

Comparison of Postmodernist Historians of Pakistan

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Abstract:

History of Pakistan has been really complex and every time a historian tried to write about a historical event, it did come under fire of criticism. Critiques roused questions whether history or the events a historian gives off are right, based on solid truths or delusions. The historians tried their best to write down the historical events of Pakistan. There have been conventional or traditional writers and also there are writers who have marked history in a postmodern approach. At the end it is always up to the readers that how they perceive history depending on what approach they believe in. But there has always been a need to compare the historians of Pakistan in order to differentiate between their works and make it easier for the common men to choose in what they believe is true and what is not according to literature they have. Pakistan has made both conventional and modernist writers of history. There are famous names that have extraordinary work regarding the history of Pakistan. There is much appreciated and can be compared in regarding their postmodernist approach to history. Critics have criticized their work one way or other but there has been very less positive comparison between these renowned historians. Although there work is really deep and puts realities portrayed already into question but there is a need for a comparison among the works of these historians. It is necessary to have a deeper look into the frame works of the historians of Pakistan individually and then compare it with each other. A framework of comparison has been provided to conclude the approaches used by historians of Pakistan and which was better or not in writing the history of Pakistan. It's up to readers in the end and their outlook on history after studying the available literature about the history.

Keywords: History, Pakistani historians, Comparison, Postmodernism.

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Introduction:

Postmodernism appeared as we entered into 20th century, changing the entire world and bringing whole new and different ideas to go through in the era of past events. In legitimate terms almost all the fields from science and arts diverted. Hence, in a result of emergence of new ideas in the name of postmodernism, historiography embraced new designs and patterns to describe the past event entirely different from what they were already explained. Before modernism has emerged, the era we call pre-modernism, history did not have much importance and there were not enough developments that it could have been regarded as an independent field. In the years before the 18th century, all you could have in the form of history were myths and stories passed on by Herodotus and Thucydides.¹

Then came the era of modernism which begun from late 18th century starting off with greater concepts and ideas of nationalism. In turn a more gracious quest for historical identity came into being. When passed the year 1930, a different time of a rather different style appeared on the surface of historiography which is thought to be striking and really quick reaction in the face of modernist theory.²

On the foundation of two nation ideology, Pakistan came into existence in 1947 as an Islamic Republic. Coming into the being of Pakistan became a prime important part of history in south Asia in different point of views as another big historical event. As Pakistan appeared on the map of the world, the historians immediately initiated to write down the record of events that were leading factors that helped bring Pakistan into existence.³

There has been variation in events taking place through the history of Pakistan. Considering the fact that there are not more than enough history writers in Pakistan, some have worked really well shaping and portraying history in a modernist to postmodernist approach. The strong and

¹ Zagorin, P. (1990). Historiography and postmodernism: reconsiderations. *History and theory*, 29(3), 263-274.

² Ankersmit, F. R. (1989). Historiography and postmodernism. *History and theory*, 28(2), 137-153.

³ Gilmartin, D. (1998). Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian history: In search of a narrative. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 57(4), 1068-1095.

evident portraying of as history has never been easy as in Pakistan; historians do not have a variety of choices to choose topics for research. Most commonly and on standard grounds regarding a response to such research interests is about the sensitivity topics along with lack of sources. But Pakistan has managed to produce some renowned historians who have helped put efforts in writing history. There is also a need to look into what influenced and inspired these postmodernist history writers. Through their side of discussion these history writers somehow differ and somewhat relate with each other. Hence a need to compare the work done by these historians roused up.⁴

Famous historians of Pakistan piled up their efforts in this intense period of events in history. Before following postmodernist approach intellectuals, history writers and scholars went behind a conventional modern approach to explain those historical happenings. After years passed, particularly East Pakistan parted its ways, a bunch of history writers, who had a belief that held the charge took the charge who believed that many disciplines of history have been over looked and interpreted in wrong way by using modern approach of history. Hence they purposed and asked for a better approach of postmodernism for describing those parts of history.

The factors that forced the writers of postmodernist history also matter to be discussed. The variation in the work is what makes up a brief comparison between these famous historians which needs to be studied thoroughly. This follows each historian's work in detailed comparison. The names Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi, K.K.Aziz , Ayesha Jallal and Dr Mubarak Ali, being the most famous history writers Pakistan has ever produced, are widely appreciated for their work on the history of Pakistan. Embracing different research models for their research and introducing new dimensions for history writing. All of them have used a different research methodology compared to the other. The work of I. H. Qurushi revolves around the confirmed source of Pakistani historiography whereas K.K. Aziz put the work of past writers under criticism. On the other side, Ayesh Jallal a new renowned and praised Pakistani historian chose other way in history writing and insisted to the introduction of method of targeting on the factors, which helped some specific conditions, develop to make a big change in history. Dr Mubarak

⁴ Roy, K. (2014). Partition of British India: Causes and Consequences Revisited. *India Review*, 13(1), 78-86.

Ali, being a big name among the historians of Pakistan, is labeled with introducing the history to the common people after he pushed away the old approach which was prevalent at those times of historiography in South Asia.

All of them helped put contributions to change the history writing pattern for better, and make Pakistani historiography a newest approach so that it will compete the history works from all over the world.

1) Prof Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi:

Prof Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi was born on November 20, 1903. Prof Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi is among the most renowned and excellent postmodern history writers and academic of Pakistan. “A Short History of Pakistan”, must be called one of his masterpieces, is an edited book published by University of Karachi Press. This book has four volumes. This book is edited entirely by Prof. Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi himself giving tiny bit of details and exclusive disciplines of historical accounts of the land, the individuals of the land the ideologies also mentioning Pakistan coming into being from a pre-historical time that led towards the state coming into the existence. It also includes separation of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).⁵

The volumes of the book are named, Book One: Pre-Muslim Period by Ahma Hasan Dani; Book Two: Muslim Rule under the Sultans by M. Kabir; Book Three: The Mughul Empire by Sh. A. Rashid; and, Book Four: Alien Rule and the Rise of Muslim Nationalism by M. A. Rahim et al respectfully. This book holds a significant position in history of Pakistan as it being the first detailed and authentic effort to portray a bigger picture of initial events from the history of Pakistan, in the region. This book gives off the particular era of history before Pakistan along with describing the history of northern region of South Asia which is Pakistan in present time. A few parts have been roughly criticized by various peer critics for being insignificantly objective describing the link of Indian Muslims, Hindus and various British political groups of subcontinent. All of the historical writings of Qureshi, particularly this book is laying on the themes of Islam, Islamic lessons, Muslims being a distinct identity and falling down into the idea

⁵ Qureshi, I.H., *A short history of Pakistan*. 1967.

of building a different country for the Muslims of sub-continent , at the end showing clear innervate antipathy to the Hindus of the region.⁶

Looking throughout his all historical scriptures and texts, Qureshi has widely nominated the Hindu bid for sitting over on the separate Muslim culture, identity and civilization because of its greater number in the region. It can be said that he was quite intact in underscoring that the prime foundation of a nation having an entire different identity, was laid down by the same day with the arrival of the first Muslim, to inhabit the region of subcontinent. Hence, the separate and distinctive identity of a nation is set in the foundations of Islam. He went ahead and included that whenever the Muslims of subcontinent came upon to any kind of threat of Hindu assimilation, various individuals and elements among Muslims came out to ensure the safety of that separate and distinct identity of Muslims. There could have been some intruders from the North-West parts or religious personalities or famous powerful names I like Mujadid Alif Sani (Shakh Ahmed Sirhindi), Mughal ruler Aurangzeb Alamgir or Shah Waliullah. To him, such specific names have always been the major mover of the directions of history. According to what he wrote as a historian, Islam is way more than just a simple religion to be led onto. To Qureshi, its actually is complete, exclusive and intact system of society along with being a complete code of life which leads human beings in all aspects of life, with such a great manner that can make a comprehensive well established and deep rooted but progressive Muslim community.⁷

There do emerge differences built up by complicated system of caste, kinship, and region which are not allowed in this free and fair system, on the basis of the splendid principles of Islam. Muslims according to his way of thinking had always been moved and inspired by an intense and deep rooted affiliation with Islam in their way of conduction, attitude, living discipline,

⁶ Qureshi, I.H., *The Muslim community of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent:(610-1947); a brief historical analysis*. 1998: Renaissance Publ. House.

⁷ Qadir, K., *Survey of Muslim Politics in the Delhi Sultanate*. Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society, 1994. **42**(2): p. 155-171.

interacting with other communities along with the entire system of governance and administration.⁸

2) **Khurshid Kamal Aziz:**

Being one of the great scholars of all times Ban hold Brecht phrased that the past must be uncovered to settle all aspects in a just way, so that one could move further in a specified direction, for better future. A number of scholars believe that to know past happenings and analyzing them is the first and significant step in order to have the complete decoding of present and in the end a good planning about future. On the opposite of this side, the scholars and history writers of Pakistan seem to be bound by believing in covering the past with umbrellas of falsehood and distortion and it's evident that no rain of reality and truth can fall on them. Despite all of this there are some writers and historians are not going after such manipulated approach. They try their best to put effort to analyze the history by applying rules and laws of reality and truthfulness.⁹

K.K. Aziz being such a writer not fearing such reality to write the past has put on so much works writing history. Born on December 11, 1927 K.K. Aziz celebrated fame globally as a history writer and political scientist along with being a great scholar. Authoring 44 valuable books based on the modern history of the Muslims of indo-pak his work is recognized worldwide. Having versatility in his way of writing that captured the attention of everyone and sundry as he knew how trigger people's thinking. He mainly focused on wrote on issues which are significantly relevant to Pakistan and also to the history of the subcontinent.¹⁰ Highly anticipated books that he wrote include History of the Ideas of Pakistan, The Meaning of

⁸ Malik, R.Z., *Cultural historiography of Pakistan*. 2014.

⁹ Qasmi, A.U., *A master narrative for the history of Pakistan: Tracing the origins of an ideological agenda*. *Modern Asian Studies*, 2019. **53**(4): p. 1066-1105.

¹⁰ Ganguly, S., *Pakistan's Forgotten Genocide—A Review Essay*. *International Security*, 2014. **39**(2): p. 169-180.

Islamic Art, Public Life in Muslim India and The Murder of History, The Making of Pakistan, A Study in Nationalism, Studies in History and Politics, Party Politics in Pakistan 1947-1958, Britain and Pakistan, Muslims Under Congress Rule 1937-1939 and British Imperialism in India. Mainly recognized for his books written in the English language, however, Aziz was subsequently mastering at Urdu prose and a firm believer in the significance of the Persian language to broaden one's knowledge about the world's historical literature.¹¹

The book written by him regarding the history of Pakistan, that changed the narratives created by conventional writers like I.H Qureshi, entirely, is named *The Murder of History: A Critique of History Textbooks used in Pakistan*, must be read in order to differentiate between his modern work from the conventional one and also to decode the historical events regarding the creation of Pakistan. It also shows how the manipulation or misunderstanding were embedded in describing the events of history and how the truths and realities were either changed, bended, shaped or completely burnt to grounds in the textbooks. But still, scholars point out two, not so important, shortcomings in this work of K.K. Aziz: Although the book is recommended by many intellectuals due to higher significance of its subject, author's diligent and reasonable research work, including the critical thinking and decoding and the solid , firm foundation it laid for writers and historians of future. In another study intellectuals drew out that in this book, Aziz actually brings out to mold the unjust and unfair approach that has been forced by early history writers of Pakistan ever since its birth as an independent country and still continues to progress somehow. Unfortunately, the history textbooks and writings of the country have been misinterpreted and disorganized for specific political advantages. In his work he has critically decoded and presented the set of complete corrections for 66 different text books that are being taught as the course of Social Studies, Pakistan Studies including different history disciplines for various students from grade 1 to 14. In this research scholars said that there is no doubt that it is a courageous and bold step that unfortunately went unnoticed and utterly neglected in his time. However it did pave a new path for new historians to view the historical events of Pakistan with an entire different angle. This tempering of history made a way for many unfortunate results.

¹¹ Khan, M.M. and E.A. Warduk, *The myth of allahabad*. Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 2017. **56**(1): p. 41-50.

One of them is the tempering and destroying child psychology, a mind which is totally ready to be productive and constructive and accept facts. Hence Aziz proved to be radical historian of postmodernism of Pakistan despite hurdles.¹²

3) Ayesha Jallal:

Ayesha Jalal being a historian, political scientist and scholar who writes about Pakistan and India. Her work goes into the creation of the Pakistani, its un-rested struggles to shape itself into a democracy, Indo-Paki relationship, and the present variations in Muslim identity in the face of modernity along with globalization. *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (1985), being her first book, analyzed the acceptable account of the part played by Jinnah and the Muslim League in making of a Pakistan in 1947. Her second book, *The State and Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defense* (1990), revises the making of the Pakistani state from 1947 to 1965 before splitting into two (separation of East Pakistan now Bangladesh). Along with being the writer of *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective* (1995) and *Self and Sovereignty: The Muslim Individual and the Community of Islam in South Asia Since 1850* (2000) and the co-author of *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (2004).¹³

Analyzing and offering South Asian history in this way refuses to accept the immense work that has already been done, pointing to division, deceit, temporary and multi-region possession gained under one sky category of public possession, such as 'Hindu' or 'Muslim'. Ayesha Jalal's recognition and *Sovereignty: The Person and Society of South Asian Islam and the Demand for Pakistan*, stated that the way in which Muslims are portrayed politically and socially varies deeply depending on whether they are a smaller or a bigger part of a provincial state. A point much similar to this was formulated by scholar Francis Robinson, speaking of the different experiences of Muslim in the region at that time known as the subcontinent, to depict that we has

¹² Malik, I., *Pakistan: a contemporary searchlight*. History Compass, 2004. **2**(1): p. **-**.

¹³ Roy, K., *Partition of British India: Causes and Consequences Revisited*. India Review, 2014. **13**(1): p. 78-86.

been there, when all Muslims were in smaller numbers but not in the provinces. Jalal, who believes that Pakistani history books give out false information and unjust stuff about history, is a definite threat to postmodernist historiography and historians of this approach.¹⁴

4) Dr Mubarak Ali:

When we look into Dr Mubarak Ali's case, appearances can be misleading. It is amazing that this soft-spoken, modest man has thrilled the establishment with his open minded explanation of history. Becoming persona non grata for a number, who do not intent to upset the apple cart — whether it is in the politics or in the academia of Pakistan. Still, Mubarak Ali is one of the most renowned and acquiring deep patterns, historians in Pakistan today. Writing countless books, he has written widely and exclusively on problems that start from the Age of Reason in Europe and come to women's movement, so well, along with the history of South Asia.¹⁵

To someone, whose entered in the discipline of historiography, did not really considered it as a choice or realized that's it is a childhood then his sole interest in and him being committed to his subject, is brilliant. Dr Mubarak Ali has done some fresh work, knowing there will be criticism on his postmodernist way of thinking. His quest was not easy being a modern historian and bringing out the true realities in the face of lies and manipulation that were forced all the way through the historiography of Pakistan. He being an interesting and quite relevant history writer laid behind his infinite ability to associate past with present. He has brought out history alive, rather than other conventional historians of his time who just put out the same, dull and lifeless notions of past times.¹⁶

¹⁴ Loveridge, J., *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* by Ayesha Jalal (1985). 2012.

¹⁵ Ahmed, S. J. (2013). History and Historiography of South Asia: A Perspective from Pakistan. *Pakistan Perspectives*, 18(2), 5.

¹⁶ Ali, M. (2011). History and Morality. *Pakistan Historical Society. Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, 59(3), 107.

Also there should be the mentioning of the fact that his work did not circle around the rules and regulations which on purpose destroy the destiny of nations. He was trained in a Marxist tradition- his way of looking into the lives of past people, their psyche, class and their conflicts and his own way of explaining historical phenomenon.¹⁷

In his own words, “In Pakistan we simply study political history. It is an account of conquerors and their conquests. We adopt the colonial perception on many issues. By studying only the history of the rulers we distort the past. It is important to retrieve the history of the common people and their culture from the neglect that shrouds them. If any section of society doesn’t have a place in history, it loses its identity. Our job as historians is to deconstruct history and dispel the myths which surround events and personalities. After all, the one who controls the past, controls the future,” Mubarak Ali says with a sense of conviction. And yet his regret is that since the early sixties when the Harvard team advised Ayub Khan to drop history from the school curricula, children in this country have ceased learning about their past. The Americans do not have a tradition of history for theirs is a young nation for whom civilization began after the discovery of the new continent”.

Dr Mubarak Ali is the maker of the subaltern studies in Pakistan. Being a continuous advocate of peoples’ history, which revolves around people because it is the people who shape the main course of history? He builds the Centre of South Asian Cultural Studies because he had faith that exclusion of the common people would not help in understanding the contemporary history.¹⁸

Conclusion:

Numerous South Asian antiquarians likewise began pursuing postmodern directions to look for replies of numerous unanswered inquiries of history. Affected by global and public occasions Pakistani antiquarians of twentieth century additionally selected postmodern stories to reexamine

¹⁷ ALI, M. M. (2018). IMPACT OF POLITICS ON CLAN AND COMMUNAL CONFLICT IN SOMALILAND.

¹⁸ Ali, M. Learning from the History.

numerous pre-segment as well as post-parcel authentic occasions. These new history specialists chalk out that prior historiography of Pakistan was just serving the public plan of state instead of outlining the genuine image of chronicled occasions. In the appointment of 1970 working class turned out to be all the more impressive and this class likewise began to put their inquiries on the hypothetical methodologies of historiography that they said was inclining toward the plans of exclusive class of state.

New antiquarians of Pakistan accepted that set of experiences reading material are only an assortment of phony plans and off-base, flawed or misquoted recorded occasions that are outlined by state/government to serve the public plan of state. This approach depicted some unacceptable elements as reason of production of Pakistan. It additionally supported the minds of new age with disdain towards Hindus and Hindustan to serve the plan of express that depended on depicting India as local hegemon. The eminent manuscript "The Murder of History: A Critique of History" in Pakistan these primers utilized by K.K.Aziz was one such book which guaranteed that genuine history. It is killed in Pakistan and understudies are simply perusing the phony information of history in reading material. Numerous different researchers likewise trusted a similar thought. Different students of history of Pakistan like I.H Qureshi and Ayesha Jalal who added to approach the genuine recorded occasions about making of Pakistan addressed their thoughts in regards to occasions and characters who really added to make the new state for Muslims of subcontinent. I-H Qureshi expressed that numerous different variables behind the one-sided disposition of Hindus really impacted Muslims to make Pakistan as their country. Ayesha Jalal expressed that Jinnah was really not for plunging joint India but rather just putting the possibility of Pakistan as a deal to get more equivalent privileges for Muslims in joint India. Numerous different history specialists and researchers dismissed their thoughts and express that

momentum lamentable circumstance of Muslims residing in India is to the point of making an end that one-sided mentality of Hindus towards Muslims was unequivocal element for Muslims to invest their amounts of energy to get discrete country for them.

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