**Characteristics of Pakistani society**

Society is derived from a Latin word socious, which means companionship or friendship. According to Professor Wright, Society is not only a group of people, it is the system of relationship that exists between the individual of groups. Every society has distinct characters but primarily they share some common feature. They are:

###### **Mutual Awareness:**

###### Accepting others around you is the first step of creation of a society. An individual alone cannot create a society. He needs others to be part of the group which is called a society.

* **Society consists of Social Relationship:**

Only being aware of people around you does not create a society. Society will be created with there is some interaction and relation among the individuals of the group. Also, actions and behavior of one would affect the other.

###### **Society has Values and norms to guide these Social Relationships:**

###### To create and maintain the social relationships among the individuals of society certain rules and regulations are these rules would enable to maintain harmony and allow the society to functions smoothly.

* **Society has General Goals:**

Every society has some objectives. These objectives would depend on the nature of society an individual lives in. These goals would enable the society to maintain its existence. For example. The most important goal of human society as a whole, irrespective of the nation, is to preserve the environment and to make the world free from threats of war and terrorism so that the future generations would live in peace and

###### **Society has** **a Number of Complementary Social Processes:**

###### Since the members of society have of varied nature and attitude, a society observes various social processes like conflict, cooperation, togetherness. etc.

###### **Society has Division of Labor:**

###### It is impossible for an individual to perform all tasks single handed.

* **Society’s more than the Sum Total of its Members:**

Any society as it develops acquire a force by which is influences its members. It is not just a collection of individuals.

#### ****Likeness:****

Likeness is the most important characteristic of society. Famous sociologist Maclver opines that society means likeness. Without a sense of likeness, there could be no mutual recognition of’ belonging together’ and therefore no society. This sense of likeness was found in early society on kinship and in modern societies the conditions of social likeness have broadened out into the principles of nationality.

Society consists of like bodied and likeminded individuals. Friendship intimacy and association of any kind would be impossible without likeness. It also helps in the understanding of one by the other. That is why F.H. Giddings opines that society rests on the ‘Consciousness of Kind’.

#### ****Differences :****

Along with likeness, differences are another important characteristic of society. Because society involves differences and it depends on it as much as on likeness. That is why Maclver opines that “primary likeness and secondary differences create the greatest of all institutions-the division of labour”. Because differences is complementary to social relationship. If people will be alike in all respect society could not be formed and there would be little reciprocity and relationship became limited. Family as the first society based on biological differences and differences in aptitude, interest and capacity. Though differences is necessary for society but differences by itself does not create society. Hence differences is sub-ordinate to likeness.

#### ****Inter-dependence :****

Interdependence is another important characteristic of society. This fact of interdependence is visible in every aspect of present day society. Famous Greek Philosopher, Aristotle remarked that ‘Man is a social animal’. As a social animal he is dependent on others. The survival and well being of each member is very much depended on this interdependence. No individual is self sufficient.

He has to depend on others for food, shelter and security and for the fulfillment of many of his needs and necessities. With the advancement of society this degree of interdependence increases manifold. Family being the first society is based on the biological interdependence of the sexes. Not only individuals are interdependent but also the groups, communities and societies.

#### ****Co-operation and Conflict:****

Both co-operation and conflict are two another important characteristics of society. Because famous sociologist Maclver once remarked that “Society is Co­operation crossed by conflict”. Co-operation is essentially essential for the formation of society. Without co-operation there can be no society. People can’t maintain a happy life without co-operation. Family being the first society rests on co-operation. Co-operation avoids mutual destructiveness and results in economy in expenditure.

Like co-operation conflict is also necessary for society. Conflict act as a cementing factor for strengthening social relations. In a healthy and well developed society both co-operation and conflict co-exist. Because with the help of these two universal process society is formed. Conflict makes co-operation meaningful. Conflict may be direct and indirect. However both are necessary for society.

#### ****Society is a network or web of social relationship:****

Social relationships are the foundation of society. That is why famous sociologist Maclver remarked that society is a network of social relationship. Hence it is difficult to classify social relationships. But this social relationship is based on mutual awareness or recognition to which Cooley call we-feeling, Giddings call consciousness of kind and Thomas as common propensity. Without these social relationships no society could be formed.

As social relationships are abstract in nature so also the society is abstract in nature. Different kinds of social processes like co-operation, conflict constantly takes place in society. And the relationships established around these create society. Hence a network of social relationships which created among individuals constitutes society.

#### ****Permanent Nature:****

Permanency is another important characteristic of society. It is not a temporary organisation of individuals. Society continues to exist even after the death of individual members. Society is a co-herent organisation.

#### ****Society is Abstract:****

Society is an abstract concept. As Maclver opines society is a web of social relationships. We can’t see this relationship but we can feel it. Hence it is an abstract concept. Wright has rightly remarked that “society in essence means a state or condition, a relationship and is, therefore, necessarily an abstraction”. Besides society consists of customs, traditions, folkways, mores and culture which are also abstract. Hence society is abstract in nature.

#### ****Society is Dynamic**** :

The very nature of society is dynamic and changeable. No society is static. Every society changes and changes continuously. Old customs, traditions, folkways, mores, values and institutions got changed and new customs and values takes place. Society changes from its traditional nature to modern nature. Hence it is one of the most important characteristic of society.

#### ****Comprehensive Culture:****

Culture is another important characteristic of society. Each and every society has it’s own culture which distinguishes it from others. Culture is the way of life of the members of a society and includes their values, beliefs, art, morals etc. Hence culture is comprehensive because it fulfills the necessities of social life and is culturally self-sufficient. Besides each and every society transmits its cultural pattern to the succeeding generations.

* **One of the characteristic of society has its own culture.**
* **It will form a social structure through**[**social institutions i.e. family, education economic, political and religious institutions**](http://www.studylecturenotes.com/basics-of-sociology/what-is-family-institution-meaning-definition-of-family-institution)**. These basic five institutions are found in all societies of the world.**
* **It is always changing**
* **Everyone in**[**society is dependent upon every other member**](http://www.studylecturenotes.com/social-sciences/sociology/135-types-of-society)**.**

Pakistani society is ethnically diverse yet overwhelmingly Muslim. It is largely rural yet beset by the problems of hyper urbanization. Since its independence in 1947, Pakistan has enjoyed a robust and expanding economy--the average per capita income in the mid-1990s approached the transition line separating low-income from middle-income countries--but wealth is poorly distributed. A middle-class is emerging, but a narrow stratum of elite families maintains extremely disproportionate control over the nation's wealth, and almost one-third of all Pakistanis live in poverty. It is a male-dominated society in which social development has lagged considerably behind economic change, as revealed by such critical indicators as sanitation, access to health care, and literacy, especially among females. Increasing population pressure on limited resources, together with this pattern of social and economic inequity, was causing increased disquietude within the society in the early 1990s.

### What is Social Stratification?

Ø      **What is Social Stratification?**

**A system by which society ranks categories of people in a hierarchy;** it is based on four principles:

1.      Social stratification is trait of society, not simply a reflection of individual differences

2.      Social stratification carries over from generation to generation

3.      Social stratification is universal but variable

4.      Social stratification involves not just inequality but beliefs as well

Determinants of Social Stratification

1.      Economic Resource

2.      Occupations

3.      Prestige

4.      Power

5.      Caste

6.      Education

Ø      **Caste and Class Systems**

                                                                    I.      Closed Systems(Allow little change in social Position) Caste system

                                                                 II.      Open Systems(Much more mobility) Class system is more open

Ø      **The Caste System**

A caste system is social stratification based on ascription, or birth.

§         Pure caste system is closed

§         Birth alone determines a person’s entire future

§         People live in rigid categories without any possibility of change

§         Mostly in agrarian societies

§         An illustration of India: Four Castes in Hindu culture

§         Exception to farming families in each caste performs one type of work i.e., priests, soldiers, carpenter etc.

§         Caste system demands that people marry others of the same ranking.

§         Caste guides everyday life by keeping people in the company of “their own kind.”

§         Caste system rest on powerful cultural beliefs.

Ø      **The Class System**

Social stratification based on both birth and individual achievement.

§         Class system are more open than caste system(Universal)

§         Schooling and skills for Mobility

§         As a result, class distinctions become blurred, even blood relative may have different social standings

§         Classification on the basis of color, sex and race seen as wrong in modern societies

§         Work is no longer fixed at birth but involves some personal choice (achieved status based)

§         **Meritocracy:**Social stratification based on personal merit. Equality of opportunity. Inequality of rewards based on individual performance. In a pure meritocracy, social position would depend entirely on a person’s ability and effort. Caste societies define “merit” in terms of loyalty to the system. Caste systems waste human potential but they are very orderly.

### [*Ethnicity in Pakistan*](https://ethnicityinpakistan.blogspot.com/2012/10/EthnicityInPakistan.html)

### *Overview of Ethnicity in Pakistan*

The battle for equality and recognition by an ethnic group is an old and recurring phenomenon. If this struggle gathers momentum, it develops into an ethnic conflict. *Baluchis*, *Punjabis*, *Pashtuns*, *Sindhis*, *Seraikis*, *Muhajirs* and *Chitralis* are the main [*ethnic groups of Pakistan*](http://ethnicityinpakistan.blogspot.com/2012/10/ethnic-groups-in-pakistan.html). Since the emergence of Pakistan on world’s map, the country has had ethnic and linguistic differences among its people, and [**ethnicity in Pakistan**](http://ethnicityinpakistan.blogspot.com/) has existed since it's very inception.

#### Ethnicity

Ethnicity refers to a group of people who have their own-shared common characteristics that distinguish them from most other people in the same society. Biological characteristics that play a part in racial differences may be visible in an ethnic group, but these characteristics do not form a criterion for defining an ethnic group. It is a population whose members identify with each other on the basis of a real or presumed common ancestry. No one has control over at their ethnicity. It relates to your race as well: Asian, African-American, Caucasian or European, Hispanic etc.

Behavioral ethnicity includes the learning of values, belief, behavioral norms, languages or distinctive dialect, by the member of ethnic category during the process of socialization. They use these social values as their basic interaction manifestation.

#### Difference between Race and Ethnicity

*Ethnicity is different than race.***Race** is the classification of people based on physical or biological characteristics sharing different ethnic values. **Ethnicity** incorporates language, religion, demarcation of territory and other cultural traits including historical, political and geographical origins. According to the survey conducted, when asked if one considered oneself associated to any ethnic group, 72% people in some way associated themselves to an Ethnic group.

### *Ethnic Differences and Ethnic Conflicts*

Changes in people’s affinity with any of them may occur over time. *Ethnic differences* among people whether physical or cultural, exist as part of human experience. The recognition of these diversities may be intensified as contacts between two groups grow. Ethnic distinctiveness invokes an innate sense of people-hood.

In many cases some groups gain privileges over others on the basis of their ethnic differences. The primary simulators of the ethnic differences are often economic, social or political power. The cultural differences referred to in ethnic interaction cannot always be reduced without a loss of analytic comprehension. Since one of the main insights from formalist studies of ethnicity is that culture cannot be treated as a fixed and bound system of signs.

Ethnic differences are inevitably linked to violence on a grand scale. The assumption that because conflicts are often ethnic, ethnicity must breed conflict is a huge mistake. But at some instances, ethnic diversities do lead to violence and conflicts. One of the most common *cause of the ethnic conflicts* is, people prefer members of their own group and have active antipathy towards out-group members making conflicts the inevitable result. If the antipathies due to ethnic diversities are so deep that they cannot be resolved, then separation is the only workable solution left.

#### Ethnic Conflicts in Pakistan

Different *ethnic groups* can reside in one nation peacefully if there is less discrimination and despising, but if the struggle to win ethnic rights is constantly hampered, it transforms into a movement for an independent nation. In a country like Pakistan, where economical and political instability prevails, ethnic differences augment with a ferocious pace and the consequences can be dreadful, thus preventing measures must always be taken to reduce these conflicts. History concurs with this notion as *ethnic differences* comprising of economical and military disparities and language controversy lead to a war in 1971 between East and West Pakistan. It resulted in separation of East Pakistan which became Bangladesh. Urdu-Bengali conflict was one of the primary factors which gave birth to Bengali National Movement.