

---

## **CULTURAL PRECONCEPTIONS**

It is important to consider the perceptions Pakistanis and foreigners have of each other and the historical factors which underlie them in order to

appreciate some of the challenges involved in developing effective partnerships.

### ***The Colonial Legacy* ♦ ♦ ♦**

Prior to Independence in 1947, Pakistan was ruled by Britain. Pakistan's public institutions and system of government are part of Britain's colonial legacy. The British imposed their Victorian class structure on top of the existing Indian caste system and produced an immensely complex social hierarchy, the psychological remnants of which can be seen

today. Under British rule, all power and decision-making was in the hands of expatriate leaders; even the most inconsequential decisions were made by the governor or manager at the top. This hierarchical structure continues in the Government of Pakistan today. The only difference is that the Pakistani elite has replaced the British decision-makers.

### ***How Pakistanis and Foreigners Perceive Each Other* ♦ ♦ ♦**

Westerners arriving in Pakistan may find a wide range of reactions awaiting them, from a warm welcome to resentment. Although it is useful to understand these reactions in an historical and cultural context, one must remember that your relationships with Pakistanis may belie the generalizations made here.

Pakistanis' perceptions of foreigners are rooted in their recent colonial past. In the 1950s and 1960s all white men and women were referred to as *Angraze*, English. With the shift in

global politics and the emergence of the United States as a superpower, the term for white foreigners became *Amreecan*. Owing to what some would describe as the love-hate relationship between Pakistan and the United States over the last several decades, many Pakistanis have mixed feelings toward foreigners. Many still associate them with British colonial rule. Foreigners symbolize the West's cultural and political dominance in the international arena, and cause antagonism, resentment, and the perception that westerners exploit Pakistan for