Imagine noble and gentle kind of personal and professional background of an author writing “A Concise History of Pakistan” in letter and spirit. This is Mr. Shahid Amin with unparalleled flair for Pakistan Studies in personal capacity, with gracious reputation as a seasoned diplomat in Pakistan Foreign Service, acknowledged by men of letters and men at the helm of affairs alike, heartthrob of hundreds of students in Pakistan Studies and International Relations. Published by the Institute of Business Management where Mr. Shahid Amin is the Visiting Faculty for Pakistan Studies and International Relations, this book speaks volumes for its truthful, objective and fair account of history based on facts, free of bias and preconceived notions. The approach adopted is to include diverse views and analyses for completeness of the record. This book is useful for students of Pakistan Studies and Pakistan History, for general readers and those in pertinent research, journalism, and political questions.

Born in Delhi on 8th February 1936, Mr. Shahid Amin secured MA degrees in English Literature from Punjab University and in International Relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Boston (USA). He stood first in Pakistan in the CSS batch of 1958. He was given the decoration of Tamgha-e-Quaid-e-Azam for his work in the Rann of Kutch case. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Mr. Shahid Amin worked as lecturer in English in Gordon College, Rawalpindi (1956 to 1958). Since 1999, he has been Visiting Professor for International Relations and Pakistan Studies at College of Business Management, Karangi Creek, Karachi. Since retirement from the Pakistan Foreign Service, Mr. Amin has written extensively for newspapers and seminars. He is also a well-known analyst on national television and radio on foreign policy and national affairs. He is the author of four books: (1) Pakistan’s Foreign Policy: A Reappraisal (2000), which is being used as a text and reference book in colleges; (2) Realism in Politics (2005), which is a collection of his articles in newspapers; (3) Reminiscences of a Pakistani, which covers the period from 1958 to 1988 in Pakistan’s foreign policy, and Europe and the Muslim World: Coexistence or Conflict? Mr. Shahid A.M. Amin spent 39 years in the Pakistan Foreign Service from 1958 to 1997.

The highlight of the very introduction of the book suggests Pakistan’s history cannot be separated from the history of Muslims of the rest of South Asia. For about a thousand years, Muslims help political power in much of India (or Hindustan, as it was called). The 1100-years-long Islamic period has profoundly influenced the thinking and attitudes of the Pakistani people. Today’s Pakistan is a continuation of that Muslim past: and its political landscape since independence has been heavily influenced by that legacy. A the same time, an awareness of the region’s pre-Islamic past -- Indus Valley civilization, Aryan, Hindu, Buddhist, Persian, Sceytian and Greek -- is also relevant for understanding the historical and cultural heritage of Pakistan.

From the Pre-Islamic period to Pakistan’s history to the Pakistan Movement, the first half of the book incisively and concisely comprises such chapters as Muslim rule over India till the Mughals, Mughal dynasty (1526-1707) impact of Muslim rule over India, decline of the Mughal empire (1707-1857), rise of the British (1757-1857), 1857 mutiny, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, political developments in India (1885-1922) and the Hindu-Muslim divide (1922-1940). From the Independence and early days of Pakistan, the book moves on with Political and Constitutional developments (1947-1958), Field Marshal Ayub Khan: the first military takeover (1958-1969), including the 1965 India-Pakistan war, General Yahya Khan: the second military takeover (1969-1971), including 1971 India-Pakistan war, the Bhu-to years (1971-1977), General Zia-ul-Haq: the third military takeover (1977-1988), return of civilian rule (1988-1999), General Pervez Musharaf: the fourth military takeover (1999-2008), Pakistan since 2008 and Pakistan’s foreign policy examined in all is different forms and manifestations.

Summing up the book, Mr. Shahid Amin emphasizes Pakistan’s importance in the International arena to be ensured by a number of such factors as “its key geo-strategic location, the sixth largest population in the world, the dynamism of its people, good resources, strong agriculture, the size of its armed forces and its nuclear and missile capability”. He believes foreign policy successes will come if Pakistan has political stability at home, eradicates extremism and terrorism and has sound economic policies. India-Pakistan mutual resolve to address problems with mutual respect, fair-play and justice will greatly help both countries in promoting peace and security and ensuring speedy economic progress. As the title of the book suggests “A concise history of Pakistan” is a step-by-step chronological development of Pakistan’s history over the centuries It is a tailored-to-perfection kind of research and reference material for students, faculty, researchers, historians and for media, government, politics and for those who have a flair for Pakistan history and Pakistan Studies. As Mr. Shahid Amin has himself been a distinguished faculty in Pakistan Studies and Pakistan History, a career diplomat, a seasoned writer and a print and electronic media analyst, it is believed that this book will go a long way pertaining to study, research and reference, beside others, for concerned students and teachers of subjects at different Pakistani colleges and universities and for concerned departments and chairs at international universities.

“A concise history of Pakistan” by Shahid Amin provides ideal resource base on the subject at colleges and university libraries, specialized libraries of print and electronic media, libraries at foreign missions and international organizations, parliament and senate libraries and is heard echoing at the threshold of its launching from Liaquat Memorial Library and State Bank of Pakistan library, Karachi to Bagh-e-Jinnah and Punjab University Libraries, Lahore and beyond to Convention Centre Library, Islamabad and even at the Municipal library, The Mall, Murree to libraries at Peshawar University and Baluchistan University with far-reaching positive vibes through social, print and electronic media at the local, national and international levels.