

**The Pragmatic Interpretation of Universal  
Declaration of Human Rights by Pakistani  
Youth**



By

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## Abstract

The following research work was intended to know the pragmatic interpretation of universal declaration of human rights by Pakistani youth. The attempt was to highlight the implicit factors from cognitive, social, historical, cultural and political contexts by which the interpretation of even a universally accepted document gets varied. Cultural diversity and its relationship to interpretation of Universal Declaration of human rights were, thus, the focus of this research. For this a random sample of Pakistani students at post graduate level from all over Pakistan was selected. Their opinions and interpretations about this particular charter were then collected through questionnaire and in-group discussions and informal interviews. The collected data was then analyzed through Likert Scale. The results proved that a significant cultural bias against United Nations and the West is dangerously affecting the pragmatic interpretation of this particular charter, thus require practical measures to protect basic human rights around the world.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Introduction	01
1.2 The Pragmatic Interpretation of Universal Declaration of Human Right by Pakistani Youth.	02
1.3 Problem Statement	02
1.4 Significance of the Study	02
1.5 Background	03
1.6 Research Questions	08
1.7 Aims and Objectives	08
1.8 Hypothesis	09
1.9 Research Methodology	09
1.9.1 Population	09
1.9.2 Data Collection Instruments	10
1.10 Limitations of the Study	10
1.11 Summary of the Upcoming Chapters	10
2. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE	
2.1 Discourse analysis: A Brief History	11
2.2 Contributing Disciplines to Discourse Analysis	14
2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis: An Outline	16

THE PRAGMATIC INTERPRETATION OF UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY  
PAKISTANI YOUTH

2.4 Texts as Ideological Representations	20
2.5 Analysis of Implicitness in Political Text	21
2.6 Process of Interpretation	23
2.7 Critical View of Ideology	24
2.8 Analysis of the Human Rights Discourse	25
2.9 Culture And Human Rights	28
2.10 Human Rights across Different Cultures	30
2.11 Some Specific Asian Cultural Values	30
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	
3.1 Research Design	35
3.2 Population	35
3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique	36
3.4 Data Collection	37
3.5 Data Collection Instruments	37
3.5.1 Books and Publications	37
3.5.2 Questionnaire	37
3.5.3 List of questions for interview	38
3.6 Delimitations of the Study	38
4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA	39

THE PRAGMATIC INTERPRETATION OF UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY  
PAKISTANI YOUTH

5. CONCLUSION	
5.1 Findings of the Study	100
5.2 Conclusion based upon the findings	103
5.3 Recommendations	104
5.3.1 Inter-cultural Dialogues	104
5.3.2 Intra-cultural Dialogues	105
5.3.3 Formation of a Global Culture	106
5.3.4 Re-conceptualization of Human Rights	107
5.3.5 Modification of Relativism in Culture	107
5.3.6 Summary	108
REFERENCES	111
APPENDIXES	
Appendix “A” UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS	118
Appendix “B” QUESTIONNAIRE	127
Appendix “C” LIST OF QUESTIONS FOR IN-GROUP DISCUSSION	130
List of Tables	131
List of Figures	132

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

War on terror is a term, haunting the whole world in general and Pakistani youth in particular for over a decade now. But the history of wars and events of mass destruction are far too deep rooted during centuries, where man has tried to turn his own fellow beings into a lost generation. History of the world is, in fact, marred with the shameful events of battles, blood sheds, hegemony, unlawful occupation, illegal domination, atomic wars and a continuous strife to tyrannize world's resources among the nations across the globe.

It was, thus, required a global document and a universal constitution in the shape of Universal Declaration of Human Rights to help prevent such mal treatment and to ensure fundamental rights not only to the nations but also to the individuals across the borders without any discrimination of race, sex, region or religion. But the history has also proved that there is mostly American led interpretation (rather exploitation) of the United Nations' Human Rights Charter.

Moreover, the havoc caused by 9/11 not only challenged the standards of so called civilized, modern and enlightened world, but also put the status of United Nations' (henceforth UN) human rights charter under severe criticism. Serious questions are being raised not only by the intelligentsia of every nation but also by the common masses.

Pakistani youth, in particular, is now showing serious concerns regarding the status of United Nations as a global organization and its Declaration of Human Rights as a universal document for peace, fraternity and emancipation. More over, they consider United Nations to be a mere agent of United States of America. In such a depressed socio-political environment, this charter thus invites further critical analysis for its Pakistani interpretation.

### **1.2 The Pragmatic Interpretation of Universal Declaration of Human Rights by Pakistani Youth**

The present thesis will try to explore the pragmatic interpretation by Pakistani youth for a charter like Universal Declaration of Human Rights which is unanimously approved by United Nations and universally accepted by all the nations.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Can the cultural bias against United Nations really affect the pragmatic interpretation of Universal Declaration by Pakistani youth?

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study will be to:

1. Improve public understanding of the role of human rights in the achievement of global objectives.
2. Check the level of similarity among the youth of different provinces on National issues.
3. Improve literature on various aspects of political discourse analysis.

## **1.5 Background**

The BBC World Service Poll has been tracking opinions about country influence in the world since 2005. The latest results are based on 29,977 in-home or telephone interviews conducted across a total of 28 countries by the international polling firm Globe Scan, together with the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland. Globe Scan coordinated fieldwork between 30 November 2009 and 16 February 2010.

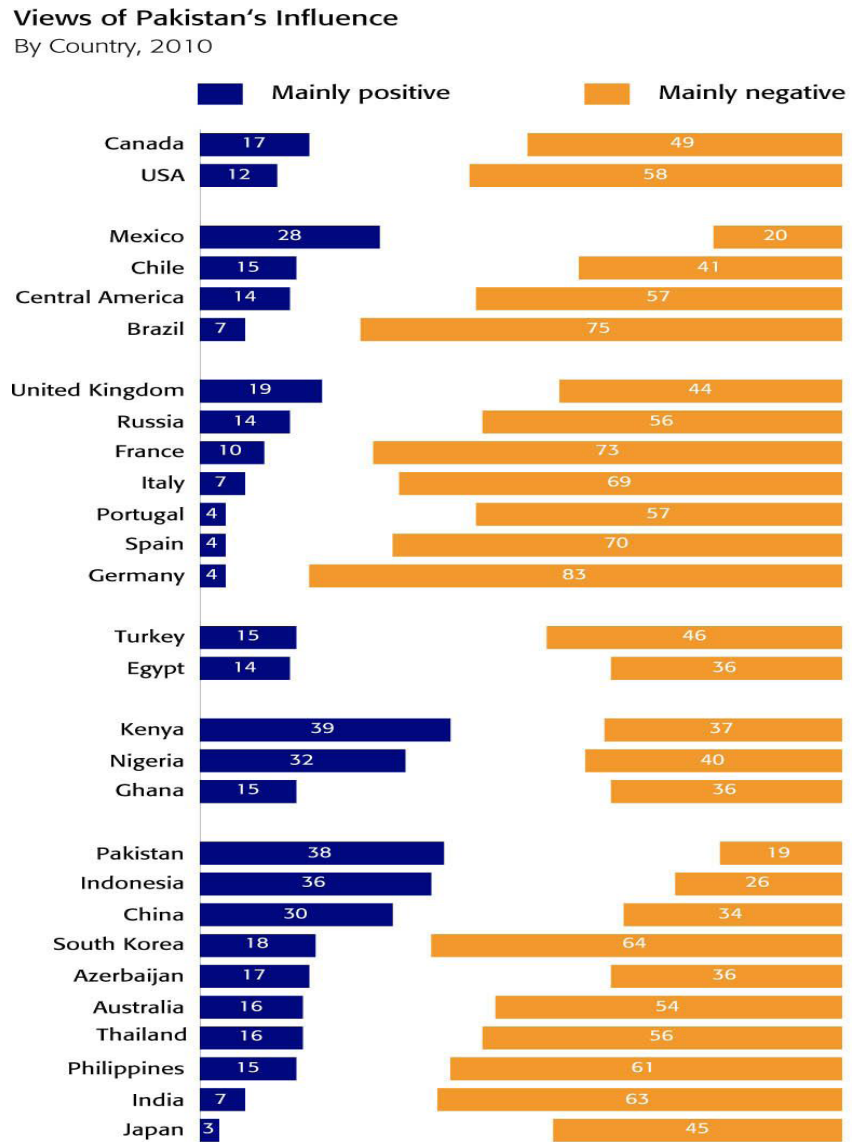
Global views of the United States (henceforth U.S.) have improved markedly over the last year while views of many countries have become more negative, according to the latest British Broadcast Company's (henceforth BBC) World Service poll across 28 countries. According to this survey, Germany is the most favorably viewed nation (an average of 59% positive), followed by Japan (53%), the United Kingdom (52%), Canada (51%), and France (49%). The European Union is viewed positively by 53 per cent. In contrast, Iran is the least favorably viewed nation (15%), followed by Pakistan (16%), North Korea (17%), Israel (19%), and Russia (30%).

Views of Pakistan remain quite negative and, overall, largely unchanged from last year. Twenty-three countries give Pakistan's influence a negative rating, two countries lean positive and two are divided. In 2009, only one of 23 countries leaned positive and two countries were divided. In the 27-country average, 51 per cent view Pakistani influence negatively and 16 per cent view it positively. Views have worsened in India and Russia. In India, negative views have risen 14 points (from 49% to 63%). Among Russians, negative views are up nine points (from 37% to 46%).

Negative views are significantly lower in seven countries, though positive views have not gone up. These include Australians, (54%, down from 63%), Canadians, (49%, down from 63%),

Americans (58%, down from 69%), Britons, (44%, down from 54%), Portuguese, (57%, down from 72%), Spain, (70%, down from 78%), and Filipinos (61%, down from 71%). In all these countries, neutral views and non-responses are up compared to last year.

The following (figure 1) clearly reflects the above mentioned views:



The white space in this chart represents "Depends," "Neither/neutral," and "DK/NA." Asked of half of sample

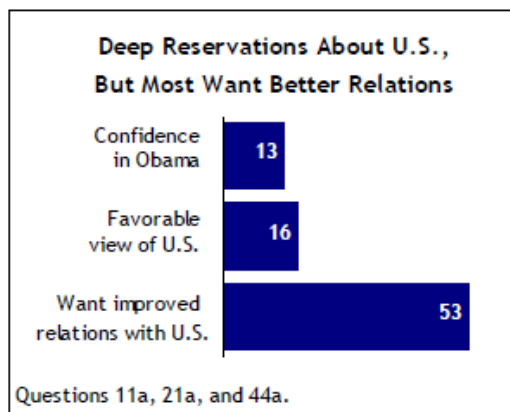
Side by side there is the comparison between the *BBC World Service Poll* and the *Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project*. These are the findings from the 2009 Pew Global Attitudes

survey of Pakistan. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 1,254 adults in Pakistan between May 22 and June 9, 2009.

The *Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project* conducts public opinion surveys around the world on a broad array of subjects ranging from people's assessments of their own lives to their views about the current state of the world and important issues of the day. The project is directed by Andrew Kohut, president of the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" in Washington, DC, that provides information on the issues, attitudes, and trends shaping America and the world.

The image of the United States is overwhelmingly negative in Pakistan. At 16%, America's favorability rating there ranks near the bottom among the 24 publics other than the U.S. included in the 2009 Pew Global Attitudes survey. Pakistan is one of three nations – along with the Palestinian territories and Turkey – in which fewer than one-in-five express a positive view.

(Figure 2)



Most Pakistanis consider the U.S. an enemy, while only about one-in-ten say it is a partner. Distrust of American foreign policy runs deep, and few believe the U.S. considers Pakistani

interests when making policy decisions. Moreover, most think that American policy in South Asia favors Pakistan’s archrival India. However, even though most Pakistanis hold negative opinions of the U.S., most also want relations between the two countries to improve; just over half (53%) say it is important for relations between the U.S. and Pakistan to improve.

Negative attitudes toward the U.S. in Pakistan are not new – throughout this decade overall ratings for the U.S. have been consistently low. The only recent Pew Global Attitudes survey in which more than one-quarter voiced a positive opinion of the U.S. was in 2006 (27% favorable), when America’s image improved slightly in Pakistan. This was tied at least in part to the fact that the U.S. provided a significant amount of aid to the country following the October 8, 2005 earthquake that struck about 50 miles outside of Islamabad, killing approximately 75,000 people.

Table 1

View of U.S.	1999/								
	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Favorable	23	10	13	21	23	27	15	19	16
Unfavorable	--	69	81	60	60	56	68	63	68
DK	--	20	6	18	18	17	16	17	16

1999/2000 survey trend provided by the Office of Research,  
 U.S. Department of State.  
 Question 11a.

Currently, only 16% of Pakistanis express a favorable view of the U.S., essentially unchanged from last year’s 19%, making Pakistan one of the few countries surveyed in which America’s overall image did not improve in 2009.

Among the 20 nations other than the U.S. surveyed in both 2008 and 2009, the percentage offering a favorable assessment of the U.S. rose in 16 and stayed about the same in four, including – in addition to Pakistan – Turkey, Russia and Poland.

Slightly more than half (55%) of those surveyed think the U.S. has a great deal or a fair amount of influence in Pakistan, and among those who believe this, the overwhelmingly consensus is that America's impact is a negative one: 78% say the U.S. is having a bad impact. In addition to the views about the U.S. as a country, Pakistanis also tend to give the American people unfavorable ratings – 57% say they have a negative impression of Americans.

Looking at the 25 nations surveyed in 2009, Pakistanis are among the least likely to say they have a favorable opinion of Americans – just 20% hold this view. Once again, the least positive views are found in Pakistan, the Palestinian territories (20%) and Turkey (14%). Part of America's image challenge in Pakistan is that key elements of American foreign policy have been overwhelmingly unpopular there in recent years.

Reservations about American policy and America's role in the world continue to be widespread in the Obama era. As noted elsewhere in this report, American anti-terrorism efforts are widely unpopular and most Pakistanis want United Nations to restrict U.S. and NATO forces out of neighboring Afghanistan. More broadly, the U.S. is seen as acting unilaterally in world affairs. Fewer than one-in four (22%) Pakistanis believe the U.S. considers the interests of countries like theirs a great deal or a fair amount when making foreign policy decisions. More than half (53%) say it does not consider their interests much or at all, while 26% do not offer an opinion

Even then, While celebrating 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the universal declaration of human rights and also Human Rights Day on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2010, the world once again proclaimed Universal Declaration Of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of member states themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

### **1.6 Research Questions**

1. Did the world really require this Charter and how far it has achieved its goals?
2. Has it introduced an altogether different concept of Human Rights to the world?
3. Who is the biggest beneficiary of this Charter? Dominant or occupied?
4. Have Pakistani youth the same trust and respect for UN after 9/11?
5. “War on Terror” or “War for Terror”, UN Human Rights Charter encourages what?

### **1.7 Aims and Objectives**

The objectives of this research project are to:

- Analyze UN Human Rights charter to evaluate its failure in providing sustainable peace to world even after 60 years of its declaration.
- Check the scope of human rights’ protection for both dominated and dominant in the global scenario.

- Bring the level of Pakistani youth's trust and respect to light for the status of this set of universal doctrine and for the developed countries indirectly.
- To make certain recommendations for global peace and confidence building on the basis of the findings of this study.

## **1.8 Hypothesis**

A significant cultural bias of Pakistani youth against United Nations is affecting the pragmatic interpretation of Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## **1.9 Research Methodology**

The study will involve evaluating the pragmatic interpretation of the UN Human Rights Charter by Pakistani youth. Consequently, the research will be designed to achieve the objectives set out by the researcher.

In terms, this research would be both Qualitative and Quantitative in nature.

### **1.9.1 Population**

The Pakistani youth at post-graduate level are the prime focus of this study as far as their knowledge as well as observance of the human rights is concerned. The targeted population for the study thus includes the post-graduate students of Pakistan.

### **1.9.2 Data Collection Instruments**

- In qualitative paradigm different salient socio political events which are related to the above mentioned topic would be analyzed. These events would be reviewed historically through the medium of different books, journals, other publications and group discussions in a highly informal setting.
- In order to testify the qualitative findings of this study, empirical data would be collected through the instrument of the questionnaire, in the quantitative research paradigm.
- 

### **1.10 Limitations of the Study**

Due to the vast area with fixed period of time as well as limited financial resources, the researcher cannot cover himself all the post-graduate institutions of the country. The research will therefore be restricted to two or three provinces.

### **1.11 Summary of the Upcoming Chapters**

After this first introductory chapter, the upcoming chapters include an extensive literature review on the topic of this thesis i.e.: The Pragmatic Interpretation of Universal Declaration of Human Rights by Pakistani Youth. The third chapter deals with the methodology adopted for the collection of the required data. The next chapter, as the name 'Data Analysis' suggests, that it focuses on the analysis of the obtained data from multiple directions to get the results. The final chapter of this thesis then constructs the conclusion based on the findings as well as offers different suggestions for the problem stated above. The references are added at the end of this work. After the references, appendixes are given at the end along with the list of figures and tables used in this research work.