

Book Review

Sikandar Hayat, Editor, *Pakistan Studies: A Book of Readings*
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The subject of 'Pakistan Studies' has been embroiled in controversy and, unfortunately, overlooked by the general public, academia, and politicians in Pakistan. Consequently, students have also failed to accord the course the attention it deserves. Certain students take it to the extreme by concocting narratives that, they claim, come from their reading of the Pakistan Studies textbooks. Some of these books indeed are a compilation of fallacies. In addition, individuals critical of the creation of Pakistan help fostering skepticism towards this Pakistan Studies course, specifically targeting the 'two-nations' theory and the ideology of Pakistan. There are those who question the origins of Pakistan and, more specifically, criticize the glorification of figures such as Muhammad Bin Qasim and Mahmood Ghaznavi as 'national' heroes. There prevails a sense of confusion among individuals regarding civil-military relations in Pakistan, as well as the country's role with the West in regional and global politics.

It is true that a majority of Pakistan Studies books are written by individuals lacking professional expertise or thorough research. This leads to numerous factual errors and a weakened overall narrative. Additionally, these books are published by publishers who prioritize quantity over quality, accuracy, and writing standards. However, there is a new book edited by Professor Sikandar Hayat that aims to dispel at least some of the misconceptions that have arisen from studying the old Pakistan Studies books. This new book addresses a number of relevant topics and seeks to fulfill the present need of understanding the subject more clearly and correctly.

The book, titled, "Pakistan Studies: A Book of Readings," is an edited work of nine authors, skillfully edited by Professor Sikandar Hayat, and co-authored by eight experts in their respective fields. The study encompasses a wide range of multidimensional topics, including "Genesis of Pakistan," "Ancient Civilizations of Pakistan," "Land and People of Pakistan," "Politics and Government in Pakistan," "Economic Development in Pakistan," "Society and Culture of Pakistan," "Foreign Policy of Pakistan," "Women and Minorities in Pakistan," and "Languages and Literature in Pakistan," in successive well-written chapters.

Professor Sikandar Hayat, a renowned historian himself, has written the opening chapter, "Genesis of Pakistan," which offers a comprehensive study of the origins and growth of the idea of Pakistan and particularly takes into account the struggles of notable figures such as Syed Ahmad Khan, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, and Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah as they endeavored to establish the new nation-state. Distressed by the lack of a viable, equitable power-sharing system of government and the indifferent, if not hostile attitude of the Congress, especially shown in its provincial rule (1937-1940), Professor Hayat argues that Jinnah was forced to reject the notion of one nation or composite nationalism in united India, and ultimately arrived at the conclusion that the partition of India based on two-nations theory was the only viable solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem.

The historic Lahore Resolution of 1940, demanding a separate state, stands as a monumental milestone in the Pakistan movement. (p. 19). Jinnah's able leadership propelled the nation towards unity and, thus, within a short span of seven years, he successfully achieved his goal of establishing Pakistan in the Muslim-majority areas. The prime objective was to secure a separate homeland for the Muslims where they could live their lives in peace and security and, above all, be able to live according to their own faith, beliefs and culture.

While highlighting Jinnah's prominent role, the author also recognizes the importance of regional and minor figures, incorporating them into the narrative whenever their significance arises. The argument presented is that Jinnah established Pakistan as a nation for the Muslim majority, with the progressive ideology of Islam as its guiding principle. (pp. 19-20). By reading this chapter, one can gain a comprehensive understanding of the two-nations theory and the rationale behind the establishment of Pakistan, as well as the ideology it embodies. The chapter serves as a strong foundation for understanding the birth of Pakistan and presenting a persuasive case for its inevitable growth and development.

Rather than beginning Pakistan studies with the arrival of Islam in India, this book takes a different approach, going into the historical background by tracing its roots to the ancient civilizations of Pakistan. This is done to highlight the fact that Pakistan is the homeland of various ancient civilizations that have significantly influenced the region's rich history and cultural heritage. In the second chapter, Dr. Farzand Masih provides detailed accounts of the Indus Valley and Gandhara civilizations, highlighting Harappa, Mohenjodaro, and Ganweriwala as prominent hubs of trade and culture during the Indus Valley Civilization. (p.52). Furthermore, the author takes care to highlight the Gandhara Civilization's historical importance, cultural accomplishments, and distinctive attributes, all of which collectively contribute to a comprehensive account of the Gandhara Civilization. (p. 69). There is the discussion of a vibrant cultural heritage that encompasses the understanding of domains including religion, philosophy, architecture, and languages.

The magnificence of these civilizations is not only evident in their archaeological sites and remains in Pakistan, but also in the profound impact they have had on local languages, beliefs, arts, and crafts. The interweaving of their influences with the local culture has given rise to a vibrant and diverse cultural tapestry that continues to flourish even today in Pakistan. These ancient civilizations played a crucial role in shaping the cultural, social, and historical landscape of Pakistan, leaving behind a rich legacy that continues to inspire and fascinate people today. As we advance in our study of the book, we witness a strengthening of the concept of cultural heritage and its continuity. This is achieved through the inclusion of a couple of dedicated chapters that thoroughly explore the social and cultural heritage within the context of Pakistan's contemporary history.

While describing the geographical significance of Pakistan, Mr. Kashif Shafique, in the third chapter examines Pakistan's geographical attributes, showcasing its diverse topography, including expansive plains in the Indus basin, rocky plateaus, picturesque valleys, snow-capped peaks, and glaciers. (p.81). The climate in Pakistan follows a continental pattern, resulting in significant temperature variations influenced by the terrain. While Pakistan falls within the monsoon regions, most areas experience arid conditions, except for the southern slopes of the Himalayas. Furthermore, the chapter provides detailed insights into the demographic aspects of Pakistan, such as population trends, distribution, density, the rural-urban divide, literacy rates, employment patterns, gender issues, age structure, and internal and external migration. By exploring these topics, the author offers a comprehensive account of the demographic dynamics within the country, enhancing our knowledge of Pakistan's diverse population and its various characteristics.

In the following chapter, Dr. Muhammad Younis provides a detailed survey of Pakistan's political history from 1947 to 2022, encompassing both democratic and dictatorial periods. The focus lies on examining significant political and constitutional developments, influential figures, key events, and their enduring impacts on the country's political system. He highlights several major events that unfolded in the process such as, Ayub Khan's imposition of martial law, the separation of East Pakistan, and the dramatic rise and fall of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. (p.123). The chapter further explores the implications of General Zia's martial law, the rise of Benazir Bhutto, and the subsequent era of democracy spanning from 1988 to 1999, characterized by the operation of a two-party system. However, this period of democratic governance was ultimately interrupted by General Musharraf's military intervention and dictatorial regime. In addition to describing the key aspects of Pakistan's internal and external policies during General Musharraf's tenure, the author places particular emphasis on concepts such as 'controlled democracy' and 'enlightened moderation.' These concepts shed light on the specific approaches and ideologies pursued during that period, shaping the country's political and diplomatic landscape. Also, the author discusses the electoral cycles from 2008

to 2022, which alternated between the governments of the Pakistan Peoples' Party, Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), and Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, ultimately leading to a motion of no-confidence in April 2022 against the Imran Khan government. (p.133). Throughout this chapter readers gain valuable insights into the intricate political life and processes of Pakistan and the transformative events that have shaped its constitution and political history.

The fifth chapter of the book written by Dr. Uzma Hanif provides a comprehensive examination of Pakistan's economic journey. It delves into various topics, offering useful insights into the challenges and opportunities affecting the economy. The author highlights different phases the country has experienced, ranging from a laissez-faire approach to nationalization, privatization, and public-private partnerships. The chapter extensively covers issues such as water management, road infrastructure, electricity generation, agricultural techniques, exports of value-added products, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), manufacturing and industry, as well as transportation and communication systems. (p. 166). However, the author also acknowledges public concerns regarding social safety, healthcare, education, literacy, and the crucial agricultural sector, which serves as a pillar of Pakistan's economy. In the end, the chapter presents constructive suggestions to modernize the agricultural sector, revive deteriorating water infrastructure, ensure affordable domestic electricity sources, and explore opportunities for regional connectivity. The proposed initiatives put forth by the author aim to establish a foundation for future progress and development in Pakistan's economy. (pp.170-71).

The sixth chapter, authored by Dr. Arfa Sayeda Zehra, explores the social dynamics and multifaceted layers of culture that exist in the country. The author highlights the complex nature of national and provincial identities within the framework of shared social and cultural values, despite the presence of heterogeneity. The author argues that society and culture are deeply interconnected and interdependent, as they are influenced by traditions, ethnicity, religion, values, language, arts, literature, music, and cuisine. The argument here is that Pakistan is a pluralistic society, with an emphasis on the distinction between society and culture. (193). The author further argues that although society and culture are interconnected, they are not interchangeable terms. Within this context, cultural expressions play a vital role in shaping social life and encompassing values and norms.

The chapter goes on to elaborate upon the diverse cultural landscape of Pakistan, showing both tangible and intangible cultural spaces that shape the nation's identity. (p. 205). It provides a profound analysis of the societal structures and cultural richness in Pakistan, emphasizing the interplay between these elements and their significant influence on the nation's social fabric. Dr. Zehra's expertise offers

valuable insights into the intricate relationship between society and culture, contributing to a deeper understanding of Pakistan's social dynamics.

The seventh chapter written by Dr. Saeed Shafqat offers a detailed analysis of Pakistan's foreign policy from 1947 to 2020. He argues that a nation's foreign policy is shaped by three essential elements: geography, historical context, and the inclinations of its political leadership and institutions. The chapter explores the different phases of Pakistan's foreign policy, commencing with the period from 1947 to 1971, during which the country found itself entangled in the rivalries of global superpowers amidst the Cold War. (pp. 224-5). It then examines the era of national rejuvenation and neutrality and the non-aligned movement under the leadership of Z.A. Bhutto from 1971 to 1977. This was followed by alliances with the West during the Afghan Jihad from 1977 to 1988, where Pakistan aligned itself with the West to combat terrorism. Dr. Shafqat also highlights the impact of the 'global war on terror and the forces of globalization, while discussing the uncertainties surrounding the 'global war on terror' in Pakistan from 2008 to 2020. This period saw Pakistan's continued engagement in counterterrorism efforts. (227). Throughout the chapter, readers gain insights into the intricate dynamics of Pakistan's foreign policy, exploring how its geographical position, historical context, and the decisions of its political leadership and institutions have shaped its international relations. Dr. Shafqat's knowledge provides valuable perspectives on Pakistan's foreign policy choices and their consequences in an evolving world order.

In the eighth chapter, Dr. Sara Rizvi Jafree argues that diverse minority groups, comprising individuals from various ethnic, gender, cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds, such as women, ethnic minorities, religious minorities, refugees, internally displaced people, transgender community, and individuals with special needs, often encounter marginalization within the nation-state structure. (p. 264). The author strongly emphasizes the importance of recognizing these groups as distinct and essential within the context of Pakistan and, hence the need to provide them equal opportunities to grow and progress as equal citizens, indeed fostering inclusivity and promoting their rights and well-being. (p. 268). Within this framework, the chapter explores the progress made by these minority groups while acknowledging the numerous challenges they face. Still, the author recognizes the significant influence of poverty and governance failures in shaping the difficult experiences of these minorities. The historical legacy of the Indian subcontinent, of course, complicated these experience further. The chapter not only sheds light on the challenges faced by marginalized groups, especially the women and minorities but also proposes remedies to address their problems and concerns. In this way, we get a better understanding of the marginalized and minority groups in Pakistan. By closely examining their experiences and struggles, the chapter provides insights into their distinctive circumstances within the broader social fabric of the society.

Consequently, it raises awareness about these vulnerable marginalized groups, bringing attention to their unique challenges and circumstances.

The ninth and final chapter by Dr. NukhbahTajLangah presents readers with a comprehensive analysis and appreciation of literature in Pakistan. Dr. Langah examines the works of renowned writers in English, Urdu, and regional languages, summarizing their significant contributions to the literature. (pp. 274-7). The chapter delves into the writings of noteworthy authors, literary movements, and genres within each language, offering valuable insights into their distinct linguistic contexts. It particularly explores the diverse literary genres prevalent in both national and regional languages of Pakistan, encompassing forms such as sher, ghazal, nazm, qasida, marsia, and more. (278-82). Furthermore, the chapter highlights the literature produced in regional languages such as, Punjabi, Pashto, Seraiki, Sindhi, and Balochi. In doing so, the final chapter showcases the richness of Pakistan's cultural traditions through its literature, emphasizing the country's diverse linguistic heritage and literary contributions. (299). It sheds light on notable writers, literary movements, and the significance of their works within the national and regional language traditions, all within the cultural context of Pakistan.

The book encompasses multiple aspects of Pakistan studies, including historical, civilizational, political, economic, social, and cultural aspects that have played pivotal roles in the creation and consolidation of Pakistan. Each chapter is presented in a manner that is self-contained, informative, and interesting. While the book solely focuses on Pakistan Studies and does not address all the questions and controversies regarding the state and society of Pakistan, for essentially being a book for undergraduate students, it does provide satisfactory answers to many questions that may arise in the minds of its readers. The authors' meticulous research and attention to details are evident, creating a credible and immersive world.

The book has an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating authors from relevant subjects. The authors present a coherent and constructive examination of the subject matter. One of the most remarkable aspects of the book is the esteemed profile of its authors, including the editor, Professor Hayat, author of the award-winning book on Jinnah, *The Charismatic Leader* (2014), Dr. SaeedShafqat, an eminent political scientist, Dr. ArfaSayedaZehra, a well-known intellectual, and Dr. FarzandMasih, an accomplished archaeologist. Their expertise shines throughout the book as they skillfully address significant themes and offer insightful commentary on their subjects. Their writing style is characterized by simplicity and clarity, and is free of jargon, making it easily understandable and engaging for the readers. The English expression used in the book is straightforward, readable, and absorbing, allowing readers to easily grasp the intricately woven arguments and well-developed characters presented in the context of Pakistan studies.

I highly recommend "Pakistan Studies: A Book of Readings" to all, particularly

undergraduate students interested in knowing and understanding important aspects of Pakistan Studies, in a single, accessible volume. However, I do not hesitate recommending it to graduate students too who may find its chapters a useful foundational text for their preparation for competitive examinations in the country. Indeed, the book is bound to leave a lasting impact, sparking meaningful conversations and inviting readers to contemplate topics such as Jinnah and the rationale behind Pakistan, the socio-cultural dimensions of society, the geopolitical and geostrategic significance of Pakistan, and most importantly, envisioning the way forward by learning valuable lessons from history.