

PAKISTANI CULTURAL VALUES AND CHARACTERISTICS

A Culture in Transition ◆ ◆ ◆

Feudalism

As the twenty-first century approaches, Pakistani culture is very much in transition. Although the country is moving from an agrarian to an industrial-based society, it continues to operate in a feudal mode. Employers are perceived as feudal lords; their organizations are their territory, their employees their serfs. Most of today's urban professionals are only the first or second generation to live away from the rural areas and derive their income from something other than agriculture. Strong rural ties and frequent visits to their villages keep them in tune with Pakistan's predominantly feudal mentality.

Hierarchy

Class distinctions are very clear in Pakistan and give rise to a hierarchical society wherein one's status and position determine one's power and control. This is especially true in the

government. Power is centralized in the hands of a few in the public and private sectors. Family-controlled businesses dominate the private sector.

Patriarchy

Pakistan is a patriarchal society. As the family patriarch is held in high regard, so is the patriarch of a business or government ministry.

Status

In direct contrast to the understated way Canadians live and work, status and position are all-important in Pakistan. The higher the position or status, the more the power, respect and authority one commands. Appearance is intimately connected with status. (If you've got it, you flaunt it!) Job titles carry a lot of weight. Who and how many people you invite to your daughter's wedding is a measure of your status. The car you drive reflects your place in society.

Concepts of Time ◆ ◆ ◆

Although there are many exceptions, Pakistanis generally believe that anything not done today can wait until tomorrow. The reasons for this attitude are many. To begin with, the Urdu word for yesterday, *kull*, is the same

word for tomorrow. Although Pakistani society is fast becoming urbanized, its time structure remains rural. Whether the cattle are brought in from the fields at five or six o'clock in the evening is unimportant. If the plough-