistan has seen many changes from the time of its occurrence up till now and the course is still continued. The force behind this continuity is that world has

evolved into a cyber space or global village with very few barriers left among nations. Pakistan faced a huge revolution during the time of cold war which was a time of geopolitical conflict between US and USSR. This time period was witnessing the denationalization of the local commercial markets, science and technology were elevating, transportations and IT were becoming the booming assets of the nations , dish and cables were replacing antenna making it possible for foreign channels to be watched all over the world. As West states unprogressive and primitive societies get motivated with the advancements of science and technology and commercial expansion so as to attain well-being. In order to achieve that level, undeveloped societies and cultures shed their own identity and borrow fake identities to compete with the best that leads them to the loss of their own individuality. Pakistani culture has amalgamated Western style subtly in their everyday life, for example; though Urdu is the national language of Pakistan but English is considered as an official language here. The whole education system of Pakistan is based on the English language. People here, wear western clothes, like western fast foods, concept of love marriages is also prevailing, co-education has become a norm, intermingling between girls and boys has become a common thing now and more and more people have started migrating to Western countries for the better future. Apparently, Westernization is a process where a society or a culture exalts itself and modernize. The Pakistani elites have started incorporating Western styles in their day to day life which is their cheap way of imitating them. Now the foremost primacy of the newer generation is to get an employment in an international firm in any developed country for their better future.

Causes of prevalent western culture

Economic differences and scientific amenities have disrupted the overall balance in the society. This wave of cultural and economic amalgamation and hybridization in the advanced countries is, for the most part very substantial because trade and industry are the key factors behind the changes in people's life as they regulate the societal and governmental affairs of the country. Some societies are more influential than the other

because they have more resources and assets which give them power to control those who are lacking the essential resources in order to infiltrate and take control of the less privileged societies. Moreover, globalization through firm and recognized services is required e.g., the consequences of leading global economic bodies like IMF and World Bank on underdeveloped nations is shocking. Similarly, World Trade Organization is functioning without showing any concern to the distressing condition of the general public. It is like an open competition where everyone is contending with the other; unprogressive and evolving nations are in competition with the advanced nations. In order to survive, one must follow the rules which are same for the weak and the strong that results in very conflicting jolts, especially in unprogressive nations. In primitive nations, these major differences are a cause of concern because they directly affect the daily lives of the people. Today's world has become very competitive and it has made it difficult to the nations who are unprogressive or struggling, to settle their people. All in all this huge financial inequality among nations has caused a split-up in the sphere.

Positive outcomes of Western Culture

Widening the prospects of knowledge in Pakistani Society

Just like other countries, Pakistan has also made use of the benefits of modernity and globalization by bringing in modern technology in the form of cell phones, computers, internet, cable televisions, and other inventions of the present times. Internet is the need of the hour because it keeps people updated on a lot of stuff and now internet connections are easily accessible and cheap to get. Innovative communication systems are visibly open for the world with the aim to help people in their day to day life in order to make it peaceful. Internet has made people more aware of their choices and rights e.g.; human rights, especially related to women and children are getting more presence in the media. The issue that gets highlight in the media creates more awareness in the masses as now even uneducated people of the society can reach and discuss over the situations they never had knowledge of.

Literacy

Western culture has affected almost all the sectors of Pakistani society but education the most. In Pakistan, irrespective of the financial circumstances, education is given its due importance because people are aware that it is the only way to bring change and improvement into their lives. They are aware that information on various topics can be retrieved with a single click, millions of books and scientific articles with step by step guidelines for online research are available on internet for everyone to use. Students can simply get admission in any foreign educational institution through internet because it has made access to everything a lot easier. International scholarship programs and exchange programs which are based on merit and competition have encouraged people to study more and better. Westernization has impacted not only the education sector but it has opened new ways of employment for people here in a way that now people have an option of moving abroad for their better future. There are many portals available that direct you to the immigrant programs and let you work for good and reputed organizations because advanced countries appreciate educated and skilled individuals. International job openings are announced online, open for everyone in the world and take advantage of.

The status of women

Emerging modernity and globalism has added value to the status of women all over the world. The living conditions for women are improving and future prospects are increasing positively. New laws have been announced and bills have been passed to guarantee the women's basic rights in the society. Masses are now more mindful and educating their daughters same as like their sons. Now, as the rules and laws are here to protect women, more and better work opportunities are generating because masses are rejecting the notion of gender discrimination.

Progress in the quality of life

A healthy society improves an overall well-being of its people. Modern economic system has introduced the loan culture in

Pakistan e.g.; economic support programs, credit cards and innovative installment plans in order for people to get their hands on certain amenities like electronic equipment and vehicles. People can now easily buy those superfluous items that they could not even think of few years back.

State's responsibility is to share

In the process of adopting a foreign culture certain challenges come their way e.g., poverty elimination is a global issue and it requires an efficient and comprehensible system to resolve this issue. Pakistani government has introduced different approaches in order to counter this problem like; subsidies, assistance plans, loan programs and professional financial assistance. On the other hand the main memorandum of the international benefactors is to grow women's and children's involvement in society so as to overcome this issue.

Flexibility mends people's life

Most of the Pakistanis belong to middle class where all their life they see and yearn to meet the elite standards which are also inspired from West. They like the idea of freedom, West reflects and to meet that idea they take advantage of every opportunity come their way whether right or wrong. Modernization has changed this world into a competitive race where everyone is trying to improve their quality of life as quickly as possible with personal influences, corruption and gaining illicit favors.

Negative Impacts of Western Culture

English as an official language

Pakistan is a developing country and just like other emergent nations, here English language is considered as a parameter for one's credibility and qualification because it is an official language of Pakistan. People with good English speaking and writing skills are offered better jobs because international organizations that are working here have close ties with advance countries. Due to this trend Urdu is trailing in its worth owing to the excessive use of English language in the country. Native literature is vanishing because more importance is been given to

English language. It is now a common trend to use English words with other native vernaculars that sounds strange but deteriorates the native language by affecting its vocabulary. The education system of Pakistan solely based on English language as all the main courses are taught in English like; Pakistani studies, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology. Regional languages like Pashto, Punjabi, Balochi and Sindhi are not given their due importance because they are considered not up to the snuff. English linguistics and literature is one of the most widely studied courses at graduate and post-graduate level. There are many English learning centers in the country which are giving language diplomas/certifications and making profits.

Western societies considered as ideal societies

In order to adopt Western culture fully, Pakistani media presents Western society as an ideal system where they have a perfect political system that ensures basic human rights, every individual has complete freedom and a viable economy. This practice leads to the failure of a native culture and deteriorates the values of shared populaces. To be specific, it is the young generation that is more hostile towards their own language, values and history because they tend to choose trade-in items, foreign teaching, language, cuisine, fashion, festivities, relationships and structures. They find their own system dull and conservative and castoff the native language, customs, principles, traditions and communal systems in conformity with modernism.

Race/Competition among individuals

Western culture attempts to create a sense in people to strive to get luxuries as the only purpose in life. Pakistan has adopted this culture of materialism to a great extent where everyone is going selfishly after facilities and amenities. This inclination has increased the notion of individualism, where pursuit of subjective contentment is the ultimate goal and no mutual gain is considered. It emphasizes on selfish interests and well-being only and results in the deterioration of the family structure. This approach to life basically gives rise to competition, and compels to make every effort to achieve the ultimate luxury for their

comfort. It can be seen that now Pakistanis spend most of their earnings on cars, make-up brands, scents, electronics, fashion and the likes. Brand game has gone very strong and people tend to spend their income in buying imported items. Therefore, in this race of grabbing the best item to achieve mere satisfaction people do not care much and those who cannot afford these find alternatives like bribes, corruption, fraud and illegal prosecution just to match a certain social status.

Creating a cultural gap within a society

The elite social class of Pakistan often follows western lifestyle for they can pay for the luxuries of that life but people who are not privileged enough to enjoy that life also longed for that comfort level. In their pursuit to achieve that status they usually forget that those who are born in that structure have different attitude towards life and they can never be the same. This creates cultural detachment within a society where individuals with same origins and beliefs but different approach cause disruption in the social order because few members of the society want to deviate from their original culture. This state halts relationships among individuals and takes over social differences owing to traditional changes (language, fashion, cuisine, style) among similar groups of the same society.

Clash of values

Every culture carries a set of specific values and morals which defines the essence of that culture but with the passage of time these values get reformed due to several factors like; religion and evolution. In the same way, reforms and adaptations in the education sector are received sincerely by the Pakistani people, in contrast, they do not accept the alterations in the family institution e.g.; inter-faith marriages, love marriages and friendship before marriage are usually not accepted. The contradictory Pakistani values and Western values come face to face on many occasions and a large fraction of the society usually finds the middle ground but still there is a long way to be accepted by the whole.

Unprogressive nations inspired from developed nations

With the progress of some advanced countries, members of unprogressive nations feel disappointment among their own culture which led them to blindly follow other cultures and weakens their sense of nationalization. This frustration causes social breakdown and national infidelity and leads to ethnic or sectarian fights. A country never cares for the one who keep on looking to the world to resolve its issues therefore; people are needed to remain faithful to their own social systems. Westernization is a concept of non-state stakeholders and the present condition of Baluchistan region is a perfect example of it.

Identity crisis

Welcoming non-native constraints always cause misunderstanding and uncertainty as it can be seen that most Pakistanis are in a constant state of identity crisis because they do not know what their true characteristics are. From language to dressing each component that completes a culture is merged with some foreign element. The process of distinguishing traditional and religious details has become increasingly ostensible.

Division of society in social classes

The elite social class of Pakistan mostly follows western lifestyle which complexes less privileged members of the society and they strive hard to copy them. Pakistani social order is divided into different classes based upon the financial conditions. The elites incline towards the western lifestyle whereas people belong to the middle class strive all their lives to match elite standards. The upper class keeps an eye on Western fashion, their food, education and family system. They form a world of their own on western patterns and carry it to their confined settings. The involvement of these so called elites in the social life is so weak that it creates a a social gap among members which hinders the overall progress of the country.

Analysis and Findings

The current study assessed three major objectives; the influence level of foreign culture on Pakistani young students, negative and positive effects of those influences and what could be possibly done in order to minimize the influences.

Firstly, teachers were asked to rate according to their observation and experience regarding the influence of foreign culture on the average percentage of university students. 32 respondents out of 50 suggested 60%, 3 suggested 80% while 10 teachers suggested 40% and 5 respondents were of believe that only 20% of the students are inclined towards foreign culture. The responses suggested that almost 65 % i.e. three fourths of the Pakistani students studying in universities are influenced from the foreign cultures one way or the other.

The influences are categorized into positive and negative factors and only two out of the seven positive factors considered progressive. These positive factors that should be claimed as social behaviors of the students, but in reality students had not displayed any productive or progressive influence of the foreign culture. 55% of the respondents believed that Western culture somehow helped in improving the inclusive knowledge of the students. Half of the respondents agreed that the students who are more bend towards the foreign culture have more polished and enhanced reading and writing skills.

In contrast, the other five positive factors showed negative responses from the respondents e.g.; 73% of the teachers agreed that the acceptance of foreign culture has not improved the overall quality of life rather it has worsen it, likewise 65% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that westernization has helped in making living conditions for women any better. Upon the statement that whether foreign culture has revamped the academic excellence, 67% of the respondents did not agree to the assumption and only 33% agreed that westernization has indeed helped in introducing new frontiers of education. On the statement that whether foreign culture has augmented the responsibility of the university management; 64% did not agree with the statement and assumed it has not made it competitive in

any way. Majority of the respondents i.e.; 80% admitted that foreign influence has in fact lessened the overall performance of the students.

In finding out the results of the negative factors, responses revealed that indeed there are more adverse effects of the foreign culture than there are positive. Seven negative factors were questioned and analyzed and results affirmed the memo of the research that non-native cultures do more damage than the good. On the statement that occidental approach is escalating materialism among students, 84% agreed to this while 16% did not agree. Upon another statement that this occidental approach towards life is morally degrading the students; 77% approved that indeed this acceptance of the modern culture is destroying student's personality. 83% of the respondents agreed to the statement that due to the acceptance of western culture English language has gained more popularity and considered a sign of power among Pakistani students which is disturbing because one should be more proud of his/her own language. Similarly, 76% of the respondents approved that those students who are more influenced by the western culture are placed as the perfect individuals of the society. 81% marked that encroachment of western culture is causing cultural gap within students that will eventually disturb the balance of the society. On a statement that foreign culture is deviating the youth from their actual roots; 88% agreed to it and only 12% were against the statement. A statement that said Westernization is initiating a clash of principles and values between students; 83% marked it to be true while 17% did not agree to it.

The overall fallouts affirm that western culture is causing more harm than good to the Pakistani youth. It is essential to observe these controls since if we are not cautious, it would disrupt our social order and result in the commotion of cultural ideals and customs.

Recommendations

Most of the nations have same communal and political systems on the other hand in Pakistan it is the exact opposite due to its regional, linguistic and cultural diversity. The religious cliques

have different views than the liberals who only keep an eye on their search of moderation. While determining laws and constitutions of the country, government needs to bear in mind the Islamic ideologies and codes as the center of forming a state but in effect the reality is precisely the reverse. Pakistan came into existence because of the combined efforts of the Indian Muslims. It was religion that joined them and they fought for a single cause. The religious symbols and idioms were applied for mass mobilization and creating political support base for the demand of a separate Muslim state. Islam is offered as a complete code of life and the only power that joins individuals belonging to diverse racial and cultural groups. The westernized political elite provided leadership and most of the religio-political leadership of that time opposed the League's scheme of Pakistan. In post partition phase the religious leadership assumed the responsibly of self appointed custodian of Islamic ideology and asked for the imposition of Islamic way of life. The conflicting perceptions and interpretations of Islamic system created tensions among Islamist and modernist. The ideological polarizations still exist and largely shape the socio- cultural behavior and traditions of different classes in Pakistan.

Despite the resentment and resistance against westernization, the process of adoption of western culture is swift and progressive. The cultural transformations are visible in different classes and segments of society and younger generations are more vulnerable to these changes, Change and modernization is imperative for the survival and Pakistani society surely needs rejuvenation, but this progress will never be achieved by following West, rather by adopting Islamic contemporaneousness and providence. The ultimate society based on the true essence of Islamic principles helps and offers an open, contemporary, and complete model irrespective of belief, race or social differences. Islam offers a world that values nobility, individual growth, corporeal necessities and a society devoid of poverty. Islam has laid stress on progressive education, improved family structure and society as one. Balanced family structure, stimulating noble values, maintaining social coherence, morals and social well-being is required in order to keep youth on right track or else they would fall prey to the so-

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called modernization. Implementation of Islamic code of life with subtle blending of modern western principles is keen the need of the hour.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

1. According to you, how many students (%) are influenced with the Western culture?
 2. a. 20% b. 40%
 3. c. 60% d. 80%
4. The adoption of Western culture has increased the responsibility on the university administration.
 - a. a. Agree b. Disagree
5. Westernization has helped in introducing new frontiers for education and raised the quality of education in universities.
 - a. a. Agree b. Disagree
6. With the acceptance of Western culture, the conditions for women have improved.
 - a. a. Agree b. Disagree
7. With the advent of Western culture, the literacy rate of the country has improved.
 - a. a. Agree b. Disagree
8. Westernization has broadened the prospects of knowledge between students.
 - a. a. Agree b. Disagree
9. The adoption of Western culture has improved the overall performance of the students
 - a. a. Agree b. Disagree

10. Westernization has added value to the general well-being of the students
a. a. Agree b. Disagree
11. The merger of Western culture in our country is creating a cultural gap among students
a. a. Agree b. Disagree
12. The acceptance of Western culture is morally degrading the youth of the country
a. a. Agree b. Disagree
13. The occidental culture is inclining the youth of the country towards acquisitiveness
a. a. Agree b. Disagree
14. Youngsters, who follow Western culture are considered as the perfect individuals
a. a. Agree b. Disagree
15. The adoption of Western culture is instigating a clash of values and morals among youth
a. a. Agree b. Disagree
16. By embracing Western culture, English language has subsided the importance of native language of the country
a. a. Agree b. Disagree
17. By accepting Western culture, the youth of the country is moving away from their actual roots
a. a. Agree b. Disagree