

## **Book Review**

(Muhammad Aurang Zeb Mughal\*)

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### **Pakistan: Social and Cultural Transformation in a Muslim Nation**

*by*

Mohammad A. Qadeer

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In post-colonial era, many non-western societies have set their own goals of development and they have been successful to an extent in achieving their objectives, therefore, according to Mohammad A. Qadeer the view that poor especially Muslim societies are socially stagnant and resistant to modernization is not justified. Pakistan is an important Muslim country with reference to its historical and geopolitical location. Despite of not having a high level of economic triumph Pakistan represents a model of culturally and socially dynamic country.

Qadeer himself regards this book as a 'contemporary social history' of Pakistan that elaborates geography, history, religion, state, politics, economics, civil society and other institutions of Pakistani society in a historical and evolutionary perspective.<sup>1</sup> Qadeer demonstrates the dynamicity of Pakistani culture through economic development and social change, and has given the demographic figures on urbanization, population growth and such related phenomena. The book specifically explains the topics like popular culture, ethnic groups and national identity, agrarian and industrial economy, family patterns, governance and civil society formation, and Islamic way of life.

Even a new state emerged in the mid of 20<sup>th</sup> century, Pakistan's history and culture can be traced thousand years back in the Indus Valley Civilization. The land of Pakistan has experienced the cultures of Aryans, Greeks, Arabs, Turks

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especially Mughals, French, British and other foreigners either in the form of rulers, preachers or traders. Such a varied historical background has given rise a diverse cultural and ethnic scenario of Pakistani society.<sup>2</sup> There is a debate over the provincial and regional ethnicities in Pakistan in which some believe that Pakistan is on the verge of splitting apart while according to other analysts 'social convergence' in language, in behavior, in consumption patterns, and in occupations is taking place.<sup>3</sup> For Qadeer, despite of ethnic disparities in terms of different languages, distinct geography and other cultural traits, all Pakistanis share a common national culture due to the religious bond, historical relations and the 'realignment of productive forces'.<sup>4</sup>

Pakistan is considered as a poor country with less adequate facilities of health, education, industries and infrastructure while on the other hand Pakistan has made great progress when compared with the situation at the time of its inception in 1947.<sup>5</sup> Villages are turning into cities while cities are being developed with big commercial and industrial centers. Material culture in each area is being westernized, and institutions are also in the phase of transition to achieve the maximum productivity, and Islamic values and norms are observed by almost Pakistanis as essential part of the everyday life.

Institutional lags and segmentation of society represent economic and material needs which are in conflict with political and social norms and practices. Such 'Conflict' paradigm forms theoretical ground on which Qadeer constructs the arguments to support that Pakistani society is modernizing and globalizing along with religious and moral restrictions and he critiques on the theories of social change and looks modernization and globalization as the phenomena working without moral consideration.<sup>6</sup>

Qadeer uses the general knowledge about Pakistan with some supportive secondary data to illustrate how Pakistan is an integrated vibrant society with the modern institutions and customary values, and to explain the social and cultural transformations at different levels. Although not sufficiently analyzed into a broader context of Islamic world and regional stream yet with an analytical insight into the dynamics of Pakistani culture, *Pakistan: Social and Cultural Transformations*

*in a Muslim Nation* offers an explanation of socio-cultural change in Pakistan and is well furnished with the information about Pakistani society.

#### Notes and References

1. p. xii
2. p. 23
3. F. Ahmed, *Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.261-268
4. p. 74
5. p. 8
6. p. 279