**Pakistani Society**

**What is Society?**

A human society is a group of people involved in persistent social interaction, or a large social grouping sharing the same geographical or social territory, typically subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations. Human societies are characterized by patterns of relationships (social relations) between individuals who share a distinctive culture and institutions; a given society may be described as the sum total of such relationships among its constituent members. In the social sciences, a larger society often evinces stratification or dominance patterns in subgroups.

Insofar as it is collaborative, a society can enable its members to benefit in ways that would not otherwise be possible on an individual basis; both individual and social (common) benefits can thus be distinguished, or in many cases found to overlap.

A society can also consist of like-minded people governed by their own norms and values within a dominant, larger society. This is sometimes referred to as a subculture, a term used extensively within criminology.

More broadly, and especially within structuralist thought, a society may be illustrated as an economic, social, industrial or cultural infrastructure, made up of, yet distinct from, a varied collection of individuals. In this regard society can mean the objective relationships people have with the material world and with other people, rather than "other people" beyond the individual and their familiar social environment.

**Definitions of Society**

August Comte the father of sociology saw society as a social organism possessing a harmony of structure and function. Emile Durkheim the founding father of the modern sociology treated society as a reality in its own right.

In the words of Morris Ginsberg, Society can be defined as

“A collection of individuals united by certain relations or mode of behavior which mark them off from others who do not enter into these relations or who differ from them in behavior.”

According to Talcott Parsons,

“Society is a total complex of human relationships in so far as they grow out of the action in terms of means-end relationship intrinsic or symbolic.”

**What is Culture?**

Culture can be defined as the language, norms, values, beliefs, and more that, together, form a people's way of life. It is a combination of elements that affect how people think, how they act, and what they own. American culture, for instance, includes everything just mentioned. It also includes our history, architecture, accepted behavior, and so much more.

Culture may be defined as behavior peculiar to human beings, together with material objects used. Culture consists of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, codes, institution, tools, techniques, works of arts, ceremonies and so on. According to Allama Iqbal:

"Culture encompasses all the mental, Spiritual and Physical activities of a Nation. It includes the basic beliefs and faith, values and literature, art and architecture, music and mode of dress, manners and customs prevalent in a given Society."

Culture is an essential part of being human. No one is completely without it; in fact, an individual can be part of many cultures and subcultures. For example, someone who lives in the U.S. could be part of the national culture in addition to the distinct culture of the South, a religious community, a heritage group, and more.

**Material vs. Nonmaterial Culture**

There are many, many elements and aspects of culture. However, each can be categorized as either material or nonmaterial culture. Material culture includes all the physical things that people create and attach meaning to. Clothing, food, tools, and architecture are examples of material culture that most people would think of. Natural objects and materials (rock, dirt, trees, etc.) aren't considered to be part of material culture. However, how people view natural objects and how they use them are.

Nonmaterial culture includes creations and abstract ideas that are not embodied in physical objects. In other words, any intangible products created and shared between the members of a culture over time are aspects of their nonmaterial culture. Social roles, rules, ethics, and beliefs are just some examples. All of them are crucial guides for members of a culture to use to know how to behave in their society and interpret the world.

**PAKISTANI CULTURE IS AN ISLAMIC CULTURE**

Pakistan is an ideological Islamic State. Its very existence is due to Islam, so the Pakistani culture is primarily based on the Islamic way of life. All other ingredients of culture are inspired by Islam. Pakistani culture is highlighted by its grandeur, simplicity, firm convictions and noble deeds and ideas.

**SALIENT FEATURES OF PAKISTANI CULTURE**

The main characteristics of Pakistani culture are as follows

1. **Religious Uniformity**

Pakistan came into existence to provide its people a system of life based on Islam. The people ,in spite of some differences of languages, customs and traditions commonly follow one religion of Islam. This is the religion, which is practiced by all people of Pakistan.

1. **Language**

A number of languages are spoken in Pakistan. Some of them are Punjabi, Sindhi, Pushto and Baluchi. But Urdu is spoken and understands in all parts of Pakistan. Being the official language, it is the media of communication between all regions of Pakistan.

1. **Literature and Poetry**

Literature is an important aspect of our cultural life. Most of our poets reflect Islamic code and trend in their poetry. They gave the message of love and brotherhood. Similarity of thoughts amongst poets and writers of all regions is an important factor of our cultural life.

1. **Dress and Diet**

Dress is an important manifestation of culture. The regional dresses of Pakistan undergo changes in the light of local traditions, economic conditions, way of living and wealth in the region. But in all provinces people generally wear Shalwar Qameez.

Our eating habits, foods and social etiquette are strictly in conformity with Islamic principles.

1. **Mixed Culture**

Pakistani culture is a mixed culture although majority of people are Muslims by birth and faith .But there is great influence of Hindu and British culture on the present Pakistani society.

1. **Male Dominated Society**

In Pakistani culture the male member of the family enjoys the key position. Family is headed by a male member and in most cases, he is the soul sources of income for other members of the family.

1. **Arts and Architecture**

The iconoclasm of Islam has given a characteristic form and pattern in the use of elegant

designs, based on geometric figures and floral forms borrowed from nature. The Shah Jahan Masjid, Shalimar Garden, Badshahi Masjid, Shahi Qila and many such graceful buildings are a living proof of the excellent Mughal architecture.

1. **Handicrafts**

Embroidery, Leather works, glazed pottery, wood work, carpet making, metal crafts, ivory are the essential parts of our culture. Pakistani craftsmen are considered as the best in their craftsmanship. They are known for the high quality works which is very popular in foreign countries.

1. **Recreational Activities-Sports**

The recreational activities all over the Pakistan are common. The games like wrestling, hockey, cricket, football, squash, Kabaddi etc. are popular in every part of our country. These games reflect our cultural identity.

1. **Education**

Education contributes a great deal in developing national character. Educational system plays a vital role in the formation of culture, unity and solidarity of a nation.it is, therefore, important that the entire syllabi right from the lower to higher level should be placed in accordance with the ideology of Pakistan.

1. **Religious Festivals**

Festivals play an important part of our culture. Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha are our two main religious festivals .They are celebrated with great happiness throughout the country.

1. **Ulema, Mushaikh and Sufi Poets**

Ulema, Mashaikh and Sufi Poets occupy an honored place in our cultural aspect of life. Sufis like Lal Shahbaz, Data Ganj Baksh, Shah Abdul Lateef, Sachal Sarmast, Hazrat Sultan Bahu and Waris Shah rendered meritorious services for the spread of Islam in the Sub Continent.