Soft Power: An Invasion to Pakistani Culture

Samreen Bari

Lecturer
Bahria College, Karachi

Rizwana Jabeen

Lecturer
Departement of International Relations
Federal Urdu University, Karachi

Abstract

It is easy to count number of cruise missiles, tanks, jet planes, naval war heads and troops but it is difficult to measure the cultural, ideological and Institutional impact of one state on another. The art of using the soft image would help the state to shape the world as per its own desire, consequently help the state to achieve its political, cultural and economic goals. The agenda of disassociating people from their own culture, by promoting and artificially injecting the cultural, political and economic traits or values of one nation, on another can be termed as Soft Power. The bombardment of foreign cultures is not only disturbing, it is also been destroying the homogeneity of the society, leading them towards a state of confusion and chaos, resulting in the disruption of unity and bond amongst them. This kind of 'Structural Cultural Globalization' is actually a 'Soft Power', which is extremely alluring, attracts the negative vibes like a magnet, brainwashes the minds of the masses. The magic formed through Soft Power, is far more appalling, than the intervention of military forces or economic sanctions. This technique has been found to be very effective, as it functions using the divide and rule formula.

Key Words: Soft power, Culture, Globalization, Imperialism

What is Soft Power?

The art of influencing others to follow, support and protecting your required results through politics, foreign policy and culture can be termed as 'Soft Power', a term first coined by Joseph Nye. It can be defined in a number of ways:

A country may attain the outcomes it desires in World Politics, because other countries--admiring values, emulating its example, seeking to its level of prosperity and openness -want to follow it.[1]The target can be achieved through non-material abilities such as reputation, culture, economic capabilities and value appeal that can aid the attainment of a state's objectives.[2].

A nation's increase in economic resources can be a cause of admiration, respect and esteem amongst other nations—a source of soft power. Flourishing, speedy economic development can instigate country's growth. Extensive trade, financial investments, aid, human development programs and investment relations can prop up successful attachments make easy in using the exercise of soft power. Economic, financial, humanitarian and political aid to third world countries are the vital source of normative soft power.

Soft Power is considered as the second face of power, through which we can get the same outcomes, that is maximization of power without using arms and ammunition. It is not simply the ability or capacity to influence or inspire others but it is the capability and capacity to attract, and attraction leads to acquiescence or consent.[3] Therefore, Soft Power rests on the ability to form, shape and design the preferences of others. Soft Power comprises of the contributions of governments, its citizens and non-governmental actors, containing economic, political as well as cultural organizations, values, ethics, not forgetting the morals.

Why Soft Power?

Michael Jackson, Madonna, Elvis Presley – the musical kings and queen - have become household names around the world. Similarly, Amitabh Bacchan, Julia Roberts, Al Pacino are well known for the roles played in movies which have been watched in almost every part of the global village. When it comes to various cuisines, the west is influenced by the east whereas the east is highly inclined towards the west…..so Sushi, Pizza, Burger, Colas, French fries and soups is eaten, drunk and enjoyed by all walks of people who are spread along the expanse of the earth. Nike or Adidas is not restricted to a certain region or to specific

Nationalities. These brands are now widely available throughout the world. Well then, what is this? You name a brand and notice the reaction – you will be amazed! Starbucks coffee --- wow! McDonalds M is visible in even the remotest village of a country!! We might have never asked ourselves why eating from McDonalds and drinking coffee from Starbucks sounds more pleasing, fashionable and modern to us- because we are being influenced by a phenomenon which is known as the SOFT POWER! Yes, this is SOFT POWER.

Soft Power and Islam

The acceptance and obligation of a belief system means that we are gladly ready to adopt and accept the terms and conditions as designed and explained by the religion. "As Islam believes on superiority of God hence it revolves around the will of the maker. In Islam, where everything revolves around the will of the Maker, terms look like iman (commitment to Allah), ikhlas (sincerity), ri∂allah (the pleasure of Allah), ja'iz (accepted by Allah), muharram (prohibited by Allah), far∂ (obligated by Allah), Sunnah (done by the Prophet – r), ummah (the community of committed Muslims)… and many more". (Mahmoud, 2017)

Cultural and societal variety is a beauty imparted from Creator; and as Muslims, we consider that we are assigned by God on a humanistic assignment to spread peace and harmony , and we should provide and work to maintain the universal civilizations for the betterment of the whole humanity. (Islamic declaration on Cultural diversity, 2004)

The current wave of cultural globalization and attractive soft power techniques are efforts to make this world as a homogenized place. Islamic countries are failed to promote the positive and progressive values of Islamic culture. In fact Muslims whether they are living in Western countries or in their native countries are mesmerized and fascinated by the Western culture.

The Western intelligentsia, movies, news papers, political and social figures and forums have successfully spread the negative image of the peaceful religion "ISLAM". In actual the Islamic culture is a culture of progress, peace and harmony. It is culture that promotes harmony, motivates its followers to enhance knowledge and whole heartedly accepts the diversity of cultures.

Soft Power and Islamic ideology of Pakistan:

Two Nations theory is considered as the ideological architect of Pakistan. It simply emphasizes that Muslims because of having different beliefs, culture and history should have their own homeland where they can exercise their rituals and festivities and where they can safeguard their political, cultural and social rights.

Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnha in his Presidential address of All India Muslim League delivered at Lahore on March 22-23,1940 ,explained. "We are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature, art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of values and proportion, legal laws and moral code, customs and calendar, history and tradition, aptitudes and ambitions; in short, we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life. By all canons of international law, we are a nation" [4] (Shams-ul-Hassan 1976) (Riaz 1982)

Through soft power and cultural imperialism Pakistan can play a vital role in spreading the positive image of the religion of Islam and Muslim ummah. "Islam with its fundamental values of Tawhid, Oneness of God, and consequently of oneness of mankind, of supremacy of the moral over the material, of integration of spiritual and mundane; its overriding commitment to justice, beneficence and compassion for all, and its insistence of shura consultation – as the process of decision making at all levels, can provide a framework for genuine globalization that could be a blessing for mankind"[5].

Soft power has constantly been a significant technique for states to attain economic goals. Developed countries have always offered their economic support to developing states, either to turn out to be their supporter or to defeat other prospective enemy.

Despite of being a country having nuclear weapons Pakistan's soft power strategy cannot be considered as successful. As we know that being a part of the British Colony for a long time, as a society, we have naturally inherited the foreigners' influence especially of the western countries. After the two hundred years of British Rule, the imperialists have left significant marks in every walk of our lives: our present political system; the power and penetration of English language in our education system, daily communication practices in the official and legislative system; architectural designs; financial and business organizations; trading systems and so on. Hence, the thinking of the

people and the culture of the whole land of Pakistan reflects the effect and impression of the Colonial Empire. The impact of the British heritage is extremely noticeable when the common man's lifestyle is studied. The most easily accessible, affordable tool, the media, is playing the role of a catalyst, propagating the glamorous standard of living as well as flaunting the Western and American cultural values amongst the masses, changing the common man's perception, across the globe, with Pakistan being no exception to this butchery.

Western Culture or American Culture, which is imposed and structured globally, is embodied in principles, focusing its foremost concern on the rights of an individual. Nevertheless, these are in direct conflict with the basic values and moralities of Pakistani Culture; our ethnicity and values are based on customary morals and ideologies, and collectivism, thus protecting the livelihood of traditional, fundamental and religious social groups. This clash and conflict can be noted in different concepts of epistemology, ethics, and communal values. Though Islam is the major religion followed here, Pakistani society consists of different cultural groups arranged around mores, languages, races, or religious sects. One of the greatest examples of this invasion is Hollywood Film Industry, which produces a variety of films throughout the year. These films are then dubbed in several languages to be launched across the global village. Pakistan, being a big market for Hollywood Film Industry is able to influence the common man easily, and the funky hair styles, latest dress fashions, language accent, actions, romance, and even their criminal acts are being adopted by these followers consciously or unconsciously.

It is a tragedy that due to the failure of the respective governments, Pakistan has never been able to highlight the fact that it has played an extremely constructive role, having sacrificed thousands of lives in the war against terrorism. Therefore, it remains to be the victim and a target of others, who are very easily manipulating the Pakistani society, focusing specially on the youth. Unfortunately, because of lack of governments' interest, technical facilities and professional approach, our local media is not capable of meeting the heavy challenges hence; other countries have taken full advantage to promote their Soft Products which in turn support their own agenda. Sadly, Pakistani electronic media is also playing the role of a catalyst by promoting foreign culture and foreign languages, engulfing the entire society. Consequently, the protection of cultural identity has become an important issue for the Youth, which is the main target, being heavily influenced by the Western

and Indian contents, adopting their fashion and lifestyle irrespectively – whether ethical or unethical, complimenting or contradicting their religious values and morals.

From the late 1980s forward, the interconnection among globalization and information technology, on one hand, and geo-economics and Soft Power, on the other hand, generates an interesting condition not only for Pakistan, but also for the rest of the developing countries. Criticizers of globalization claim that the rich industrialized world, while monitoring the mechanisms of power, is fighting a key war to prevent looming threats to its pre-eminence in worldly matters by deceiving the poor and under - developed countries in the net of globalization.[6]

Soft Power in the name of cultural globalization can be held responsible in widening the inequality gap in Pakistan. As it is evident that the ruling elites, MNC's, media, capitalist regimes and cultural imperialists introduce, promote and safeguard the cultural values, beliefs and morals, that support the interests of capitalists and because of this structured and imposed Soft Power, the developing countries like Pakistan is facing adverse consequences.

Indians know the art to project their rich, colorful and multi dynamic culture. They have equipped their cultural industry with the latest technology, and have educated their professionals, who are working aggressively throughout the globe to establish its Soft Power, with Pakistan as its primary object.

Cultural Impact of Soft Power on an average Pakistani:

In order to encourage buyers to purchase and use their merchandises, the MNC's adopt and employ different types of persuasive techniques. These Soft Power techniques comprise of social, cultural and market research, building opinions to enhance and extend interest groups, politicizing, promoting, lobbying, sponsoring, and so on towards the final objective. The final objective, is to attain and accomplish the desired results, by altering the mentality of a society, eventually changing their habits, leading to modifications, in the overall lifestyle of the society.[7]

The lower middle class and the upper middle class are among the staunchest followers of the Soft Power; consumption culture and living beyond the means have devastated the overall culture of Pakistani society. Fast food culture, adopting foreign fashion trends and figures, eating out, late night parties, promoting fashion shows, film industry, fast media, use

of alcohol, migrations, lingua franca are the trends being pursued by the average Pakistanis currently. Let alone the moral and ethical dimensions, the common Pakistanis idolize their way of living without even considering their financial status.

We can find examples from our daily routine that our life style and preferences are not only changing rapidly, but marketing of global culture are also elucidating the harmful and addictive effects of so many products. Thanks to the powerful footings of Soft Power, we all are well aware about the harmful effects of the carbonated drinks, but still the drastic consumption of beverages, fruit juices, tea and coffee is increasing day by day in Pakistan. The total retail value of beverages in Pakistan was approximately Rs. 297 billion in 2017 and has been increasing at the rate of 15.9% per year for the past five years.[8] In the same way, per capita tea consumption is about one kg per annum[9]. As Pakistan does not produce enough tea to fulfill the demand of its consumers, hence we import around 140 tons of tea per year.Similarly, fast food chains are also a product of increasing universal food culture. Therefore, the statistics have revealed that fast food industry is the second largest fastest growing industry in Pakistan having approximately 169 million consumers.[10]

The drastic influence of Soft Power or the increasing influence of Westernization and Americanization has not only changed the eating habits of average Pakistanis, but also their attire. Young boys, professionals, players, singers, hence people in every walk of life prefer to use western clothing instead of using the traditional wear, the Shalwar and Kameez.

Soft Power and cultural globalization can be held responsible for changing the family pattern of traditional Pakistani society as well. Our joint family system has been replaced by the nuclear family system; collectivism has been swapped by individualism, thus devaluating the basic essence of our society. The new generation now openly rejects the social, cultural and religious obligations, imposed by their parents and elders. Because of this, tolerance and patience are long gone, almost disappeared from the scenario. These significant changes in the social pattern of our lives have drastically increased the divorce rates. According to the official statistics, 13,299 Khula cases were testified in Punjab in 2012, which advanced to 14,243 in 2013, in 2014, they went up to 16,942 and in 2016, the number increased to 18,901.These are the cases reported only from the Punjab[11]. Considering the overall increasing

rates of divorce in Pakistan, we can just assume the negative impact to the society.

ROLE OF MEDIA

Satellite broadcasting in today's world is playing a very significant and vital role in controlling and designing the overall pattern of human psychology; its associations and reactions are considered as the major weapon or tool of Soft Power.The effects of technology do not happen at the level of feelings or concepts, but alter sense ratios or patterns of perception steadily and without any resistance.[12]

Media is considered as the fourth pillar of the state. Along with government, establishment and Judiciary; media can encourage and persuade the youth and civil society to eliminate radicalism, violence and growing poverty and to establish peace in the country. Theoretically, ideally and logically media is responsible to protect, safeguard and promote the cultural and social values; identify the weaknesses of the society and highlight the threats against human liberty and freedom. It is also the duty of a responsible media to create awareness about human development and focus on the importance of education. It is also the foremost responsibility of the media to promote and to design programs and print media to create consciousness about Nationalism and to stimulate patriotism.

Research Study

In order to support and verify the presumed effects of soft power on Pakistani culture, society and the overall way of living, and, to assess its reflection on the thought process and narrative building a study has been conducted . The objectives of the study, the mode of research and the data analysis all will help our readers to understand and establish their views regarding the cultural invasion of Pakistaniz through the use of soft power.

Objective of the study

- To study the impact of soft power on Pakistani youth

- To study the supremacy of Western culture on local Pakistani culture

- To investigate the impact of Islamic values on Pakistani youth.

- To investigate the impact of soft power on appearances and life styles of Pakistani youth.

Research Methodology

Sample

We conducted a survey in August 2019 by using Google forms technique. Due to the time and budget limitations only the students of Khadim Ali Shah Bukhari Institute of Technology (North Naziamabad Campus) participated in this survey. As the basic aim of the survey is to investigate the consequence of soft power on socio-cultural practices of youth hence University is the most excellent field of study to symbolize youth.

We used purposive sampling technique and asked the questions from 150 students who are aware of the terms like "soft power" "globalization" and "cultural globalization" mainly the students were from the social science background.

Major Findings

The percentage division of students, as per their views about the impact of soft power on local language, dress patterns, eating habits, Islamic values and impact of mass media on our daily lives.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
It is beneficial to speak and learn English language as it has become an international language now a days.		2%	5.4%	37.8%	54.7%
I prefer to use English Language to speak with my friends	7.5%	22.6%	24.7%	24.7%	20.5%
I only use Arabic language while recit ation	2.8%	8.3%	11.7%	33.8%	43.4%
It is beneficial to teach Arabic language in Schools	2.7%	0.7%	6.1%	36.7%	53.7%
It is beneficial to teach academic courses in English	1.4%	5.5%	7.5%	39.7%	45.9%
I believe that cable TV, mass media and internet are the source of learning foreign languag es	3.4%	8.2%	16.4%	41.1%	30.8%

Business abilities plus foreign language expertise make an employee more valuable in the marketplace.	0.7%	2%	5.4%	51%	40.8%
Foreign languages help one understand other countries' art, music, dance, fashion, cuisine, film, philosophy, science	1.4%	6.2%	11.7%	46.2%	34.5%
I like to wear Western/ Fashionable/ Non-traditional dresses.	12.9%	22.4%	21.8%	24.5%	18.4%
I prefer to wear Eastern dresses as per Islamic traditions	0.7%	4.8%	20.4%	44.9%	29.3%
I wear foreign clothing on a regular basis	15.1%	26%	15.8%	20.5%	22.6%
Eating out has become a usual habit for me and my family.	9.6%	26%	21.9%	24.7%	17.8%
Muslims are commonly using alcohol	17.9%	22.1%	16.6%	34.5%	9%
Eating preferences of Muslims are changing drastically.	1.4%	16%	22.9%	36.1%	23.6%
TV Channels nowadays are the best source of learning new fast food products	8.8%	2%	13.6%	44.9%	30.6%
I prefer to eat fast food over local products	10.3%	25.3%	17.8%	27.4%	19.2%
Mnc's fast food products have drastically decreased the importance of our local food products	2.7%	15%	21.8%	38.1%	22.4%
I idealize TV / Film actors' personalities	25.2	29.3%	9.5%	24.5%	11.6%
Our mass media depicts the true picture of our Islamic traditions.	49%	27.2%	10.2%	9.5%	4.1%
In my opinion mass media has weakened our	8.2%	4.1%	9.6%	37%	41.1%

Islamic values					
The west has infused their customs through cable channels and mass media	3.4%	1.4%	10.3%	43.2%	41.8%

The first statement on which we seek the response of the students was:

It is beneficial to speak and learn English language as it has become an international language now a days.

A major proportion of students that is 54.7 strongly agreed and 37.8 were agreed with the above mentioned statement, whereas 5.4 % (around 5) decided to remain neutral whereas 2 % were disagreed with the statement.

The next question was asked about the daily routine we enquired: I prefer to use English Language to speak with my friends.Again majority of the students that is 20.5% students were strongly agreed and 24.7% were agree with the statement, whereas vast majority that is 24.7% preferred not to answer and they remained neutral and 22.6% were disagreed and 7.5 were strongly disagreed with the statement.

By considering the importance of Arabic language in Understanding the basic concepts of Islam We also asked about the use of Arabic language in daily practice in this context we wanted to know their response on the following statements: I only use Arabic language while recitation. Huge majority i.e. 43.4% students strongly agreed and 33.87% were agree that they use Arabic language only during recitation whereas 11.7% were neutral while 8.3% disagreed and 2.8% strongly disagreed this notion.

In the same context we asked another question that is " it is beneficial to reach Arabic language in Schools. Vast majority i.e. 53.7% students strongly agreed and 36.7% were agreed that they believe that Arabic language should be taught in Schools whereas 6.1% were neutral while 0.7% disagreed and 2.7% strongly disagreed this notion.

To have their views about the English language that is considered as lingua franca and a strong tool of soft power we enquire that whether "it is beneficial to teach academic courses in English" great majority i.e. 45.9% students strongly agreed and 3.97% were agreed that they strongly believe that English language should be taught in Schools whereas 7.5%

were neutral while 5.5% disagreed and 1.4% strongly disagreed this statement.

We enquire "I believe that cable TV, mass media and internet are the source of learning foreign languages".Vast majority i.e. 30.8% students strongly agreed and 41.1% were agreed that they strongly believe that the cable TV, mass media and internet are the source of learning foreign languages whereas 16.4% were neutral while 8.2% disagreed and 3.4% strongly disagreed this notion.

As contemporary world is business centralized hence it is important to know whether "Business abilities plus foreign language expertise make an employee more valuable in the marketplace". Straightforwardly 40.8% students strongly agreed and 51% were agreed this statement whereas 5.4% remained neutral and 2% disagree and 0.7% strongly disagreed this statement.

It is really important to analyze the impact of the persuasive techniques hence we asked student whether "Foreign languages help one understand other countries' art, music, dance, fashion, cuisine, film, philosophy, science…" vast majority of the students that is 34.5% accepted and strongly agreed and 46.26% agreed this statement whereas 11.7% remained neutral and only 6.2 % disagreed and 1.4 % strongly disagreed this notion.

Dress patterns and lifestyles portrayed the overall picture of the society. Hence we asked the questions related to the dress pattern as well. I like to wear Western/ Fashionable/ Non-traditional dresses Majority of the students that is 24.5% agreed this notion and 18.4% were strongly agreed. A huge number of students that is 24.5% preferred to remain neutral whereas 22.4% disagreed and 12.9% strongly disagreed.

The next statement on which we seek their comments was "I prefer to wear Eastern dresses as per Islamic traditions". Although students showed their interest in Western dresses still vast majority i.e 44.9% agreed this statement and 29.3% were strongly agreed with this statement 20.4% remained neutral whereas only 4.8% disagreed and 0.7% were strongly disagreed with this statement.

Eating patterns, tastes and traditions are also an important aspects of soft power hence we ask several questions regarding eating habits as well. First of all we asked whether eating out has become a usual habit for me and my family. 17.8% strongly agreed and 24.7% agreed this

statement 21.9% remained neutral and 26% negate this statement while 9.6% strongly disagreed this statement.

The over exposure of varied cultures has changed the overall eating patterns of overall Muslim world we asked from our youth that whether Muslims are commonly using alcohol. We received mixed feelings on this topic as 34.5% agreed and 9% strongly agreed this statement 16.6% remained neutral whereas 22.1% disagreed and 17.9% were strongly disagreed.

In this context we wanted to take the overall feelings regarding the eating habits hence we asked that whether eating preferences of Muslims are changing drastically. 23.6% strongly agreed and huge majority that is 36.1% agreed with this notion 22.9% were neutral whereas 16% disagreed and nominal 1.4% strongly disagreed this statement.

As fast food chains have changed the eating pattern throughput the world hence we asked whether Mnc's fast food products have drastically decreased the importance of our local food products. 22.4% students strongly agreed and huge majority that is 38.1% were agreed 21.8% remained neutral whereas 15% disagreed and 2.7% strongly disagreed this notion.

We also asked the students whether they prefer to eat fast food over local products 19.7% students strongly agreed and 27.4% agreed this statement 17.8% remained neutral whereas 25.3% disagreed and 10.3% were strongly disagreed this statement.

By considering the importance of mass media as a tool of soft power we asked whether they idealize tv/film actors 24.5% agreed and 11.6% were strongly agreed with this statement 9.% were neutral whereas 29.3% disagreed and 25.2% strongly disagreed this statement.

We also asked that whether our mass media depicts the true picture of our Islamic values strikingly vast majority that is 49% strongly disagreed and 27.2% disagreed this notion 10.2% remained neutral whereas 9.5% agreed this statement and 4.1 % strongly agreed this statement.

We also asked a question about western values and mass media that whether the west has infused their customs through cable channels and mass media 41.8% students strongly agreed and 43.2% agreed this statement 10.3% remained neutral whereas 1.4% disagreed and 3.4% students strongly disagreed this notion.

Lastly we enquire whether mass media has weakened our Islamic values huge majority that is 41.1% strongly agreed and 37% agreed this statement 9.6% were neutral whereas 4.1% disagreed and 8.2% strongly disagreed this statement.

Conclusion

To sum up, we understand that students are highly aware that soft power has the persuasive power to change the preferences of the people specially of our youth. Protection of our National identity, values and Culture is the most important aspect for a nation to flourish, as reliability and usage of our own resources and feeling pride on our own values are interlinked with each other. Due to the over exposure of foreign culture, imposed upon us by the 'Cultural Imperialists', **'Soft Power'**, the uniqueness or distinctiveness of average Pakistanis and Islamic values are fading. Because of this rapid, unnatural and uncontrollable cultural change, our average and common Pakistanis are experiencing acute identity crisis.

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