

ISSN-P : 2616-955X | ISSN-E : 2663-7030

DOI(Journal): 10.31703/grr

DOI(Volume): 10.31703/grr/.2024(IX)

DOI(Issue): 10.31703/grr.2024(IX.II)



# GRR

**GLOBAL REGIONAL REVIEW**

**VOL. IX, ISSUE II, SPRING (JUNE-2024)**



Double-blind Peer-review Research Journal  
www.grrjournal.com  
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**Article title**

**Searching for Leadership in Pakistan in the Twenty-First Century: Agency-Structure Conflict Management (2013-2023)**

**Global Regional Review**

p-ISSN: 2616-955X e-ISSN: 2663-7030

DOI(journal): 10.31703/grr

Volume: IX (2024)

DOI (volume): 10.31703/grr.2024(IX)

Issue: II Spring (June-2024)

DOI(Issue): 10.31703/grr.2024(IX-II)

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**Abstract**

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**Key Words:** Leader, Leadership, Corruption, Dynastic Politics

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**Pages:** 55-64

**DOI:** 10.31703/grr.2024(IX-II).05

**DOI link:** [https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/grr.2024\(IX-II\).05](https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/grr.2024(IX-II).05)

**Article link:** <http://www.grrjournal.com/article/A-b-c>

**Full-text Link:** <https://grrjournal.com/fulltext/>

**Pdf link:** <https://www.grrjournal.com/jadmin/Author/31rv1olA2.pdf>

Citing this Article

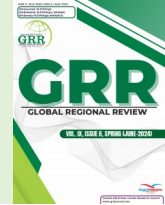
05		Searching for Leadership in Pakistan in the Twenty-First Century: Agency-Structure Conflict Management (2013-2023)					
Pages		Author	Year	Volume	Issue	DOI	
55-64		Rana Eijaz Ahmad	2024	IX	II	10.31703/grr.2024(IX-II).05	
Referencing & Citing Styles	APA	Ahmad, R. E. (2024). Searching for Leadership in Pakistan in the Twenty-First Century: Agency-Structure Conflict Management (2013-2023). <i>Global Regional Review</i> , IX(II), 55-64. <a href="https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2024(IX-II).05">https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2024(IX-II).05</a>					
	CHICAGO	Ahmad, Rana Eijaz. 2024. "Searching for Leadership in Pakistan in the Twenty-First Century: Agency-Structure Conflict Management (2013-2023)." <i>Global Regional Review</i> IX (II):55-64. doi: 10.31703/grr.2024(IX-II).05.					
	HARVARD	AHMAD, R. E. 2024. Searching for Leadership in Pakistan in the Twenty-First Century: Agency-Structure Conflict Management (2013-2023). <i>Global Regional Review</i> , IX, 55-64.					
	MHRA	Ahmad, Rana Eijaz. 2024. 'Searching for Leadership in Pakistan in the Twenty-First Century: Agency-Structure Conflict Management (2013-2023)', <i>Global Regional Review</i> , IX: 55-64.					
	MLA	Ahmad, Rana Eijaz. "Searching for Leadership in Pakistan in the Twenty-First Century: Agency-Structure Conflict Management (2013-2023)." <i>Global Regional Review</i> IX.II (2024): 55-64. Print.					
	OXFORD	Ahmad, Rana Eijaz (2024), 'Searching for Leadership in Pakistan in the Twenty-First Century: Agency-Structure Conflict Management (2013-2023)', <i>Global Regional Review</i> , IX (II), 55-64.					
	TURABIAN	Ahmad, Rana Eijaz. "Searching for Leadership in Pakistan in the Twenty-First Century: Agency-Structure Conflict Management (2013-2023)." <i>Global Regional Review</i> IX, no. II (2024): 55-64. <a href="https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/grr.2024(IX-II).05">https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/grr.2024(IX-II).05</a> .					



## Global Regional Review

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/grr>



Pages: 55-64

URL: [https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2024\(IX-II\).05](https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2024(IX-II).05)

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Cite Us



### Title

**Searching for Leadership in Pakistan in the Twenty-First Century: Agency-Structure Conflict Management (2013-2023)**

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### Abstract

*The paper interprets different relationships between people and leaders using an interpretive method. We observe that individuals can make choices based on perspectives relevant to their values and traditions. However, social structures influence those choices through power abuse in third-world/developing countries. Pakistan is a obvious example. Therefore, we interpretively explain the leadership crises in the country. The social evils, corruption, social injustice, dynastic politics, personality cults, idiosyncrasy, and enslaved people among both leaders and the led. The findings are mainly drawn from the researchers' observation through the inductive method, and conclusions are made from primary and secondary sources. We conclude that efficient leadership is essential to manage Pakistan's socio-political and economic crises. The research emphasizes and demands from leaders fighting against corruption, promoting social justice, and respecting people's mandate. We call for diminishing dynastic politics and personality cults and promoting popular leadership from mainstream social strata in Pakistan.*

**Keywords:** [Leader](#), [Leadership](#), [Corruption](#), [Dynastic Politics](#)

### Introduction

Pakistan is struggling in the comity of nations to emerge as one of the significant leading countries in the South Asian region. It requires a proactive

approach with some bold decisions in searching for leaders from the people and the people instead of from the traditional families or traditional parties with their stronghold in the rural areas. It may



achieve the goal of an economically independent Pakistan within a subsequent decade.

The recent shift in Pakistan's foreign policy and protecting its national interests against the people's wishes is inflating Pakistan's leadership crises. In joint statements regarding diminishing terrorism from the region, Modi and Joe Biden, chief executives of India and the U.S., respectively, implicitly call Pakistan a hub of terrorism (Raza, 2023). India's inside volatilities have developed due to Modi's inhumaneness in Kashmir, Khalistan, Hyderabad, and Nagaland. India's foreign policy starts and ends at the Pakistani borders. Consequently, Pakistan is looking forward to its new regional alliances with China and Russia.

After the PTI governance from 2018 to 2022, appeasement no longer exists in Pakistan's foreign policy. In the neo-Cold War era, Pakistan tended to develop its relationship with its old friends, Iran and Turkey, to enhance its choices of more friends than foes in its surroundings.

Instead, it is adopting a proactive approach, which includes building more substantial economic and strategic partnerships with other countries.

Pakistan's relationship with China has become a top priority, given China's rising economic and political power. Pakistan believes it can benefit from China's economic growth by building stronger economic ties with the country. Given its increasing regional influence, Pakistan also seeks to enhance its strategic partnership with China.

### Who is a leader?

A true leader is someone who not only commands respect from others but also respects himself. He fights against established social stigmas and ensures everyone around him is respected. A leader thinks about the welfare of the entire community of individuals and carves out a plan that is implemented based on the available resources. He is a fearless person who is always on the lookout for any external dangers that may harm his people. Still, he also keeps an open eye on any unfavorable conditions that may create difficulties for them. A leader involves people in their destination and helps them to focus on achieving the set targets.

Pakistan has only one crisis, and that is leadership. Since September 1948, the country has been plagued by a lack of leadership.

### Factors: Pakistan lags in leadership

However, sectarian and ethnic tensions have often led to violence and conflict, making it difficult for leaders to unify the country and promote a shared vision for the future. The following are the factors that created the leadership crises in Pakistan.

#### Limited resources

Pakistan is a developing country with limited resources, making it difficult to invest in the infrastructure, education, and healthcare needed to support strong leadership. It lacks essential services and opportunities for many people, hindering the development of a solid and capable leadership cadre.

#### Death of Quaid-i-Azam

The early demise of Quaid-I-Azam is why Pakistan remains unsuccessful in creating leadership. Since he could produce his simulations for leading Pakistan in forthcoming years, his death in September 1948 disrupted the leadership in Pakistan. It pushes the existing leadership to pursue the colonial mindset.

#### Colonial Mindset

The colonial mindset could only create enslaved people in Pakistan; therefore, after the partition, the civil and military bureaucracy was more self-seeking, scared of losing its powers, and continued a system of British legacy. The British rule in India created a bureaucracy for controlling enslaved people. Pakistani policymakers kept the traditional setup to enjoy powers and privileges. It made another class of feudal lords in Pakistan.

#### Feudal Lords

Feudal lords are a community in Pakistan. British rule obliges people of the subcontinent who had been loyal to the Britishers. Later, those who received lands from the Britishers for their insincerity toward the people of the subcontinent and spied for the colonial master were known as feudal lords.

#### Frail Institutions (Parliament, Judiciary, and Executive)

The institutions in Pakistan have been frail in their composition. Parliament means legislation by the elected people of Pakistan. Unfortunately, it is a tool in the hands of the handlers to dominate the people of Pakistan; almost twenty-six (Mehboob, [2023](#)) amendments of the Pakistan Constitution 1973 belong to the elite capture instead of popular sentiment. The website of the Pakistan Senate shows the 25 amendments.

In the same way, the executive and judiciary work for Pakistan's civil-military establishment instead of as per law (Khan, [2023](#)). That is why Pakistan's judicial system is considered number 128 out of 140 countries' rule of law scale. (Pakistan Ranks 129 out of 140 in the Rule of Law Index, [2022](#)). Therefore, these are the top institutions of Pakistan that are monopolizing the whole system for the elite capture. "The people believe the judiciary at the top overrides the sovereignty of the parliament and sets aside the ruling of the deputy speaker Qasim Khan Suri as unconstitutional. Article 69 (1) of Pakistan's 1973 constitution says, "The validity of any proceedings in [Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament)] shall not be called in question on the ground of any irregularity of procedure." Owing to the Supreme Court of Pakistan's Suo Moto notice against the deputy speaker's ruling marked a question mark on the sovereignty of the parliament in Pakistan." (Mahnoor Mansoor, [2022](#))

### Personality Cult

Personality cult has been an important feature of Pakistan's political system. People start worshipping a person in Pakistan because of his ideological understanding or some other traits. It gives rise to the status quo instead of mobilization.

Personality cult is a deep-rooted cause of the extinction of leadership from Pakistan. After patrician Mujeeb-ur Rehman in East Pakistan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in West Pakistan led the people with their flagrant style of politics. It led to the disintegration of Pakistan in 1971. Bhutto emerged as a brand in contemporary Pakistan, and Mujeeb emerged in modern Bangladesh. In the 1980s, the military establishment introduced Nawaz Sharief as a new pawn for exploiting its monopoly over the silent majority of Pakistan's people. Khawaja Asif, the present defense minister, once said on the National Assembly of Pakistan floor that Pakistani

military generals were unaccountable, as they had never been asked about their defeats against India in 1965, 1971, and 1999.

### Dynastic Politics

Dynastic politics is also a cause of leadership crises in Pakistan. Traditional political parties focus on their families and want the future leaders of Pakistan to come from their families. The PMLN and the PPP are two major political parties, and both maneuver their agendas through their children, who are incapable, corrupt, and proven liars. Maryam, Hamza Shahbaz, Hassan, and Hussain Nawaz were named in money laundering and many other corruption cases. However, the PTI government remained unsuccessful in proving any of those cases.

One reason for Pakistan's leadership crisis is the country's lack of a democratic system. The military establishment rules over the country through four primary methods: influence, blackmailing, displacement, and supplant. (Ahmad, [2010](#)) It exacerbated the governance crises in Pakistan because the non-political elite started performing as a political elite and overlapped the functioning of the government with its earlier mentioned four primary methods. It obstructed the public sector structures in Pakistan to develop institutions. It started a tug of war between the civil and military elite; both passed the buck upon each other for the crises of Pakistan.

### Education System

Pakistan's education system is traditionally designed and has no critical thinking. It is based on dictation and cramming instead of thinking or innovating. The other reason for the contemporary leadership crises in Pakistan is the lack of comprehension regarding grooming behaviors as an education that may indoctrinate political awareness. Most people are unaware of their duties and unable to realize their rights.

Corruption is deep-rooted in Pakistan. It may be the primary cause of the leadership crises. It has diminished people's trust in their traditional leadership. People are fed up with the political extravaganzas on the public purse and looting the same.

Another reason is the money laundering, exposed through the Panama Papers and other sources. The traditional political parties in Pakistan laundered money on a large scale outside Pakistan through actresses and other fake bank accounts.

To overcome this crisis, Pakistan needs leaders dedicated to serving the people and with the vision and competence to lead the country towards progress and development.

### Individual Lethargy

Individually, people are more passive in being vigilant in their political understandings. They prefer to stay in their comfort zone. Living in their shells and not challenging the existing dilemmas is a major source of corruption and the absence of leadership in Pakistan.

### System Capabilities at the state of abeyance

An efficient leadership always utilizes a political system's available and observable system capabilities. Almond and Powell introduce the system capabilities as extractive, regulative, and distributive as input capabilities, and the rest of the symbolic and responsive system capabilities are the output capabilities. The leader utilizes these capabilities, extracts the resources, regulates them, and distributes them equitably to the grassroots level. (Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell Jr., 1966) Pakistan is a country where leaders exploit these system capabilities for personal, party, and family interests and pursue crony capitalism. Consequently, the system is dysfunctional due to the system's capabilities malfunctioning.

### Major Leadership Essentials

Several characteristics are commonly associated with influential leaders. Some of the significant characteristics include the following:

#### Vision

Leaders envision where they want to go and how to get there. In the contemporary world, we may quote the visionary leaders of Turkey and China, who believe in interdependence.

#### Communication

Leaders must communicate their vision, goals, and expectations to their team.

#### Confidence

Pakistan has been a colony of Britishers; therefore, we are unable to get ourselves out of that slave mindset, which hinders individuals from leading from the front. Traditionally, people lack confidence in their body language and consider themselves inferior. Such an inferiority complex makes it difficult to challenge any existing setup.

#### Integrity

The history of Pakistan reflects that so-called leaders have been changing political affiliations and political parties. Why would people who are insincere to the parties be sincere to any national cause? They become tools in the hands of the establishment at home and abroad.

#### Empathy

Effective leaders can understand and relate to the needs and concerns of their team members.

#### Decision-making

Leaders must make informed decisions quickly based on the information available to them.

#### Decisiveness

Leaders must be able to make tough decisions quickly and effectively.

#### Adaptability

A leader must adapt to changing circumstances and be flexible.

#### Accountability

Leaders must take responsibility for their actions and decisions and hold themselves and their team accountable for results.

Creativity: A leader must think outside the box and develop innovative solutions to problems.

#### Emotional Intelligence

Leaders must manage their own emotions and effectively manage the emotions of others to build strong relationships and achieve common goals.

#### Team-building

Leaders must build a strong team and work collaboratively with their team members.

### **Continuous Learning**

Effective leaders understand the importance of constant learning and strive to improve their skills and knowledge over time.

A leader is always progressive and looks forward to the people's best interests. Sincerity, honesty, and commitment to his tasks may be the significant characteristics of a leader. He avoids vengeance and his personal, family, or party interests. He believes in a holistic approach and knows how to make appropriate long-term decisions.

### **What are the repercussions?**

The absence of effective Leadership in Pakistan can have many repercussions. Some possible consequences are:

#### **Political instability**

A lack of leadership can lead to political instability, with competing factions and interest groups vying for power and influence. It can create a climate of uncertainty, which can harm economic growth and social development.

#### **Economic downturn**

The absence of strong leadership can also result in economic downturns, as investors and businesses become wary of investing in an unstable environment. It can lead to high unemployment, inflation, and a decrease in standards of living.

#### **Social Unrest**

The absence of leadership can create social unrest, with citizens feeling frustrated and powerless. Protests, strikes, and other forms of civil unrest can further destabilize the country.

#### **Security Threats**

In a politically unstable environment, security threats can arise, including terrorism, insurgency, and other forms of violence. It can lead to a breakdown in law and order and can also have an impact on neighboring countries.

The absence of effective leadership can have a cascading effect on a country, impacting its political,

economic, social, and security situations. Therefore, Pakistan must have strong and competent leaders who can guide the country toward stability and progress.

### **Significant Challenges for a Leadership**

Leadership is a complex and demanding role that requires individuals to navigate various challenges. Some of the significant challenges that leaders commonly face include:

**Building and managing a team:** Leaders need to recruit, train, and manage a team of individuals with diverse skills and personalities. They must ensure that the team is aligned with the organization's goals and objectives and that everyone works together effectively.

**Decision-making:** Leaders often face tough decisions that can significantly impact the organization and its stakeholders. They need to make decisions quickly and decisively while also considering the long-term consequences of their actions.

**Communication:** Leaders must communicate effectively with their team members, stakeholders, and external parties. They need to be able to convey complex ideas and information clearly and concisely while also listening to the perspectives and concerns of others.

### **Managing Change**

Leaders must adapt to changing circumstances and navigate the organization through transition periods. They need to anticipate and respond to new challenges and opportunities while ensuring the organization remains focused on its goals.

### **Motivating and Inspiring others**

Leaders must motivate and inspire their team members to achieve their full potential and create a supportive work environment that encourages creativity, innovation, and collaboration.

**Dealing with conflicts:** Leaders need to be able to manage conflicts and resolve disputes within their team and with other stakeholders. They need to be able to handle difficult conversations and



negotiate solutions that are acceptable to all parties involved. (Yousaf, [2023](#))

These challenges can be difficult to navigate, but influential leaders can develop the skills and strategies to overcome them and lead their organizations to success.

### What are the Opportunities?

There are several opportunities available for emerging leaders in Pakistan. Some of these include:

#### Government Strategies

The Pakistani government offers various programs to support and empower emerging leaders, such as the Prime Minister's Youth Program, the National Youth Development Framework, and the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs): Numerous NGOs operating in Pakistan offer leadership development programs, mentorship opportunities, and networking events to young professionals.

#### Professional Development Programs

Several organizations, including the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), offer executive education and leadership development programs for professionals in Pakistan.

#### Startup Incubators and Accelerators

Many startup incubators and accelerators in Pakistan, such as Plan9, NIC, and Invest2Innovate, offer mentorship, funding, and other resources to emerging leaders in the startup ecosystem.

#### International Programs

Many international organizations, such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), offer programs and initiatives for emerging leaders in Pakistan.

Emerging leaders in Pakistan have many opportunities to grow their skills, expand their networks, and positively impact their communities.

Interdependence and equal opportunities for ethnic diversities to share and care for are real opportunities.

### Searching Leadership in Pakistan

Pakistan is a South Asian country with over 220 million people. The country has a complex political system, and Leadership in Pakistan is divided among various branches of government.

At the federal level, the President of Pakistan is the ceremonial head of state, while the Prime Minister is the head of government and holds executive power. As of my knowledge cutoff in 2021, Imran Khan was the Prime Minister of Pakistan, having been elected in August 2018.

In addition to the federal government, Pakistan has several provincial governments, each with its own Chief Minister responsible for the day-to-day governance of their respective provinces.

Apart from the government, Pakistan has several political parties that are essential in shaping the country's leadership. Some of the major political parties in Pakistan include:

1. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI): led by Imran Khan
2. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N): led by Nawaz Sharif
3. Pakistan People's Party (PPP): led by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari

Many other political parties and groups have representation in the country's National Assembly and other legislative bodies.

It is important to note that Pakistan has a dynamic political landscape, and the information provided here may have changed since my knowledge cutoff in 2021. (Sadiq, [2023](#))

### Agency Structure Conflict Management in Pakistan 2013-2023

In Pakistan, people are supposed to make their own choices for any government. The general elections are held at different times. There were general elections in Pakistan in 2008, 2013, and 2018. On February 8, 2024, another general election will be held in Pakistan. However, the structures in Pakistan limit the capabilities of individuals as agencies. The representatives of the PTI are being arrested and sent behind bars. Their nomination papers for the 2024 general election have been snatched and stopped from submitting their nominations. The judiciary, executive, and Election

Commission of Pakistan are resisting the part representatives of the PTI.

In the 2013 general elections, the PMLN assumed power, although all major political parties, PPP and PTI, along with JI and JUIF, raised eyebrows upon the credibility of elections. The PTI started a protest against the credibility of elections in a few constituencies and demanded the recounting in those constituencies of Lahore. The structures did not respond well to PTI, which forced it to sit in Islamabad for more than 120 days. However, it was allegedly propagated that the sit-in was also structured to dismantle the PMLN government. In December 2016, the APS tragic tragedy happened in which almost 148 children were brutally massacred. In 2017, PMLN leader Nawaz Sharief was ousted in a Panama case out of corruption charges. He went abroad for medical treatment but never came back. He was declared an offender, but when he returned in November 2023, all his cases were finished, and he was set free for all activities. This structural free fall for one party and crushing of the opposition made the individuals in Pakistan make free choices peacefully.

### **How Pakistan can produce a Quality Leadership**

Producing quality leadership in Pakistan is a complex challenge that requires addressing various social, economic, and political issues. Here are some steps that could help:

#### **Focus on Education**

Investing in education is crucial to producing quality leaders. Pakistan needs to prioritize improving the country's education quality to make well-educated and informed citizens who can take on leadership roles. It includes investing in teacher training, improving curriculum standards, and increasing access to education.

#### **Encourage Critical Thinking**

Developing thinking skills is essential for producing leaders who can analyze complex problems, make informed decisions, and solve issues. Pakistan must create an educational environment that encourages students to think critically and challenge conventional wisdom.

Promote diversity and inclusion: Pakistan is a diverse country with different cultures, religions, and languages. Embracing diversity and inclusion can help produce leaders who can understand and empathize with people from different backgrounds.

#### **Encourage Youth Participation**

Young people represent Pakistan's future and should be encouraged to participate in leadership roles. This can be done by providing opportunities for youth to engage in politics, civil society, and entrepreneurship.

#### **Foster Transparency and Accountability**

Pakistan must strengthen its institutions and promote transparency and accountability in all sectors. It includes improving the justice system, combating corruption, and holding public officials accountable.

Provide mentorship and coaching: Mentorship and coaching can help individuals develop leadership skills, gain insights into their strengths and weaknesses, and build relationships with experienced leaders. Pakistan needs to provide opportunities for aspiring leaders to connect with mentors and coaches who can guide them on their leadership journey.

Producing quality leadership in Pakistan requires a long-term approach that involves investing in education, promoting critical thinking, embracing diversity and inclusion, encouraging youth participation, fostering transparency and accountability, and providing mentorship and coaching.

#### **The Way Forward**

Every society has three types of individuals—subjects, parochial, and participants. We can find these three kinds of individuals in every group. The increased number of participants makes a country more responsible, autonomous, and a paradise for leadership. In Pakistan, dynastic politics, feudal lords, praetorianism, and personality cults have created a monopoly of monopolists who may be better known as opportunists. They divide people by religion, sect, caste, creed, and status. It constructs a voting behavior in the country, and the media plays a lapdog function. It supports corrupt people in coming into power.

Every citizen must be responsible for observing the rule of law, social justice, transparency, and board accountability. Compromising upon the citizens' duties, as mentioned earlier, resists the creation of leadership in the country. Merit recruitment, out-of-turn promotion, and illegitimate service extensions deprive individuals of their fundamental rights. Therefore, citizens must be vigilant while voting and consider whether popular candidates won in general or unpopular elections. They need to leave their comfort zones and launch a protest until the right person wins the slot.

Finding responsible and efficient leadership for Pakistan is a complex issue that requires a multi-faceted approach. Here are some suggestions on the way forward:

### Promoting Democratic Values

Pakistan must strengthen its democratic institutions and ensure regular, free, and fair elections. It gives the citizens of Pakistan the power to choose their leaders and hold them accountable.

### Fostering Transparency and Accountability

The government should establish independent oversight institutions to investigate and prosecute corruption and ensure public officials are accountable for their actions.

### Encouraging Political Participation

Pakistan should encourage political participation and create avenues for citizens to engage in political processes. It can be done through community outreach programs, public forums, and youth engagement programs.

Investing in education: The government should invest in education, mainly in rural areas, to promote literacy and critical thinking. This would enable citizens to make informed decisions and participate in the political process.

### Supporting Independent Media

The government should support independent media and ensure journalists can operate freely without fear of retribution. A free press is essential for holding leaders accountable and promoting transparency.

### Promoting Diversity and Inclusion

Pakistan is a diverse country, and ensuring that all voices are heard and represented is essential. The government should encourage diversity and inclusion in all aspects of society.

Pakistan must promote democratic values, transparency, and accountability, encourage political participation, invest in education, support independent media, and promote diversity and inclusion. These efforts help to create responsible and efficient leadership in Pakistan.

Pakistan has to be proactive in making independent decisions with efficient leadership for its trade and economy.

Remarkable advancements in science and technology mark the current era, yet the world seems in constant chaos and unpredictability. This research endeavor is poised to revolutionize the field of social sciences, shedding new light on the intricacies of contemporary society.

It is widely acknowledged that Pakistan's fate is closely tied to China and the Central Asian region. To secure a prosperous future, Pakistan must embark on a mission to unravel the complexities of Central Asian states. To achieve this, Pakistan needs to develop a deep understanding of the region and its strategic significance while showcasing its leadership skills internationally.

Pakistan is facing several challenges at the international level, including the following:

### Security

One of Pakistan's biggest challenges is security, particularly regarding terrorism and extremism. The country has been battling these issues for decades and has suffered numerous attacks from various terrorist groups.

Economic challenges: Pakistan's economy is facing several challenges, including a high level of debt, a large trade deficit, and low foreign reserves. These financial challenges have led to several difficult decisions, including seeking assistance from international organizations like the IMF. (Malik, 2023)

### Diplomatic Challenges

Pakistan's relationships with some of its neighbors, particularly India, are strained. The country also faces challenges in building relationships with major powers, including the United States.

### **Climate Change**

Pakistan is among the countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including increased temperatures, droughts, and flooding. These effects are significantly impacting the country's economy and population.

Human rights: Pakistan has faced criticism from the international community for its human rights record, particularly regarding issues such as freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the treatment of minorities.

Nuclear war propaganda and economic inequality are the significant challenges.

### **Conclusion**

Leadership is a quality that a leader wears as an outfit while interacting with others. Moreover, a

leader practices good deeds and then asks others to do so. In Pakistan, it happens otherwise. However, we must be vigilant about what kind of leaders we are bequeathing to the next generations. The present generations have to sacrifice their lives and money to give a better future to their children.

We need to be vigilant and get out of our comfort zone. Everyone in Pakistan would have to take responsibility today for the better future of the next generations. It is not the duty of any single individual to rescue Pakistan from the ongoing crises.

Pakistan can produce leaders if we start individual introspection and start performing our duties. This would give everyone rights. Performing our duties is the best way to create leadership anywhere in the world, and Pakistan needs it the most in the prevailing circumstances.

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