

Privacy and Confidentiality ◆ ◆ ◆

According to many Canadian expatriates, confidentiality, as it is known in Canada, does not exist in Pakistan. Although this is not true necessarily, it is fair to say that Canadians value privacy more than Pakistanis. The extended family system in Pakistan does not lend itself to privacy or confidentiality.

Pakistanis are accustomed to asking questions that Canadians may be embarrassed to answer, such as, "How much money do you make?" or "What is your religion?" Expect that everyone on your staff will know how much

the other makes. Remember that walls have ears. Do not underestimate the ability of servants, even those with apparently poor English, to overhear something and pass it on.

Everything that is thrown out is recycled. It is not unheard of to find your discarded letters being used for wrapping paper at the local market. You should shred or burn personal and confidential paper. Any work document or correspondence of value to your office staff will be scavenged, duplicated, and traded for money or favours.

Customs and Traditions ◆ ◆ ◆

Respect for age and parental authority

In Pakistan, the older the person, the greater the respect he or she commands. When an older person walks through the door, it is customary to stand. Within the family, elders are held in high esteem and their wishes respected. Children respect their parents' decisions, even if they disagree. Parents arrange marriages, whether in a traditional or modern household. Even love marriages must be sanctioned by the parents. Many other decisions—whether or not to take a new job, accept a transfer, go abroad for training—require authorization from members of the extended family.

Formalities

Pakistani society is much more formal than Canadian society. There are formalities between men and women, juniors and seniors, children and teachers and most other members of society. How can Canadians learn these formalities? The key is to observe carefully at all times and ask what to do when in doubt. Your Pakistani colleagues and most foreigners who have lived in Pakistan for several years can give you good advice. Be patient; there is lots to learn.

You will be invited to attend many inaugurations, conferences and formal gatherings. In Canada, you would