

THE SERVICES OF FAROOQ AHMAD KHAN LEGHARI AS PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

Dr. Akmal Kalyar ¹, Dr. M. M. Gohar ^{*2}

Abstract

Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari's presidential period (1993-1997) is one of the most significant, but least researched, eras of Pakistan's political and constitutional history. He has been the subject of scholarly attention for his role in the dismissal of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's government, but his wider constitutional, administrative, developmental, and diplomatic contributions have been ignored, though he was in office during major political and institutional changes. This paper is a critical assessment of Leghari's presidency using historical and qualitative research methods, utilizing official documents, archival documents, legislative debates, contemporary newspapers, interviews, memoirs, and relevant academic literature. It explores his transition from a highly successful civil servant, a prominent parliamentarian, and President of Pakistan, and assesses his contribution towards institutional accountability, democratic governance, regional development, constitutionalism, and Pakistan's foreign policy. The current article also covers some constitutional issues, such as the dismissal of the Benazir Bhutto government, the proposal for the Council for Defence and National Security, legal battle with the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, and Leghari's eventual resignation. It claims that his presidential period is a watershed moment that has significantly shaped the constitutional development, civil-military relations, and the power dynamics in Pakistan.

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1. Introduction:

1.1 Background

There are two competing models in the Pakistani political context that have shaped the state's political history: that of the feudal-dynastic politician and the military leader. In a very literal sense, Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari doesn't fit into either of those categories. He was born on 2nd May 1940 in the house of his maternal grandfather, Colonel Abdul Rahim Khan, in Tank (KPK), and was predestined to become the twenty-first chief of the Leghari tribe, a notable Baloch tribe whose roots were in the colonial service, based at Dera Ghazi Khan. His grandfather, Sardar Jamal Khan Leghari, was awarded the title of *Khan Bahadur* for settling tribal disputes and his contribution to the British war effort during World War 1, and his father, Sardar Muhammad Khan Leghari, was a member of the Punjab Assembly in the 1950s.

However, Leghari's life was far from a typical feudal lord. He attended Aitchison College and Forman Christian College and later studied Philosophy, Politics, and Economics at Oxford

¹, Lecturer Department of Pakistan Studies IUB (RYK) Campus. akmal.hussain@iub.edu.pk

² PhD Pakistan Studies BZU Multan. mubeen.gohar78@gmail.com

University. In 1964, he scored 3rd position in the Central Superior Services examination and joined the Central Superior Services (Pakistan's top-notch civil service). This combination of privilege and meritocratic elite training would form his unique political identity.

Following the death of his father in 1971, Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari inherited the position of tribal chief (Leghari Tribe). Consequently, he resigned from the Civil Service in 1973 to embark on a full-time political career. Accepting the invitation of the then Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, he joined the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), to which he remained persistently loyal during both periods of political ascendancy and adversity. His unwavering commitment to the party was severely tested during General Zia-ul-Haq's military regime, when he suffered more than four years of imprisonment for his political convictions. Despite these hardships, Leghari steadily advanced through the party hierarchy, securing election to Parliament and later serving in the federal cabinets of both Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto. His election as President of Pakistan on 13 November 1993 was, in one sense, the reward of unbroken party loyalty. Yet it was equally the product of a specific institutional moment: the post-Zia constitutional order in which the Eighth Amendment had transformed the presidency from a largely ceremonial post into an office with genuine discretionary power over the survival of elected governments and the leadership of the armed forces.

1.2 Historical and Political Context of Pakistan in the Early 1990s

The early 1990s were among the most turbulent eras of Pakistan's political history. After the assassination of General Zia-ul-Haq in a plane crash in August 1988, democracy was once again restored in Pakistan, which has witnessed the alternation of civilian governments by Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Nawaz Sharif's party. The Eighth Amendment (1985) dramatically enhanced presidential powers, thereby laying the foundation for this democratic experiment. Under Article 58(2)(b), the president was given the power to dissolve the National Assembly if the government failed to function according to the constitution, and under Article 243, 'service chiefs' could be appointed by the president too (Khan, 2009, pp. 408–412). These provisions made the Presidency a strong institutional mediator and provided a channel for indirect military control that operates in a subtle manner without direct military intervention (Rizvi, 2000, pp. 180–182; Ziring, 1997, pp. 301–308).

The significance of Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari's presidency cannot be denied; however, existing literature has focused merely on Farooq Leghari as the president who dismissed Benazir Bhutto's second government in November 1996. This dominant narrative has overshadowed a proper discourse on his overall contribution to Pakistan's political and constitutional development. Consequently, his development projects, diplomatic efforts, constitutional and administrative reforms, and the ideas behind his leadership between 1993 and 1997 have not been given significant scholarly attention. In contrast with the one constitutional action perspective, this study tries to fill this gap by looking at Leghari's presidency as a different and independent field to be studied. The current research focused on four central questions. What were the major services and contributions of Leghari other than the dismissal of the Bhutto government? Second, what was his balance between party loyalty and understanding of the national interest, particularly in November 1996? Thirdly, what impact did his presidency have on civil-military relations in constitutional

appointments and the proposed Council for Defence and National Security (CDNS)? Lastly, what lessons does the presidency of his leave for us about the opportunities and constraints of democratic consolidation in Pakistan in the 1990s?.

1.3 Objectives of the Research

The primary objective of the present research is to have an extensive analytical review of the services of Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari as President of Pakistan (1993-1997). It aims, specifically, to explore his major achievements in the sphere of developmental activities in South Punjab, diplomatic relations, judicial and administrative decisions, and institutional reforms. The study also seeks to explore the complex tension that Leghari had to balance between party loyalty and constitutional duties, particularly in the wake of the removal of Benazir Bhutto's government in November 1996. The other objective was to examine the role of his presidency in the field of civil-military relations, especially the appointments of high-ranking military officials such as General Jahangir Karamat as the army chief and the formation of the Council for Defence and National Security (CDNS). Finally, the study tries to analyze the broader opportunities and structural impediments to democratic consolidation in Pakistan that emerged during the turbulent 1990s through the lens of Leghari's tenure.

1.4 Significance and Scope of the Study

The importance of this study is that it fills an important gap in Pakistan's political historiography. Leghari is known for one controversial decision, but this study points to the fact that his entire presidential career was a classic example of technocratic leadership and constitutional governance, and the delicate balance between civilian and military institutions. The study analyzes his principled resignation in 1997, which has been an integral part of the discussion on institutional integrity and democratic stability in Pakistan. It will be useful to scholars, students, and policy makers who want to gain insight into the difficulties of leadership in hybrid forms of democracy.

The scope of the study is mostly confined to Farooq Leghari's presidency (1993-1997) with necessary contextual references to his pre-presidency career. It does not go too deeply into a detailed discussion of his post-resignation political life, thereby maintaining a sharp analytical focus on his services as President and their implications for democratic consolidation in the 1990s.

1.5 Research Methodology

This study is based on a qualitative historical-analytical approach and focused on the tenure of Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari as President of Pakistan (1993-1997). Sources (primary and secondary) have been used for data collection. Primary sources include official documents, speeches of the President, notifications from the government, and personal interviews of important personalities such as General Ghazanfar Ali Khan (Military Secretary to the President Leghari), Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, and Jamal Khan Leghari. They provide good inside information on leadership and decision-making. Secondary sources include books, scholarly articles, newspapers (Dawn, The News, Nawa-e-Waqat), official reports, and memoirs.

2. Literature Review

The literature on Pakistan's political history of the 1990s is rich with literature on the fragility of democratic transition, the ascendancy of the military-bureaucratic elite, and the role of constitutional amendments in governance. However, the detailed literature, especially on the role of Farooq Leghari as the President of Pakistan, is limited. Most available studies have treated Farooq Leghari as a loyalist of the PPP or as a transitional figure in Pakistan's civil-military relationship, but not as a key player in the study.

Hamid Khan (2009) provides a detailed constitutional history, highlighting how Article 58(2)(b) empowered presidents to dismiss governments and how Leghari exercised this power in 1996 amid allegations of corruption and governance failure (pp. 417–420). Similarly, Rizvi (2000) places Leghari's tenure within the broader pattern of military influence in Pakistani politics, noting his role in military appointments and the establishment of the Council for Defence and National Security (CDNS) as attempts to institutionalize the civil-military relationship (pp. 382–383). Ziring (1997) offers valuable insights into the political crises of the 1990s, describing Leghari's decision to dismiss the Bhutto government as a bold assertion of constitutional authority, though motivated by a desire to restore stability rather than personal ambition (pp. 540–543).

More recent scholarship has begun to explore Leghari's technocratic background. Hussain and Gohar (2025) trace his evolution from civil servant to president, emphasizing how his Oxford education, bureaucratic experience, and tribal leadership shaped a leadership style that prioritized institutional integrity over partisan loyalty. They argue that Leghari's presidency represented a rare case of a non-dynastic technocrat attempting to strengthen constitutional norms in a polarized environment (pp. 1089–1095). Kalyar's earlier M.Phil. thesis (2013) remains one of the few dedicated studies, providing rich biographical details and chronological accounts of Leghari's developmental work in Dera Ghazi Khan and his diplomatic engagements. However, it lacks deeper theoretical engagement with civil-military dynamics. In his memoir 'Between Dreams and Realities 2009', Sartaj Aziz provides first-hand insights into the tenure of Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari as the President. Aziz also credits Leghari for his work in forming the Council for Defence and National Security (CDNS) as a platform for institutionalizing civil-military consultation and for his dedication to the democratic transition during the interim of 1996–97. On the other hand, he identifies the conflicts between Leghari and Nawaz Sharif after the 13th Amendment, and describes Leghari's resignation as a principled act for the dignity of the Constitution. Overall, Aziz's account offers valuable context to Leghari's role in holding the executive power in check while promoting democratic values (Aziz, 2009, pp. 157–160).

Theoretical works on civil-military relations further contextualize Leghari's contributions. Rebecca Schiff's Concordance Theory (1995) helps explain Leghari's efforts to build elite consensus through mechanisms such as the CDNS, while Janowitz's Convergence Theory (1960) illuminates the partial overlap between civilian and military roles during his tenure. Despite these contributions, a comprehensive analytical study that integrates Leghari's full presidential record —developmental, diplomatic, judicial, and institutional — with theoretical insights remains absent. This research aims

to fill that critical gap by offering a holistic evaluation of his services and their implications for democratic consolidation in Pakistan.

3. Farooq Leghari's Political Career: Pre-presidential Career

3.1 Early Life, Education, and Civil Services

Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari was born on Thursday, May 2, 1940, in Tank (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) at the residence of his maternal grandfather, Colonel Abdul Rahim Khan (Hussain & Gohar, 2025, p. 1090). Farooq Leghari was a member of the highly esteemed Aliani clan of the Leghari Tribe, which is the dominant Baloch tribe of Choti Zareen, Dera Ghazi Khan. His family had a long history of political involvement with the British colonial administration and post-independence politics as well. It is worth noting that his grandfather, Sardar Jamal Khan Leghari, was awarded the title of *Khan Bahadur* and *Nawab* for his services, while his father, Sardar Muhammad Khan Leghari, was a member of the Punjab Assembly during the 1950s (Mehmood, 2004, p. 793).

Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari got his early education from the Primary School Chopra and then enrolled at Aitchison College, Lahore, where he was an outstanding student in both academics and co-curricular activities. Elected Head Boy, he was an all-rounder and gained an award for Senior Cambridge in 1956 (The News 2010). He did his Graduation from Forman Christian (F.C.) College and secured a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree from the University of the Punjab in 1960. He later went to the University of Oxford and graduated in 1963 with degrees in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (The Nation, 1993).

In 1964, Leghari entered the Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP) and secured third place in the competitive examination in Pakistan (from both wings of Pakistan). As a CSP officer, he held various posts such as Assistant Commissioner (Pakpattan), Deputy Commissioner (East Pakistan, Dhaka), and Deputy Secretary (Home and Industries Department). During the turbulent times in East Pakistan, he demonstrated his political wisdom and administrative expertise (The News, 2010). Following his father's death in 1971, Farooq Leghari came back to his roots to look after the tribal affairs of his tribe. He was made the 21st Chief of his tribe. In 1973, he resigned from the civil services to look after his tribal issues and entered active politics (Hussain & Gohar, 2025).

This early period laid the foundation for Leghari's later political career, a mix of tribal leadership, Western education, and bureaucratic experience that guided his technocratic and principled approach to governance.

3.2. Farooq Leghari in Politics

As stated earlier, in September 1971, Farooq Leghari's father, Sardar Muhammad Khan Leghari, died, and Farooq Leghari returned to his hometown, Choti Zareen (D.G Khan), to assume the responsibility as the 21st Chief of the Leghari Clan. He left the Civil Service of Pakistan in 1973 and joined the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) following an invitation from the then Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (Hussain & Gohar, 2025). The party had a bright future ahead of it because of his political insight, leadership, and organizational instincts, which helped him climb the party

ladder with amazing speed and become one of the promising leaders of the PPP. He has been a District Secretary General of the PPP at D.G. Khan and subsequently became a Provincial Finance Secretary. He served Pakistan for four months at the United Nations in 1974. In 1975, he was elected to the Senate, and in 1977, he became Federal Minister for Production (The News, 2010). The same year, he secured a National Assembly seat from his birthplace, Dera Ghazi Khan, by a significant margin (Nawa-e-Waqat, 2010).

Following the military coup of Zia-ul-Haq and the imposition of martial law in 1977, Farooq Leghari was arrested by the martial law government and remained in prison for more than four years, but he never made any compromise with the military regime. During the exile of Benazir Bhutto in the 1980s, he was one of the most important party representatives to coordinate party activities and expand party networks in the provinces (Ziring, 1997, p. 308). The stage marked Leghari's rise as one of the most reliable members of the Bhutto family.

3.3 Ministerial Roles and Road to the President

Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari's political dimension grew significantly after the general elections of 1988, in which he won both the National Assembly and Punjab Provincial Assembly seats. At the request of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, he vacated his National Assembly seat but retained his provincial seat to contest for the office of Chief Minister of Punjab as a nominee of the PPP. Despite an energetic campaign, he was defeated by Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, whose coalition formed the provincial government in Punjab (Kalyar, 2013, pp. 17–18). However, when the PPP could not form a government in Punjab, Leghari resigned from the Provincial Assembly and contested a by-election to the National Assembly from his home constituency of Dera Ghazi Khan in 1989, which he won (Hussain & Gohar, 2025).

Leghari's return to the National Assembly was the start of an important phase for his executive career. He was appointed Federal Minister for Water and Power by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, one of the vital infrastructure ministries of the country. He made the following efforts during his tenure to enhance the operational efficiency of the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA): minimizing losses in transmission and distribution system, bolstering the national power system, promoting long-term planning for large-scale hydroelectric power projects to address Pakistan's growing energy requirement and accelerating rural electrification programme, especially in underdeveloped areas of southern Punjab and Sindh (Kalyar, 2013, pp. 18–19).

The first Benazir Bhutto government was dismissed in August 1990, and the general elections were held in October 1990. Leghari became one of the leading Parliamentary leaders of the Pakistan People's Party here and became the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly. His political moderation, administrative skills, parliamentary knowledge, and unwavering loyalty to the Bhutto leadership further strengthened his position in the party. Following the general elections in 1993, the PPP returned to power again, and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto appointed Farooq Leghari as Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, where he looked after the country's foreign relations for a short period before being nominated for the presidential position. Leghari went on to become the 8th President of Pakistan on 14 November 1993 when he won an overwhelming electoral victory over the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)'s candidate Wasim Sajjad and began a Presidency that would have a significant impact on Pakistan's constitutional and political development during the mid-1990s (Hamid Khan, 2001, p. 417; Kalyar, 2013, p. 20).

3.4 Presidential Elections: 1993

The 6th general elections were held in October 1993, resulting in the victory of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in the National Assembly. The presidential election was scheduled to be held on 13 November 1993. Benazir Bhutto, who became the Prime Minister for the second time, nominated Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari as the PPP's candidate for the presidency. Leghari, who was known for his loyalty to the Bhutto family and administrative competence, was considered the best choice to preserve harmony between the government and the presidency (Kalyar, 2013, pp. 37-38).

Leghari contested the presidential election against Wasim Sajjad, then the Chairman of the Senate and the candidate of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). The election was held by the electoral college of members of the National Assembly, Senate, and Provincial Assemblies. Leghari convincingly won with a large parliamentary majority: 274 votes to 168 votes of Wasim Sajjad (The News, 1993, November 14; Dawn, 1993, November 14). On 14 November 1993, Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari was sworn in as the 8th President of Pakistan (Hussain & Gohar, 2025, p. 1092; Kalyar, 2013, p. 38).

Table No i

Vote Polled in the Presidential Election 1993

Name of the House	Total votes polled	Valid votes polled	Farooq Leghari		Wasim Sajjad		Other		Total calculated
			Valid	Calculated	Valid	Calculated	Valid	Calculated	
National Assembly	283	281	170	170	108	108	3	3	281
Punjab Assembly	237	236	139	24	97	17	-	-	41
Sindh Assembly	101	101	98	39	3	1	-	-	40
NWFP (KPK) Assembly	78	78	38	20	40	21	-	-	41
Baluchistan Assembly	43	43	21	21	21	21	1	1	43
Total	742	739	466	274	269	168	4	4	446

Source: Election Commission of Pakistan Report of the Presidential Election 1993 P.23.

The election of Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari as President of Pakistan was a sign of the PPP's new rise in political power and its ambition to consolidate the constitutional base after the 1993 general election. Leghari was considered one of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's close confidants, but he was already a veteran parliamentarian and an efficient administrator and had, in the process, built up a reputation to create his own credibility.

In his inaugural speech, he promised that "he would fulfill his responsibilities as President" according to the Constitution, respect the rule of law, and protect democratic values. His accession to the Presidency ushered in a period of his Presidency that would see a severe institutional feud

and clash between the Presidency and the elected government that would culminate in one of Pakistan's most important skirmishes with its constitution (Hamid Khan, 2001, p. 417).

The prospect of Leghari's becoming president was seen as a political move by the PPP to strengthen its institutional stability and centralize power. Similarly, it pointed to the rising role of the President's establishment as a constitutional guardian and a stabilizing force in the developing democratic system in Pakistan (Ziring, 1997, p. 525).

4. Farooq Leghari's Services as President of Pakistan

4.1 First Phase of Presidency (1993-1996): Cooperation and Transformation

On 14 November 1993, Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari took the oath as the 8th President of Pakistan. Chief Justice of Pakistan Nasim Hassan Shah administered the oath, and Farooq Leghari was the third Head of State³ to be elected under the 1973 Constitution (The News, 1993). He started a very cordial relationship with the government and was deeply loyal to the Bhutto family (Kalyar, 2013, pp. 37-40). Leghari was actively involved in the PPP's agenda and also worked on developmental projects, primarily in his own hometown, Dera Ghazi Khan. He was instrumental in promoting infrastructure and rural development projects and was well loved by the people of his constituency (Hussain & Gohar, 2025).

In this period, Leghari had significant diplomatic engagements. His visit to the United States had helped in strengthening Pakistan-US ties and in resolving important bilateral issues (Dawn, 1994). He also faced political issues such as the ousting of Manzoor Wattoo's government in Punjab and dealing with government issues in the NWFP (KPK) (Kalyar 2013, pp. 54-57).

But, over time, the relationship between the President and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto became strained. Some of the main issues that were put up for discussion were the selection of judges, the selection of the new Army Chief, the devolution of law and order in Sindh, and the rising level of corruption against the PPP government (Hamid Khan, 2001, pp. 417-418). Leghari was a very disciplined bureaucrat who had a deep interest in the proper functioning of the institution and began to worry about the governance lapses. Gen. Ghazanfar Ali Khan, the then Military Secretary of President Farooq Leghari (Personal interview April 2026), stated that President Leghari allegedly wrote several letters and memos to Benazir Bhutto calling for corrective measures, which were ignored.

The assassination of Mir Murtaza Bhutto in September 1996 further exacerbated the crisis and also undermined the trust the people had in the government. These tensions continued to build up and led to the constitutional conflict of November 1996. During this first phase, Leghari was seen to play two roles – a PPP supporter in the government on various fronts and as a president to assert his presidential power when he felt a threat to constitutional governance and national interest (Ziring, 1997, pp. 530-535).

³ Under the 1973, Constitution of Pakistan, Fazal Elahi Chaudhary was the 1st Elected Head of State. Ghulam Ishaq Khan was the 2nd elected head of the State and Farooq Leghari was the 3rd elected head of the state.
Zia-ul-Haq was not the elected head of state under 1973 Constitution, but was elected through Referendum.

Overall, the first half of Leghari's tenure as President was characterized in a positive manner in the developmental realm and in the diplomatic arena, but also had a few drawbacks that manifested the contradictions inherent in the role of a party politician and constitutional President. These early skirmishes were a preview of the more dramatic events to come in the later years of his administration.

4.2 The Constitutional Crisis and Dismissal of Benazir Bhutto's Government

By the end of 1996, there had emerged a wide divide between President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Some of the key issues that saw disagreement were judicial appointments, the selection of a new Army Chief, the worsening law and order in Sindh, and emerging allegations of corruption against key PPP leaders, including Asif Ali Zardari (Hamid Khan, 2001, pp. 417–418; Kalyar, 2013, pp. 63–71). As mentioned earlier, President Leghari sent formal letters and directly met with relevant authorities several times for these remedial measures, but most of these were ignored.

After the assassination of Mir Murtaza Bhutto on 20th September 1996 in a controversial police encounter, the crisis escalated. This event undermined the government's credibility and forced the President to take action (Nawaz, 2008, p. 483; Ziring, 1997, p. 540). Leghari had exercised his constitutional powers under Article 58(2) (b) to dismiss the Bhutto government on 5 November 1996. Leghari, supported his decision, while pointing out the allegations of corruption, administrative failures, political chaos, and the deterioration of the rule of law in the country (Dawn, November 6, 1996; Kalyar, 2013, pp. 77–80)

Leghari's decision was really very tough. He was a long-time PPP stalwart and close confidant of the Bhutto family, and his government's dissolution was a challenge to his deepest political loyalty. However, having acted with a conscience and with integrity, he preferred constitutional obligation to party loyalty. This sentiment of his was later put into words by Ventura, J. (2011, January 17), "I love my country, not my government," which exemplifies his political philosophy and principled method (Hussain & Gohar, 2025, p. 1093).

The action of dissolution produced very divergent reactions. It was welcomed by the opposition parties, including PML-N, and by significant portions of civil society, as a substantial move towards accountability and stability (Anjum, 1997, p. 22). For PPP supporters, though, it was a double betrayal, because it was one of their own leaders who dissolved the government. The Supreme Court later ruled that the President's action was constitutional (Hamid Khan, 2001, p. 418).

For analysis, Leghari's decision was a rare instance of the President's assertion of national interests over personal interests. It revealed some of the conflicts of interest in Pakistan's dualist formula and brought to light the transformation of Leghari from a committed party worker to a protector of state institutions. This step, politically expensive, is one of the most important in the history of Pakistani democracy, which is still being analyzed as an instance of constitutional assertion over party allegiance. However, the decision was somehow supported by the Supreme Court of Pakistan too.

4.3 Interim Government and Democratic Transition (1996–1997)

Since the dismissal of Benazir Bhutto's 2nd Government on 5th November 1996, President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari took quick action to restore political stability. He appointed the senior, reputed, and experienced politician Malik Meraj Khalid as Caretaker Prime Minister. This option was largely considered a neutral and credible one, which helped to restore the trust of the public in the transitional arrangement (Kalyar, 2013, pp. 85–88; Hussain & Gohar, 2025).

During the interim period, one of the major initiatives was the formation of the *Ehtesab* Commission to initiate a campaign against corruption. Even working under time constraints, the Commission was a representation of Leghari's accountability and good governance (Hamid Khan, 2001, p. 418). Although it was suggested by some quarters, including the Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah, to postpone the elections to ensure proper accountability, Leghari strongly opposed the idea to postpone the elections and strongly insisted on holding the general elections on time. He thought that timely polls were crucial for bringing back democratic legitimacy (Ziring, 1997, pp. 542–543; Kalyar, pp. 89–91)

The caretaker government managed to hold the 8th General Elections on 3rd February 1997. National and international observers generally judged these elections to be free and fair. A historic event was the extension of the adult franchise to Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), which allowed millions of people in these regions to access the national electoral process for the first time in history (The Dawn, 2009, Leghari, n.d.). PML-N won a landslide victory in the National Assembly with a 2/3 majority.

President Leghari showed a great sense of restraint and constitutional maturity throughout the interim phase. He has refused to use pressure to expand his own influence and has ensured a peaceful change of government. His actions at a crucial time are expected to bring credibility back to the electoral process at a time when the people's faith in democratic institutions is waning.

The interim period during 1996–97 is one of the most positive achievements of Leghari's leadership in Pakistan's democratic process. His commitment to holding elections on time and ensuring institutional neutrality over personal and party interests was instrumental in aiding a democratic transition. During this period, he demonstrated his dedication to constitutionalism and strengthened his reputation as a president whose main focus was on the national interest and democratic continuity (Hamid Khan, 2001, pp. 418–420).

4.4 Civil-Military Relations

One of the most important elements of Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari's presidency (1993–1997) was civil-military relations. Under the Eighth Amendment of the 1973 Constitution, Leghari had a remarkable influence on military appointments and looked for institutional options to control civil-military relations. As mentioned earlier that the 8th Amendment has given maximum power to the president including the appointing authority to the military chiefs (Hussain & Salyana, 2022). One of Farooq Leghari's early important decisions was the appointment of Gen. Jahangir Karamat as Chief of Army Staff in January 1996. This decision, despite rumors that it once again faced

opposition from Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Asif Ali Zardari, showed Leghari's determination to assert the presidential powers under Article 243 of the Constitution (Kalyar 2013, p. 67–68; Rizvi, 2000, pp. 382–383). The appointment came after a crucial period of transition and ensured order was not disrupted and the rule of seniority was upheld in military promotions.

Leghari's most visible institutional change was the formation of the Council for Defence and National Security (CDNS) in January 1997 during the caretaker government of Malik Meraj Khalid. The CDNS was put together as an advisory body to the President and Prime Minister, comprising the Defence and Interior Ministers, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, and the three service chiefs. It mainly aimed at connecting defence policy with foreign and domestic policies and discussing issues of national security and stability on a formal basis, thereby minimizing the dependence of the Defence system on informal channels of military influence (Hussain & Gohar, 2025; Shafqat, 1998, pp. 221–223).

Leghari's idea for the formation of the CDNS can be explained with the help of two major theoretical frameworks. The Concordance Theory of Rebecca Schiff (1995) holds that there is a need for agreement within the military, among the political elites, and among the civilian elites about the military's role and limits. The CDNS was a conscious attempt to create this concordance and was offering a constitutional and formal forum for discussion. Likewise, in modern government, there is a blending of civilian and military, as emphasized in Morris Janowitz's Convergence Theory (1960). The CDNS also incorporated aspects of convergence to bring the institutional aspects together and minimize conflicts by engaging service chiefs in discussions that went beyond operational defence issues (Hussain, Salyana & Faiz, 2021).

Leghari's overall policy towards the military was to ensure civilian supremacy while also giving due respect to legitimate military interests. Instead of confrontation or subservience, he went for structured interaction. He appointed General Karamat and established the CDNS as a part of his deployment strategy to control the military within constitutional limits. This strategy proved especially significant in Pakistan, where there was a history of entrusting the military with direct intervention due to the weakness of civilian institutions. Institutionalization was a means by which Leghari sought to promote mutual trust and strengthen democratic processes without scaring off the armed forces.

These efforts are reflected in the civil-military literature. The need to institutionalize civil-military relations beyond ad-hoc arrangements is also highlighted in the article titled “Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan: Quest for Power and the Role of National Security Council”, by Hussain, Salyana & Faiz (2021), which mentions the formal bodies like the CDNS and subsequently the National Security Council as significant instances of institutionalizing consultation. The CDNS lasted only a few months and was never implemented after the 13th Amendment was ratified. Still, it left a conceptual legacy that was carried forward in follow-up efforts to regularize civil-military interactions.

After all, Leghari's approach to civil-military relations was indicative of his grown-up awareness of Pakistan's power dynamics. His efforts provided a middle ground appropriate to the country's nascent democracy—a middle ground that aimed at avoiding direct military intervention by open-ended institutional means rather than closed ones. The lessons of this experience are still relevant to the present situation in Pakistan, where cordial and transparent civil-military relations, based on the rule of law, remain crucial for strengthening democracy and national stability.

4.5 Second Phase of Presidency (PML-N Regime: 1997)

Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari's second term as President started after the February 1997 general elections, which gave Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) a landslide victory. The party won a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly in order to enable Sharif to change the political scene (Hamid Khan, 2001, p. 418–420). This was a major change in dynamics and the path toward head-on challenges to the presidency.

One of the major steps initially taken by the PML-N Government was the introduction of the 13th Constitutional Amendment in April 1997. This amendment removed Article 58(2)(b) of the Constitution, which gave the President the power to dissolve the National Assembly, and by extension, rendered the Presidency a largely symbolic position (Rizvi, 2000, p. 189; Kalyar, 2013, pp. 97–98). Leghari's institutional power was severely reduced, and the PML-N government did not bother to pursue any of the measures, such as the Council for Defence and National Security (CDNS).

There were tensions during the judicial crisis of 1997 over Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah. The government was said to have forced the removal of the Chief Justice from office in the wake of a controversy over the split in the Supreme Court. Leghari adamantly declined, saying that it would affect the independence of the judiciary and would go against the spirit of the constitution (Hamid Khan, 2001, pp. 418–419). It goes up a notch in November 1997 when the pro-government militants stormed the Supreme Court building, which resulted in a constitutional impasse and deep institutional differences (Nawaz 2008, pp. 488–489).

During the crisis, the military leadership, headed by General Jahangir Karamat, tried to resolve differences between the President and the Prime Minister. Leghari did not back down from his stance of judicial independence, though. He tendered his resignation on 2 December 1997, almost a year before the end of his constitutional term. In his farewell speech, he said that he did not want to be a figurehead in a scheme that has removed the dignity and constitutionality from the presidency (Dawn, 1997, December 3; Kalyar, 2013, pp. 100–102).

Leghari's resignation was seen as a principled action. He refused a proposal of the PML-N to remain in office, provided that he dismissed the Chief Justice. In his decision, he reaffirmed his reputation as a leader with a strong commitment to institutional integrity and the preservation of constitutional values. The episode came at the end of a presidential era of assertiveness and helped further the trend of going towards parliamentary dominance in Pakistan. Additionally, it pointed out the structural weaknesses of the Presidency as it meets a strong elected government (Ziring, 1997, p. 544–545).

5. Analytical Evaluation of Leadership Style and Services of Farooq Leghari

The rule of Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari (1993–1997) is one of the most complex and significant in Pakistan's democratic history. During his tenure, there were plenty of clues to consider in evaluating the technocratic model in an unstable democratic regime. Although they may be associated with the dismissal of Benazir Bhutto's government, a comprehensive appraisal shows a figure who contributed much to the integrity of the institutions, to the continuity of democracy, to accountability, and to civil-military relations.

5.1 Major Contributions

The most distinct service Leghari rendered is related to constitutional governance. He invoked presidential powers to deal with corruption and failures in government by dismissing the Bhutto government in November 1996, in some instances regardless of his own party loyalty. The next few years of his leadership brought in a fair general election in 1997 and above all, FATA was included in the electoral process (Hussain & Gohar, 2025, p. 1094; Kalyar, 2013, pp. 89–91). Prior to that, he had promoted the idea of institutionalizing civil-military relations and, with the formation of the Council for Defence and National Security (CDNS) tried to minimize ad hoc military influence (Shafqat, 1998, p. 221–223).

Being as Mr. Clean, Leghari was also fair to his duties as a man of accountability through the Ehtesab Commission and always called for administrative reforms. His principled resignation, in December 1997, from the Presidency, which, rather than substantiating him as the 'ceremonial head' of the institution or as a proof of compromise, further demonstrated his commitment to institutional integrity (Hamid Khan, 2001, pp. 418–420).

5.1.1 The Advantages and Disadvantages of his Technocratic Approach

Leghari's strength was his technocratic training (Oxfordian, civil servant, and tribal leader). This gave him a good sense of administrative discipline and institutional thinking on a long-term basis. He was more interested in the national interest than any other politician of his time.

But his technocratic approach was cumbersome. His focus on rules and propriety sometimes evoked the impression of being removed from populist politics in this highly polarized political climate. Although his decision to dismiss the PPP government was constitutionally sound, it had a price to pay in the eyes of the people and during his later tenure. Furthermore, his usage of presidential powers as per the 8th Amendment ultimately failed because when the supremacy of Parliament was restored, as per the 13th Amendment, he could not hold on to those powers.

5.1.2 Legacy: Guardian of the Constitution in a Polarized Politics

Leghari's name will always be linked with the effort to uphold constitutional values in an inauspicious period. He was a man of strong constitutional principles; he was a great believer in the supremacy of the Constitution and eventually preferred to resign rather than compromise his principles. However, his efforts at civil-military institutionalization through the CDNS created an important precedent for subsequent institutional mechanisms.

On a larger canvas, there was an example of the capability and instability of technocratic leadership in Pakistan. When democracy was still emerging, he showed that civilian leaders can take charge of the nation by constitutional methods, and not by confrontation or by bowing to military authority. He tried to do a few things, but they were resisted and short-lived; they emphasized the need for mutual trust, for institutional dialogue to deepen democratic consolidation.

In the final analysis, Farooq Leghari illustrates the separation between loyalty, power, and principle in the intricate political context of Pakistan. His term is a good lesson to learn about the conflict between personal conviction, party politics, and state institutions.

Conclusion

The tenure of Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari as President is one of the most significant but least researched in the constitutional and political history of Pakistan. This study sheds light on his role beyond the dismissal of the Benazir Bhutto government in 1996. The entire period of his service was a testimony of his strong dedication to the principles of the constitution and institutional accountability, democratic continuity, and responsible governance during one of the most politically turbulent times of Pakistan's history. Leghari wanted to put constitutional obligations before partisan interests by strengthening state institutions, administrative reform, promoting regional development, institutionalizing civil-military relations, and ensuring a peaceful democratic transition. He has shown that his approach to national good is not one of political convenience, and that his integrity as a president is greater than any political concerns. Some of his efforts were restricted by the structural nature of Pakistan's mixed political system, yet benchmarks were set for the development of civilian institutions and constitutional governance in the country. Balanced assessment of the historical trajectory, therefore, reveals Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari not only as a controversial political figure who dissolved Benazir's Government, but also as a constitutional statesman of ideas who provides lessons for the consolidation of democracy, institutional resilience, and civil-military relations in Pakistan.

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