

## PAK- IRAN CULTURAL & HISTORICAL TIES

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### ABSTRACT

Iran is an important neighbour for Pakistan from the cultural, economic, strategic, political and social point of view. Pakistan has maintained the traditional warmth and cordiality that exists in the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Iran. The main binding force between the two countries is Islam. There are many other factors such as geography, defence, cultural similarities, language and historical background. The roots of these relations are thousands years old. This article discusses all aspects of cultural factor in detail. The two countries have century's old deep rooted cultural relations.

**KEYWORDS:** A Muslim Country, Persian Gulf

### INTRODUCTION

On the west border of Pakistan, Iran is our neighbour. A Muslim country having 830 km common border with Pakistan. Iran has rich cultural, territorial and religious history. Iran is bounded in the north by Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Caspian Sea and Turkmenistan, east by Afghanistan and Pakistan, south by Gulf of Oman and Persian Gulf, and west by Iraq and Turkey. It has an area of 1,648,195 square Km (636,368 sq. miles). The UN gave an estimated population for 2010 of 75.08 million. The official language is Farsi or Persian, spoken by 45.6% of the population in 2003. 28.5% spoke related languages, including Kurdish(9.1%) and Luri in the west, Gilaki and Mazandarami in the North and Baluchi in the South East; 28.3% speak Turkish languages (particularly Azeri), primarily in the North-West. Mainly a desert climate, but with more temperate conditions on the shore of the Caspian Sea. Sar zed azofoughmehr-e-Khavaran' (Rose from the horizon the affectionate sun of the east) words by a group of poet; tune by Dr. Riahi is the national anthem of Iran. The unit of currency is the Rial (IRR) of which 10=1 *tooman*. The official religion of Iran is the Shia branch of Islam.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Descriptive and analytical methods and approaches have been used in the following research. The research is qualitative and is based on primary and secondary documents which are available in Pakistan. The Turabian style of quotation and references is used in this research paper. New research techniques such as use of internet, print and electronic media will also be used to collect the data.

Some primary and secondary sources are used such as:

- Books

- Articles
- Newspapers
- Journals
- Official Reports
- Websites

The method used in my research is mostly descriptive and qualitative.

## RESULTS

The results of my research are to prove the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Iran. The two countries have century's old cultural and social relations which bind the people of these two countries into deep rooted ties. This paper also emphasis on the need of future cooperation between Pakistan and Iran. It also discuss the cultural similarities between Pakistan and Iran in detail. The paper concludes the intensity of close relations between Iran and Pakistan.

## DISCUSSIONS

Iran is a country in the Islamic world with which Pakistan has always had very strong ties. It is not only a neighbour but also a country with which Pakistan has age old relations based on cultural, ethnic and spiritual links. The Islamic republic of Iran and the Islamic republic of Pakistan have pre-historic relations. The ancient Indus valley civilization had deep rooted relations with civilization of Mesopotamia. On the coastal areas people had social, cultural and traditional relations. The Harappen culture of Pakistan imported metals like silver, turquoise, copper and lapis lazuli from Persia. The origin of cultures of both countries is same, when Aryans came and made settlements here. The Persian culture has a vide impact on South Asia. The Persian culture has two main parts, the pre-Islamic and post Islamic period. There are two types of culture, material and non-material. The beliefs, poetry, customs, literature and thoughts are included in non-material culture while architecture, irrigation system jewellery and dress are material cultures.

There had been many similarities in the architecture, poetry, paintings, calligraphy, cuisine, music, arts and crafts and many others. Even today the classical Persian manuscript can be seen on historical buildings in Pakistan. Iranian influence is visible in Pakistan's languages and culture. In particular, Urdu, the national language of Pakistan has been heavily influenced by the Persian language and its poetic traditions. Urdu language has borrowed many phrases, metaphors and words from Persian language. In a famous book Tahqiq Ma ul Hind the historian Abu Rehan Al Biruni describes the Iranian and Indian cultures in detail.

The Western parts of Pakistan were the part of Persian Empire. In the northern areas of Pakistan an Urdu speaking tribe of Iran named Qizilbash is also settled. There is also tremendous goodwill for Iran among the Pakistani people. Jashen Nawruz and Mehrgan festivals are celebrated both in Iran and northern areas of Pakistan such as Chitral and Gilgit Baltistan. UNESCO has recognized Jashen nawruz as an Intangible cultural heritage of humanity. The word naw means new and ruz means days. These are the celebrations made in order to welcome the spring season.

The Mughal kings were highly influenced by Persian style of politics, the architecture, paintings and script.

At that time the official language of the sub-continent was Persian. Most of the buildings of Mughal period have been constructed in the same manner as in Iran. The both countries also exchange architects. The Persian manuscript is also evident on these building.

### **The Similarities between Pakistani Culture and Iranian Culture**

Being close neighbours and Muslim states Pakistan and Iran has a lot of cultural similarities. These similarities reflect their influence on the socio-cultural aspects of both countries. The Persian language has deep impact on Urdu, while many terms and words of Persian language are also a part of Urdu language. In other words we can say that Urdu language becomes a substitute of Persian in the sub continent. The manuscript of both languages has a lot of similarities. Persian was the official language of darbar for a long times in sub-continent. The followers of other religions other than Islam were also speaking Persian language, Imam Abu Hanifa and Naqshbandia series has Persian origins.

The Hazara tribe in Pakistan still speaks Persian. In architecture, painting, weaving, pottery and calligraphy these similarities are obvious. Most of the marriage ceremonies having same style in Pakistan and Iran. Iranian migrants and Islamic preachers had left long lasting impression on the people and civilization of the Indo-Pak Subcontinent and Persian became a widely spoken and also as an official language till 19<sup>th</sup> century. The architecture of Mughals reflects Iranian architecture. The Maintenance of large gardens is a distinctive feature in Iran. Taj-Mahal garden is of Persian gardens style having a waterway in quadrilateral plane. Mughal architecture follows the Persian style of constructing minarets. The construction of Masajids also follows the Persian pattern. Indeed, the renewal of cultural and religious similarities between Iran and Pakistan would go a long way. The tomb of Shah Rukn-e-Alam in Multan, Dewan-e-Khas and Shalimar gardens in Lahore is a reflection of Persian architecture.

Polo, boxing, swimming and shooting are the popular game in both countries. The cooking style is similar in many ways. Use of meat, Kebab, Biryani, Kharahi, Tikka and salads are very common in both countries. Being the Islamic states, Ramadan is observed as the Holy month in both countries. Sehri and Iftari, chand raat and Eid celebrations are common also. Eid Milad-e-Nabi, Moharrum, Aushora and Shab-e-Barat and other religious ceremonies are commonly celebrated in both countries. Dress similarities can be seen such as hijab is common in women; Iranian triangular scarf is also used in Pakistan. Being the Muslim countries, dressing has many similarities.

Poetry is a highly respected art and profession in Pakistan. The pre-eminent form of poetry in Pakistan almost always originates in Persian, due to the long standing affiliation in both regions with the Persian Empire. Allama Muhammad Iqbal wrote a large part of his poetry in Persian. The Iranian people have a great love and affiliation for the poet of the East. In 1915 Iqbal wrote poetry book *Asrar-e-Khudi* in Persian language which was equally popular in Iran and Sub-continent. Iqbal's poetic works are written primarily in Persian rather than Urdu. Among his 12,000 verses of poetry, about 7,000 verses are in Persian. In 1915, he published his first collection of poetry, the *Asrar-e-Khudi* in Persian. The poems emphasise the spirit and self from a religious, spiritual perspective. Many critics have called this Iqbal's finest poetic work.

The same idea was used by Farid- ud- Din Attar in his *Mantaq-ul-Tair*. He proves by various means that the whole universe obeys the will of the Self. *Rumuz-e-e-Bekhudi* is also written in Persian and published in 1917 this group of poems has as its main themes the ideal community, Islamic ethical and social principles, and the relationship between the individual and society. Even though he is true all through to Islam, Iqbal also recognises the positive analogous aspects of

other religions. The Rumuz-e-Bekhudi explains the emphasis on the self in the Asrar-e-Khudi and the two collections are often put in the same volume under the title *Asrar-e-Rumuz (Hinting Secrets)*. It is addressed to the world's Muslims. In 1927 Zaboore-e-Ajam and in 1932 Javed Nama also wrote in Persian. He said,

است شکر عذوبت در اردو گرچه

*Garche Urdū dar uzūbat shekhar ast*

است تر شیرین دري گفتار طرز

*Tarz-e goftar-e Dari shirin tar ast*

Translation: *Even though in sweetness Urdu is sugar – (but) speech method in Dari (Persian) is sweeter*

Hafiz Sherazi and Omer Khayyam are popular in Pakistan as is Iqbal in Iran; above all we are linked together by the permanent bond of our common faith Islam. So relations between Iran and Pakistan have traditionally been close, cordial, deeprooted and cooperative. Persian literature is popular in Pakistan. Persian is offered as an elective subject in Pakistan's educational institutions. Every middle school and upward institution employs at least one Persian teacher. Pakistan has recently revived the Chair for Urdu and Pakistan Studies at the Tehran University and a scholar from Punjab University, Dr. Tehseen Firaqi has been appointed by Pakistan to assist the Urdu Faculty of Tehran University where about 80 students are studying Pakistani languages. Urdu literature is heavily indebted to Persian, its smiles, metaphors and adages. Hikayat-e-Saadi is commonly used by the people of Pakistan. Every year groups of students visited Iran

The importance of Persian language in the Indo-Pak subcontinent can be assumed by following some reasons:

- At several shrines the music played was brought from Persia.
- Several Pakistani regional languages borrow thousands of their words from Persian language.
- Imam Abu Hanifa was also of Persian origin followed by Sunni sect of the subcontinent.
- The textbooks that Indians selected during the last one thousand years to teach Arabic and Persian languages at religious schools are mostly the literary works of the Persians.
- The families of scholars who migrated from Persia to India after the advent of Islam.
- Over the past eight centuries the people of India considered the Persian language the most appropriate for producing their works on the various subjects like mathematics, astronomy, astrology, metaphysics, chemistry, medicine, logic, philosophy, mysticism, ethics, law, music and the other fine arts, geography, sociology, religious studies, history, biography, travelling and the others.
- Many Sufi orders and the exponents of the important scholars of jurisprudence came from Persia to India. Most of them were Persians who developed their thoughts in a Persian environment.

Pakistan and Iran are neighbours, connected by the thinly populated Baluchistan region split between them. There is a long history of contact and joint influence between the two nations, with segments of Pakistani culture directly descended from Iranian cultures. However, today their relations are complex, driven by geo-political aspirations and internal and external factors.

Relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have since the common prehistoric Indo-Iranian heritage. The Western region of Pakistan was one part of the eastern most satraps' provinces of Persian Empire which included the areas of Satraps provinces of present-day Pakistan. Many extremely old and historic buildings in Pakistan have classical Persian writings on manuscript of the buildings. After the establishment of Pakistan on August 1947, Iran has a unique distinction of being the first country to internationally recognise the status of Pakistan.

The National Anthem of Pakistan, while written in Urdu, has heavy poetic vocabulary from Persian. Many distinctly Persian forms of literature, such as Ghazal, Qasida, Marsia and Nazms, directly carried over into Urdu literature, producing a distinct melding of Persian heritages. A famous cross-over writer was Amir Khusro, who's Persian and Urdu couplets are to this day read in Pakistan. Allama Iqbal, the renowned poet-philosopher and the national poet of Pakistan, wrote much of his poetry in the Persian. He is known as *Iqbal-e-Lahori* among Persian-speakers. *Hikat-e-Saddi* is a popular book in Pakistan also found in Urdu Translation.

Many self-finance Iranian students are given admission in various educational institutions of Pakistan, according to Pakistan, the Punjab University, Karachi University and Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad, remains among the most popular institutions for the Iranian students. Each and every year, the Iranian media delegations have been visiting Pakistan since 2004, many journalists settled in Pakistan. These visits have played an effective role in promoting mutual understanding and projection of better image of Pakistan in Iran. The visits of Iranian media and journalists play an effective role in promoting mutual understanding and projection of better image of Pakistan in Iran.

Both countries are promoting tourism. Cultural visits are often held. Cuisine in Iran is one of the oldest in the world having similarities with Pakistani cuisine. Baking of bread and cooking of rice having similarity. The traditional sweet dishes are common between the two countries. Meat is an important part of cuisine.

### **The Place of Baluchistan in Pakistan –Iran Relations**

Baluchistan and Seistan the Baloch province of Iran are two neighbouring provinces. In this way Baluchistan is the first step of Pak-Iran socio-cultural relations. The balochs of two countries have same traditions and culture. The Baloch tribes on both sides having same linguistic, cultural and ethnical traditions. The Iranian cultural centre in Quetta making efforts for the enhancement and promotions of socio-cultural relations with Iran e. g. the exchange of scholars, intellectuals, professors, businessmen and students for academic purposes. Courses of languages and calligraphy are a distinct feature of cultural centres. According to Napoleon, "The geography of a country determines its foreign policy."

The geo- strategic location of Baluchistan is of keen importance in Pak-Iran relation. The Baloch living in Pakistani Baluchistan and Seistan implications on Pak-Iran relations. Baluchistan is one of the four provinces of Pakistan, which has a close geographical closeness with Iran. This province is one of the leading factors accountable for overall relationship between Pakistan and Iran. The geo-strategic location of Baluchistan makes it the most attractive province for transit route to Iran The common border-line is for the regular interactions between the Baloch communities living in Pakistani Baluchistan and Seistan (Iranian Baluchistan), and also the interaction between Hazara's community living in Quetta and Qum and the other major cities of Iran. The Baloch of Pakistani Baluchistan and Seistan Baluchistan of Iran have a same customs and tradition. The strategic corporation gas pipeline projects and construction of seaport, oil refinery and oil at Gwadar further increase the significance of Baluchistan as an important energy conduit in the region.

There are a number of towns and villages where the houses penetrate both sides of the border. For example, the towns of Ridee and Balu in Turbat. There are five border districts predominantly inhabited by Baloch and Barhvi population. They are Panjgur, Chagai, Wasuk, Turbat and Gwader. Previously, Kharan was an important and largest district in the area wise, which bordered Iran. But after the formation of three new districts in Baluchistan, there has been border demarcation.

The Baloch living on across the border have dual nationality. The people from the both sides of the boundary line frequently cross the border for various purposes which include the following:

- To see relatives, dependents and family members.
- Social visits to friends, vacation, and tourism.
- Cultural visits e. g. attendance of marriages, ceremonies, burial ceremonies, naming ceremonies.
- Visit to seek employment.
- Trade and business visits.

The social visits include tourism, meeting with friends, and spending vacations there. These visits are common among the family members. Friends of the family members, often travel with them. Social visits are widespread in border towns. In normal life upsetting business, social and cultural relations when the people of Iranian Baluchistan and Pakistani Baluchistan cross the border line for one reason, or the other, that does not own the feeling that they are entering the foreign land.

Inter-marriages are common among the Baloch. The system inter-marriages have been in practice for centuries. The system is supported by two leading factors. First, the family bond which can be served and strengthened by finding match across the borders. It is more common in the case of arranged marriage with a close family members living on both sides. Secondly, further opportunities of interaction by making a fresh relationship, a party from either side through third party may come up with proposal of marriage. The student exchange across the borders is very limited in the case of two communities. The student's ratio is however very small, it should have been larger. Students studying across the border are exempted from limitations.

Many ethnic and social Pakistani groups having traces of their parentage in Iran. Especially the Baluchi people often visited Iran even without visa. Iranian students are awarded by scholarships by the government of Pakistan every year. They continue their education in various disciplines e.g. medical, engineering, theology, pharmacy and other technical programmes. Self financed Iranian students also studying in Pakistani universities. Iranian media delegations, journalists and tourists also frequently visit Pakistan every year. These visits improve socio-cultural relations between Pakistan and Iran. Some of the Pakistani officials also have their ancestors in Iran.

The present day arts and crafts of the two counties having many similarities. Many antique and historic buildings in Pakistan, on their manuscript have classical Persian writing. Persian is taught in many universities and colleges of Pakistan. On the events of joy and happiness, cultural visits are very often. Especially on Eid and any urs of saints, people of both countries visited such as PirShorah in Seistiyari, ShazeniPir and Rakal Shah at Chowkat.

Due to the geo-strategic location of Baluchistan, it occupies a supreme significance in the context of Pak-Iran

relations because it is the only Province which shares direct border with Iran. The province plays a front and leading role in Pak-Iran cultural and social relations and enhances the bonds of friendship. Cross border trade is also possible by this province. The movements of people across the border also increase the socio-cultural and economic links between the people of two countries.

- The cultural interaction and people to people interaction achieved a progress in political and international diplomatic and economic relations. The people of these two provinces have a homogeneous culture and traditions, common faith and interests from centuries. It also reflects the nature of relationship between the people of two provinces.
- The Pakistani Port Gwader and the Iranian Port Chabahar are the major source of trade between Pakistan and Iran. These ports also provide employment to the local masses. The joint venture refinery in Hub is of significant importance in promoting business and trade also. Taftan-Minjaveh, Ladgashtjalaq, Parome-Kuhak, Mand-Peshin and Santsar-Nobandan are the important places for border trade particularly.
- Islamic Revolution of Iran had a profound and deep influence on the socio-cultural developments between Iran and Pakistan.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2004, on the occasion of the visit of Engineer Hussain Amini, the Governor of Seistan Baluchistan, and Owis Ghani, the Governor of Pakistani Baluchistan, declared Seistan Baluchistan and Pakistani Baluchistan as twin provinces. According to the agreement both the sides stressed the need for close interaction and the exchange of teachers and students between the two provinces. Both the provinces take joint and collective steps for the eradication of smuggling, illegal trade and drug trafficking. The provinces of Seistan will provide techniques and experts for the modernization of irrigation system in the province of Pakistani Baluchistan. The governments of the two countries provide maximum facilities and cooperation to travellers and visitors of across the border and the visa formalities for passengers would be relaxed. The illegal crossing of border is discouraged and discarded and complete security is provided to the visitors.

Some areas of Baluchistan such as coastal areas of Makran are facilitated by electricity from Iran. The use of Iranian electricity by the border Baloch is a major source of jubilation as there is no load shedding there compared to other areas of Baluchistan which remain plunged in darkness for long hours. The demand for Iranian electricity is growing in Kharan, Noshki etc that their areas also be hooked to the Iranian supply of electricity.

On 9<sup>th</sup> March, 1956 a cultural agreement was signed between Iran and Pakistan. According to the agreement the two countries has to work to enhance cultural cooperation. To increase technical, scientific and cultural exchange some more agreements were signed on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1999, and on 2003. The Khana Farhang Iran are working for the promotion of cultural cooperation. In 1992 Persian language research institute was established in Pakistan. In 1995 Persian teacher programme was started.

## CONCLUSIONS

After independence Iran was the first country to recognise Pakistan. Shah of Iran was the first Head of State having state visit to Pakistan. Quaid-e-Azam advocated for the pro-Iranian policy. He declares Iran as closest Muslim neighbour, also laid stress on the importance of cordial relations with Iran in particular and the Muslim world in general.



Among the Pakistani nation Iran is a popular, and favourable Muslim nation. Many Pakistani families have ancestors in Iran. According to a survey report 76% of Pakistanis respect and The Urdu literature is heavily in-debt to Persian literature. Persian was also the official language of the Indo-Pak subcontinent in Mughal period. An Iranian stamp commemorating the centenary of Mohammad Ali Jinnah printed in 1976. Iranian and Pakistani people have deep rooted cultural relations.

These relations have a vast historical background. The people of the two nations have love, affection and brotherhood. The two neighbouring countries have many cultural similarities. These similarities are also a cause of bilateral and fraternal relationship. Especially the people living in border areas like Baluchies' have a deep love and brotherhood with Irani people. They have inter-marriages, common festivals and trade relations also. The future relations of two Muslim countries have a vast perspective due to these social and cultural ties. The geographical position of the two countries is of vital importance. It proves a strong defence barrier for Muslim countries of the Middle East. The satisfactory relations and ever increasing warmth can also be useful in improving bilateral trade and for controlling terrorism.

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