

Book Review:

The Pakistan Paradox Instability & Resilience

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Dr. Christopher Jaffrelot, a senior research fellow at CERI (Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales) at Sciences Po Paris, and Research Director at the CNRS (Centre National de La Recherche Scientifique) comes up with an honest and unbiased account of the history of Pakistan. Christophe Jaffrelot rises to the challenge with self-confidence. With knowledge and energy, he presents a historical and political sociology of Pakistan, from the end of the rebellion of 1857 to the aftermath of the killing of Osama bin Laden.

For a country that is barely 70 years old, Pakistan has a lot of history and lots of contradictions. Every bit of this history is marked by origin, consolidation and crises. That is probably the reason that there is no single account of the history of Pakistan that captures all aspects of the history in one single attempt. Jaffrelot makes a bold attempt to capture the events and realities in one single volume. Being French, he is not influenced by the biases that an Indian, Pakistani, British or American may carry

due to direct or indirect relations and influences. His narration of the events post creation of the country is honestly pretty standard work that has been narrated by various other authors and probably in a better way. Where he stands out is his narration of the era and events leading to the creation of Pakistan. He effectively challenges the popular and common understanding which is believed to have led to the creation of Pakistan.

He gets beyond the surface to reveal the three sets of tension that have so predominately marked the events in Pakistan even before its creation.

The first set of tension he argues is the tension between the central forces and the regional forces whereby he argues that Jinnah was perusing an agenda in continuation to the efforts of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan to create a separate homeland to be ruled by the minority Muslims of UP and other Hindu dominated areas. These minority Muslims were in pursuit of not losing their dominant position in the society, which they believed to be entitled of by

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virtue of being a ruling class for centuries, While the Muslims of the majority Muslim provinces were attracted by the idea of a Muslim state to which they could associate being a part of without losing their regional & cultural identity. They boarded the Pakistan Journey to be a part of a Muslim confederation. He further argues that this conflict of central forces vs. the autonomous regional forces has continued to date and separation of East Pakistan is a result of this tension.

The second tension is between democracy and authoritarianism. Jaffrelot disapproves the idea that sees Islam as incompatible with democracy. He emphasized three factors: the continuation of the “vice regal model” of government by Jinnah; the desire to prevent the electoral domination of Bengalis; a political culture of opportunism by even popular and populist leaders. Further, he declines to view the politicians and the army as opposite poles. If they repeatedly colluded with each other, it was because they shared the same political culture and class interests. The result of this is social reaction and gross economic inequality. The poor financial performance of the country is an outcome of the shared interests of the civil-military elite. Attempts to persuade the judiciary are another.

The third problem relates to the role of Islam. Jaffrelot determines two schools with shifting lines stretched against each other: one, coming down from Jinnah and the Muslim League which saw Islam as a cultural marker compatible with at least some form of secularism; and the other, issuing from clerics who embodied a vision of Islam that was plainly incompatible with minority rights. The process of constitution-making between 1947 and 1956 was hampered by these discussions. Jaffrelot records that

Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, Jinnah’s chief lieutenant, introduced an objectives resolution in 1949 that sought to accommodate at least some of the demands of the leading clerics. But this was not just a question of elite bargaining. There was something unrealistic about a mass political movement launched in the name of a religion that ends up aiming at establishing a secular state. Whatever the intentions of Jinnah’s tactics, those who voted with their feet to create Pakistan saw it as a Muslim country. Jaffrelot rightly points out that Islamisation began seriously in the 1970s, under Bhutto, who needed some glue to hold the truncated country together, and Zia, who needed to legitimize a prolonged military rule.

Jaffrelot intelligently draws relation between these three sets of tensions and argues his case well in defining and explaining the problems and contradictions arising because of them. Where one may differ from Jaffrelot is his firm stance on accusing the minority Muslims of creating a Muslim state to just fulfill their desires of not losing their ruling status and be at the helm of power as the rulers. In contrast a popular belief, which is also believed by many educated in the country, is that the minority Muslims of the pre-partition Indian sub-continent were the only enlightened ones to realize the necessity of a separate Muslim home land and had the foresightedness to see the shape of Hindu radicalism in the days to come and more so in a Hindu ruled state. The events after the partition clearly justify the creation of a separate Muslim homeland and the bias of Hindus and the radicalism displayed on various accounts justifies the creation of Pakistan. In all , it is a good effort by Jaffrelot which is factual to a large extent and will not be easy to surpass by any other book on Pakistan easily.

A Decade of Market Forces

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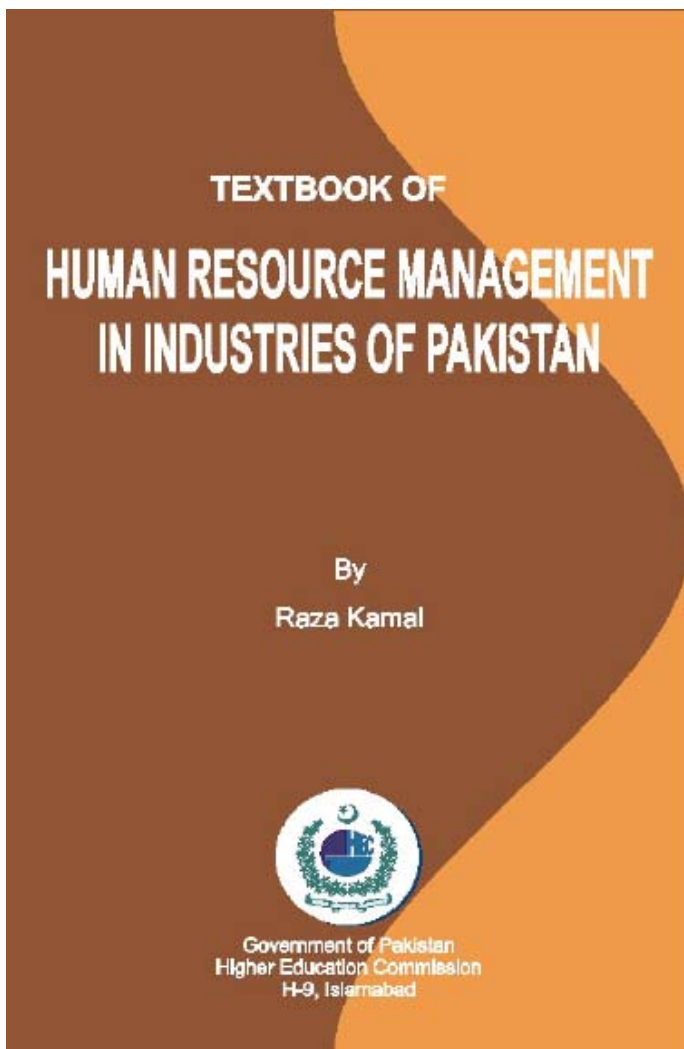
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Having taught the subject of human resource management in business schools for the last decade and more, I realized that there is a glaring dichotomy of what is taught through foreign-authored textbooks and the reality of the business environment on the ground. This textbook endeavors to bridge the gap that exists between HRM theory and its application in the industries of Pakistan. However, for conceptual framework, we lean on modern researches of the world that needs to be tailored according to our work culture and value system. Human resource management in Pakistani organizations is not in its infancy anymore and best practices that are followed are neither known to the academicians nor accessible to the student community. There is a dire need to develop an intimate interaction between the industry professionals and the academicians of Pakistan.



The addition of two chapters on demographic profile of labor force in Pakistan and industrial laws are subjects not covered in textbooks prescribed for this course. The key elements of the text include gleanings from the Pakistani press on human resource management. Review questions at the end of each chapter are applicative in nature, thereby, persuading the learners to tax their thinking faculties. A self-assessment test would help students to measure their assimilation.

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