

Pakistan (1947–51) – Social and Cultural Divisions

Introduction to Divisions

After Pakistan was created in 1947, the new country faced many challenges. People from different regions had their own languages, customs, and traditions. The country was divided into East and West Pakistan, which were far apart and very different. Refugees coming from India also created pressure on society. The government found it difficult to unite everyone under one national identity.

Language Issues

One of the biggest problems was language. Urdu was chosen as the national language, but most people in East Pakistan spoke Bengali. They felt ignored and protested against Urdu's dominance. Students in Dhaka gave their lives in 1952 for Bengali. Other groups like Sindhi, Punjabi, Balochi, and Pashto speakers also wanted respect for their languages. This issue created mistrust and later became one of the reasons behind the breakup of Pakistan in 1971.

Regional and Ethnic Divisions

West Pakistan had many provinces with different ethnic and cultural identities. Punjab was dominant in politics and the army, while smaller provinces like Sindh, Balochistan, and NWFP felt ignored. East Pakistan also believed it was economically and culturally neglected. Tribal areas were not fully integrated, and weak institutions could not solve these issues. These regional divisions created long-lasting mistrust between different groups.

Social Challenges

Pakistan faced huge social problems in its early years. Millions of refugees (Muhajirs) came from India and needed food, jobs, and houses. This created tension with local people in different provinces. Poverty and unemployment increased, and health and education systems were weak. There was also a big gap between rural and urban lifestyles. Old traditions clashed with modern ideas, making it difficult to shape a stable society.

Cultural Identity and Nation Building

Pakistan struggled to create one national culture. The government promoted Islam as a unifying identity, but regional cultures like Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi, Pashto, and Bengali wanted recognition. The central government's focus on uniformity clashed with regional pride. Literature, arts, and media showed this cultural struggle. Because the government did not make an inclusive cultural policy, many groups felt excluded, and nation-building became slow and difficult.