

### ***Book Review***

**Saeed Shafqat (ed.), *Contemporary Issues in Pakistan Studies*, Azad Enterprises, Lahore, 1998. Pages: 270. Price: Rs. 300 (HB); Rs. 100 (PB).**

This is the second edition of Dr. Saeed Shafqat's popular and well received book, the first edition of which came out in 1995. Pakistan studies has been an integral part of the country's educational syllabi and competitive examinations for many years now. Unfortunately the syllabi for our school, college and university students reflect a narrow definition of the subject. Not much attention has been paid to historical authenticity and accuracy of facts. The approach in general is simplistic and one is sorry to note, jingoistic. No wonder this discipline, whose importance cannot be overemphasised, fails to capture the minds and imagination of the young students and the level of perceptions manifested by its study are abysmally low. There is need to raise the tone and level of debate and to move beyond the Pakistan Movement to which this subject has largely been confined. Even here the treatment is by and large narrow and simplistic.

Dr. Saeed Shafqat, a distinguished scholar and presently Chief Instructor at the Civil Services Academy, has presented his own version of how Pakistan studies, as a discipline, should be designed. For him, the subject should reflect dimensions such as culture, value systems, physical configuration and contiguity, social groups and their interaction with each other, and strategic considerations.

The book under review, a collection of research papers by a number of scholars and researchers, is an attempt to promote this vision of the subject. It has turned out to be a model, which has received much acceptance in the relevant quarters. The educational establishment, like all establishments, is slow to come to terms with new ideas, concepts and realities. It will thus take some time before our universities adopt this particular model of Pakistan studies. But it seems that Dr. Saeed Shafqat's efforts in raising the intellectual level of the treatment of the subject and broaden its scope has not gone waste.

The second edition adds five more articles to the original twelve of the first edition. For a live subject such as Pakistan Studies, such frequent adjustments are necessary. This book is an invaluable source of knowledge for students who look for scholarly and critical analysis of contemporary issues.