

## **Pakistan's National Character and Quality of Individual: Impact on National Power**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research attempts to explore Pakistan's national character and quality of the individual as factor in the national power of Pakistan. Based on quantified observation and symptomatic research methods, the study finds that Pakistan's national character is philistine in nature, where it becomes difficult for the people to change their social milieu for better and improve their life. The quality of individual in Pakistan is found to be mundane in general. Individuals hailing from the common social backgrounds pursue self-serving values; develop apathetic, hostile and authoritarian attitudes; and aggressive behaviour when they attain any position of authority. Pakistan's national character and quality of the individual contribute restrictively to the national power of Pakistan. Nevertheless, the study finds streaks of hope and optimism in the people of Pakistan- especially the younger generation- who yearn to engender values of inclusiveness, positive change, patriotism, and mutual well-being to enhance national power potential and create a better Pakistan.

**Key Words:** Pakistan, National Character, Quality of Individual, Values, Attitudes, National Power & Social Conflict.

### **Introduction**

Many social scientists have considered national character and quality of the individual as important elements of national power (Morgenthau, 1973, & Hartman, 1983). All state and society institutions are constituted by the people whose character, behaviour and attitudes influence the degree to which these institutions are effectively performing. It also determines the social integration and level of motivation with which the people act and interact with one another across the state and society relationships. This forms an important part of nation's ability to pursue and achieve its internal and external objectives (Hartman, 1983). How a people think and act can be objectively seen in their day to day life: the way they work, organize, interact and behave with one another; perform their roles and duties; act as officials, citizens, artisans, farmers, teachers, businessmen and so on. The behaviour of the people of Pakistan can be gleaned from observance of their day to day national life as it has evolved since country's independence. This

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includes their behaviour in times of crisis and adversity; and their value pursuance and attitudes. National character and the quality of the individual in Pakistan is also important because the people translate power potentials of a nation into realized or actual power. Therefore “People are the real wealth of a nation” (Human Development Report, 2010). It is the character of the people and the quality of their individuals that is the ultimate arbiter of development, dignity, liberty and happiness of nations. Strength of character and level of individual’s honesty and dedication can not only translate the tangible potentials into national power and development, but also can compensate for any lack in the material endowments of a nation. Conversely, if national character and human material were underdeveloped, even huge tangible attributes of national power would be squandered away- and the condition of national collapse could prevail. Human history and many current situations showcase the afore-mentioned positive and negative national scenarios. The basic quest of this research is the exploration of national character of Pakistan and quality of the individual to determine its impact on the ability of Pakistani nation-state to progress and develop itself and pursue dignity and wellbeing in the comity of nations. The research also seeks hope and optimism, especially in the young Pakistanis, who seem to yearn for the values of positive change, patriotism, well-being and development to create a better Pakistan.

### **Statement of the problem**

National character and the quality of individual is important element of national power that interacts with historical experience, geography, politics, economics and culture of the nation and imparts power to achieve national goals. National character of the people of Pakistan seems to be philistine in nature, which depicts low self-esteem and inertia in changing their environment for better. The overall quality of the individual in Pakistan is subdued, lacks in self-awareness, self-respect and positive capacity. There are attributes of hope and resilience in the people, but national character and quality of the individual contribute restrictively towards Pakistan’s national power.

### **Research methods**

This research is exploratory in nature and qualitative in practice. Data and quantities have been used to measure national character and quality of the individual. Based on quantified observation and symptomatic research approach, salient characteristics of the people of Pakistan have been highlighted. Since day to day life of nation is reflected in the newspapers and media reports, these resources are used adequately in the research. Scholarly works, reputed journal articles and institutional reports have also been used extensively. The data from United Nations HDI Report, Global Peace Index, Fragile State Index, World Bank, and World Values Survey have also been incorporated to support the research

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argument. The study employs the empirical data to measure the qualities of trust, violence, apathy and deprivation to assess the national character and individual's quality. This mix-method approach involves collecting, analyzing and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data for analyzing the research question. Primary sources form an important part of the study in which archival material, official websites and interviews have been used.

### **Literature review and theoretical perspective**

Erich Fromm (1956, 50-55) opines that "character is a conditional group of attitudes which is created by social influence operating upon the temperamental basis." He defines social character as "the core of the character common to most members of a culture, in contradistinction to the individual character, in which people belonging to the same culture differ from each other" (Fromm 1962, 62). The social scientists like Hans Kohn, Joseph Frankel, Frederick Hartmann, Morgenthau and Banse believe that territorial, historical, psychological and social dimensions shape the attitudes of a people, and consequently different nations tend to develop their own peculiar ways of thinking and acting, some of which could be more useful than others for the power of the nation-state (Frankel, 1968, 89). Hans Kohn (1952) observes that "life in a common territory, subject to the same influences of history and legal systems, produces certain common attitudes and traits, often called national character." Ewald Banse (1934, 6) opines that:

[E]verything a region contains- the shape and structure of the ground, the sky and atmosphere, vegetation and crops, buildings and means of communications, coalesces in the land to form a concrete picture. All the rest - race and nationality, historical past, economic activity, cultural achievement and psychological structure- solidifies in the people to form an intelligible character.

National Character represents relatively functional personality characteristics and patterns that are prototypes in the adult citizens of society. It is because most individuals behave in line with the prevalent norms of their society (Peabody, 1985, 419). In other words it is the sum total of the habits and attitudes, desires and inclinations, views and opinions, motives and standards, beliefs and ideas, and hopes and aspirations of an individual which he shares with other members of his nation (Raffiuddin, 1963, 12). Dostoevsky holds that individual remains a nation's spokesmen, on whom the inquiry should finally depend for revelation of a nation's psychology (Demiashevich, 1938, 4-6). The common characteristics are accumulated when majority of the people occupy a common territory; resulting in a degree of integration which refers to the sense of belonging and identification of a nation's citizens. Historical experiences and traditional values undoubtedly are

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important, as are such factors as geographic location and environment (Morgenthau, 125-127). The Russian mistrust of the external world, for instance, is historically verifiable as part of their national character, whether it is because of the centuries of Tartar rule or three European invasions within a period of about 125 year (Spanier & Wendzel, 186-192). Russian endurance and persistence is also considered as their character trait. Same is the case with German's thoroughness, American's innovation and the Englishman's rationality.

The psychosocial approach places special importance on the individuals' position within society and on his/her social structure. So the individual and the society interact with one another. Erikson's eight stages integrate the interplay of culture, social conditions and individual's psychology (Eyadat, 2009). Each successive stage in a child's life has a specific linkage to one of the founding elements of society (Erikson, 1950, 250). Conflicts in society occur due to relative power, social distance, social class, inequality, inconsistent values and norms, or breakdown in them. An opposite and diverse character of values and norms of the actors generates antagonism among them (Sorkin, 1969, 143). Antagonism depletes the social capital, which is a valuable means of correcting social disorders. Social capital facilitates individual or collective action generated by relationships and trust (Putnam, 1995, 65-78). Social capital reduces the instance of conflict and enables the individual and groups to cooperate. The quality of individuals is an important determinant of a nation's ability to pursue goals and prevail in crisis situations (Rais, 2015). The pursuance of nation's core values and constitutional norms, display of benevolent attitudes by those in the positions of authority- are the means for correcting the misperceptions, and enabling people to cooperate despite them. The presence of balanced individuals in a society guarantees that social conflict would remain low across the society; and the conditions of trust, compassion and integration would be promoted. The distances between people on the common components of socio-cultural space such as differences in language, religions, ethics, law, wealth, power, prestige, and class determine the magnitude of internal conflict. It is the nationalisation of the socio-cultural space, historical experience, political and economic contexts which synchronises the individual action towards the common goals (Pickel, 2009, 9-10).

## **Pakistan's national character and quality of the individual**

W.I. Thomas has explained the social personalities of groups by employing the idea of social generalization of personalities as "typical line of genesis" (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1961, 934-940). His three broadly accepted personality generalisations are: Creative, Bohemian and Philistine. Taking observation as criterion, the social personality of the Pakistani people seems to correspond to the philistine nature (Ahsan, 2003, 339-349). A philistine adopts a set of attitudes that is so gravely innate that it practically stops development of new attitudes towards the prevailing conditions of his life. He is extremely traditionalist and reluctant to change. It is because his mind accepts only that which has become a dominant part of his social conditions. The only chance for his transformation lies in the change brought about in his social environments either by evolution or revolution. As long as the environments don't change, the attitudes of a philistine are difficult to

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change. A philistine is a conformist; he accepts tradition and is unable to struggle with persistence. If there are indications that he might not succeed in his enterprise, the future becomes obscure and struggle seems meaningless to him. Ewald Banse (1934, 55) writes that a philistine is “hopelessly bewildered by the smallest interruption of the normal course of events, looking at the whole world from the standpoint of his little ego and judging it accordingly.” Philistine is “a person deficient in liberal culture and refinement; one without appreciation of the nobler aspirations and sentiments of humanity; one whose scope is limited to selfish and material interests (Webster’s American Dictionary, 1828). The philistine social personality of the people of Pakistan is evidenced by their general intellectual inertness, ideological uncertainties and lack of innovation (Global Innovation Index, 2020). Pakistanis tend to be an easy prey to almost any idea or slogan, which they think provided a definition of or a solution to their problems (Malik, 2021). Pakistanis can be easily instigated and aroused. They are generally content with their social milieu. They talk about change, but practically do little to actually bring about the change. When faced with opposition or challenge, they get frustrated. They personify Aitzaz Ahsan’s (2003, 339-349) typical “Indus Person,” who is a “good soldier and subordinate, but a bad administrator. He is a family person and produces just enough to live comfortable”- reflecting his philistine personality.

The people of Pakistan show lack of innovation and are reluctant to change their social milieu for better. This trait appears to be the result of their overall historical experience with authoritarian suppression and insecurity. The dismal record of patents, trade-marks and industrial designs awarded to Pakistani individuals, universities and industrial set ups confirms this tendency (Global Innovation Index, 2020). The people of Pakistan lack self-confidence which is visible in their behaviour, especially during a crisis situation. “Unfortunately it is somewhat common in our national life to appear supremely confident before the crisis. Any mention of impending difficulties is regarded as a sign of pessimism” (Khan, 1985). This complacency stems from a sense of under-confidence, inability to analyse the threats and handle them appropriately. It is a common observation that Pakistan’s national Cricket and Hockey players find it difficult to play under pressure (“Why do Pakistani Batsmen crumble under pressure?”, 2012). Even the best players tend to give in cheaply; although under favourable conditions, they might have performed as good, and at times even better, than their world-class counterparts. In much the same way, the people of Pakistan work reasonably well under the circumstances that they think are favourable. But they tend to fret under stress or when there is a doubt that their endeavour might not succeed.

The people show low level of self-esteem. The lingering effects of the colonial rule which has sapped the national pride; repressive authoritarian regimes; political and economic instability- all have contributed to low level of self-esteem. Consequently, Pakistanis get easily impressed by the foreign products, fashions and ideas. “Look at advertisements for renting out houses. Many of them openly say “foreigners preferred” or “only for foreigners”. Advertisement for marriage often say “a young man with a Green Card wants a wife” or a “young lady with

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Green Card wants a husband.” The accumulation of external debt and the consistent pledge for bail-out packages from the international donors is a sign of low self-esteem, especially of the ruling elite of Pakistan. The people tend to compensate for their lost pride and self-respect by displacement activities like pursuance of wealth, and materialism (Dar, 2015); aggressiveness that shows in mutual hostility, lack of courtesy and sadistic trends (Hooper and Yousaf, 2012, 2-3); selfishness that shows in indifference to other's pain, jealousy and pulling one another down (Rehman, 2011). The younger generation of Pakistan tends to exhibit radicalized behaviours. It has been observed by the former Director General Intelligence Bureau that the two generations after General Zia ul Haq's martial law regime (1977-1988) have been radicalized, and it would take many years more to change the mind-set of these generations (Khalil, 2016). There is limited sense of discipline in the people of Pakistan. Authority in any form or guise earns a negative reaction from them. Their experience with authority has mostly been that of insult and apathy. The lack of discipline in the people might well be a reaction to their experience with authority. It appears that the people of Pakistan have some internal chaos, dissatisfaction and un-fulfilment. This seems to be the result of the adverse psychosocial conditions that they have experienced (Erikson, 1950. 247-274). As a result, they disregard rules, traffic lights and standard operating procedures. The scenes at bus stops, railway stations, airports, cinema houses, stadiums, offices and factories- are manifestations of low level of discipline in the people (Ahmad, 1997, 208). The disregard to order and orderliness is especially evident by the traffic on the roads of Pakistan (Faizi and Zubairi, n.d); which shows that the people lack the road sense; self-discipline and safety culture-making them inchoate and disorderly in their national life.

A renowned columnist had observed in 1985 that “ungratefulness has become our national character. We are all the time full of complaints, like a musical instrument is ever full of music. Probe anyone, he would sing the sad songs of complaint and ungratefulness” (Rashid, 1985). About 36 years later, attitude of ungratefulness seems to have become more prevalent. It is also because the genuine complaints of the masses have multiplied and their sense of betrayal has increased. There is more inflation; more agonizing official procedures; more apathy of government functionaries; more crime and violence; and reduced chances of getting justice from the courts. Main concern of 87 % of Pakistanis is crime; corruption is the main concern for 59 % of them, and poor quality education of their children is the main concern for 57 % Pakistanis (World Values Survey 2012). There has been at least 50 per cent increase in all categories of crimes in Pakistan during 2003-2014 (Crime Data and Analysis 2001-2015). Considering the lack of efficiency of the police and low conviction rates by the courts, the complaints of the people of Pakistan have genuine grounds. The data on murders portrays a culture of violence in Pakistan. In period 2003-2014, about 142034 persons have been murdered; and 172279 persons have been attempted to be murdered. Murder rate in Pakistan is seven times higher than China and twice the murder rate of India (The Next Generation Report, 2014). There is evidence showing that the suicides in Pakistan are steadily increasing since 2001, when about 3000 suicide cases were reported nationally (“One million people commit suicide every year” 2010). Suicide cases are grossly under-reported. There is evidence that suicides by young people, and mothers and fathers with small children are rising due to pressures of poverty, unemployment, depression and

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anxiety. About 50 percent suicides are committed due to poverty and economic hardships. The rise in crime, spike in murder and suicide cases underscores the presence of anomic conditions indicating that normlessness and callousness have increased in the people. While poverty and adverse economic conditions may have impacted on suicide rates in recent years, the role of problematic interpersonal relationships and mental illness are also contributory factors in cases of suicides. Population-based prevalence studies give high figures for depression in Pakistan. In one study, 44.4% (male 25.5% and female 57.5%) of the cohort was found to be suffering from depression for more than a year (Husain et al, 2000, 395-402). Other studies have found prevalence of anxiety in 66% and depression in 60% of women. Uncertain economic conditions, erosion of public confidence in national institutions, and an unstable political situation seem to have created a sense of pessimism in the people (Khan & Prince, 2003, 67-69). The protective shock absorbers of religion, culture and social capital seem to become less effective. This tends to accentuate the level of distress and depression in the people. A report reveals that the people have become very rigid, inflexible in their thinking, and confused about religion.

Pakistanis seem to have major issues around "trust" because they have lived in the heightened security during war against terrorism. "After all, you never know who is living next door; your neighbours could be a suicide bomber" ("Pakistan becoming 'psychological pressure cooker'- say psychiatrists", 2012). The people of Pakistan are suffering from an epidemic of violence. Most of them see violence on the TV screens, social media and newspapers. A large number, especially the young Pakistanis, suffer violence in the family or extended family, educational institutions; or through crimes, police encounters, political and sectarian conflicts. A seminal study on youth violence indicates that 22 per cent of the next generation Pakistanis are victims of violence (The Next Generation Report, 2014, viii), and most of the remaining ones have suffered indirect violence. Women suffer high level violence inside their homes as well as outside their homes. Around 33 per cent married women in Pakistan have, at least once, suffered physical violence. More than 70 per cent women have been victim of domestic abuse that includes acid attacks, gang rapes and honour killings. The violence and insecurity have weakened the bonds of mutual trust in the people of Pakistan (The Next Generation Report, 2014, 4-5, viii). Pakistanis hardly trust one another, nor do they trust their government authorities and political leaders. They also show low levels of mutual courtesy. They seldom smile, exchange pleasantries or talk politely to the one another, especially with strangers or when one of them is at some position of social or public authority. The treatment meted out by even a petty clerk to a citizen, who visits his office in connection with some job, is simply snobbish. The educated and highly placed officials behave in much the same way (Khattak & Shakil, 2010). The happiness, which is the essence of life, seems to have evaporated in the intense heat generated by violence, conflict, mad competition for wealth, abolition of trust and sympathy. With perpetual stress, precarious security, rampant violence and poor governance, Pakistani society is turning in to a psychological pressure cooker.

A seemingly pathological proneness to un-cleanliness is another feature of Pakistan's national character. The religion that has declared cleanliness as half of

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the Faith, hardly finds adherence in the people. The railway stations, bus-stands, government offices, mosques, public schools, bazaars, streets, markets, public toilets are mostly unclean with filth and garbage.

Imagine driving through the busiest street of a major metropolitan city in Pakistan. What would you see? Buildings, vehicles, street vendors, a crowd of people? Obviously. But alongside this, you would also be welcomed by a heap of filthy, smelly garbage simply lying around the pavements. (Khalil, 2015)

Being poor or under-resourced does not automatically translate into living in untidy environments (Avvannavar & Manilbid, 2007). The sense of cleanliness, like discipline, is an internal virtue. The Pakistanis as a people show some kind of disregard to clean living and environment. The garbage collection system has long been dysfunctional in cities and towns of Pakistan (Poverty and Social Impact Analysis, 2008, ix); and the sewage systems are non-existent in most villages and towns; and are pathetically functioning in big cities (Urooj, 2016). The sanitation facilities in the urban centres are barely adequate. In most of the towns and villages, there are hardly any sanitary arrangements (“Pakistan lags behind in basic sanitary facilities,” 2012).

Pakistanis are prone to conspiracy theories. While the dengue fever disease was affecting the people in 2013-2014, a well-educated government servant serving at a coveted post, held the Americans responsible for breeding and letting loose the mosquito that was causing dengue in Pakistan (“What is the wildest conspiracy theory pertaining to Pakistan?”, 2015). When Malala was shot in October 2012, many people believed it was a staged drama by America to rally the country behind launching an operation against the Taliban. Some of them also presented “documentary proof” to establish that Malala's wounds were actually a make-up. Some seriously believed that the hospital operating on Malala was in coordination with the CIA. A large number of Pakistanis, many of them highly educated and well-placed, believe that the American operation to kill Osama Bin Laden on May 2, 2011 was actually a big hoax. The belief in conspiracy theory goes right up to the top leadership. The then President Pervez Musharraf had declared that the rape of Mukhtaran Mai was a farce sponsored by the Western NGOs to tarnish Pakistan's image (“Musharraf: 'No need to apologise,’” 2005). The media and notable people routinely blame India for conspiring to spread floods in Pakistan by opening up the dams in the rainy season (Ebrahim, 2014). When the Sri Lankan cricket team was attacked in 2008 in Lahore; the people were in disbelief not because the Taliban were incapable of such an act, but because many Pakistanis had dubbed it as an Indian conspiracy (Nelson, 2009). It is easy and convenient in Pakistan to divert the mass murders, honour killings, rage shootings, targeted executions, suicide attacks, sectarian mayhems and terrorist attacks to actors outside Pakistan- who are deliberately targeting Pakistan to destroy it.

Pakistanis do not own up to their faults (Anwer, 2011). They probably think that if he/she accepted the mistake, it would be an anathema to his/her family and



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reputation. There is no dearth of people who attribute liability for their shortcomings elsewhere. The American people follow George Washington's "Cherry Tree Story," which teaches them to "do the right thing and take responsibility for your actions." In case of Pakistan, doing the right thing is not taught earnestly; so taking responsibility for one's action is hardly the norm. Many social observers believe that correcting the problem of "not taking responsibility" could well become the first step in recovering from the down slide. "Pakistanis are yet to take the first step. These symptoms are not expected to subside as long as the cancer continues to be misdiagnosed as pneumonia" (Chaudhry, 2014). The lack of courage to accept mistakes has led to the habit of denial and hypocrisy. According to a reputed senior police officer, 80 per cent First Initial Reports (FIRs) of rape cases are false and baseless. Most of the calls made to Emergency 1122 are obnoxious or made for fun. In cases of theft or burglary, the claims of loss are magnified by hundreds of times. If ten thousand rupees have been stolen, the claim would be made of a million rupees. Although the false claim can be determined after simple cross questioning, yet the people continue with false claims of the loss (Nisar, 2014). The political leaders announce welfare schemes for the poor, and make them look as if the billions being spent on the schemes were paid out of their own pockets. They make big publicity campaigns out of the welfare schemes from the public money (Khan, 2011).

Typical Pakistanis are prone to hypocrisy and double standards. They profess faith in Islam, but their majority behaviour is opposite of the basic and everyday Islamic requirements of truthfulness, keeping promises and trust, extending courtesy and taking care of the needy. Since the disregard to Islamic tenants is the operative social reality, the escape mechanism of the people is hypocrisy, especially, the hypocrisy of the "religious class" (Akbar, 2016). "It is alright to slander corrupt politicians while discreetly evading taxes"; "A civilian Memo is treachery while underhand military deals are downright pragmatic"; "American support of Israelis is duplicity of character while Pakistani support of Taliban is "strategic foresight." (Shirazi, 2011). Pakistanis seem to live in perpetual mode of denial (Cawasjee, 2010). Pakistanis have strange relationship with Islam. They earnestly believe that Islam would give them all that it claims; but without their actually following it. They are also waiting for Allah (Lamb, 1991). Common Pakistanis could be made to do almost anything in the name of Islam- like kill someone on simple hearsay of blasphemy ("Blasphemy law claims another life", 2011). But they would hardly fashion their behaviour according to the Islamic teachings. Very few would practice courtesy and piety for the good of society (there are many honourable exceptions); and even fewer would stand by the weak and oppressed, or strive for the rights of the women, oppressed and the minorities ("Pakistan Minister Shahbaz Bhatti shot dead in Islamabad", 2011). The high hopes and idealism pinned in Islam is aptly showing in the preferences of the young generation. More than 70% of them believe in religion. This belief is actually their 'hope' in Islam as the religion of peace, justice, equality, love and dignity (Mufti, 2016). This belief in the promise of Islam seems to be the basic reason for positive traits of resilience and perseverance that could be inferred from the behaviour of the people of Pakistan. Although they have been exploited in its name, and Islam has not been fully translated into operative values and institutional behaviours, yet the people are hopeful. It is because they have similar

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images of the Islamic welfare state in their mind as those of the developed and peaceful state-societies like Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and New Zealand.

Pakistanis are emotional people. “The people have a proclivity for sentimentalism, can be quickly provoked and have a mental set-up that cannot sustain a long and involving rational argument” (Ahmad, 2002, 61). They have been used by the demagogues and fiery orators rather frequently- often creating violence against minorities or sects (“Christian couple beaten to death for 'desecrating Quran': police”, 2014). Emotionalism or sentimentalism could also be a useful and positive character trait. Given proper direction, this emotional-sentimental element could prove important for augmenting the national action in the times of crises and national emergencies. Pakistanis can prove to be extremely hardworking and intelligent people. For example, there are Pakistanis whose prowess in their respective fields is simply stunning and recognized the world over (“Amazing Pakistanis”, 2019). Dr. Abdus Salam- the noble laureate (“Salaam Abdus Salam”, 2011); Dr. Abdul Qadeer- the father of Pakistan’s nuclear programme; Dr Muhammad Asghar- a Pakistani-origin scientist who played a key role in building the French nuclear and thermonuclear capabilities; Dr Mahbubul Haq- who made the foundational contribution to Human Development Index (HDI) (“Mahbub ul Haq” , 1998); Faiz Ahmad Faiz- the world-class poet and recipient of the Lenin Prize; Maulana Abdus Sattar Edhi, the leading humanist and devout welfare worker; Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan- the legend lyricist and music maestro; the world’s legendary Squash players Hashim Khan and Jehangir Khan; cricket stars like Zaheer Abbas, Javed Miandad, Imran Khan; hockey stalwarts like Kalimullah, Hassan Sardar etc. are few examples. There are scores of those who have been acclaimed and recognized for their professional and socio-cultural contributions in the U.K., Western Europe, USA and elsewhere in the field of politics, medicine, science and technology and education (Kugelman, 2013). It implies that Pakistanis are no less in their potential when compared to other nations.

## **Impact of national character and quality of individual**

The human interaction is shaped by the use of symbols, by interpreting or ascertaining the meanings of one another’s actions (Blumer, 1993, 302-305). Human society comprises individuals who have “selves”, i.e. they make identification to themselves. The group or collective action reflects the alignment of individual action by interpreting each other’s actions. This is where quality of the individual becomes important. An individual’s sense of compassion is important in dampening and suppressing conflict. An individual of mundane sense would interpret other’s action in a shallower and negative manner. This would aggravate conflict. The preceding analysis of national character and quality of the individual reveals that there is a “famine of real individuals in Pakistani society” (Masood, 1973, 49-50). That is why the negative forces remain largely unbridled and unchecked. Most individuals are following the values of self-preservation, selfishness and hypocrisy. A common Pakistani hardly trusts the other Pakistani. There is an acute shortage of the social capital. The individuals would understand

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the problem and also its remedy. But they would hardly make an attempt to solving the problem unless the individual were convinced that his/her interests will also be looked after in the bargain. Hardly anyone would help the victim of a heinous crime, except in the case of close blood relation. Violence is imbedded in the nature of most Pakistanis through the settings of poverty, inequality and injustice, and ignorance (Global Study on Homicide 2013, 78). Corruption is entrenched in almost every position of authority. The peons, petty clerks and the high officials- most are involved in rent seeking. The Transparency International declared Pakistan as the most corrupt country in 1998, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> most corrupt country in 1999. Since then, Pakistan is usually among the 40 most corrupt countries of the world. The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for 2020 places Pakistan at 124<sup>th</sup> position out of 180 countries. Majority of the people would bribe clerks, magistrates and judges and prolong a petty case that could be decided in few months to 55 years. If the victim is poor, the legal system would support the rich and well-connected offender and not the victim. The individual in Pakistani appears to be insecure, hypocritical and without higher ideal or aims. He is deeply concerned with the immediate survival and sustenance. He would generally blame others for his own faults. Only he is innocent and sincere; rest everybody is bad and corrupt. "Pakistan" or "Islam" is generally not the focus of their actions and endeavours, but their own "selves" are their focus. The poet-philosopher of Pakistan has aptly observed that:

The only effective power, therefore, that counteracts the forces of decay in a people is the rearing of self-concentrated individuals. Such individuals alone reveal the depth of life. They disclose new standards in the light of which we begin to see that our environment is not wholly inviolable and requires revision. (Iqbal, 1930, 197)

In Pakistani society such kind of individuals are hardly found, and in this human multitude of over 220 million, the men and women of high quality are generally missing. This makes the Pakistanis who become state officials and pursue self-preserving values; personalize the power of their designation and use the same to safeguard their position and institution. The adverse aspects of the national character and low quality of the individual do not contribute wholesomely to the national power of Pakistan. Pakistan has low ranking in Fragile State Index. It is the 25<sup>th</sup> most fragile state out 178 states in the Index (Fragile States Index 2020- Annual Report). Pakistan's fragility is due to factional conflict, instable political and security situation and economic disarray caused by the weakness of national character and mundane quality of the individual. The Global Peace Index (GPI) is the ranking of 163 states depicting their level of peacefulness. Pakistan ranks 152 out of 163 states. It implies that there are 151 states having better peacefulness level than Pakistan. Less peacefulness in the country is the collective

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failure of the people, making Pakistan a weak nation state. In United Nations Human Development Report 2020, Pakistan stands at 154<sup>th</sup> position out of 184 countries and Territories. The Report indicates that inequality, poverty, and exclusion have increased and “the gross imbalances of power and opportunity that prevent change” coincides with the philistine nature of the national character and limited prowess of the individual to bring about positive change. It affirms that Pakistan’s national character and quality of the individual have constrained impact on national power.

## **Hope and promise in Pakistan**

Notwithstanding the limitations in the national character and quality of the individual, there are precious rays of hope and promise in the people of Pakistan. The manner, in which the people were able to rally around the then Chief Justice of Pakistan after he was dismissed by General Musharraf in November 2007, represented an enhancement in people’s political awareness. The Chief Justice’s refusal to accede to the General’s demand for resignation earned him admiration of the people; and ushered a peaceful protest movement of the lawyers, urban professionals and the younger generation (Siddiq, 2012). This spirit of sacrifice and sharing is another promising characteristic of the people of Pakistan. It provides genuine evidence that the people have the urge and capacity to sustain and regenerate the society. The philanthropy and giving in Pakistan is estimated to be as high as 650 billion rupees per year (“Pakistanis give Rs 650 billion in charity every year-study”, 2015). Nearly 78 per cent Pakistanis give charity; 69 per cent give charity in form of money. This factor mitigates the pessimism of many scholars who see an uncertain future for Pakistan (Cohen, 2012). The people have shown resolve and ability to overcome many challenges confronting Pakistan in the past. In the aftermath of country’s break up in 1971, there was a deep sense of anguish in Pakistan; but the people demonstrated tremendous strength and resilience in overcoming the trauma of the secession. The next challenge confronting Pakistan was India’s nuclear weapon test in May 1974. The Pakistani nation recognized that India’s possession of the ultimate weapon would critically enhance India’s ability to pressurize Pakistan (Khalid & Bano, 2015, 221-235). Despite the odds, the Pakistanis were able to execute a comprehensive plan for an indigenous nuclear program; and Pakistan was able to establish strategic equilibrium by becoming a nuclear state in May 1998. The traditional ability of the nation to confront challenges in a concerted manner was witnessed in the spontaneous and world-wide response of the Pakistanis during the October 2005 earth quake in Northern Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. This was a convincing manifestation of the strength of the idea of Pakistan. Thousands of Pakistanis, along with the international fraternity, arrived from towns and cities from Karachi to Sialkot, and from USA to Japan to do whatever they could for their fellow Pakistanis (Aziz, 2009). In 2010-2011 floods, the common citizens of Pakistan-not as much the government or the establishment- provided the main relief and

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sustenance effort. A great sense of perseverance and persistence was exhibited by the poor citizens affected by the devastating floods, which had plunged around 20 percent of the nation under flood waters (Kugelman , 2012). During the Swat operations in 2009, a huge number of around two million locals became Internally Displaced People (IDPs). The provincial government had the capacity of rehabilitating barely 250,000 of them. The rest of 1.75 million were looked after by their relatives, acquaintances and even strangers in the adjacent areas. This was a huge display of sacrifice, dignity and fraternity by the common Pakistani people (Ghani, 2016). Almost the same was the situation in the exodus of around 2 million people from North Waziristan during operations in 2014. Only a fraction could be supported by the local authorities; the bulk was looked after by the relatives and acquaintances. More than 60 per cent of the population of Pakistan is young- below the age of 35. They are yearning for change in the system and for following the constitutional values of peace and progress in Pakistan (Generation Unlimited (GenU) Report 2020). Their sincerity for Pakistan and their urge to change Pakistan for better- are the sources of great hope.

### **Conclusion**

The national character and quality of the individual is an established element of national power. In case of Pakistan, the negative aspects of the national character seem to out-number the positive ones. These negative aspects are found in the majority of the Pakistanis- whether rich or poor; educated or uneducated; military or civilian; bureaucrat or teacher; judge or the policeman; Punjabi, Sindhi, Pathan or Baloch; Muslim or non-Muslims. Every Pakistani- more or less- exhibits the national characteristics- for that is the definition and concept of national character. The day to day interpretation of the meanings and symbols is not producing harmonious, synergistic and compassionate interactions. The positions of authority are being misused or abused by the individuals. At the same time, the individual is deeply insecure and lacks trust in the “self” and in the “other”. Consequently, the values of self-preservation, selfishness and compromise are being pursued. The attitudes of apathy and indifference often turn into those of hostility and aggression, especially towards the subordinated ones or the weaker ones. Since all the state institutions are populated by Pakistani individuals, the quality of individual is exacerbating the authoritarian-coercive face of each institution of the state and society. The individuals, who constitute judiciary, legislation, administration, security and economics are using their institutional and individual positions and roles to seek rent; and by behaving more and more in an apathetic and heartless ways. The individuals in the civil society are becoming more confused and frustrated. Since every individual is carrier of the same national characteristics, the inter-personnel rivalries, frustrations and anxieties are increasing. The individuals are becoming more mundane, shallower and survival

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oriented than being self-confident, aware and dignified. This does not contribute positively to the national power; and Pakistan is becoming weaker. However, there are some aspects of hope in the people of Pakistan as well. They are generous, well-meaning and intelligent- especially the young Pakistanis. They are also 'truly Pakistani' by their very patience and forbearance in the face of adversity- a characteristic often called "resilience." They can make the nation-state of Pakistan much more powerful, stronger and dignified.

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